

## Public administration in modern Russia: ecological consequences of the digitalization

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The article is devoted to research of conceptual models of public administration for modern Russia, definition of its features in the conditions of digitalization. The conditions and existing results of reforming the system of Russian public administration, modern concepts of modernization of public administration and their priorities in the Russian legal system, existing socio-economic, political and other challenges are analyzed. The analysis of sources of foreign and Russian literature, the ongoing transformations in the Russian public administration system illustrate the inevitability of modernization of classical postulates of public administration in Russia towards democratization. It is noted that taking into account the peculiarities of the notion of "public administration" as a legal category, scientific theories about the service model of the state actively developed by foreign and Russian researchers in the field of public administration are not acceptable for the Russian Federation. Attention is drawn to the fact that the fundamental constitutional principles, global challenges of our time and others make it necessary for Russia to have a "strong" state, the key goal of which is to ensure individual rights and freedoms. Accordingly, it is necessary to strengthen further development of the scientific constitutional and legal direction in the area under consideration.

**Keywords:** executive authorities; reform of public administration; "service" state; "strong" state; public services.

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### Introduction

In the Russian Federation, in accordance with the fundamental constitutional principles of the priority of human rights and freedoms as the supreme value, a democratic federal legal social state, the processes of improving the system of public administration are carried out. The beginning of fundamental reforms is considered to be the results of administrative reform, at various stages of which the relevant goals and objectives were implemented. Key among them are the reform of the system and structure of federal bodies of executive power, establishment and development of public service, improvement of professionalism and competence of civil servants. The President of the Russian Federation has defined a new vector of modernization of the Russian state administration aimed at creating an efficient system of provision of state and municipal services to the population by public authorities (Presidential Decree, 2012). Information and communication technologies are actively penetrating into the mechanisms of interaction between public authorities and individuals and legal entities, and are becoming an indispensable tool in interdepartmental government interaction. We can say that the ongoing transformations in the Russian public administration system are typical of all advanced foreign countries. Accordingly, a new scientific view of the concept of modern public administration and its peculiarities in the Russian context is needed. At the same time, the search for a conceptual model of public administration in modern Russia also includes adaptation of foreign experience in the application of scientific theories and concepts of public administration.

Purpose and objectives of the research. The purpose of the research is to consider the public administration as a social and legal category, to study the modern theories and concepts of classical and modern public administration; to develop proposals for a conceptual model of modern public administration, and to consider the ecological consequences of digitalization.

### Materials and methods

The subject of the conducted research comprised the fundamental provisions of the Constitution of the Russian Federation (Constitution, 2014), regulatory legal acts adopted on their basis in connection with the implementation of public administration, generally accepted concepts of improvement of public administration, which have been adapted in the conditions of modernization of public administration in developed foreign countries, scientific judgments and positions of Russian and foreign scientists in the mentioned sphere. The methodological basis of the research was general and private scientific methods of public administration studies. To achieve the goal of this research, such frequently used scientific methods as historical, comparative, formal and legal, regulatory, logical, systematic, structural and functional methods in their various combinations were used.

## Results and discussion

In Russian jurisprudence, public administration is generally regarded as the activity of government agencies, mainly executive agencies, to implement management ideas embodied in regulatory legal acts (Kanunnikova, 2012; Pisarevskiy, 2013; Popov et al., 2010; Starilov, 2012). The classical bureaucratic system of state administration established by well-known thinkers M. Weber (1973) and V. Wilson (1987) is becoming ineffective under modern conditions all over the world. Such a system of management is characterized by strict hierarchical subordination of state bodies; strict distribution of functions among them within a single power level. Correspondingly, absolute regulation of activity of management subjects in accordance with norms of law is associated with management of modern social and economic processes "...with non-achievement of the goal and (or) overestimated expenses for their achievement, make application of other management methods and models necessary" (Miroshnikov, 2018). Transformations of the public administration system (administrative reform, civil service reform, e-government, etc.), which are undergoing in the last decades in the Russian Federation, also testify to the change of the classical paradigm of public administration and application of the concept of new public administration (New Public Management). Famous representatives of the mentioned concept D. Osborne and T. Gaebler define the key objective of the new public administration as ensuring efficiency of the public administration process in all its forms: economic, social and organizational (Osborne, Gaebler, 1992). Under these conditions, the role of the individual in interacting with public administration bodies is changing. A citizen becomes a client, and the state becomes a service organization hired by the people to provide public services to individuals and legal entities. Russian researchers in the field of management, analyzing the system of modern public administration of Russia, designate as well as their foreign colleagues the emerging innovative processes in public administration as a "service" model of the state (Kozhenko, Mamychev, 2010; Martynova, 2011; Styrin, 2006) or the model of a new administration as a service of guaranteed service (Dubrovin, 2009). According to scientists, a "service state" has a developed civil society, and the state must create conditions for personal self-realization, provide services that meet the needs of the population. Citizens, not the state, have an influence on the quantity and content of public services, and state bodies should change their activities to meet emerging needs of the population (Kozhenko, Mamychev, 2010). The practice of functioning of the institute of public services is given as a positive example, for example, in Great Britain; new services are introduced taking into account the interests of different social groups, not the state bodies (Savranskaya, Sivasheva, 2010). It seems that the Russian Federation is closer to a somewhat different model of new public administration, which has been formed, for example, in Germany. The well-known German administrative activist Ernst Forsthoff noted that public administration is implemented in public and private legal forms, and the subject of public administration depending on various circumstances (Forsthoff, 1959) makes the choice of a particular form. Such model of public service provision is based on the use of the meaning and content of the very notion of "public administration". Public administration as a negative phenomenon (jurisdictional activity) presupposes the activity of state authorities related to the application of measures of public power coercion: interference and restrictions (Eingriffsverwaltung); while provision of public services to the population is public administration characterized as a positive phenomenon (Leistungsverwaltung) (Forsthoff, 1959). In this regard, G. Guglielmi (2020) also considers modern public administration as a jurisdictional and positive activity, the latter acting as a kind of public service delivery; he notes that the state and its bodies use these two main ways to ensure social balance in society. The first one is the publication of legal acts aimed at regulating public relations through the establishment of mandatory rules of conduct guaranteed by the state and ensured by it in case of non-compliance with them with public enforcement.

