MODERNIZATION STRATEGY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM IN UKRAINE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE MAJORITY OF ITS CITIZEN

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Abstract. The strategic course for Ukraine’s development as a democratic state through human-centric modernization of public administration system in terms of focusing government authorities on the interests of ordinary people has been substantiated. At the same time, such modernization will significantly facilitate the stabilization of social relations and consolidation of different strata having different views and values.

Keywords: public administration, modernization, human-centrism, quality of life, satisfaction of human needs (personality self-actualization), qualimetry, assessment of government authorities’ performance by community on micro-, meso-, and macro-levels.

Problem Statement

The recent events in Ukraine are the consequence of the ineffective public administration system that for more than 20 years has functioned without feedback, which ultimately has led to huge estrangement of government authorities’ interests from the interests of nationals and to great non-confidence in authorities.

The lack yet today of a strategic course for comprehensive renewal of the public administration system in the interests of citizens, which [the system] cannot essentially be changed by replacing certain managers with others (even if at all administrative levels), becomes the main reason for exacerbation of Ukrainian political crisis impending its destruction as a sovereign state. The confidence in the new power is also gradually diminishing.

Indeed, the question “What to do?” is becoming thornier for the government. “No to criminal power!” slogans or transition to a parliamentary presidential form of state rule do not meet the key challenge: how to eliminate the huge estrangement of the interest of administrative (power-holding) elite from the interests of majority of public. We cannot duplicate the Western democracy as the laws they have do not work here. Perhaps, because the peculiarity of our mentality is the result of our existence under the reign of princes and their kinsmen for 200 years, and later, for centuries, under monarchs of other countries (Dmytrenko, 2012).

Obviously, Ukraine needs its human-centric course in transition to democracy, a course capable of ensuring purposeful convergence of the interests of administrative (in particular, power-holding) elite and the public, whichever political party is at power.

We are speaking about interior administrative course of Ukraine in the context of human-centrism ideology that would be the foundation for national reconciliation based on amalgamation of interests of people who today are on the opposite sides of the barricades. This is first and foremost. Second, the implementation of this Course in terms of strategy could ensure that the authorities would actually face people in an evolutionary way, without shedding a single gout (Dmytrenko, 2011).

Below is the substantiation of the new administrative course based on principles, which have stipulated the content and logics of material presentation:
- The research was conducted on the basis of such logics: from a human-individual-personality with his/her needs and interests (the uppermost need is self-actualization need) to the essence of the public administration modernization in this line.
- Ukraine is viewed as a peculiar country with a special mentality of people and a very low social capital reserve; that is why the public administration system should choose its specific development vector and an appropriate technology to implement it.
The current public administration mechanism in Ukraine is specific as it works in a “manual mode” through downward administrative pressure without considering human-centric eventual outcome of state (first of all, government) authorities’ performance that determine the level of needs of ordinary people. In other words, there is very weak feedback on the final result, thus the whole public administration system requires drastic changes in terms of its considerable democratization, through accountability for these results to the citizens.

The public administration system is viewed primarily in relation to the activity of government and local self-governing authorities at the rayon [district] (micro-) and oblast [regional] (meso-) levels, as well as to functioning of central government (macro-level).

1. Personality, Economy, Society: the Essence of Interaction

There are common philosophical truths that have been developed throughout centuries: man is the measure of all things, man is a thing in itself, human is the ends and means at the same time, etc. It was later defined that a human is a biosocial being that should be viewed both as a personality and a main productive force of the society.

As a personality a human has certain character traits and professional personal qualities (including moral), psychomotor virtues, abilities, values, health condition, physiological make-up, etc. Some of these qualities are natural and the others are acquired in the course of socialization based on natural bents. As a consequence of a range of personal qualities the human’s needs are formed, which are the driving forces of the human’s activity. According to A. Maslow’s pyramid, the hierarchy of needs is developed from the basic level – physiological needs, to the highest level, namely self-actualization in all spheres of human life.

