

Theoretical Approaches to The Formation of The Political Image of The Civil Service in Foreign Countries and Uzbekistan

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a theoretical examination of the concept of the political image of the civil service, the stages of its development, and its importance in society. Based on the experiences of European countries (United Kingdom, Germany, France) and Eastern nations (Turkey, Japan, Singapore), it analyzes approaches to personnel policy and public relations. The article also explores the reforms implemented in Uzbekistan's civil service, the stages of political image formation, and theoretical approaches to increasing the attractiveness of public service careers.

Keywords: - Image, political image, image formation, attractiveness, personnel policy, international experience, public relations, public service, civil service, political image of the civil service.

INTRODUCTION

Uzbekistan is undergoing a period of profound reforms, modernization, and rapid development. Today, the country is experiencing deep transformation, technological advancement, and dynamic socio-cultural change. In this context, the main task of state policy — alongside serving the general well-being — is to preserve national unity, freedom, and equality, while strengthening harmony and peace within society.

The civil service, as an integral part of the social structure, holds particular importance due to its responsibility to overcome unique challenges and act as the primary executor of state policy. Its areas of activity, organizational structure, operating principles, constant adaptability, and capacity to effectively and efficiently respond to public expectations all contribute to elevating the political significance of this sector. These aspects are also reflected in the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 788, adopted on August 8, 2022.

According to this legal document, the civil service is regarded as an essential safeguard in addressing numerous complex issues emerging in society and is tasked with responding to “the constantly evolving demands of citizens.” In this way, the civil service is recognized not only as a fundamental pillar of the state, but also as a decisive institution that ensures stability and progress within society. The political image of the civil service is one of the key structural factors that ensures consistency across various spheres of public life, the stability of the system of power, and the implementation of public administration in a pre-planned manner. Studying the issue of image in the field of public administration primarily requires analyzing the image of state bodies, civil servants, or officials as a complex and multifaceted process. This image is formed in the minds of the public or citizens who utilize public services and has a significant impact on their trust in and attitude toward the state. The concept of image is not limited to visual

appearance alone. It also includes the image of activity as shaped in public consciousness. In this context, the terms “image” or “perception” are used in a broad sense — they encompass the organization’s representation in the public imagination, its moral character, professional performance, and the overall way it is accepted within society.

I. FORMATION OF THE CONCEPT OF THE POLITICAL IMAGE OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND CIVIL SERVICE

1.1. Initial Theoretical Approaches to the Political Image of Public Service

Public service, which is essential for maintaining stability and systematic continuity in the life of society, appears not only in terms of its content and essence but also as a fundamental condition for the existence of the state and the formation of its administrative structure. In other words, public service is not merely practical activity but also represents a specific structural and social foundation of the state. It is worth noting that our homeland is one of the earliest places where theoretical approaches to public service and public servants, as well as people-oriented practical experiences, were initially formed and developed. According to historians, the Avesta contains terms that describe the governance of the state and society, indicating a clearly regulated social structure. Sources note that society was divided into four main groups: priests and warriors, who played a significant role in public service; craftsmen and artisans; farmers and herders; nobles and merchants. The texts of the Avesta emphasize the role of these four groups in social life and their importance in ensuring social stability and progress. This structure was connected not only to economic and occupational differences but also to public administration, moral leadership, and the ethical values of society [1].

Eastern thinkers such as Abu Nasr al-Farabi, Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, Ibn Sina, Yusuf Khos Khajib, Nizam al-Mulk, Unsur al-Ma'ali Kaykavus, Amir Timur, Jalal al-Din al-Dawani, Alisher Navoi, Husayn Vaiz Kashifi, Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, and Samandar Termizi extensively studied the early concepts related to public service. In particular, the great Eastern philosopher Abu Nasr al-Farabi considered a number of criteria that

define the image and essence of a public servant to be essential. These criteria in Farabi’s doctrine are important not only as personal virtues but also as values that shape the political image of public service.

According to Farabi, a servant (the ruler of the virtuous city) must naturally possess twelve traits or virtues. First, he must be physically healthy and capable of performing his duties freely. Second, he should be intelligent and quick to comprehend speech and situations. Third, he must have a strong memory and not forget what he sees or hears. Fourth, he should be sharp-minded and insightful. Fifth, he must be able to express his thoughts and ideas clearly. Sixth, he should be eager for knowledge and never tire of studying. Seventh, he must know how to control his desires and avoid indulgence. Eighth, he must be truthful and just, with a strong aversion to lies. Ninth, he should be honorable and strive toward noble goals. Tenth, he must not be attached to wealth or pursue material gain. Eleventh, he must be inherently just, detesting oppression and tyrants, and be a promoter of justice. Twelfth, he should be resolute, persistent, courageous, and brave in implementing necessary measures, never allowing fear or hesitation to deter him [2, pp. 159–160].

Yusuf Khos Khajib, in his “Qutadghu Bilig”, outlines the moral and ethical foundations of public administration. According to him, any leader within the state — be it a king, vizier, or official — must serve the interests of the people and adopt the principle of justice as the core criterion of governance. The following couplet from the work conveys this very idea:

“The ruler is bound by the rights of the people,
And the people are bound by the just rule of the ruler.” [3]

These two lines express a high moral standard of mutual responsibility and trust. Yusuf Khos Khajib regards the ruler as a servant of the people and emphasizes that a leader must protect the rights of the population and govern with their consent. His views are directly relevant to the political image of public service in modern governance. When citizens perceive a civil servant not merely as an official, but as someone who upholds justice and serves the interests of society, public trust, respect for state service, and the legitimacy of governance increase. This influences not only the personal image of the civil servant but also the institutional

image — that is, the overall political image of the state.

