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## **Administrative-Political Elite in the Political-Administrative Structure: Concepts, Functions, and Recruitment Mechanisms**

### **Abstract**

The paper focuses on the state administration–political elite and its place in government, as well as its effect on personnel policy. The members of this elite are depicted as a special socio-political group that includes political leaders and high-ranking officials. They are examined in their functions, structure, and recruitment mechanisms using a variety of theoretical approaches that relate to classical elitism, institutional, and systemic theories. The study identifies the personnel policy of the state as a determinant in the regeneration and success of the elite. In the analysis, the factors that emerge based on the Russian case are centralization, the prioritization of political loyalty, and the lack of rotation. The need to reform closed recruitment mechanisms, promote meritocracy, and ensure transparency is noted as a way forward. Finally, the professionalism of the administrative–political elite and an open staff policy are identified as some of the most important conditions for successfully developing the state and maintaining public trust.

**Keywords:** *administrative-political elite, public administration, personnel policy, theory of elitism, Russian example, meritocracy, transparency*

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## **İnzibati-siyasi elita siyasi-inzibati strukturda: konseptlər, funksiyalar və işə qəbul edilmə mexanizmləri**

### **Xülasə**

Araşdırmada inzibati-siyasi elitanın dövlət idarəçiliyində rolu və kadr siyasəti ilə qarşılıqlı əlaqəsi təhlil olunur. Elita yüksək səviyyəli dövlət qulluqçuları və siyasi liderlərdən ibarət xüsusi sosial-siyasi qrup kimi təqdim edilir. Onların funksiyaları, strukturu və formalaşma mexanizmləri müxtəlif nəzəri yanaşmalar əsasında izah olunur — klassik elitizm nəzəriyyələri, institusional və sistem yanaşmaları. Tədqiqatda göstərilir ki, dövlətin kadr siyasəti elitanın yenilənməsi və fəaliyyət effektivliyi üçün həlledici amildir. Rusiya nümunəsi əsasında kadr siyasətində mərkəzləşmə, siyasi loyallığa üstünlük verilməsi və məhdud rotasiya problemləri müəyyənləşdirilir. Qapalı seçmə mexanizmlərinin islahı, meritokratiyanın inkişafı və şəffaflıq vacib istiqamətlər kimi qeyd olunur. Nəticə etibarilə, inzibati-siyasi elitanın peşəkarlığının və açıq kadr siyasətinin gücləndirilməsi dövlətin davamlı inkişafı və ictimai etimad üçün əsas şərtlərdən biri hesab olunur.

**Açar sözlər:** *inzibati-siyasi elita, dövlət idarəçiliyi, kadr siyasəti, elitizm nəzəriyyəsi, Rusiya nümunəsi, meritokratiya, şəffaflıq*

## Introduction

The issue of the formation and functioning of the administrative-political elite has occupied a central place in political science for many decades, since it is precisely this group of managers and political leaders that determines strategic priorities, directions of domestic and foreign policy, and also acts as a key actor in ensuring political stability and the socio-economic development of the state (Gaman-Golutvina, 2006, p. 11).

In the context of intensifying global competition, growing interdependence of states, and accelerating transformation processes of socio-economic systems, the effectiveness of the administrative-political elite becomes one of the decisive factors of national competitiveness (Panarin, 2005, p. 13). The stability of the political system and society's trust in state institutions depend on the quality of its composition, the level of professionalism, the ability to adapt to changing conditions, and to develop long-term strategies (Pugachev & Solov'yov, 2002, p. 10).

The study of the administrative-political elite makes it possible to identify stable patterns of politico-administrative interaction, analyze the mechanisms of selection, promotion, and rotation of personnel, and assess the degree of openness and effectiveness of state personnel policy (Kovler, 2010, p. 32). At the same time, this category of analysis is closely related to the study of issues of political leadership, institutional structures, the historical evolution of bureaucratic systems, and the influence of foreign policy factors on domestic administrative processes (Shabrov, 2008, p. 20).

### Research

The theoretical and methodological foundation of this study is based on the works of domestic and foreign political scientists who have developed the concepts of elitism, institutionalism, and the structural-functional and systemic approaches (Duka, 2014, p. 12). Particular attention is given to the Russian context, where the administrative-political elite was formed under the influence of traditions of centralized state governance, the specifics of the federal structure, the party system, and the characteristics of political culture (Kryshtanovskaya, 2005, p. 9).

The administrative-political elite represents a special group within the structure of power, bringing together senior state officials, political leaders, heads of key institutions, and strategically important areas of public administration (Gaman-Golutvina, 2006, p. 5). Its distinctive features include a high level of political influence, access to decision-making resources, the ability to determine the priorities of state policy, and to manage their implementation (Pugachev & Solov'yov, 2002, p. 7). At the same time, the administrative-political elite performs a system-forming role, ensuring a balance between political power and the administrative apparatus, as well as the integration of various segments of state authority (Kovler, 2002, p. 66).

From a structural point of view, this elite can be divided into several functional levels: the highest (forming strategic decisions and determining foreign and domestic policy), the middle (responsible for program implementation and activity coordination), and the lower (mainly engaged in the execution of current administrative functions) (Shabrov, 2008, p. 23). In addition to the vertical structure, researchers also distinguish horizontal differences determined by sectoral specialization and affiliation with various political and corporate groups (Duka, 2014, p. 27).