Each person exists in five life spheres (“labor sphere”, “family”, “place of residence and recreation”, “the education sphere”, and finally, “living in a country” through state allegiance). The existence of a person in all these spheres by satisfaction of needs will define the level of his/her self-actualization. To put it simple, the person is self-actualizing if most of the time he/she: willingly goes to work and to educational institutions; is happy to be in the family and in the place of residence and recreation, and perceives oneself a personality belonging to a country that one is proud of.

From these perspectives it is obvious that the meaning of life is life itself (a philosophical truth).

As the society’s main productive force a human becomes the satisfier of both basic physiological needs via economic factors and the personal self-actualization needs in the labor sphere. That is, a person “makes” economy based on fulfillment of labor potential. It should be noted that everything around us and what we consume is the product of nature and the physical/intellectual work of a human in interaction with nature. For this purpose people use various equipment, tools, technologies, electronic means, etc., which they have actually developed and produced themselves. Thus, the role of human in the economy is absolutely crucial.

It is the inability to generate and employ the country’s labor potential that makes the national economy unproductive and uncompetitive. This also is the result of low efficacy of the existing public administration system (PAS).

Therefore, the public administration system has a super-strategic task: to purposefully, step by step, favor the person’s self-actualization as a personality and the main productive force of the society in the interests both of the public and the state. This is possible only if the activity of all state authorities (primarily, the government agencies at micro-, meso-, and macro-levels) is precisely focused on the person – on raising one’s self-actualization level in all five human life spheres.

In this case there is no sense to prove that the key human-centric mission of the whole public administration system is in every way to stimulate self-actualization of every person in all human life spheres within universal ethics and national consciousness through creating appropriate conditions. This means adoption of relevant acts, decrees, resolutions, orders and provision for their implementation.

It bears reminding that to do so, the interests of government authorities (in the first line) should be converged to those of the public.

Another important peculiarity of the situation that Ukraine currently faces and which is a considerable obstacle to PAS modernization is worth mentioning. It is the very low reserve of social capital in the country. In general, social capital is marked by national unity, ability to act together in one line on the basis of confidence in the authorities and in each other. Unfortunately, Ukraine’s historical past, which has to a large extent determined the people’s mentality and the inefficient actions of authorities in more than 20 years of
independence, has contributed to nation’s partitioning and drastic reduction of social capital in Ukraine. Thus, Ukraine as no other country, under the crisis conditions should find what would unite the nation around something important and great that would be shared by, obvious and interesting to each and every of the Ukrainian citizens. And this is not just an idea or a declaration, which nobody puts faith in anymore. It should be a Consistent Course of public administration development that would contain the great idea (ideology), certain strategies and technologies understandable to most of the population.

However, this Consistent Course of PAS modernization is to be based on the scientific foundation of human-centric approach and system management, i.e. management of goals and ultimate outcomes that determine the activities of all performing parties.

2. Human-Centric Paradigm of Public Administration System (PAS) Development in Ukraine: Conceptual Aspect

In the context of management theory and system approach to the development of state governing, the underlying reason for ineffectiveness of the current PAS in Ukraine is lack of feedback on ultimate results of authorities’ actions. And this becomes the ground for estrangement of the interests of administrative elite from the interests of people and prevalence of widespread corruption, the rise in which cannot be stopped just by the letter of law.

Therefore, the fundamental PAS modernization if conducted on scientific principles should start with determination of its key strategy, specifically of human-centric ultimate results of authorities’ actions at the rayon (district), oblast (region) and national levels (central government). And because the significance of human-centric ultimate results can hardly be overestimated, there are some fundamental requirements to them. First, these results should be able to thoroughly combine effective functioning of authorities at different levels, from the bottom to the top. Second, these results should be precisely measured in order to be the key tool in establishing feedback in the administration system. And third, along with being the assessment tool for authorities’ efficacy (for a certain period), these results have to provide data for planning activity of these authorities with the required focus. And, finally, the obtained results need to reflect the underlying human-centric orientation of the whole public administration system in such a way that the actions of authorities are subject to control of villages’, settlements’ and cities’ communities (that integrate the assessment of certain personalities).

