INNOVATIONS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Rajab RAHIMLI
Associate Professor, Doctor of Philosophy in Political Sciences
Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Head of the Department of Civil Service and Personnel Policy
email: rehimli@yahoo.com

SUMMARY

Following the Republic of Azerbaijan's independence, changes were made to national state building in line with state administration systems recognized in the modern world, and the old Soviet state apparatus that had ruled the nation for 70 years was replaced with an independent state administration apparatus of Azerbaijan. In addition to the establishment of the country's public administration system, reforms in other facets of life there also started. These changes affected the administrative and socioeconomic management systems. In addition to the necessity of implementing state construction, the execution of administrative reforms and, in particular, the implementation of changes in the civil service, was influenced by worldwide trends.

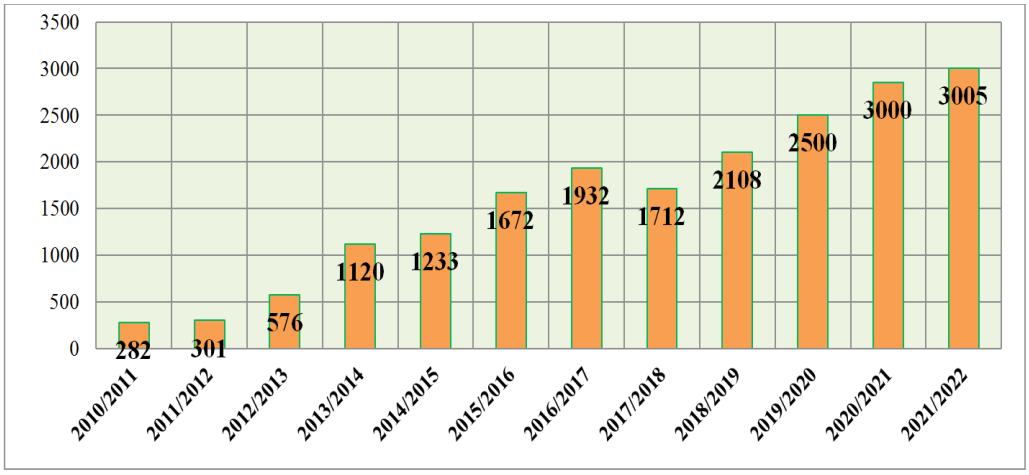
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One of the key institutions of state administration in Azerbaijan, the civil service system, was formed and developed from the country's early years of independence. Reforms were then carried out in the direction of a modern state building, the legislative base was strengthened, and phased measures were put into place. As a result, the "Constitutional Act on State Independence" [1] passed on October 18, 1991 and the Constitution passed in 1995 created the fundamentals of our nation's state system and government. The ability to participate in governmental management was granted to citizens by Article 55 of the Constitution, which they might exercise either directly or through representatives [2]. The Republic of Azerbaijan's citizens have the option of serving in government organizations, according to that article. Government employees are chosen from among Republic of Azerbaijan residents. In accordance with the law, foreigners and stateless people may be accepted to the civil service. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state government were also established under the constitution. Azerbaijan was approved as a member of the Council of Europe's European Commission on Democracy (Venice Commission) at its meeting on March 17–18, 1996. In June 1996, the PACE Bureau decided to grant Azerbaijan the status of "special invited guest" in recognition of the