During the rule of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty in the Bukhara Emirate, Samandar Termizi, in his work “Dastur al-Muluk”, analyzes the causes of crises that occurred in the central administration of the state. He identifies the primary factors as, first, internal conflicts among the nobility serving in the civil service, and second, flaws in the appointment and selection of officials in state governance. He also points to the lack of adherence to discipline and regulations within this sphere. Addressing the ruler — the amir — the author emphasizes that selecting qualified civil servants and establishing order and discipline among them must be regarded as a top priority and a fundamental condition for strengthening the central government. He writes: “My dear, choose your officials from among the noble, virtuous, conscientious, and high-minded individuals. In selecting your officials, avoid those of low origin, the unscrupulous, the deceitful, and the treacherous. If the people around you — your officials — are noble, intelligent, and high-minded, the secrets of the homeland will be safeguarded, your people will always be protected, and no one will suffer harm”. [4, pp. 73–76]

The author's views remain relevant today and are recognized as a decisive factor in restoring public trust in government institutions and shaping a positive political image of the civil service in the eyes of citizens.

Several scholars in Western countries have also advanced early theoretical perspectives on the political image of public service. In particular, during the development of absolutism in sixteenth-century France, the concept of services communs (common services) began to be increasingly used. During this period, terms such as intérêt public (public interest) and service public (public service) acquired a prominent place in legal and political discourse and gained concrete meaning. Especially during the period of state policy led by Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the concept of public service expanded beyond its traditional scope of military, financial, and judicial authority to include social, cultural, and economic spheres as well [5, p. 11]. This expansion laid the groundwork for redefining the state's obligations to society in a new way. The renowned Scottish economist and philosopher Adam Smith, in his seminal work “An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations” (1776), asserted that state authority must fulfill the following three essential functions: 1) Protect society from violence and external invasion. 2)

Safeguard every citizen from injustice and oppression. 3) Establish and maintain infrastructure and institutions that are necessary for the benefit of society but which cannot be effectively provided by private individuals driven solely by personal interest.

According to him, “Every man is, no doubt, by nature, first and principally recommended to his own care; and if his reward is to be the same whether he does or does not perform his duty, it is natural that he should neglect it altogether, or, at most, perform it in a careless and hasty manner, especially if there is little chance of punishment.” [6, p. 426]. Through this statement, Adam Smith emphasizes the human inclination toward ease in fulfilling duties and highlights the necessity of control and incentive mechanisms in the performance and responsibility of civil servants. He acknowledges that an effective public administration requires a proper balance between wages, discipline, and supervision. In this context, a civil servant is not merely an administrative executor but appears as a dedicated individual accountable to the public, and bearing both legal and moral responsibility. This serves as a decisive factor in shaping the positive political image of public service.

The theoretical consolidation of the concept of public service dates back to the early twentieth century. This process is associated with the Bordeaux School (École de Bordeaux) in France, and with legal scholars such as Léon Duguit, Roger Bonnard, and Gaston Jèze. According to their doctrine, public service is not merely an administrative function, but a central concept that forms the core of administrative law and even constitutes the moral and legal foundation of the state itself [7, pp. 106–108].

The concept of public service developed during the formation of capitalist society as a means to safeguard the interests of the ruling class — the bourgeoisie — in the public sector and to stabilize capital accumulation. As the necessity arose for the state to assume certain functions within society, the practice of providing specific services by the state emerged.

The state, as the political expression of the ruling class, began to institutionalize its functions on a societal scale in the form of public services. Under such conditions, the terms “state activity” and “public service” began to be used interchangeably. In this process, public services were shaped not as entities subject to market competition, but as mechanisms aimed at preserving social balance,

reinforcing state authority, and ensuring state activity. In addition, through public services, the state began to perform not only governance functions but also those of supervision and redistribution.

In the United States, significant reforms concerning the criteria for public service and the activities of civil servants were implemented at the end of the 19th century. By the 20th century, the public service system and the image of the civil servant had taken shape, and the issue of improving the system began to be treated both as an efficient sector and as a subject of academic research. On this basis, university-level courses in "Public Administration" were introduced in American higher education institutions.

In the United States, Frederick Taylor is recognized as the founder of scientific management theory. A prominent member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Taylor devoted particular attention in his theories to structuring public service and the role of civil servants as the most efficient and respectable system for society, grounded in scientific principles. He emphasized: "The remedy for inefficiency lies in systematic management... The best management is true science; it must be built upon clearly defined laws, rules, and principles." [8].

The renowned American political philosopher John Bordley Rawls argued that the foundation for building a stable society and fostering trust in it lies in establishing just rules within state institutions and adhering to them faithfully. He stated: "A crucial feature of the concept of justice is that it must generate its own support. Its principles should be such that, when embedded in the basic structure of society, they inspire in individuals a corresponding sense of justice and a desire to act in accordance with those principles. In such a case, the concept of justice can be considered stable." [9, p. 119].

German-American philosopher and political theorist Hannah Arendt, in her essay "Lying in Politics", noted: "Half of politics is the art of creating an image; the other half is getting people to believe in it." [10, p. 10]. She warned that in a fully developed bureaucracy, citizens may become disillusioned with civil servants and begin to perceive them not as active defenders of public interest, but as unaccountable mechanisms. She wrote: "In a fully developed bureaucracy, there is no one left with whom one can lodge a complaint, on whom the pressures of power can be exerted.

Bureaucracy is a form of government in which everybody is deprived of political freedom and the capacity to act." [11, p. 81].

From the above, it becomes clear that civil servants are not only responsible for legal and administrative duties but also bear political and moral responsibility before society. One of the most contested and complex aspects of public service lies in defining the boundaries between duties and authority. This is because citizens' perceptions of the state are shaped precisely by the extent to which these boundaries are respected, as well as by the civility, cultural competence, and professional skill of civil servants.

In our view, civil servants represent a distinct, capable social class that carries out public administration as a form of state management. Therefore, shaping the image of public service cannot rely solely on appearances or public relations strategies. Rather, it must be grounded in the civil servant's conscientious, legally sound, and highly professional fulfillment of their responsibilities. Image is, above all, the result of trust, respect, and social acceptance.

1.2. The Emergence and Developmental Stages of the Concept of the Political Image of the Civil Service

The image of the state on the international stage reflects its political, economic, and cultural prestige; however, its internal foundation is the image of the civil service. While a country is recognized abroad through diplomacy, foreign policy, and international public relations, its domestic population primarily perceives the state through the services delivered by civil servants. Therefore, the professional conduct, ethical integrity, and efficiency of civil servants constitute a core component of the state's overall image.