All these requirements provide conditions for shifting from manual management and starting the development of a consistent democratic system of governing the state from the grass roots, all components and links of which fall into the line of one consolidating objective. The achievements of this objective are tracked through measured ultimate results of government authorities’ performance (primarily). Not a single possible indicator to characterize human-centric ultimate results of the government agencies’ performance in the form of “well-being” of people, “living standards” of citizens, “paying capacity” of citizens, “gross domestic product (GDP) per capita” and other, do not meet the above requirements. There is only one indicator, human-centric in nature, that complies with all of the mentioned requirements (if determined under a certain technology, see Section 3).

What is referred to is the index reflecting the level of self-actualization of a personality in all human life spheres through the degree of satisfying certain needs. This is the citizens’ quality of life index (QLC).

The recent achievements of qualimetric science and, in particular, criteria-factor modeling give the opportunity to evaluate, in terms of quantity, the level of citizens needs satisfaction in all these spheres on the basis of subjective perception of this level by citizens themselves (by each person individually).

This is made via using such criteria per factor (for example, “healthcare services”): fully satisfied; rather satisfied than not; average; rather not satisfied than satisfied; totally dissatisfied. The quantitative value of these criteria is determined as 1.0; 0.8; 0.5; 0.3; 0.0 accordingly. Each person can determine one or another criterion by certain factor. Hence, the satisfaction of needs level can be expressed in a quantitative value, for instance, 0.85, 0.65, 0.32, etc., i.e. ranging from 1.0 (full satisfaction) to 0.0 (total dissatisfaction). The QLC evaluation is completely subjective.

But the special form of obtaining data through specific questionnaires gives the possibility to significantly make objective the subjective perception by the person of his/her self-actualization level through satisfaction of needs (more information is provided in the monograph). The citizens’ quality of life index becomes a real tool of implementing the human-centric approach into public administration practices.
Today, the school of thought of the President of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine V. G. Kremen’ unveils the substance of human-centrism in various aspects, including as the guiding idea of Ukrainian society (Kremen', 2007, 2009, 2011).

According to V. Kremen, “human-centrism” might become the national idea of Ukraine’s development. But this idea should be made to its practical implementation through appropriate strategies and innovation technologies of fulfillment, the realization of which will foster authorities to face people.

3. Unique Human-Centric Technology of Comprehensive Renewal of PAS Modernization from the Bottom

Only people themselves can determine the QLC index through evaluating the self-actualization level of each personality in every human life sphere based on the level of satisfaction of relevant basic needs (eventually, these change). None of those, at first sight objective statistic data can substitute person’s perception of one’s peace of mind depending on the impact of given factors. So there is no alternative to determining the quality of life index through surveying people in order to make administrative decisions. There are only doubts that the obtained results are objective enough as they depend on the emotional state of respondents. But specific questionnaires consisting of the open and closed sections, resolve this issue.

The uniqueness of social technology used to determine QLC index is specified by three factors:

1) Specific tool questionnaires;
2) Operators of the surveys;
3) Solving certain strategic questions.

In the first case we refer to a specific questionnaire, the closed section of which allows obtain information on evaluating the citizens’ quality of life and which at the same time is the assessment of the performance of authorities in the public administration system. The open section provides information on the reasons of dissatisfaction of needs by factors, and along with that it serves as the basis for forming the items of plans for social and economic development of villages, settlements, and cities. It is the determination of reasons for dissatisfaction in certain needs by factors that drastically reduces the emotional background when the respondents answer questions. As to the second case, survey operators, the role of which is assigned to deputies of local councils in their respective districts, are typical for conducting annual surveys.

In the third case, the uniqueness of proposed social technology is determined by the possibility to solve the upcoming very important goals. For example, there is a tool for real democratization of public administration on the basis of evaluating ultimate results of authorities’ performance by the community of each locality. Finally, the feedback is arranged (through quantitative evaluation of QLC in villages, settlements, cities) and social responsibility of authorities to the citizens for the outcomes of their activity is realized. In the end, there is the opportunity to engage a large number of people to participate in formation of plans for regional social and economic development by using information from the open sections of the questionnaire.

