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AXIOLOGICAL FUNDAMENTALS OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION: VALUES, ETHICS, PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES FOR UKRAINE

Public sector management is not merely a technical or bureaucratic function but a value-oriented practice that reflects societal expectations and norms. Axiology, as the philosophical study of values, plays a key role in shaping public administration by influencing decision-making, policy development, and institutional functioning.

A combination of methods and approaches was employed: literature review; comparative analysis of axiological principles; normative and legal analysis; systematic approach in identifying interconnections between values, governance principles, and decision-making; prognostic methods for the future development of axiological principles in Ukraine's public service and administration, especially in the context of post-war recovery and European integration.

The analysis of scientific literature indicates the importance of axiological foundations in public administration. Integrity, ethics, justice, civic participation and the rule of law are key elements that ensure effective and accountable governance.

The article examines contemporary challenges for the axiology of public service and administration in Ukraine, including post-war recovery, anti-corruption efforts, decentralization, and the integration of European governance standards. In countries striving for European integration, the European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour plays an important role in ensuring adherence to the principles of transparency, accountability, impartiality, and efficiency. This article substantiates the main axiological determinants of public administration, which are divided into three groups: ethical and moral values, democratic and governance principles, and operational and managerial values. It is noted that Ukraine inherited a bureaucratic and centralized governance model from the Soviet system; however, since the 1990s, it has been implementing reforms aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability, and public participation.

The paper outlines promising directions related to the axiology of public service and administration, such as the development of ethical leadership, the expansion of public participation in policy formation, and the implementation of digital technologies to improve the efficiency of public administration.

Keywords: public administration, axiology, ethical values, democratic principles, transparency, accountability, integrity, decentralization, European integration, public participation, digital governance, reforms, efficiency, innovation, post-war recovery.

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АКСІОЛОГІЧНІ ОСНОВИ ПУБЛІЧНОЇ СЛУЖБИ ТА УПРАВЛІННЯ: ЦІННОСТІ, ЕТИКА, ПРИНЦИПИ ВРЯДУВАННЯ ТА ПРОЦЕСИ УХВАЛЕННЯ РІШЕНЬ ДЛЯ УКРАЇНИ

Управління в публічному секторі є не лише технічною чи бюрократичною функцією, а й ціннісно-орієнтованою практикою, що відображає суспільні очікування та норми. Аксиологія, як філософське вчення про цінності, відіграє ключову роль у формуванні державного управління, впливаючи на ухвалення рішень, розробку політики та функціонування інституцій. У країнах, що прагнуть європейської інтеграції, важливу роль відіграє Європейський кодекс належної адміністративної поведінки, який забезпечує відповідність принципам прозорості, підзвітності, неупередженості та ефективності. У статті обґрунтовуються основні аксіологічні детермінанти публічного управління, що поділяються на три групи: етичні й моральні цінності, демократичні й управлінські принципи та операційні й управлінські цінності. Зазначається, що Україна успадкувала бюрократичну централізовану модель управління від радянської системи, однак із 1990-х років впроваджує реформи, спрямовані на посилення прозорості, підзвітності та громадської участі. Розглядаються сучасні виклики для аксіології публічної служби та управління в Україні, які охоплюють пост-воєнне відновлення, боротьбу з корупцією, децентралізацію та інтеграцію європейських стандартів управління. Визначаються перспективні напрями, пов'язані з аксіологією публічної служби та управління, такі, як-от розвиток етичного лідерства, розширення громадської участі у формуванні політики та впровадження цифрових технологій для підвищення ефективності державного управління.

Ключові слова: публічне управління, аксіологія, етичні цінності, демократичні принципи, прозорість, підзвітність, доброчесність, децентралізація, європейська інтеграція, громадська участь, цифрове врядування, реформи, ефективність, інновації, пост-воєнне відновлення.

General problem statement and its relevance to significant scientific and practical challenges. Axiology in public administration in Ukraine encompasses the study and application of values, ethics, and principles that underpin governance and decision-making processes. It serves as a fundamental framework for shaping policies, administrative practices, and public sector reforms, ensuring alignment with democratic ideals and societal needs.