Trust in the civil service, its transparency, fairness toward citizens, and the quality of service provision directly influence public perception and confidence. A positive image of civil servants strengthens trust in the entire system of public administration, helps dispel negative stereotypes, and plays a vital role in engaging the public in state reforms. Hence, the image of the state is shaped not only through foreign policy but also through civil servants who reflect the quality of domestic governance.

The roots of the civil service system trace back to the earliest political governance practices and

public institutions in the history of human civilization. As the political sociologist Max Weber emphasized, the primary feature of state authority is its “monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force,” which is exercised on behalf of society and was historically first manifested through the military and the police [12].

Weber’s concept of the state as the holder of the monopoly on violence holds a significant place in twentieth-century legal and political philosophy. However, such a narrow definition does not fully capture the real social role and significance of the civil service. In fact, the broader idea of serving the public emerged much earlier in other professions and contexts: for instance, in Athenian democracy, public advisors known as *dēmosioi*; in the Roman Republic, public slaves referred to as *servi publici*; in imperial China, civil servants known as mandarins; and in European royal and imperial courts, a variety of officials. Although their social status ranged from slaves to hereditary nobility, they all shared a common purpose: to meet societal needs and perform public services under the authority of the state.

This historical continuity illustrates the roots of today’s concept of modern civil service. More importantly, it demonstrates that the political image of public service — meaning the perception of civil servants by citizens as individuals working for the public good — is a continuation of a long-evolving tradition of social thought.

In the early 19th century, both the French civil service tradition and the newly emerging U.S. federal administration operated under a system where administrative structures were strictly subordinated to political power. Even in the most routine positions, administrative bodies did not possess independent decision-making authority. As French jurist, politician, and philosopher Pierre Paul Royer-Collard wrote: “Those who clean our streets and light our lamps are representatives of sovereignty.” [13, p. 61].

By the mid-to-late 19th century, the idea of a distinct legitimacy for the civil service — possessing a certain degree of independence — began to emerge. One of the founding figures in the legal and sociological discourse on public service, jurist Léon Duguit, conceptualized the state as “a federation of public services designed to organize society and ensure its functioning for the common good.” In this framework, civil servants were not seen as mere executors but as “individuals participating in the implementation of services that fall within the obligatory functions of the

state.” Limiting the technocratic implications of this view, Duguit concluded: “If state authority exists, it is not a right, but a duty and an obligation.” According to him, the state derives its legitimacy solely through the services it provides [14, p. 413]. In the United States, the legal foundation of the civil service system is tied to the passage of the Civil Service Act (Pendleton Act) in 1883. This law was enacted to ensure the legal basis for the selection of civil servants and for establishing effective oversight of their performance. According to many researchers, the Pendleton Act laid the legal groundwork for the modern American civil service system. Prior to 1883, the civil service was, as they argue, primarily designed to serve the interests of high-ranking officials and did not represent the public interest [15].

Through the Pendleton Act, the principles of meritocracy — entry into public service based on knowledge, competence, and impartial selection — and performance-based efficiency and accountability were introduced. This transformation had not only legal implications but also significant institutional image value. Civil servants were now expected to be perceived by the public not as agents of personal interest, but as reliable and impartial individuals operating on the basis of public approval and justice. Thus, the Pendleton Act became a foundational legal instrument, not only enhancing the effectiveness of public administration but also contributing to the formation of the state’s positive political image through the civil service.

During the era of Classical Public Administration, the civil service was formed on the basis of specific theoretical principles, including stability, systematization, adaptability, impartiality, equality, and gratuity. Bureaucratic organization, as developed in modern capitalist states, was designed precisely on these principles to ensure effective public administration. This approach relied on the idea of scientifically grounded management — most notably exemplified by the hierarchical and standardized organizational structure based on the division of labor and specialization proposed in Frederick W. Taylor’s theory of “Scientific Management” [16, pp. 334–336].

Within the classical approach, the civil service is viewed as the institutional core of the state — its practical embodiment. Its activities are associated with the state’s mission to produce and distribute public goods and services, and bureaucracy is considered the most effective mechanism for

fulfilling this mission. The key values of this system — confidentiality, efficiency, and rationality — are intended to ensure professional administration free from political interference [17, pp. 551–552].

By the late 1970s, in response to criticism of classical public administration in developed countries, the concept of New Public Management (NPM) emerged. This model emphasized efficiency, competition, decentralization, citizen-centeredness, and the application of private sector methods in public governance. NPM introduced the view of the citizen as a “client,” placing outcome-based performance and accountability at the forefront. Since classical bureaucratic structures were seen as rigid, unresponsive, and ill-suited to technological change, advocates of NPM promoted the use of market mechanisms to improve the quality of public services.

The development of the New Public Management (NPM) model fundamentally transformed the concept of “services” within public administration. The scope of public services was reduced, with many responsibilities transferred to the private sector or independent agencies. Values such as service quality, accountability, and transparency gained prominence. This transformation occurred in stages: beginning with cost-efficiency measures and subsidy reductions, followed by privatization, and eventually transitioning to a quality-oriented model of public service. As a result, the concept of “public service” was redefined — not merely as an executive apparatus, but as a competitive and client-oriented service-providing institution [18, p. 113].

From the early 2000s, the concept of New Public Service (NPS) emerged — a governance approach centered on democratic values, citizen participation, and the humanistic nature of public service. Proposed by B. Denhardt and V. Denhardt, this model was formulated as a critical response to the efficiency- and market-driven logic of NPM. It views the purpose of government not as controlling or steering society but as serving citizens, protecting their rights and interests, fostering participation, and enriching the essence of public service with democratic consciousness and responsibility [19, pp. 364–386].

According to NPS, the citizen is not a passive object of governance but an active subject. Therefore, it is essential to ensure citizen participation in the development and implementation of public policies and to solve social issues in collaboration with them. This model incorporates contemporary

governance values such as accountability, transparency, collaboration, teamwork, restructuring, and quality. Public services can be delivered not only by state agencies but also through contractual arrangements with private and nonprofit organizations.