Hypothetic solution to these tasks becomes the ground to start the process of raising civil status and self-reliance of the residents of villages, settlements and cities and to increase social capital of the country.

But this is not the only uniqueness of the proposed technique to obtain QLC index in the survey. Such surveys should be conducted on a yearly basis, being assigned the status of “Annual Local Referendum”, which will allow us: first, to determine efficacy of authorities’ performance in a given period of time; second, to build a recurrent constant information flow from the bottom to the top and, thus, to provide an effective feedback in the public administration system.

In practice, this unique technology of fragmentary QLC determination (in life sphere: “place of residence and recreation”) was first successfully implemented back in 1997 in Vyshneve town of Kyiv oblast. The most important result is the evidence that the technology does work, it is realistic. It became obvious that people can provide a distinct assessment of authorities’ effectiveness, and the local deputies are capable of performing the role of surveys main operators (after corresponding short training). Actually, this is their direct responsibility: to systematically, not fragmentary, get information from the people in order to form items of plans for social and economic development of localities and performance assessment of executive committees.
on fulfillment of these plans considering local budgets possibilities (Hoshko, Dmytrenko and Knyazyev, 2004, Hoshko 2006, 1999).

4. Formation of New Administrative Course of Ukraine based on Human-Centric Ideology: Theoretic Technological Aspect

Human-centric ideology is implemented into the public administration system, first of all, through determination of ultimate results of government agencies’ performance on micro-, meso-, and macro-levels. It is already obvious that such result is the citizens’ quality of life index (QLC) in villages, settlements, cities. But to determine this result is not enough; a mechanism of managing this result’s achievement through relevant arranging of professional activity inside these agencies should be built. Otherwise it will be another declaration or a slogan, just more concrete than the thesis “Ukraine is for the People”.

The question is about transition to the culture of management by objectives (administration as per objectives and outcomes) in each separate public administration and local self-governing agency, namely in the government – state administrations at rayon (district), oblast (region), and national levels.

The essence of culture of management by objectives is presented in three blocks, the first of which is the strategic management block. This block includes determination of mission, strategic objectives and means to achieve them. The second block is the mechanism of systematic personnel management which ensures achievement of goals provided that all other means are fulfilled appropriately. It is based on realization of four fundamental principles: first is goal-setting; second is feedback based on performance results; third is goal-oriented motivation of employees; and forth is the employee’s conformity to the position held according to professional personal qualities. The third block is very special: it contains assessment of ultimate performance results of the whole organization, which are measured as socially useful, economic, social, and ecological ones.

The current system of manual administration in government authorities as compared to the culture of management by objectives differs in the declarative nature of goals (fuzziness) and lack of measured results capable of becoming a feedback tool. The existing mechanism of personnel management is far from systematic. In the latter, the goals that are ensured by relevant means are communicated to employees, and motivated staff achieves results, which are appropriately evaluated on a mandatory basis followed by incentives. But if the specialist’s results often do not meet the goals, the employee will either start training and improving, or will resign voluntarily.

Inability to manage personnel on a systematic basis has always been the weak point in national management, which now becomes the obstacle to use national labor potential at a maximum level both for the organization and for the society in general.

Thus, the key strategy of human-centric public administration system development is being determined: this is the transition to the culture of management by objectives in government (administrations) and local authorities. It is focused on achieving a unique objective – raising the self-actualization level of citizens in all life spheres, this level is clearly measured by the overall QLC index in villages, settlements, and cities (through the degree of a personality’s needs satisfaction) (Hoshko, 1999).

In the context of human-centric ideology the role of national educational system considerably increases for the future (perception of self-actualization by the personality throughout the whole life) and for today when the implementation of the “New Administrative Course” is provided through training of Ukrainian elite of all levels within the postgraduate education system (Dmytrenko, Riktor, 2011).