The axiological foundations of public administration establish the value-based principles upon which governance systems operate. These principles, including justice, fairness, and transparency, guide the formulation and implementation of policies that prioritize the public interest over personal or political objectives. Ethical values such as integrity, accountability, and respect for

human rights play a pivotal role in fostering trust between citizens and state institutions, which is essential for societal stability, adherence to the rule of law, and active civic engagement.

Furthermore, axiological principles reinforce democratic governance by ensuring the responsible, equitable, and inclusive exercise of power. They serve as safeguards against authoritarian tendencies by promoting participatory decision-making and upholding fundamental rights and freedoms. Values such as professionalism, competence, and responsiveness contribute to the effectiveness of public administration, enhancing its capacity to address societal challenges. The integration of ethical standards also mitigates corruption, inefficiency, and bureaucratic inertia, thereby improving institutional performance.

In the context of globalization, adherence to shared values—such as human dignity, environmental sustainability, and good governance—facilitates international cooperation and alignment with global administrative frameworks. For Ukraine, which is undergoing a complex post-war recovery process, the institutionalization of axiological principles in public administration is particularly critical. The adoption of European public governance values not only strengthens democratic resilience and institutional effectiveness but also accelerates integration with international standards and best practices.

Review of recent studies and publications that have addressed this problem and form the basis of the author's work. The ethical values of public administration are widely studied by Johnston M., Somit A., Peterson S. and others. The axiological foundations of modern administration were examined by Frańczuk M., Kudlyk N, Oxley D. and others. Ganushchyn S. revealed axiological determinants of public administration and management in Ukraine. The analysis of scientific literature indicates the importance of axiological foundations in public administration. Integrity, ethics, justice, civic participation and the rule of law are key elements that ensure effective and accountable governance. The development of these principles is particularly relevant for Ukraine in the context of its democratic transformation and post-war reconstruction.

Formulation of the article's objectives (defining the tasks). The aim of this paper is to explore the axiological fundamentals of public administration by analyzing the role of values, ethics, and principles in governance and decision-making processes. It seeks to identify key ethical and value-based frameworks that enhance transparency, accountability, and public trust in governmental institutions.

Presentation of the main material of the research with a full substantiation of the obtained scientific results. Public administration is not merely a technical or bureaucratic function but a value-driven practice that reflects societal expectations and norms. It is founded upon fundamental values that guide its operations and legitimacy, particularly within the framework of public service.

Axiology, as the philosophical study of values, plays a critical role in shaping public administration. It influences decision-making, policy development, and institutional functioning by integrating ethical, moral, and cultural principles into governance structures. In the context of countries seeking European integration, a key role is played by the European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour, which operationalizes the principles enshrined in Article 41 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, namely, the right to good administration. This framework ensures that public institutions adhere to principles of transparency, accountability, impartiality, and efficiency, fostering trust between citizens and the state while aligning national governance practices with European standards [8]. This key document that sets out principles of fair and transparent administration for European institutions, ensures they act in the best interests of citizens. The principles of good administration are the bases for axiology, the study of values and ethics.

The core axiological determinants in public service and administration can be categorized into three key domains: ethical and moral values, democratic and governance values, and operational and managerial values.

Ethical and moral values form the foundation of public administration, ensuring that

governance is conducted with integrity and responsibility. Among these, integrity and honesty are paramount, as public servants must uphold ethical standards, act transparently, and avoid corruption or misconduct. The integrity of the public sector, often referred to as public integrity, denotes the responsible and ethical use of entrusted powers and resources, ensuring that they are utilized effectively, honestly, and solely for the public good [10].

Secondly, justice and fairness as policies should be developed and implemented equitably, ensuring inclusivity and protection of marginalized groups. Fairness, as Oxley D. claims, is processed both cognitively and affectively with self-interest motives attempting to constrain the impulsive emotional reaction to the violation of the social norm [11, p. 14]. Cory Jr. underlines, that fairness, is a result of a dynamic balance between the empathetic range, based upon affective feelings, and the egoistic range, based upon the self-interested, cognitive processing of the brain [7]. Thirdly, human dignity and respect as administrative decisions should prioritize human rights, well-being, and citizen participation. As Oxley D. insists public policy should emerge from heritable individual preferences. If a decision is made according to criteria common to many in society, then its perceived legitimacy is substantiated [11, p.21].