According to the research findings, collaboration between state institutions and society has led to an expansion in the areas of service delivery, the establishment of cooperation and accountability mechanisms, and an enhancement of administrative capacity. As a result, a previously rigid and rule-bound state structure has become more responsive to the needs of citizens. In this regard, the New Public Service approach can be viewed as a progressive methodology for shaping a political image grounded in citizen-government relations.

II. INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN SHAPING THE POLITICAL IMAGE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

2.1. The Experience of Developed European Countries (United Kingdom, Germany, France)

The institutional foundations of the British civil service were laid in the second half of the 19th century, particularly between 1850 and 1870. During this period, the system based on inheritance or personal connections in personnel selection was abandoned and replaced by a mechanism of open competitive examinations. To manage recruitment and performance evaluation independently, a special body — the Civil Service Commission — was established. As this body operated entirely independently from other administrative structures, it ensured the neutrality and professionalism of the civil service.

One of the core principles of the British civil service is the insulation of administrative management from political influence. According to this principle, public officials are divided into two main categories: political appointees (approximately 100 individuals) and permanent professional civil servants. The first group includes the Prime Minister, ministers, secretaries of state, and other officials who leave office when the government changes. The second group consists of career civil servants who continue their duties regardless of changes in government. In this way, the political neutrality of the civil service is preserved, though civil servants do participate in preparing political decisions. However, responsibility for the

implementation of such policies lies with political figures — ministers [20, pp. 159–160]. Furthermore, individuals working in ministries and central government institutions funded by Parliament are officially considered civil servants. They play a key role in executing state policy, maintaining accountability to the public, and shaping the image of the state as an institution.

The Fast Stream program exists within the UK civil service as a mechanism to recruit talented young graduates into specialized areas through practical experience and to facilitate rapid career progression [21]. However, at the same time, there is a noticeable trend of specialists leaving the civil service and moving into other sectors. The primary reason for this is the significant disparity in salary levels between the civil service and the private sector [22].

Currently, many civil service departments are pursuing policies of appointing expert academics to high-ranking positions. Nevertheless, the demand for qualified specialists remains unmet. This is especially evident in areas such as medicine, mathematics, statistics, procurement, and engineering, where personnel shortages persist. This situation highlights the need to further improve mechanisms for attracting and retaining highly qualified professionals within the public service [23].

In Germany, although the term “civil service” (öffentlicher Dienst) is frequently used, in practice it refers to two distinct systems: Beamte (civil servants) and Tarifbeschäftigte (contractual employees working in the public sector) [24]. The Beamte enjoy a special legal status — appointed for life and dismissed only in cases of serious legal violations, such as corruption or criminal conviction. This status originated in 18th-century Prussia with the aim of professionalizing the public service and ensuring justice.

Beamte are responsible for authoritative activities carried out on behalf of the state, and in return for their duty to serve with high loyalty, the state guarantees them financial and social security. Those with Beamte status receive numerous benefits: access to private health insurance, generous pensions, annual salary increases, and protection against arbitrary dismissal. However, they are not allowed to strike like regular employees, and their working hours and salaries are determined by law. They are also held to strict standards of patriotism and impartiality in their service to the state [25].

Tarifbeschäftigte refers to a category of employees

in Germany who are hired under collective agreements (Tarifverträge), particularly in the fields of social services and, in some cases, healthcare [26]. Although these employees do not hold Beamte status within the civil service system, they still perform certain functions within the public sector. There is no fully developed career progression system for them, and certain legal and institutional privileges specific to German citizenship and Beamte status do not apply to them.

In recent years, debates over the need to abolish or reform the Beamte institution have intensified in Germany. These discussions are primarily driven by criticism regarding the numerous legal and financial privileges granted to Beamte, as well as concerns over the excessive number of such officials in administrative structures. Underlying these demands is a broader aspiration to make public service more transparent, economically efficient, and competitive.

Based on the information provided above, it can be concluded that the civil service system in the Federal Republic of Germany is a highly regulated and well-organized framework in which powers are distributed in accordance with different administrative levels. This institution is considered a prestigious field, as only candidates with proven knowledge and successful outcomes are selected through a multi-stage recruitment process. Additionally, the system is supported by merit-based principles and public oversight, with particular attention paid to informing citizens about the procedures and standards of joining the civil service.

In France, civil servants are regarded as individuals who serve in all levels of state institutions — both in the capital and in local territories — across the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. In addition, under the provisions of the 1984 law, a distinct corps of civil servants was also established within the system of local authorities. Each public legal entity — whether a state body or a local community — functions as an independent employer, and the legal status of its employees reflects certain unique characteristics. All civil servants are divided into two main categories. The first includes civil servants within the state administration, local communities, and public institutions (including teachers and medical professionals); the second comprises military personnel, judiciary staff, and parliamentary employees [27, p. 103].

France’s strong civil service traditions and the high

quality of its public services serve as a solid foundation for the country's economic growth, international competitiveness, and investment attractiveness. Preserving and strengthening this capacity is particularly vital today, in light of demographic changes, the advancement of digital technologies, and increasing global competition. In this process, the cooperation between the public and private sectors, with each playing its distinct roles and leveraging its capabilities, is of central importance. The effectiveness of public service in France is a decisive factor in achieving positive economic outcomes, particularly in terms of job creation and labor market dynamics.

It should be noted, however, that many regional government institutions and human resource officials are currently facing serious challenges in recruiting civil servants. This issue is not limited to France, but is also observed in other leading EU countries — particularly the United Kingdom and Germany. According to researchers, addressing the problem requires solving five key challenges:

- Creating competitive working conditions;
- Strengthening the image of public service as a profession;
- Promoting public service careers among youth;
- Expanding internal motivation and opportunities for professional growth;
- Improving mechanisms to retain talent.

Additionally, to enhance the attractiveness of regional organizations as employers and retain the workforce, three practical directions are recommended:

1. Enhancing the reputation of local institutions as employers by shaping a positive image of public service;
2. Expanding outreach and information about public service careers, particularly to youth;
3. Creating competitive conditions and a positive work environment to retain current employees and attract new ones.