In terms of the foregoing, the “New Administrative Course of Ukraine” is being distinctly defined, and it cannot but consolidate the society. It is based on human-centric ideology, the key implementation strategy of which is the culture of management by objectives in government authorities upon determination of ultimate performance results, and the human-centric system of national education becomes its fundamental background.

5. Human-Centric Strategy of National Education Development in the Context of the New Administrative Course of Ukraine

Reviewing strategic vector of education development in the context of human-centric ideology implementation predetermines the necessity to distinguish its three stages: preschool and school; professional; postgraduate (adult education). Each of these stages plays its role both in ensuring the human-centric focus of public administration system, and facilitating self-actualization of each personality.
In general, the fundamental role of education in a person’s fate is life-long stimulation of the personality’s self-actualization. That is why preschool and school institutions should focus, primarily, on studying biosocial essence of each child (involving parents to the process) and formation of creative, moral, and healthy personalities. It should be noted that such personalities are much more comfortable in finding common language in the social medium, as well as gaining recognition in the future among employers, colleagues, family, etc., in other words, it is easier for them to self-actualize in various life spheres.

But the main strategic goal of preschool and school education is the development of cognitive activity of the personality in terms of the environment, as well as self-cognition. What is taught in the educational institutions is coming out of date year by year, whereas the sparked interest of pupils to acquire knowledge and abilities to use it stimulates to update knowledge in the course of lifetime. The same can be said about the person’s awareness of his/her abilities, character traits, psychomotor virtues, values, professional personal qualities, etc. This is more than important for every person that can consciously select an adequate profession and career, form consciously harmonious relations in the family and other social media. If you succeed in judging yourself, it’s because you are truly wise man. This thesis of Antoine de Saint-Exupery can be actually implemented in life starting with preschool, and even earlier – with the family. If parents consider/take the child as a personality and watch manifestation of natural qualities, this will be the first step in this direction. Later, the teachers will do it, engaging pupils to the process.

The strategic objective of professional educational institutions (their ultimate performance result) is training of competitive graduates in accordance with competency passports of each profession (Dmytrenko, Medved', Mudra, Krymova, 2013).

This means that in the context of implementing human-centric ideology in the education, competitiveness is viewed both in terms of self-actualization of the employee himself and meeting interests of the economic complex and the employers.

Training of such graduates should be comprised of two components: fundamental, which in the future would facilitate self-actualization of the personality in the economic complex, and actual (acquiring up-to-date knowledge and skills), which would meet the labor market requirements, i.e. of the employers. In the nearest future (without waiting for the school to be reformed), at higher educational institutions the entrants’ enrollment can be performed in conformity with the selected profession by their professional and personal qualities. In fact, within the implementation of competency-based approach in the context of human-centric education development this should be done for sure.

Unfortunately, the overall strategy of performing entrants’ enrollment at higher educational institutions is limited to after-school testing of students’ knowledge at Centers for External Independent Testing instead of determining their cognitive activity index.

That is why the enrolment technology to higher educational institutions may involve three stages: school performance assessment (average score), cognitive activity index (determined at Centers for External Independent Testing), and conformity of professional and personal qualities of the entrants with the selected profession (evaluated at higher educational institution).

The cascade training of state and local authorities’ managers becomes the strategic goal of postgraduate education in the transition to the “New Administrative Course”. Cascade training means that first the top managers attend an introductory session. Those of them who realize the essence of the course arrange trainings for managers of subordinate organizations and, finally, for public officials of lower ranks starting from macro-, then meso-, and, in the end, micro-levels. There might be other variants of shifting to the “New Administrative Course” with a corresponding training path.

One of such training paths is the development of strategic thinking with the managers, which becomes a pre-requisite in important decision-making at national level. And if in the economically developed countries special strategic thinking training programs are in place, in Ukraine, unfortunately, national educational system lacks any kind of training for such specialists. The training for strategists should begin with identifying natural bents (strategic activity abilities), designing a special program for the development of abstract thinking capabilities and formation of skills to perform strategic management.