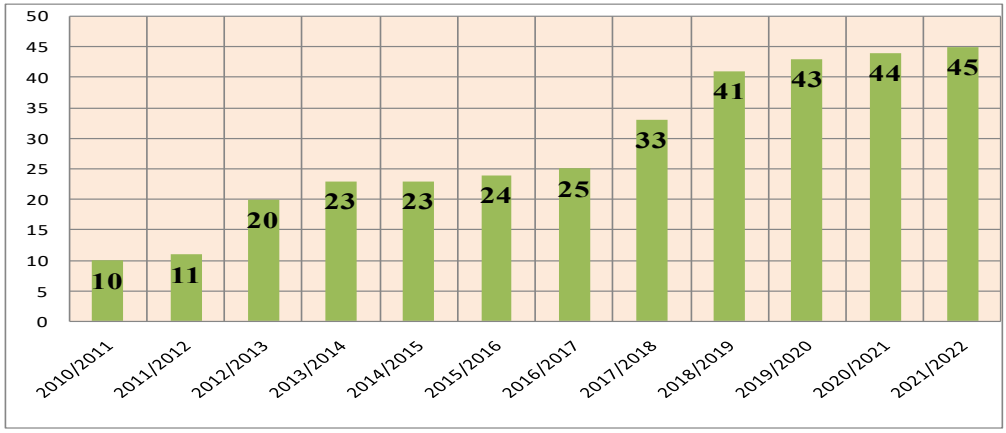
nation's efforts to establish a democratic state. Resolution (96) No. 32, which calls for stepping up talks with the Azerbaijani government and assistance in the form of cooperation initiatives to hasten the country's transition to democracy, was adopted on September 11 at the 573rd meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe. In Azerbaijan, the death penalty was banned in 1993 and completely eliminated in 1998. One of the key elements that made sure Azerbaijan's integration into Europe was the abolishment of the death penalty and the humanization of the correctional system. The Legal Reforms Commission was established on December 29, 1996, which marked the next development in the Azerbaijani state administration structure. This Commission significantly altered the legal system's philosophical underpinnings that were inherited from the Soviet Union and established the goals of the earliest legal reforms to be undertaken [8, p.136]. The Constitutional Court was initially created in the Republic in 1998. The "State Program for the Protection of Human Rights" received approval and has begun to be put into practice. The adoption of the municipal law and the creation of the municipal institution were novel events in the evolution of Azerbaijan's statehood. Milli Majlis (Parliament) elected an Ombudsman for human rights on July 2, 2002. Additionally crucial were the Republic of Azerbaijan's ratification of international treaties and the local legal code's alignment with international norms.

High caliber administrative staff was required for the governmental apparatus to run well throughout the nation. The Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan was created on January 3, 1999, with the aim of training individuals in the field of public administration in accordance with contemporary standards [3]. The Republic of Azerbaijan's civil officials needed to be trained and furthered their education, and this educational institution, which was established for the first time in the nation under the President, was tasked with addressing these pressing challenges. The creation of proposals for the state personnel policy; the analysis and dissemination of public administration information; the formulation of suggestions for the growth and legal protection of public administration; offering public employees in positions of authority and reserve personnel of the public service training and additional education; International projects and programs for the training and continuing education of civil officials receive scientific and organizational support. With the introduction of innovative teaching technologies at the Academy of Public Administration, more than 3,000 civil officials are currently retrained each year by top foreign experts and national scientists in a variety of subjects and at various levels of higher education.

Scheme 1: The number of students enrolled in the professional development program and training at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan's İnstitute "Increasing the qualifications of leading public administration personnel". [10, p.80]



Scheme 2 shows how many training sessions, programs, and modules are offered at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. [10, p.80]



The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Civil Service" was adopted on July 21, 2000 in order to establish a unified state policy in the area of Azerbaijan's civil service, as well as to specify the major tenets of personnel policy in this area, as well as the role of civil servants in society and their rights and responsibilities. The law also governed the government's interactions with employees in the Azerbaijani civil service as well as matters pertaining to the employees' legal standing. [7]

Working on the creation of a single information center that contained data on the management staff and civil servants of the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan and 12 ministries, the reforms in the area of civil service that were begun in 2003 were carried out within the framework of the TACIS (Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States) program of the European Union. The proj-

ect included creating a plan for putting the Republic of Azerbaijan's "On Civil Service" Law into action, establishing the functions of the Civil Service Management Council, creating a centralized system for collecting information about civil servants, and creating a plan for reforming public administration [9, p.45].