By implementing these solutions, public service can become more efficient, competitive, and an attractive career path for younger generations [28].

2.2. The Experience of Modern Eastern States (Turkey, Japan, Singapore)

The global transformation processes currently underway have had a direct impact on the public administration system of Turkey. As in other countries, Turkey's administrative system has not

been shaped by the direct adoption of foreign models, but rather through their adaptation to the country's unique historical and social context. This is because any developed tools or methods must first be applied to the country's existing institutional structure before being introduced into practice.

In analyzing the evolution of Turkey's administrative structure, Metin Heper drew particular attention to the role of bureaucracy and described the public administration system through the concept of a "state tradition," evaluating existing political, social, cultural, and historical conditions as critical variables. According to Heper, Turkey's public administration has developed its current structure based on models from both the Ottoman period and the early years of the Republic. From this perspective, the current restructuring of public administration continues to be built on this foundational model, adapting to changing conditions [29].

In the early 2000s, the process of reorganizing public administration in Turkey emerged not only as an administrative undertaking but also as a key element in shaping the country's political image. Through the 2002 "Action Plan for Enhancing Transparency and Developing Efficient Governance in Turkey," key criteria such as efficiency, transparency, accountability, and administrative capacity were placed at the center of public administration's image policy. Within this framework, broad reforms were implemented to define performance standards in civil service, reassess the relationship between public institutions and civic structures, ensure citizens' right to access information, and strengthen local governance — ultimately enhancing the credibility of the state apparatus in the public eye [30, pp. 13–47].

This action plan later served as the foundation for a series of legal reforms aimed at restructuring public administration. One of the most significant among these was the 2003 Law on the Basic Principles and Restructuring of Public Administration. This law sought to clearly define the roles and responsibilities within the institutional system of governance and to establish an appropriate distribution of duties between central and local authorities [31]. These developments, in turn, contributed to increasing the efficiency of the civil service, ensuring greater transparency and accountability, and thereby

supporting the formation of a positive political image of public service. The reforms expressed a strategic effort to redirect the work of civil servants toward public interests, improve service quality, and shape the perception of the state as a trustworthy, modern, and active administrative actor.

From this perspective, Japan's experience is particularly noteworthy. The widely known Japanese aphorism "Wakon Yōsai" — translated as "Japanese spirit, Western learning" — is considered a formula for Japan's modern development: the ability to preserve traditional national values while adopting the advanced achievements of Western civilization. In the realm of civil service, Japan has developed a set of distinctive principles. Personnel policy emphasizes gradual, step-by-step advancement through the ranks. For example, it is not possible to be appointed as a deputy department head at the age of 30. The principle of "from rank to rank" in Japanese civil service prevents such "leapfrogging," ensuring that positions are closely linked to age and work experience, thereby preserving systemic stability. Japanese society prioritizes preventing the participation of unqualified, inexperienced, or incapable individuals in public administration [32, p. 106]. As a result, the civil service sector is highly regulated and integrated, contributing to effective governance.

In recent years, Japan has attracted significant international attention for its remarkable economic achievements. Some scholars attribute this success to distinctive features of the Japanese political-administrative model, particularly the efficiency of its bureaucratic apparatus. For instance, Harvard University sociology professor Ezra Vogel, in his influential book *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America*, describes Japanese bureaucracy as a system staffed with highly qualified personnel, devoted to tradition, and deeply conscious of responsibility. According to him, these are precisely the qualities lacking in the American bureaucratic system [33].

The unique structure of Japanese bureaucracy has been shaped primarily by national mentality and culture. Its effectiveness is closely tied to traditional Japanese virtues such as industriousness, collectivism, respect for social reputation, pursuit of harmony in interpersonal relations, and the cultural principle of continuous self-improvement (*kaizen*). These traits ensure the discipline, loyalty, and stability of the system,

making Japanese bureaucracy not merely an organizational mechanism but a culturally rooted instrument of societal order.

As a result, the political and social image of the Japanese civil service holds high prestige and is viewed by society as a trusted and respected institutional symbol. Bureaucracy in Japan is not simply an administrative structure; it is seen as an impartial, efficient, and responsible model of public service capable of responding to citizens' needs. In this sense, the Japanese experience demonstrates that the integration of cultural values and professional standards can serve as a strategic foundation for shaping a positive image of the civil service.

Although Singapore's civil service was formally established in 1955, its roots trace back to 1819, when the British founded a trading post on the island. The gradual introduction of local self-governance and the country's independence in 1965 did not directly shape the structural framework of its public service. However, after 1990 — following the disciplined and centralized system under founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew — significant institutional reforms were implemented through the introduction of a more efficiency-oriented model known as the "Lee Order," which moved closer to the principles of democracy [34, p. 240].

Today, Singapore's civil service is recognized as one of the most efficient and highly regarded public administration systems in Asia. This efficiency is closely linked to the strict discipline of civil servants, their strong sense of responsibility, a deeply ingrained work ethic, and notably low levels of corruption. Public servants are selected based on meritocracy — that is, according to knowledge, qualifications, and competence. Their skills are continuously developed through regular training, and dedicated programs aimed at improving service quality are consistently implemented.

Singapore's political leadership demands constant pursuit of excellence in public service. The role of civil servants is not merely to execute government policy but to implement it at the highest level of effectiveness. This process is supported by the country's compact geography, a clearly defined and long-term planning strategy, a highly respected administrative apparatus, and strong public trust. As a result, Singapore's civil service has become not only a model of effective governance but also an institution with a highly esteemed political image in the eyes of the public.

Its influence stems from a results-oriented approach and a deep commitment to meeting citizens' needs.

In our view, Turkey's administrative restructuring process, alongside bureaucratic reforms, has focused on strengthening the image of public service — emphasizing transparency, accountability, and service quality to enhance public trust and openness. In contrast, the stability and prestige of the civil service systems in Japan and Singapore rest primarily on national culture and strict discipline. Moreover, the adherence to meritocracy — fair selection based on knowledge, ability, and hard work — has served as a decisive factor in ensuring the effectiveness of these systems and earning the trust of the public.

III. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO SHAPING THE POLITICAL IMAGE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE IN UZBEKISTAN

3.1. Stages in the Formation of Uzbekistan's Political Image During the Years of Independence

Following its independence, Uzbekistan quickly secured a respected place within the international community and established close cooperative relations with many countries and prestigious international organizations. The country came to be recognized as a young and promising state.

Over the past 34 years, Uzbekistan's international image has evolved gradually. While the country's achievements in political, economic, social, and cultural spheres have had a positive influence on its image, certain events have negatively impacted it as well. Taking these dynamics into account, the formation of Uzbekistan's political image on the global stage may be conditionally examined in three phases:

The first phase spans from the achievement of independence in 1991 to 2005. During this period, Uzbekistan was recognized by the international community as a newly independent state. It pursued an active foreign policy and made constructive proposals on global issues, positioning itself as a youthful and proactive country with growing international standing.

The second phase covers the period from 2005 to 2016, during which various internal political, economic, and social challenges negatively affected the country's political image. Following the 2005 Andijan events, the international media's one-

sided coverage significantly damaged Uzbekistan's global reputation. As a result, the "Cotton Campaign" initiative led to a boycott of the country's cotton exports based on allegations of forced labor. This, in turn, led to increased restrictions and censorship concerning foreign media access.

The third phase extends from 2016 to the present. In this phase, strengthening Uzbekistan's positive external political image has become one of the core priorities of state policy, and numerous reforms have been initiated. Notably, the Action Strategy on Five Priority Areas for the Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017–2021, adopted in 2017, outlined key objectives: reinforcing state independence and sovereignty; enhancing Uzbekistan's status as an equal subject in international relations; securing a worthy position among developed democratic states; fostering an environment of security, stability, and good neighborliness; and providing the international community with objective information about the ongoing reforms in Uzbekistan [35].

As part of these objectives, concrete measures were developed to enhance Uzbekistan's positive reputation on the international stage and to ensure the fair and objective evaluation of the country's position in global rankings and indices. In particular, on February 25, 2019, Presidential Decree No. PQ-4210 "On Measures to Improve the Position of the Republic of Uzbekistan in International Rankings and Indices" was adopted. This decree marked an important step in the state's policy toward improving the country's image.

A positive international image is a key factor in effectively promoting national interests. It serves as a critical condition for strengthening the well-being of the state, achieving sustainable development, and addressing strategic issues such as enhancing the global competitiveness of the national economy [36]. To this end, a draft of the "Concept for Strengthening the Positive International Image of the Republic of Uzbekistan" was developed and submitted for public discussion as part of efforts to refine and advance the country's image policy on the basis of a clearly defined program.

Another factor that significantly contributed to the improvement of Uzbekistan's image was the speeches and proposals delivered by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the 72nd and 75th sessions

of the United Nations General Assembly. The President's initiatives — such as developing an international convention on youth rights and the adoption of a special UN General Assembly resolution titled "Enlightenment and Religious Tolerance" — received considerable attention from foreign media. President Mirziyoyev also raised critical issues such as the rational use of water resources in Central Asia, the Aral Sea environmental crisis, strengthening good neighborly relations with bordering states, and the situation in Afghanistan. He emphasized: "The only way to achieve peace in Afghanistan is through direct dialogue between the central government and the main political forces in the country, without any preconditions." [37].

Furthermore, President Mirziyoyev highlighted the need to expand the UN Security Council in line with current global realities and expressed support for the reform initiatives being undertaken by the new leadership of the United Nations aimed at improving the organization's management system.

At the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, Shavkat Mirziyoyev delivered a speech in the Uzbek language. He proposed the development of an International Code of Voluntary Commitments of States in Pandemics. The President also stressed the importance of addressing regional challenges and affirmed Uzbekistan's position that Afghanistan should be viewed as an integral part of Central Asia.

One of the most widely recognized achievements has been the rapid and substantial improvement in cooperation among the Central Asian states. Uzbekistan's foreign policy toward its regional neighbors has entered an entirely new phase — one that unfolded in a remarkably short time and has been acknowledged as a model example in international diplomatic practice.

A key component of ongoing reforms is their focus on transforming human consciousness. This represents one of the most critical dimensions of reform, as it is a driving force behind the creation of a "New Uzbekistan." The quality of human capital forms the foundation for any process of modernization and economic advancement. However, this transformation cannot rest solely on theoretical considerations or formal frameworks — it must be guided by compelling and inspiring ideas. One such idea is the concept of the Third Renaissance, proposed by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

This concept is grounded, on the one hand, in

historical memory — the recognition that the territory of present-day Uzbekistan once served as a center of science, spirituality, and culture for world civilizations and peoples. It draws upon national identity, moral-historical roots, and cultural heritage. The intellectual resurgence that occurred during the 9th–12th centuries — the First Renaissance, known as the Islamic Enlightenment — and the Second Renaissance of the 14th–15th centuries during the Timurid era, serve as its historical antecedents.

On the other hand, the Third Renaissance is future-oriented. The 21st century is defined by information and communication technologies, innovation, and intellectual resources, all of which drive global competition. Within this context, Uzbekistan faces not only a significant challenge but also a historic opportunity to integrate into the leading ranks of global development. However, the effective realization of this opportunity depends, first and foremost, on comprehensive reform of the education system and the development of human capital. Only then can Uzbekistan secure a worthy place in this new phase of national revival known as the Third Renaissance.

Analysis shows that Uzbekistan, from the first years of independence, defined the formation of a positive foreign political image in the international community as one of the priority tasks of its foreign policy. In recent years, this direction has become one of the strategic and priority areas of state policy, and in order to achieve this goal, systematic and large-scale reforms are being implemented. The positive perception and increasing prestige of our country on the international stage, in turn, are being considered as an important resource for the effective implementation of priority tasks in the economic, social, investment, scientific, educational, and cultural fields. Therefore, the political image of Uzbekistan and the rational and purposeful use of its potential are directly related to increasing the effectiveness of reforms in the field of state civil service. In this direction, accelerating the activities of state bodies, increasing the prestige and attractiveness of the state civil service, as well as strengthening effective cooperation and coordination mechanisms between state and public structures are of urgent importance.

