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BALANCE BETWEEN A LIBERAL APPROACH TO STATE GOVERNANCE AND INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the issues of state and public governance, the legitimacy and transparency of political power, and reform problems within the context of contemporary philosophical debates. From a socio-philosophical perspective, it highlights the separation of powers, and the role of civil society institutions (NGOs) and e-government systems in state decision-making processes. Furthermore, through the prism of classical utopian and dystopian concepts, the study explores radicalization trends in practical politics, state ideology, national security, and the impact of liberal, social-democratic, and conservative perspectives on modern governance.

Keywords:
State governance, political power, legitimacy, transparency, civil society, e-government, state ideology, liberalism, utopia, dystopia, socio-philosophical analysis

In contemporary philosophical debates, the problems of reforms aimed at organizing and conducting elections, ensuring the legitimacy and transparency of political power, the activities of political parties and movements, ensuring pluralism and political competition, as well as aligning the status, goals, and objectives of political power with societal demands, stand at the very center of discussions.

A broad wave of philosophical perspectives can also be observed regarding the practical activities of state organs and institutions. The separation of state power into legislative, executive, and judicial branches, ensuring their mutual cooperation and balance, the boundaries of influence of state bodies and institutions, their role in formulating and implementing state policy, and the problems of interaction between various levels of government hold significant importance within the system of modern philosophical views.

The role and influence of political leaders in state and public governance, their impact on shaping and executing state policy during specific periods, issues concerning the legitimacy and accountability of political leaders, the methods and mechanisms of citizen participation in political life, their influence on state decision-making, as well as the authority, actions, and effectiveness of civil society institutions and their role in ensuring the openness and accountability of state organs are increasingly occupying a broader place within scientific-philosophical analysis and research.

"Among contemporary philosophical views, the issue of state ideology and policy also holds a conceptual position" [1, 2010]. This is because the formulation and dissemination of state ideology, its impact on social consciousness and behavior, the development and implementation of state policy across various spheres (economy, education, healthcare, social protection, etc.), the foreign policy of the state and its interaction with other nations and international organizations, the influence of international processes and events on domestic state policy, the maintenance of public order, the fight against crime and terrorism, ensuring national security, as well as protecting state

sovereignty and territorial integrity carry vital significance in today's turbulent world. Philosophical reflection on the future regarding all these matters is becoming an essential demand of our time.

In recent years, political relations in the international affairs of many countries have been radicalizing at the governmental level. We can observe that subjecting free philosophical views to political pressure, adapting citizen freedom to the standards set by the state's political will, molding youth responsibility and patriotism based on such regulations, and restricting the political activity of citizens are becoming increasingly widespread in practical politics.

Therefore, practical politics must focus deeply not only on organizing and operating state institutions, but also on advanced changes that ensure their interconnected cooperation with citizens, political parties, various branches of governance, international organizations, and other subjects of political processes.

Public governance, according to the principles of practical life, can essentially be defined as the process of organizing and coordinating the activities of various state institutions and groups to achieve common goals and resolve socially significant problems. It encompasses mechanisms that ensure effective cooperation between the state, civil society, and the private sector, and is predominantly managed by the state within real-world processes.

In public governance, involving citizens in crucial decision-making processes—which is linked to public consultations, surveys, referendums, and other forms of direct democracy, as well as supporting public initiatives and other organizations that play an important role in solving social problems and improving the quality of life—imparts a philosophical essence to the execution of state administration.

At the same time, the cooperation of NGOs with state organs and the private sector for state administration, the protection of human rights, the advancement of environmental initiatives, the provision of social assistance, and the implementation of joint projects and programs serves as an important philosophical theme from the perspective of updating the social mentality in line with the demands of the era.

In philosophical analyses of modern state and public governance, issues such as ensuring that state administration guarantees the openness of state and public institutions, consulting with the public and utilizing information, informing citizens about draft decisions and enabling their participation in discussions, and improving the use of modern technologies like e-government to increase openness and accountability also occupy an extensive place.

Indeed, at present, the introduction of new methodological approaches, such as e-government, public discussion, online platforms for voting and submitting appeals, enhances the efficiency and accessibility of public services, allows for faster, broader, and more accurate collection of citizen opinions, and increases the capacity to analyze data and make more rational decisions.

Accordingly, "the philosophical debates surrounding the nature of power (sovereignty) and its legitimacy (lawfulness) within the concept of state administration continue actively even today" [2, p. 704].

Within its framework, increasing attention is being paid to the analysis of the ethical foundations of state administration, the mutual moral obligations between the state and its citizens, the virtues that should prioritize the activities of state institutions, shared values, and ethical principles, as well as how citizens participate in the political process and their responsibility to society and the state. Research is intensifying into the social characteristics that transform democratic values and practices into a worldview or culture, the meaning of civic participation, and the issues of balancing individual freedom and rights with the demands of social order and common

interest. Philosophical approaches and debates regarding the boundaries of state intervention into the private lives of citizens, the protection of personal autonomy, the principles of inclusivity and equality, and the functions of state administration in building relations of trust between citizens and the state are increasingly developing as direct subjects of contemporary philosophical research.