The second way for public authorities to provide a social optimum, according to the researcher, is to provide certain services aimed at meeting public collective needs (Guglielmi, 2020). It can be said that a similar legal mechanism is also applied in the exercise of public administration by the executive authorities in Russia - the activity of establishing various types of interventions and restrictions is carried out through the functions of a public authority; and the exercise of public administration authority to provide public services is a positive activity. For example, the federal control of ensuring the protection of state secrets is carried out within the framework of the corresponding function of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (Order, 2015), while the licensing of activities on development, production, sale and acquisition for the purpose of sale of special technical means intended for tacit receipt of information is a state service (Order, 2013). The above mentioned example clearly demonstrates that each public administration body provides, at the request of a citizen (client), public services within the limits of its powers and in accordance with approved administrative regulations; at the same time, it performs functions of control and supervision over subordinate subjects of public administration (individuals and legal entities) without their will. Thus, the modern Russian state cannot be characterized as a "service" state in which the state administration is limited only to the activity of providing public services to the population. The impossibility of turning any modern state into a service organization is also justified by the theory of a "strong state" based on the paradigm of a rule-of-law state established in its time by I. Kant and G.V.F. Hegel, of which Francis Fukuyama, an American researcher, is a well-known representative. In Fukuyama's opinion, in modern conditions (global environmental problems, threat of terrorism, etc.) there are inevitable tendencies for the etatization of public life and the expansion of the state's powers; the main value is considered to be public order, the guarantor of which is "strong state and public institutions and a wide sphere of state influence" (Fukuyama, 2004). It seems that taking into account historical, socio-economic, geopolitical and other features of the formation and development of statehood in the Russian Federation, as well as in connection with the insufficiently developed civil society, the leading vector of social development should be the state itself, not society. At the same time, the goal of the modern Russian state is to ensure the rights and freedoms of man and citizen. It is necessary to note that all researchers, adherents of this or that concept of public administration, assert, in particular, that the modern public administration is aimed at "... a qualitative component in the implementation of interaction with citizens..." (Gaidar Forum, 2019), on their systematic interaction "... in order to reach an agreement on the state and political issue of interest to them..." (ibidem). The above mentioned is also the leitmotif of the

scientific concept called the model of "Public value management", which is successfully developing in Russian and foreign science (Petrov et al., 2019). Improvement of Russia's public management system within the framework of the concept of new public management is associated, first, with the creation of a public management system capable of achieving socially significant measurable goals. In modern conditions, public administration is not only an organized effective system and structure of executive bodies as key subjects of public administration, but also a system that functions in close cooperation with civil society structures. In terms of institutional positions, this approach demonstrates the priority of democratic values, combining the interests of the state, business and the population. New institutional opportunities and approaches to the organization of modern Russian public administration are conditioned, in particular, by the wide spread of information and telecommunication technologies and the creation of an information and communication environment. We are talking about the digitalization of public administration, i.e. the transformation of the state into an advanced IT-corporation.

The President of the Russian Federation in his Message to the Federal Assembly in March 2018 defined comprehensive digitalization as the most important condition for Russia's development (Message, 2019); digitalization is becoming one of the national development priorities (Gaidar Forum, 2019). The main proposals for the digitalization of public administration relate to the conversion of all public services into digital form, the creation of a new ecosystem of digital public services, the organization of a unified identification system and a system of "digital twin" of an individual, as well as "... man-dependent legally significant decisions..." (Rotberg, 2014), i.e. created by means of artificial intelligence.

## Conclusions

In the Russian Federation, as in other developed countries, a modernized model that incorporates the postulates of scientific concepts of new public administration (New Public Management) replaces the classical bureaucratic model of public administration, which is ineffective under modern conditions. Russia's belonging to the Romano-Germanic legal family, whose main source of law is a legal act, determines the understanding of public administration as the activity of state bodies in providing public services to the population and jurisdictional activities related to the application of measures of state and power coercion. Given these circumstances, various concepts of the "service" model of the state are unacceptable to the Russian Federation.

The fundamental constitutional principles and other constitutional prescriptions lay down democratic priorities in the system of modern Russian state management in the interaction of the state, business and population, which are aimed at forming socially significant goals. At the same time, the state is the main vector of inevitable modernization in the system of Russian state management. In this connection, the models of "strong state" and "public value management" are attractive for Russia. Institutional changes in Russia's modern public administration system are largely determined by the processes of its further digitalization. Accordingly, further development of the scientific constitutional-legal direction in terms of the concept and peculiarities of modern public administration, its essence, content, subjects, forms and implementation of the main goal - to ensure the rights and freedoms of the individual - is considered necessary.

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