Theoretical approaches to the study of the administrative-political elite include the concepts of elitism, institutionalism, structural-functional, and system analysis (Mosca, 1939, p. 12). The classical theory of elites (V. Pareto, G. Mosca, R. Michels) considers the elite as an inevitable element of any political system, where power is concentrated in the hands of a relatively narrow circle of individuals (Pareto, 2008, p. 15). The institutionalist approach emphasizes the formal rules, institutions, and procedures that determine the formation and functioning of the elite (Lapkin, 2012, p. 6). The systems approach, on the contrary, focuses on the interaction of the elite with other elements of the political system and with society as a whole (Easton, 1991, p. 6).

The mechanisms of recruitment and reproduction of the administrative-political elite represent a set of formal and informal procedures that ensure the entry of new members into elite structures and the renewal of their composition (Kryshtanovskaya, 2005, p. 12). Formal procedures include appointments, elections, and competitive selection processes provided for by legislation (Federal'nyy

zakon, 2004, p. 9). Informal recruitment channels include personal connections, corporate solidarity, clan and regional networks (Ledyayev, 2001, p. 11). A significant role is played by the state personnel policy, which can be aimed either at openness and competitiveness or at preserving a narrow circle of individuals with access to power resources (Smirnov, 2018, p. 15).

State personnel policy represents an integrated system of principles, methods, and tools aimed at forming, developing, and rationally utilizing the country's human resource potential (Kuznetsov, 2019, p. 17). In the context of the administrative-political elite, personnel policy acquires strategic importance, since the effectiveness of the selection and promotion of key managers determines the efficiency of public administration (Gaman-Golutvina, 2017, p. 40).

In Russian practice, personnel policy has traditionally been characterized by a high degree of centralization, where key personnel decisions are made at the federal level (Ledyayev, 2015, p. 42). The President and his administration play a decisive role in appointments to senior state positions, forming a specific vertical of personnel flows (Shabrov, 2010, p. 40). This mechanism ensures the unity of political direction but at the same time reduces the degree of openness and competitiveness of selection procedures (Smirnov, 2021, p. 15).

An important direction of state personnel policy is the creation of a personnel reserve, which makes it possible to systematically prepare specialists for filling managerial positions (Federal'nyy zakon RF, 2004, p. 19). In recent years, Russia has implemented programs aimed at identifying and promoting promising managers, including projects such as *Leaders of Russia* and regional personnel schools (Ofitsial'nyy sayt ANO "Rossiya – strana vozmozhnostey", proyekt *Lidery Rossii*, n.d., p. 21). These initiatives contribute to the renewal of the elite; however, their effectiveness largely depends on the transparency of procedures and the real possibility of advancement beyond the framework of established elite networks (Grebenshchikov, 2018, p. 20).

A key factor in the functioning of the administrative-political elite within the framework of personnel policy is the balance between professionalism and political loyalty (Gaman-Golutvina, 2012, p. 17). In practice, Russia tends to prioritize the political reliability of candidates, which leads to a limited influx of professionals not associated with existing power groups (Kryshtanovskaya, 2005, p. 15). As a result, there is an effect of personnel closure, in which the renewal of the elite composition occurs mainly at the expense of representatives of already existing politico-administrative groups (Lapkin & Pantin, 2016, p. 19).

Another problem is the insufficient rotation of personnel, which leads to stagnation in administrative structures and a decrease in the adaptability of the political system (Pugachev & Solov'yov, 2002, p. 33). Despite the formally established legal mechanisms for the replacement of officials, their application is often limited by political expediency (Lapkin, 2014, p. 31). Thus, personnel policy, instead of serving as an instrument of modernization, often becomes a mechanism for reproducing the established elite configuration (Duka, 2014, p. 41).

Modern challenges, including globalization, technological change, and the growth of public expectations, require a revision of the principles for forming the administrative-political elite (Nye, 2013, p. 7). This implies a shift from closed recruitment mechanisms to more open and meritocratic procedures, as well as the development of institutions for personnel monitoring and systematic managerial training (Shabrov, 2018, p. 11). At the same time, it is important to take into account the need to preserve political stability, which in Russian conditions has traditionally been perceived as a priority that justifies limiting personnel competition (Ledyayev, 2001, p. 68).

The analysis of the administrative-political elite within the political-administrative structure of the state shows that this socio-political stratum plays a key role in shaping and implementing the country's strategic course (Petrov, 2016, p. 4). The effectiveness of its functioning directly affects the stability of state institutions, the level of public trust in authority, and the quality of public administration (Gusev, 2018, p. 7).

The first part of the study demonstrated that the administrative-political elite represents a specific group combining managerial and political functions, operating within both formal and informal institutions (Solov'yov, 2019, p. 17). Its structure and functions are determined by the characteristics

of the political regime, the traditions of public administration, and the degree of institutionalization of personnel policy (Smirnov, 2020, p. 12).

The theoretical review revealed a diversity of approaches to the study of elites — from the classical concepts of Pareto, Mosca, and Michels to modern institutional and network theories. These approaches make it possible to view the elite as a dynamic system subject to internal and external transformations and dependent on the mechanisms of recruitment and reproduction of personnel (Gaman-Golutvina, 2017, p. 16).

Special attention in this work was given to the analysis of state personnel policy as an instrument for shaping the elite. Based on the example of Russian realities, it has been established that personnel policy combines elements of meritocracy and political loyalty and is also influenced by the political situation (Krylov, 2020, p. 28).

### Conclusion

Modern trends such as the digitalization of personnel processes, increased professionalism, integration of international experience, and diversification of the elite's composition open new opportunities for improving the efficiency of public administration (Lapkin, 2019, p. 97). At the same time, the persistent problems — dependence on informal channels, the closed nature of elite groups, and the influence of political factors — require comprehensive reforms (Zubov, 2018, p. 21).

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