3.2. Reforms in the Civil Service and Their Impact on Political Image

With the independence of the Republic of

Uzbekistan, the need arose to establish an effective civil service in the process of forming and developing a sovereign, legal, and democratic state. A gradual transition began from a centralized socialist governance model to a reform-based management system grounded in the principles of a market economy. This process unfolded against the backdrop of various political and economic complexities and economic inequality in society. While some perceived these changes as promising reforms, others viewed them as painful and leading toward an uncertain future.

In the early years of independence, challenges such as inflation, a decline in production, and reduced purchasing power of the population negatively affected the civil service. During the gradual privatization of state-owned enterprises, the lack of a clear legal framework and effective oversight mechanisms exacerbated social inequality in some sectors and generated public sentiment marked by declining trust in the state. Furthermore, several issues emerged among civil servants, including a decline in professional pride, low wages, a lack of transparency in service activities, and uncertainty in career progression.

In Uzbekistan, consistent efforts began to modernize public administration and establish an effective civil service system. In this process, the institution of public service developed into a comprehensive institutional structure in legal, organizational, and functional terms. To strengthen the civil service legally, relationships arising in this field were regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and normative legal acts in administrative, labor, financial, criminal, and other areas. This contributed to the legal guarantee of civil service activities in various sectors and enabled the management of relations among civil servants based on clear criteria.

Although a separate law on public service has not yet been adopted, the term “civil servant” was officially used for the first time in the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 1778 dated May 13, 1997, “On Incentives for Civil Servants’ Labor.” This governmental document provided for supplementary payments to the official salaries of employees in government and administrative bodies, the judiciary, and the prosecutor’s office, funded from the state budget. Thus, the concept of “civil servant” was applied to individuals working in state bodies (ministries, state committees, agencies, state inspections) as

well as in judicial and law enforcement institutions [38].

Another important regulatory legal document governing the civil service sphere is the joint decision of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population and the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated September 22, 2003. This document approved the Nomenclature of positions for managerial, service, and technical staff in state and economic administration bodies [39].

According to A.Yu. Umarov, Vice-Rector of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the main problem in the civil service during that period was the inconsistency of management practices, work methods in public service, and the principles of its formation with the ongoing transformation processes in society and the economy, as well as with the country’s goals for sustainable development. The structural aspects of the problem can be summarized as follows:

- the absence of a systematic legislative framework regulating the civil service and defining the rights, duties, and social guarantees of civil servants;
- the need to improve the concept and system for training personnel for the civil service;
- the lack of a system for objectively evaluating the activities of civil servants and a differentiated wage system based on achieved results;
- existing human resource policy technologies do not ensure a fully transparent and objective process in the selection and evaluation of civil servants [2, p. 17].

By the Presidential Decree No. PQ-24, the Concept for Implementing Priority Areas of Reform in the Fields of State Construction and Governance, and Strengthening the Role and Influence of the Legislative Authority, was approved to implement the priority tasks and directions of democratizing and renewing society, reforming and modernizing the country, as outlined in the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan’s address to the joint session of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis on January 28, 2005. The Concept envisaged the preparation of a draft Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Civil Service,” which was to include measures to define the legal status of civil servants, the procedure for public service, and to enhance the responsibility and accountability of civil servants.

On August 8, 2022, the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, signed the Law “On Civil

Service.” The adoption of this law is recognized as a historic event, as it marks the resolution of an important issue that had been postponed for nearly 30 years. This document serves as a programmatic guideline aimed at improving the lives of the 35-million-strong population, enhancing public morale, and increasing trust in the state. The adoption of the law lays a solid legal foundation for fully realizing the principle that “It is not the people who should serve the state bodies, but the state bodies that should serve the people.”

Why was there a need for this law in the first place?

If we examine the experience of foreign countries, their civil service laws comprehensively regulate areas such as the training, retraining, and professional development of civil servants, performance evaluation, career advancement, transitions to other public positions, remuneration, working hours, and leave entitlements. The adopted law aims precisely to eliminate existing issues in these areas and to establish and implement a unified state policy in the sphere of civil service. The law, consisting of 10 chapters and 64 articles, defines the legal status of civil servants, the powers within the civil service, mechanisms for combating corruption, procedures and conditions for entering civil service, as well as legal and social protection norms for civil servants. The laws and strategies being adopted play a crucial role in shaping and strengthening the political image of the civil service. In particular, the Law “On Civil Service,” the “Uzbekistan – 2030” strategy, and Presidential Decree No. PF-95 dated June 19, 2025 – “On measures to organize the civil service based on new approaches and to form a corps of professional and results-oriented civil servants” – ensure consistent reforms in the sphere of civil service and contribute to increasing its social and political prestige. These legal and strategic documents, by covering issues such as the legal status of civil servants, performance-based activities, transparency and openness in recruitment, adherence to service ethics, and social protection of employees, create a foundation for forming a positive public perception of the civil service.

In our opinion, promoting the positive image of the Republic of Uzbekistan on a global scale, as well as shaping the brand of the civil service, creating a positive image of civil servants, enhancing and strengthening their prestige, requires the development of a comprehensive and systematic state policy along with consistent and long-term

efforts. At the same time, when analyzing the efforts being undertaken in the direction of forming a positive image of the country, a stable and positive trend can be observed.

3.3. Theoretical Approaches to Increasing the Attractiveness of Civil Service

First of all, if we focus on the concept of state image, in the draft Concept for Strengthening the Positive Image of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the International Arena, the definition of the state image is given as follows:

“Image creation is the conscious construction of certain features and qualities of a subject that make it attractive and appealing to society, and allow it to solve certain political tasks (winning elections, increasing the legitimacy of power, etc.) with its participation” [41. p. 70].

It must be acknowledged that from the formation of an independent state called Uzbekistan on the world political map up to the era of New Uzbekistan, the international image of our country was not positive. This was primarily due to the closed political policies pursued on the international stage, the use of forced labor — especially child labor — in the cotton monoculture sector, the existence of strong censorship in mass media, the excessive influence of bureaucracy on state and societal life, and the harsh nature of the criminal justice system.