6. The Concept of Certain Human-Centric Changes in Ukrainian Legislation on PAS Modernization

Analysis of the current Constitution of Ukraine shows that participation of the public in national managerial decision-making is guaranteed by certain rights, the exercising of which would allow residents of villages, settlements, and cities raise the status of the “citizen”.

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But the rights granted by the Constitution, do not actually work. The reasons are known: these rights are either significantly discredited (this can be said about, for instance, the elections of people’s deputies, whose interests are estranged from those of majority of citizens), or are not exercised at all due to the mental habit of people to be cogs in the public administration system. The referendum on nation-essential issues had been held only once, in 1991.

The problem of raising the status of the “citizen” via gradual moving from the “cog” role in the public administration system and being a manipulation object for politicians is progressively solved as the “New Administrative Course” (NAC) of Ukraine is developed; the Course requires a legislative support.

The first step here is to define legislatively the ultimate socially useful results of government agencies’ performance on micro-, meso-, and macro-levels, which are the subjective indexes of citizens’ quality of living (later supplemented by statistical data).

As identification of the personality’s self-actualization is tied to his/her personal opinion on the needs satisfaction level, the survey on this issue becomes a single technology to determine QLC index. This index to a certain extent is made objective via lowering the emotional background by making the respondents identify the reasons to their dissatisfaction.

In terms of this, the second step in forming the NAC (and, at the same time, ensuring the public administration comes out of a systemic crisis) should be legislation of a unique social technology for surveys to be conducted among residents of villages, settlements and cities at referendums. Specifically these regular annual surveys will provide data on dynamics of QLC index growth or decrease, this index being descriptive for the authorities’ performance in a given period.

This social technology of identifying ultimate results of government agencies’ performance is unique due to totality of features that require legislative support. Firstly, it is a unique survey tool, a specific questionnaire that gives information to evaluate authorities’ performance and at the same time to plan their activity for the long term. At this, subjective information received from people is made objective due to lowering the emotional background manifested at the time of responding.

Secondly, the survey is voluntarily participated by the citizens and transparently conducted, envisaging coverage of the assessment results and the process of forming items of plans for social and economic development of localities (considering local budgets possibilities) in the local media.

Thirdly, it is about the guiding role of deputies of local councils in conducting surveys among residents of villages, settlements and cities, as well as in analyzing the results and forming items of appropriate plans for social and economic development of localities.

Forth, it is the communication of a flow of integrated (from an individual personality to their totality) information from the bottom to the top in order to obtain the QLC index for villages, settlements, cities, rayons (districts), oblasts (regions), and the country in general for evaluating government agencies’ performance on micro-, meso-, and macro-levels correspondingly.

Notably, there are chances to start a new stage of the historic process in shaping a New Ukraine on the global map, with its own “face” of democracy. The main thing is to have the political will to follow the New Administrative Course focused on the needs and interests of the majority of its citizens.

Afterword

The legislative support of the new human-centric administrative course of Ukraine is dictated by the necessity to make a principal choice of the vector of development of the state, which now practices the trial and error method in its development. And it is not the choice between the European and Customs unions. The issue is deeper. The mentality of our people, most of whom have never become full citizens of their country but are manipulation objects for politicians and “cogs” in the imperfect public administration system, should undergo certain changes.

Today is the time to choose the strategic vector of country’s development: either we keep on with the traditional path until unitary Ukraine is totally self-destructed, or we get our own regeneration way. That is, to go the way of raising self-actualization of our citizens, revival of their enthusiasm, expansion of social capital on the grounds of national unity around human-centric ideology, which should be led by the modernized public administration system.

But how to start this process? For example, scientists can develop, make public, and support the “New Administrative Course” through appropriate interpretation and training [8]. But who can give the impetus for such a progress? Journalists or politicians? Whether or no, these should be strategically-minded patriots,
considering that the proposed New Administrative Course of Ukraine” not only gives the opportunity to actually make the authorities face the people, but it also can become the technology for consolidation of society and national reconciliation in this not an easy historical period for the country.

You are welcome to collaborate with the “Association of Strategically-Minded Patriots of Ukraine”, you are welcome to write to dmytrenkoha@gmail.com.

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