

SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE CONCEPT OF A NATIONALISTIC STATE (ON THE EXAMPLE OF UZBEKISTAN)

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Abstract: In this article, the socio-philosophical essence of the concept of a “people-oriented state” is analysed. The historical roots of the principle of **people-centrism** and its manifestations in Eastern and Western philosophical traditions are examined. The author reveals the dialectical relationship between state and society through the categories of **human dignity** and **social justice**, identifying the core features that distinguish a people-oriented state from the paternalistic model. Using contemporary Uzbekistan as a case study, the article shows how social policy, legal reforms, and the development of civil-society institutions influence the benchmarks of people-oriented governance. Employing conceptual analysis, historical-genetic inquiry, and normative approaches, the study offers theoretical conclusions and practical recommendations for both the conceptual foundations and real-world implementation of the people-oriented state idea.

Keywords: people-oriented state; social justice; human dignity; civil society; social policy; philosophy; historical-genetic approach; globalization.

СОЦИАЛЬНО-ФИЛОСОФСКАЯ ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯ ПОНЯТИЯ НАЦИОНАЛИСТИЧЕСКОГО ГОСУДАРСТВА (НА ПРИМЕРЕ УЗБЕКИСТАНА)

Аннотация: В статье анализируется социально-философская сущность понятия «государство, ориентированное на человека». Рассматриваются исторические корни принципа человекоцентризма и его проявления в восточной и западной философских традициях. Автор раскрывает диалектическую связь государства и общества через категории человеческого достоинства и социальной справедливости, выявляя основные черты, отличающие государство, ориентированное на человека, от патерналистской модели. На примере современного Узбекистана в статье показано, как социальная политика, правовые реформы и развитие институтов гражданского общества влияют на ориентиры управления, ориентированного на человека. Используя концептуальный анализ, историко-генетический поиск и нормативные подходы, в исследовании предлагаются теоретические выводы и практические рекомендации как для концептуальных основ, так и для реальной реализации идеи государства, ориентированного на человека.

Ключевые слова: государство, ориентированное на человека; социальная справедливость; человеческое достоинство; гражданское общество; социальная политика; философия; историко-генетический подход; глобализация.

INTRODUCTION

“Under today’s conditions of globalization and multi-vector geostrategic instability, state governance models increasingly feel the imperative to place the interests and dignity of their populations in the primary position. In particular, the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) and the “human security” concept demand that governments worldwide adopt citizen-centered approaches to welfare [2.3.]. Against this global backdrop, the idea of a “people-oriented state” emerges not merely as a humanitarian ideal but as an essential prerequisite for socio-economic stability, the effectiveness of legal reforms, and the institutional maturity of civil society.

In the case of Uzbekistan, the urgency of this topic is even more apparent. The 2023 constitutional reforms enshrined “the primacy of human dignity and rights” as a fundamental principle [1.]. The country’s “For the Sake of the Human Being” social policy, the “New Uzbekistan as a People-Oriented State” concept, and local programs supporting self-governance, social protection, and civic initiatives all call for thorough theoretical and practical study of this category. The motto “Elevating human dignity and developing a free civil society in order to build a people-oriented state” [3.15.] captures this vision. In such circumstances, it is crucial not to confuse people-orientation with paternalistic or populist practices, but rather to interpret it as an integral philosophical paradigm that serves social justice and the advancement of human dignity.

Filling the theoretical gap. In world philosophy, the notion of “people-centred governance,” that is, “Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override” [4.536], and the idea that “Freedoms are not only the primary objectives of development but also its principal means” [5.430], as well as the “capabilities approach” - “Capabilities are answers to the question, ‘What is this person able to do and to be?’ In other words, they are ... a set of (usually inter-related) opportunities to choose and to act. ... Capability is thus a kind of freedom: the substantive freedom to achieve alternative functioning combinations” [6.20.] - have been widely discussed; nevertheless, they have not been subjected to a systematic analysis in post-Soviet societies, particularly in the context of Uzbekistan.

Revisiting the existing paradigm. Interpreting the dialectical relationship between state and society through the categories of “human dignity” and “social justice,” “Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override” [4.55], and “A focus on dignity will dictate policy choices that protect and support agency, rather than choices that infantilize people and treat them as passive recipients of benefit” [6.25.] - strengthens a critical approach to paternalistic theoretical models.

Developing Practical Guidelines. The socio-philosophical criteria presented in the article can serve as methodological foundations for evaluating the effectiveness of state programs, legal and regulatory acts, and civic initiatives. These criteria - such as human dignity, social justice, citizen agency, and participation - offer a deeper axiological dimension to assessment than mere administrative metrics. Above all, they align with the ideas of Kant, Rawls, Sen, and Nussbaum that any political or legal initiative must serve to reinforce, rather than diminish, personal dignity. Consequently, the evaluation process itself becomes subject to ethical standards, not just its outcomes.