It should also be noted that reflecting upon the possible ideal forms of state administration (utopias) and warnings about potential hazards (dystopias) has historically existed in philosophical thoughts and has not ceased today. Along with classical utopian works such as Thomas More's and T. Campanella's "Utopia" [3, p. 256], dystopian novels like George Orwell's "1984" [4, p. 320] provide a profound understanding of the nature of power and social governance.

"One such approach is liberalism. One of the remarkable conclusions of liberalism is the issue of limited state intervention in citizen life and the economy within the development of state and society" [5, p. 504]. In liberal views on public service, this issue manifests as follows:

The state, embodied by the public servant, must operate based on openness and accountability, working transparently and responsibly to prevent the abuse of power and corruption. Public service must ensure continuous modernization and efficiency through the servant, support performance-based management principles, and thereby focus primarily on know-how approaches and the effectiveness of state organs. Government bureaucracy should be reduced, simplifying administrative processes to increase efficiency and eliminate red tape. Regarding competition and privatization, it is necessary to transfer certain state and public service functions to public institutions or the private sector to improve the quality of public services and reduce expenditures, thereby introducing a positive competitive environment.

Another approach that synthesizes views on public service in philosophical and political research is the conservative perspective. Conservatives "have advocated that order, strong authority, and social discipline should prioritize state administration" [6, p. 216]. In views concerning public service, this is expressed as follows:

- Preserving stability and traditions: supporting the stability and preservation of traditional institutions of public service;
- Patriotism and a mentality of service to the nation: placing a strong emphasis on patriotism and the unity of state and societal interests among public servants;
- Ensuring strong governance: supporting strong government structures to guarantee order and security in the actions of administrative bodies and society;
- Discipline and professionalism: ensuring a deep awareness of professional responsibility and adherence to high standards of established discipline in the activities of public servants.

Another prominent approach in philosophical research is the socialist and social-democratic perspective. Socialists and social-democrats place greater emphasis on social justice, equality, and supporting vulnerable groups. From a public service standpoint, their views are expressed as follows:

- Equality and inclusion: promoting equality and inclusion in accessing and delivering public services;
- Broad social programs: developing and supporting extensive social programs and services aimed at enhancing the well-being of all citizens;
- Social responsibility: focusing heavily on the social responsibility of public servants and on public service as a guarantee of social protection;
- Collectivism and solidarity: supporting collective interests and solidarity within public service.

In contemporary philosophical views, radical and revolutionary approaches to public servants and service issues are also noteworthy. Proponents of such approaches advance ideas of revolutionary political movements, often criticizing existing government institutions and proposing fundamental transformations. Their views regarding public service find expression in the following:

- Radical reform or even the abolition of public service, taking into account new forms of social organization;
- Decentralizing power and granting local social groups greater rights to self-governance;
- Introducing horizontal and more autonomous management structures instead of vertical hierarchical frameworks.

The development of modern public service was largely viewed as a broad theme in the reflections of last century's philosopher-politicians, which clarified a series of principles and prepared the ground for their application to public service. Among these principles, ideas of enhancing the professional skills and specialized knowledge of public servants, and creating bureaucratic structures that have become complex today for growing state functions, have been widely applied in practice.

In contemporary political-philosophical approaches, greater emphasis is being placed on increasing the efficiency and transparency of public service. Here, trends such as introducing digital technologies, delivering services through public-private partnerships, strengthening non-governmental sector participation, increasing international cooperation, and applying best practices in public service have become widespread.

These trends reflect specific philosophical-ideological and political-moral goals that influence the development of public service across various countries.

In modern trends, a number of narrow conceptual approaches can also be observed. For instance, the "ethics of care" in the context of public service focuses on emphasizing care and mutual assistance in the social and healthcare spheres. The idea of "democratic accountability" stresses the importance of social control and civic participation in governance to ensure the accountability of public servants. Proponents of "global justice" examine issues of global justice and the responsibility of state officials under the influence of global challenges such as climate change and human rights.

Philosophical reflection on the systemic problems of modern state and public governance allows for the following important conclusions to be drawn:

First, today the legitimacy and transparency of state power depend not only on institutional structures but also on the level of adaptability to societal demands and sharp changes (radicalization processes) in international relations.

Second, the implementation of e-government and online platforms has accelerated communication between the state and citizens. This process has become the primary factor in increasing the activity of civil society institutions (NGOs) and ensuring openness and accountability in decision-making.

Third, in the contemporary philosophical analysis of state administration, particularly from the perspective of liberalism, restricting state intervention in private life and the economy, and balancing human rights with the demands of social order, is emerging as the most urgent task on the agenda.

Fourth, philosophical debates between the search for ideal forms of state administration (utopias) and warnings against totalitarian hazards (dystopias) serve as a theoretical foundation for preserving national security, state sovereignty, and ideological stability in today's turbulent world.

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