

---

## 17) MERITOCRATIC FUNDAMENTALS OF PERSONNEL POLICY IN THE PUBLIC GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

Tetyana Arbuzova

Bila Tserkva National Agrarian University, Bila Tserkva, Ukraine, Email: tv\_arbuzova@ukr.net

### Abstract

The approaches to understanding the essence of meritocracy in the system of forming the administrative elite have been analyzed in the article. It has been found out that the meritocratic principle is to choose intelligent, talented, charismatic, communicative persons, endowed with managerial abilities, as well as responsibility, impartiality, honesty, own personal core. It is found that the term has a number of meanings, in particular, the principle of political governance, the mechanism of selection and appointment of the administrative and political elite. Meritocracy is based on free competition, impartiality and objectivity as opposed to power inheritance, social and cultural preferences, personal acquaintances and more. It is the equality of opportunity for citizens that underlies the social lift.

It is revealed that the basic elements of the meritocratic principle of the implementation of personnel policy are the competitive principles of entry into public service; personal abilities, knowledge, ability are the criteria for evaluation of applicants; non-discrimination against all public servants; equal pay for equal work; encouragement for effective performance; the search for talent, care and creation of favorable conditions for the people selected for power.

The world and Ukrainian experience of formation of managerial personnel on the principles of meritocracy was investigated, its advantages and disadvantages were revealed. Positives include the possibility of a fair distribution of political values beyond heredity, ties, social status; any competent and highly conscious person can claim a politically important position; hierarchy of career ladder promotion; the disjointed rulers contribute to the prosperity of the country and civilization. Criticism of meritocracy is based on the inability to apply universal means of determining merit to society and measures of human capacity; priority of intelligence and secondary values of human values (kindness, compassion, etc.).

In our opinion, the meritocratic principle must be fundamental in the formation of the national management elite through the system of examinations formed, testing on the basis of impartial, objective, comprehensive evaluation. It is proved that an integral part of the general problem of overcoming corruption, creation of the Ukrainian democratic statehood, based on effective and authoritative public authority in the society, is the identification of sources of formation of public service personnel according to the principles of meritocracy.

**Keywords:** meritocracy, governing elite, public administration, public service, personnel policy

### Introduction

The formation of the managerial elite, professional, patriotic, highly moral, creative and authoritative staff of the public administration system may obviously play an important role in ensuring effective socio-economic transformations, which Ukrainian society has been hoping for almost three decades. The meritocratic approach to this problem is one of the effective ways of implementing national personnel policy and forming an effective state apparatus.

### Material and Methods

The study aims to examine the application of the meritocratic principle in forming and implementing personnel policy in the public administration system. The study investigates this issue by using general scientific and special methods of economic research such as abstract-logical, generalization and comparison, selective, structural-functional. The information base was provided by legislative and regulatory

documents of Ukraine and international organizations, works of leading Ukrainian and foreign scientists, information publications, Internet resources.

## Results and Discussion

The meritocratic principle is to select intellectual, educated, talented, charismatic, communicative, experienced persons with managerial abilities, as well as responsibility, impartiality, honest and a backbone. This term has a number of meanings, in particular, the principle of political governance, the mechanism of selection and appointment of managerial and political elite. Meritocracy is based on free competition, prejudice and nonpartisanship as opposed to inherited power, social and cultural advantages, personal acquaintances and so forth. This is equality of opportunity for citizens, which is the basis of their social elevator.

The main elements of the meritocratic principle of personnel policy implementation are competitive principles of public service entry; personal abilities, knowledge and skills are criteria for assessing applicants; non-discrimination against all public servants; equal pay for equal work; incentives for effective performance; talent search, care and creation of favourable conditions for people in power.

Meritocracy is not a perfect mechanism for selecting personnel for the public sector, and has both benefits and drawbacks. Among the advantages of meritocracy, it should be noted the possibility of equitable distribution of political values beyond inheritance, ties, social status; every competent and highly conscious person can apply for a politically significant position; hierarchical career advancement; distinguished managers contribute to the prosperity of the country and civilization. Criticism of meritocracy is based on the inability to apply universal methods of determining public merit and measures of human abilities; priority of intelligence and secondary universal values (kindness, sympathy, etc.); differentiation of society and the inaccessibility of high-quality and prestigious higher education abroad for ordinary citizens; inability to influence the chosen course from the lower class, absence of checks and counteractions.

Suffice it to say that Ukrainian and international documents on improving public administration are meritocratic. The Law of Ukraine on Civil Service among the principles on which it is based, defines the provision of equal access to civil service, as the prohibition of all forms and manifestations of discrimination, the absence of unreasonable restrictions or the provision of unreasonable advantages to certain categories of citizens when entering and completing the civil service indicates the competitive principles of civil service employment (The Law of Ukraine, 2015). The checklist on the content of legislation from the civil service of the Program of support for changes in Governance and Management of SIGMA, which has been cooperating with Ukraine since 2013, figuring out the way to entering civil service, suggests the answer to the question: does the Act require the implementation of selection for the civil service by open competition among those who meet qualification requirements? If a career-based system is adopted, does the Act require some form of open examination for entry to the civil service? If competition is not required, is it clear how selection will be made, and by whom, in ways that excludes patronage or nepotism, partiality and prejudice? (SIGMA Papers No. 5, 1996)