Democratic and governance values presupposes transparency and accountability. Openness of information means providing citizens with access to information about the activities of government bodies, decision-making, budget expenditures and other important aspects; accountability mechanisms refer to control and feedback tools that allow citizens to evaluate the activities of government institutions and influence their decisions as L.Grynevych claims [2]. Open decision-making processes and mechanisms for public oversight are essential for democratic governance [9]. Democratic values also include Rule of law and legality as public institutions must operate within legal frameworks to maintain legitimacy and public trust, besides, nowadays they are a defining feature of a modern social and legal state; the fundamental importance of the principle of the rule of law for the activities of public authorities and for the relevant field of scientific research [3]. Citizen participation and responsiveness are also included into this block of values as governments must consider public interests and feedback in policy implementation. The positive aspect of the concept of participatory democracy is that it ensures a high level of legitimacy for decisions made by citizens together with the authorities. The legitimacy of such a decision becomes the result of a general discussion formed on the basis of rational discourse, and not the embodiment of a previously formed universal will, which is represented by a small, powerful part of society [4, p. 34].

Operational and managerial values in public administration encompass several fundamental principles that ensure the effective functioning of institutions while fostering trust and accountability.

Public administration must optimize resources to achieve maximum impact with minimal waste. This involves streamlining processes, reducing redundancies, and ensuring that public services are delivered in a timely and cost-effective manner. Effective governance also requires performance measurement, evidence-based decision-making, and continuous evaluation to enhance service quality.

Public institutions should be flexible and responsive to change, incorporating new technologies, governance models, and management practices to meet evolving societal needs. Digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and data-driven policymaking play a crucial role in modern governance, allowing for improved decision-making, transparency, and citizen engagement. Adaptability also ensures resilience in times of crisis, such as economic downturns, health emergencies, or geopolitical challenges.

Civil servants should be highly skilled, knowledgeable, and committed to continuous professional development. Professionalism in public administration is reflected in competence, ethical behavior, and integrity, ensuring that public officials serve the common good rather than personal interests. Honesty and integrity form the foundation of trust between administrative service

providers and citizens. Ethical conduct, transparency, and open communication ensure that public institutions remain credible and legitimate. Honest communication enables citizens and stakeholders to make informed decisions and actively participate in governance. Then, public officials must take full responsibility for their actions and decisions. This includes being answerable to oversight bodies, the public, and ethical standards. Mechanisms such as audits, performance evaluations, and citizen feedback loops enhance accountability, leading to corrections of mistakes and overall improvements in managerial and administrative practices. In addition, respect in public administration is important as it involves honoring the autonomy, dignity, and rights of every citizen. It also extends to professional relationships within institutions, fostering collaboration, inclusivity, and effective teamwork. A respectful work environment enhances morale, productivity, and overall service quality. Besides, the field of public administration is constantly evolving due to advancements in technology, changes in governance models, and new research in public management. To remain effective, civil servants must engage in lifelong learning, attending professional development programs, policy training, and academic collaborations to stay informed about best practices.

Additionally, public administration should uphold citizen-centric governance, ensuring that all policies and decisions prioritize public welfare, inclusivity, and social equity. This requires proactive engagement with diverse communities, incorporating participatory decision-making processes, and fostering a culture of co-creation between government institutions and the public.

By embedding these values into governance frameworks, public administration can enhance service delivery, strengthen public trust, and contribute to sustainable and democratic development.

The mentioned values underline the role of axiology in public administration theories among which are traditional public administration (Weberian model) which emphasizes bureaucratic neutrality, rule-based governance, and hierarchy and promotes such values as efficiency, order, and strict adherence to legal frameworks; New Public Management (NPM) which prioritizes market-based principles, performance measurement, and privatization and such values as cost-effectiveness, competition, and customer-oriented service delivery; New Public Governance (NPG) which focuses on collaborative governance, multi-stakeholder engagement, and decentralization and such values as participation, inclusivity, and network-based decision-making.