The State Examination Center was created by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan's Decree of April 11, 2016, to implement student admission to higher and secondary educational institutions, as well as to select personnel for the civil service in Azerbaijan. The State Examination Center organizes the centralized admission of citizens to the civil service on the basis of competition and transparency, offers personnel training in the relevant area, and evaluates the performance of civil servants in their roles as employees. It also participates in the development of a unified state policy in the field of civil service and other personnel issues [4].

The State Agency for Service to Citizens and Social Innovations under the President and the "ASAN service" center were established on July 13, 2012, with the goals of modernizing the civil service, increasing transparency, and establishing a new style of operation, improving the implementation of public services provided to citizens, reducing additional costs and time lost by citizens, adhering to ethical standards and behaving politely toward them, and further enhancing public trust in government. In "ASAN service" centers, residents can access almost 300 state services. There are currently 25 "ASAN service" Centers in Azerbaijan, and 98–100% of the people there are satisfied with the services.

The innovations put into place in the Azerbaijani civil service were influenced by a number of State Programs adopted with the goals of enhancing the public administration system, guaranteeing the balanced and sustainable growth of the nation's economy, and fostering an organic connection and mutual understanding between the current, medium, and long-term periods of socio-economic development. As a result, the "Azerbaijan 2020: a vision of the future" Development Concept from 2012, the "Strategic roadmap for the perspective of the national economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan" from 2016, and the "Strategies on the development of civil service in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2019-2025" from 2018 all defined measures for the gradual development of the civil service system. The development of state body personnel potential, the creation of a corps of civil servants distinguished by knowledge, skills, and positive character traits based on high moral and ethical values, and the improvement of efficiency in the operations of state bodies were all put forward as priority issues in the strategies. Additionally, the strategy called for the adoption of models for progressive motivation (incentives), competence (competency), and rotation of civil officials, as well as personnel policy [6].

The Azerbaijani civil service system is changing to the "Talent Management" model, which combines performance management, competency management, and learning and development, in order to draw talent to the organization, recognize it, and manage it. In addition, it establishes the framework for good governance.

The "Rise" competition was launched on July 26, 2019, with the goal of attracting talents to the Azerbaijani civil service, identifying them, and building the nation's managerial personnel reserve bank. A multi-level comprehensive evaluation of candidates

is conducted in the competition based on the principles of objectivity, transparency, equality of opportunity, and the rejection of conflicts of interest, and the winners are added to a special personnel reserve bank as reserve personnel [11, p.93]. Although it is debatable whether or not leaders are born or developed (Van Wart, 2003), this competition will enable leaders to make up the majority of the workforce in public administration in the future [12, p.13].

The adoption of ICT in Azerbaijan's civil service system, the decline in official-citizen interactions, and the accessibility of public services via mobile platforms have all created the conditions for the country to reduce its army of civil servants, resulting in savings to the state budget. The Azerbaijan State Statistics Committee estimates that there are 26,700 civil servants in the country in 2022, an 8% decline over the previous seven years.

Scheme 3. The total number of government employees in Azerbaijan. formulated by the author using data from freely available sources.



Effective public administration reforms in Azerbaijan, policy optimization, an increase in the standard of the civil service, and the availability of mobility within the civil service all contributed to making this possible.

The document "Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-economic Development" was approved on February 2, 2021, with the goals of ensuring sustainable development in Azerbaijan, stimulating economic growth, and enhancing population social protection. The country's major directions for the next ten years are reflected in the National Priorities. The National Priorities included the development of a vibrant, inclusive, and social justice-based society in the nation as well as a sustainable, developing, and competitive economy. Azerbaijan also planned to establish a space for modern technologies and competitive human capital as part of the National Priorities in order to establish itself as a "green growth" nation [7, p.99-100].

The changes made to the Azerbaijani civil service system sped up the development of electronic government, advanced public-private and public-citizen dialogue, ensured the shift from official-entrepreneur contacts to digital solutions, and also served to advance public-private and public-citizen dialogue.

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