Introducing competition in the personnel selection for all positions of the civil service, especially for positions of the senior corps, using the procedure for assessing the performance of civil servants are an attempt to implement the equal access principle. However, the processes of reforming the civil service has not give rise to an optimistic perception by Ukrainian society. According to the Shadow Report on "Civil Service and Public Administration Reform in Ukraine in 2017" by the "Agency of Legislative Initiatives", the majority of respondents believe that the Law of Ukraine "On Civil Service" (2016) has not made it easier to get into the civil service, only a tenth of respondents are convinced of the opposite, and 47% found it difficult to answer this question. According to the vast majority of respondents, bureaucracy, formalism and corruption are the main problems of the civil service. At the same time, 48% of respondents point to such negative features of the civil service work as irresponsibility and 47% - to low staff efficiency. Young people consider low level of renewal and innovation (50%) to be problems of civil service, while experienced workers consider formalism and bureaucracy (79%) (Agency For Legislative Initiatives Under The USAID Program, 2017). Thus, the difficulty of holding civil service positions, lack of initiative and inefficiency give us grounds to summarize that there is no real meritocracy in forming and functioning the Ukrainian civil service.

For a long time, the priority of the meritocratic principle in the process of forming the managerial elite is inherent in many countries of the world economy, in particular, the USA, Japan, Great Britain, France, China, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Kazakhstan, Georgia. The successes of public administration in

these countries proved unquestionable and demonstrated a high level of perception among citizens of these countries. For example, in Kazakhstan, official websites of public authorities note that meritocracy is the main principle of selection for civil service (Department of Justice of the Kostanay region). Ukraine has also attempted to resort to meritocratic methods of forming managerial elite. However, the invitation to hold public office from successful foreign “technocrats” in 2014-2016, the so-called special forces for reform, did not make a significant difference in the industries they patronized – the economy, finance, health care, internal affairs, regional development, etc. It seems that the reason for this is insufficient knowledge of local conditions “from the inside”. Thus, S. Taylor’s reasoning that local organizational standards of selection can be based on the definition of deviance and conformity which more correspond to the current convenience of management than social justice (Taylor, 2006) indicate the relevance of taking into account the applicant’s knowledge about the specificity of the object of management impact, not just the process technology when selecting personnel.

Another reason for discrediting the principle of meritocracy in Ukraine was the appointment to civil positions of educated, intellectual, ambitious, creative professionals, graduates of prestigious foreign educational institutions, but too young, without life and professional experience. Such the public-authorities decisions are perceived by society as reckless, the attitude to them is sceptical, which does not enhance trust. Knowledge inheritance, experience and skills play an important role in ensuring effectiveness of public administration. Entering the civil service should include the mandatory holding of basic posts, and career advancement should be based on a competent approach.

### Conclusions and Outlook

An integral part of the general problem of overcoming corruption and creating Ukrainian democratic statehood, based on effective and authoritative public authority in society, is to identify sources of forming civil service personnel on the basis of meritocracy. In our opinion, meritocratic principle should be the main principle in forming the national management elite through the existing system of competitive selection by examining and testing based on unprejudiced, nonpartisan, comprehensive assessment of knowledge, performance and personnel motivation. Knowing advantages and weaknesses of the investigated principle will allow managers to operate skilfully. We consider it the most acceptable in the case of personnel selection for public administration, recognizing the fact that in real practice there are also other methods of selection (nepotism, favouritism, cronyism, localism, clanship, etc.), which also have their strengths, but limit the competitiveness of civil service positions, that contradicts the market principles of economic organization. The effectiveness of applying meritocratic principles directly depends on the success of the anti-corruption policy implementation of the country.

### References

Pro derzhavnu sluzhbu: Zakon Ukrainy vid 10.12.2015 r. № 889-VIII [On Civil Service: The Law of Ukraine dated 10.12.2015]. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/889-19/print> (accessed: 25.10.2019)

Civil Service Legislation Contents Checklist. SIGMA Papers No. 5 Organisation for economic co-operation and development. Paris, 1996. 15 p. URL: [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/civil-service-legislation-content-checklist\\_5kml6g9vtkxw-en#page15](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/civil-service-legislation-content-checklist_5kml6g9vtkxw-en#page15)

Shadow report: Reforma derzhavnoi sluzhby Ukrainy: realizatsiia profilnoho zakonu 2016-2017. HO «Laboratoriia zakonodavchykh initsiyatyv» u ramkakh Prohramy USAID. KYIV [Shadow report: Civil Service Reform in Ukraine: Specialised Law Implementation in 2016-2017. AGENCY FOR LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES under the USAID program. Kyiv.]. 2017. 39 c. URL: [https://parlament.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/SHADOW\\_report\\_ALI.pdf](https://parlament.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/SHADOW_report_ALI.pdf).

Meritokratiya – glavnyj princip otbora na gosudarstvennyu sluzhbu. Departament justicii Kostanajskoj oblasti [Meritocracy is the main principle of selection for public service. Department of Justice of the

Kostanay region]. URL: <http://www.kst.adilet.gov.kz/ru/articles-inner/meritokratiya-glavnyy-princip-otbora-na-gosudarstvennyu-službu>

Taylor, S. 2006. Acquaintance, meritocracy and critical realism: Researching recruitment and selection processes in smaller and growth organizations. *Human Resource Management Review* 16, 478–489. URL: [https://bazresi.nipc.ir/uploads/jazb\\_va\\_estekhdam\\_116234.pdf](https://bazresi.nipc.ir/uploads/jazb_va_estekhdam_116234.pdf)

**MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE  
FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS**