From this point of view, the role of public relations in shaping the image of the state is invaluable. Through theoretical approaches and practical technologies in this field, it becomes possible to shape a positive image of an organization or state in the eyes of the public.

Researchers emphasize that “Public relations studies a set of technologies that enable an organization to build relationships with the public and to create its image. The image of any organization in the eyes of the public is the most effective appeal in which the main ideas and principles of the organization’s activity are recorded; it reveals the individuality and development prospects of the organization” [42. p. 9].

In this regard, Professor O. Musurmonova notes: “Each environment has its own image. At the same time, one should not lose one’s individuality and uniqueness.” In the creation of an image, it is certainly necessary to take into account material, spiritual, intellectual, and visual resources. Only after that, it is necessary to study what kind of

leader employees desire, what kind of teacher students prefer, or what kind of artist fans like [43. p. 21].

The wide-ranging reforms being carried out, above all, require every leader to work with enthusiasm, honesty, and devotion. This, in turn, serves as an important theoretical and practical foundation for increasing the attractiveness of the civil service. Because in the civil service system, the professionalism, personal qualities, and loyalty to the state demonstrated by managerial personnel strengthen public trust in this service. According to Professor A. Yuldashev, "In today's complex environment, amid the growing relevance of new global threats facing the countries of the world, a leader, as a person, is distinguished by unique traits. In order to evaluate him as a person, it is necessary to take into account human qualities, the level of general knowledge, leadership skills, leadership, systematic and critical thinking, ability to work in a group, communication culture, as well as the ability to creatively apply the experience of others" [44. p. 110].

According to O. Fayzullaev, the state institution today remains at the constant center of attention of society and the mass media. Therefore, the political image of a civil servant appears as the face of a particular state body in which they operate. The main factors that positively or negatively influence the image of a civil servant are identified as social, psychological, moral, and legal conditions. Each of these factors determines the personal and professional qualities of the employee [45].

In our opinion, having a positive reputation in the eyes of employees is not only one of the key factors of high morale and work efficiency, but it is also a strategically significant element for the entire organization, especially the civil service system. A civil servant, through their official activities, directly interacts with citizens and represents the practical face of state policy and reforms. Therefore, the internal motivation, job satisfaction, and the external perceptions formed through civil servants directly affect the political image of the civil service. A corps of reputable, professional, and reliable civil servants serves to strengthen the state's prestige in the eyes of society.

A. Usmonova notes: "Forming a social and political stance, expanding mechanisms of self-governance, and being able to respond promptly to the rapidly changing and developing processes of today — are all critical tasks in shaping the image of an institution in society. The image of each institution

or organization is formed based on its powers and functional responsibilities, and thus the scope of influence and cooperation gradually expands" [46. p. 54].

Analyses show that forming a corps of professional, loyal, and positively reputed civil servants plays a decisive role in ensuring the stability of public administration and achieving a high level of communication culture with society. This, in turn, strengthens citizens' trust in the civil service and contributes to increasing its attractiveness.

CONCLUSION

At present, research on increasing the prestige of the civil service, forming its brand, strengthening the positive image and status of the civil servant, as well as studying issues related to its political image, is still insufficient. Regarding this issue, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to organize the civil service on the basis of new approaches and to form a professional and result-oriented corps of civil servants" outlines a number of systemic activities and measures to improve the image of the civil service and create favorable conditions for civil servants.

Undoubtedly, there is still much to be done. In addition to the work already carried out in shaping a comprehensive and systematic state policy to strengthen the positive image of the civil service, we believe that the implementation of the following tasks is also expedient:

Firstly, rational use of social networks is of great importance in forming the brand of the civil service, creating a positive image of the civil servant, and enhancing their status. Social networks are an effective tool that allows direct communication between the administration and citizens, enables the rapid dissemination of accurate and reliable information of interest to users, and creates opportunities for mutual exchange of opinions. This ensures two-way relationships and effective public communication mechanisms. Today, social networks have become so global in nature that news and events spread through them can have a serious impact beyond the local level. The diversity of social networks – blogs, microblogs, social and professional networks, social bookmarking sites, forums, and even virtual platforms like Second Life – makes it possible to select a channel that matches the needs of interested groups. From this point of view, public institutions and individuals responsible for

public relations need to strategically determine which platform to participate in. This not only serves to strengthen the image of a territorial or sectoral brand but also helps to reduce the costs of using traditional mass media. At the same time, a systematic approach is required for the effective use of social networks, which necessitates the development of a special social media plan that defines clear goals and priorities in the media strategy.

Secondly, a specific civil service organization should be presented like a person, meaning that people should clearly and explicitly understand what it does. In such an approach, the main goal in shaping the image of the civil service is to provide the public with objective and truthful information about the activities of the legislative, executive, and judicial authorities as well as civil servants. This, in turn, strengthens public trust and respect towards the civil service.

Thirdly, the civil service system must possess its own reputation like corporations. That is, it must regularly update and strengthen its positive image, forming in the public consciousness as a responsible, transparent, and efficient system. Such an effect is achieved through the continuous promotion of the activities of territorial and sectoral public services.

Fourthly, the civil service must clearly and openly demonstrate the advantages that distinguish it from other organizations. These advantages may include the legality of its operations, serving the interests of the population, the presence of a fair and qualified cadre corps, transparent work procedures, and an established system of accountability. Such distinctions help to increase the prestige of the civil service and to strengthen its positive image among citizens.

Fifthly, along with the overall image of a government body, the personal image of individual civil servants among the local population is also of great importance. Every employee is perceived by the public as the face of the organization. If the personal behavior, communication style, or professional performance of a civil servant does not align with the overall and political image being created by the government institution, such inconsistency may leave a negative impression in the public consciousness. This, in turn, can adversely affect not only the organization's image but also the political legitimacy and public trust in the system of government. Therefore, each civil servant must carry out their work with a sense of not only legal-executive responsibility but also

political responsibility.

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