Within the framework of the classical theory of axiological comprehension, as S.Ganushchin considers [1, p. 170] administrative-state governance appears as a top-down regulated hierarchical organization of a linear-functional type, with clearly defined functions for each official category. At the next stage, various motivational models have been developed and are used in the theory and practice of administrative-state governance. The third stage in the formation and development of the theory of axiological comprehension of administrative governance dates back to the second half of the 20th century and, de facto, continues to this day. A post-Soviet axiological model of governance emerged, combining two negative contexts: the overtly bureaucratic Soviet model adapted to new social realities supplemented by corrupt elements [1, p. 171]. Nowadays there is also a dynamic shift in the value-based justification of modern management and administration styles. While in the previous century, officials actively avoided risky actions, resisted change, and feared making mistakes due to administrative penalties, the new century and millennium highlight the necessity, in certain situations, to accept risk and interpret protocol norms more flexibly.

Ukraine inherited a bureaucratic and centralized governance model from the Soviet era, characterized by hierarchical structures, rigid administrative procedures, and limited public participation. This model emphasized formalism and procedural compliance rather than democratic values. Since the 1990s, Ukraine has been transitioning toward European governance standards, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and citizen participation.

Regarding axiology in the context of Ukraine's public administration the spectrum of challenges can be defined. First, post-war recovery and ethics of public administration ensuring fair reconstruction, transparency in resource allocation and citizen trust. With ongoing reforms, there is

a strong emphasis on open government initiatives, public access to information, and mechanisms to hold officials accountable. Ukraine's public administration is increasingly shaped by European democratic principles, ensuring that governance is based on legal norms, human rights, and citizen participation.

Then, decentralization oriented towards strengthening local institutions with democratic and community-based values. A major reform since 2014, decentralization aims to empower local governments, increase efficiency, and align governance with local needs.

Besides, corruption and bureaucratic resistance addressing value conflicts within the administration to promote integrity. Ukraine has made anti-corruption efforts a central part of its governance reforms, with institutions like the National Agency on Corruption Prevention (NACP) enforcing ethical standards. That is why the axiological characteristics, Kudlyk N. claims, must be integrated into the context of modern high standards of public governance and administration. A state that has achieved these standards can be referred to as a modern or advanced state [5, p.182].

For Ukraine new opportunities are opened with introduction of European integration as country's pursuit of EU membership has led to the adoption of best governance practices, including public service professionalization and merit-based recruitment and with democratic values aligning governance principles with EU best practices; smart technologies and value-driven public services using digital tools to enhance transparency and efficiency as the introduction of e-government platforms (e.g., Diia) reflects a shift toward efficiency, accessibility, and public service innovation; with social equity and inclusion ensuring policies benefit all societal groups, especially war-affected communities.

In this context the future directions for Ukraine are defined within strengthening axiology in public administration which is revealed in ethical leadership development connected with training civil servants in value-driven governance. In the Order of the National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service Affairs (July 30, 2024, No. 111-24) among Priority Areas (Topics) for the Professional Development of Civil Servants in 2025 are anti-corruption topics (integrity, corruption prevention, standards of ethical and integrity-based behavior) [6]. Such axiological aspect as civic engagement and participatory decision-making targeted towards expanding citizen influence in policy formation is also important axiological direction together with international cooperation for value-based governance meaning learning from best European governance models while preserving national identity.

The conclusions drawn from this research and the potential for future investigations in this field. Axiological transformation presupposes a number of challenges connected with corruption and bureaucratic resistance, because corruption requires continuous value-based reforms in governance. Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022 has shifted governance priorities toward resilience, security, and emergency management, influencing axiological approaches to governance. The shift from rigid administrative traditions to flexible, innovative governance is ongoing, requiring cultural and institutional change. To overcome these challenges, the system of public administration needs to provide such important steps as strengthening value-based policymaking in line with EU and international standards; enhancing ethical leadership and decision-making in public service; expanding public participation and trust in governance through digital and participatory mechanisms.

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