In practical terms, these criteria are transformed into a three-stage “methodological framework”. Mapping Objectives to Criteria. Program goals are normatively calibrated and plotted against the criteria “map.” For example, under the sub-objective of “human dignity,” one might require the reduction of bureaucratic barriers and the abolition of degrading practices. Indicator Development. Each criterion is converted into measurable indicators. For human dignity, this could be the median processing time for administrative complaints; for social justice, the disparity in service provision across regions or the Gini coefficient. Data Collection and Analysis. Information is gathered through official statistics, surveys, and “citizen report cards,” then linked to quantitative regression analysis and qualitative methods (focus groups, discourse analysis). The result is a dedicated “feedback package” that shortens the policy cycle - planning, implementation, audit, and re-planning - by embedding ethical and philosophical benchmarks at every stage.

Theoretical Outcome. The concept of a “people-oriented state” becomes fully operationalized, clearly delineating the boundary between paternalism and populism. The practical result elevates the “dignity-first” principle to the level of a KPI in resource allocation and enables the development of an interregional justice map. In this way, socio-philosophical criteria become a universal evaluation tool that strengthens sustainable cooperation among the state, society, and citizens.

Strengthening Civil Society. Analyzing the institutional components of the people-oriented state concept helps to clearly define the roles of civil society institutions, NGOs, and local self-government bodies. **Post-Pandemic Resource Scarcity.** The pandemic made it necessary to reassess social protection and healthcare systems, bringing the issue of restoring citizens’ trust in the state to the forefront.

Digital transformation - e-government services and digital participation processes greatly expand the ability to hear the “voice of the people” directly, yet they also give rise to the risks of “digital inequality.” **Social stratification** - as disparities in citizens’ incomes deepen, the state’s redistributive functions must be enriched with fair mechanisms.

These factors theoretically substantiate the idea of a people-oriented state and make the development of its practical mechanisms an exceedingly urgent task. Therefore, this article aims - through conceptual analysis, historical-genetic, and normative approaches - to reveal the socio-philosophical essence of the people-oriented state concept in depth. As a result, methodological and practical recommendations can be formulated not only for Uzbekistan but also for other countries that regard people-orientation as a strategic priority.

MAIN PART

The theory of the “people-oriented state” draws its inspiration from the concepts of human dignity and social justice. John Rawls presented justice as the supreme norm that recognizes each person’s inviolability - “Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override” [4.5] - while Amartya Sen equated development with the expansion of human freedoms; Martha Nussbaum then unified these two ideas within the capabilities approach. Accordingly, the people-oriented model regards personal dignity as an absolute value and fair resource distribution as an imperative duty.

From a theoretical-methodological standpoint, this model rests on four interrelated criteria: dignity, justice, agency (capability), and participation. Each criterion can be evaluated by linking programmatic goals to concrete indicators (for example, the average processing time for administrative complaints or the Gini coefficient); in this way, the state’s performance can be measured through the dual lens of “outcomes + dignity.”

Historically, this idea resonates with Eastern traditions of justice and compassion, the Confucian ideal of the benevolent ruler, and Western *res publica* concepts. In the twentieth century, Rawls’s Theory of Justice and the capabilities paradigm of Sen and Nussbaum crystallized these explorations into a universal framework of freedom. It is precisely at this point that paternalism diverges from people-orientation: the former reduces citizens to passive objects, whereas the latter elevates them to the status of political and moral partners.

The Uzbek experience offers a practical illustration of this theory in action. The 2023 constitutional reform’s Article 13 declared human dignity the highest value, and the 2022–2026 Development Strategy made the principle “For Human Dignity” the first priority of state policy. During this period, a unified social-protection registry was established; the “My Opinion” portal generated a monthly stream of proposals on draft laws; and mahallas began to launch their own

initiatives in participatory budgeting. As a result, the median processing time for administrative complaints fell from 21 days to 12 days, and the Gini coefficient measuring regional income disparities declined from 0.329 to 0.312 [7].

In the global context, the UN's 2030 Agenda and UNDP's human-security concept elevate people-centred governance to an international standard. Yet new challenges - digital inequality, transnational responsibilities, and climate change - demand that our criteria be broadened. Going forward, priorities will include embedding a "dignity-KPI" system into ministry reports, deploying AI-based deliberative platforms, and establishing regional solidarity funds. The people-oriented state model is being reinforced theoretically by the ideas of Rawls, Sen, and Nussbaum, and practically by Uzbekistan's constitutional renewal and development strategy. Through the normative calibration, indicatorization, and rapid feedback processes of these socio-philosophical criteria, a stable partnership among state, society, and citizens is forged, reformatting the governance system around the core principle of "upholding dignity and ensuring justice."

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Foundations and Analysis of the People-Oriented State Concept and the Uzbek Experience have highlighted several key points: Synthesis of "Dignity + Justice". Rawls's principle that "justice is the supreme virtue recognizing each person's inviolability" [4.3] sharply distinguishes the people-oriented paradigm from paternalistic or populist models. Placing justice and personal dignity at the core demonstrates that state legitimacy must rest not only on social-protection measures but equally on a moral foundation.

Capabilities Lens. Sen and Nussbaum's approach, which measures freedom by asking "What is this person able to do and to be?" [6.20] and views development as "the expansion of real freedoms people enjoy" [5.102], enables the integration of agency as an evaluative criterion within state assessment frameworks. This, in turn, uncovers the "human indicators" hidden behind aggregate growth figures - such as educational attainment, health outcomes, and political voice.

Participation Paradigm. Drawing on the theories of Habermas and Arnstein, it has become clear that the social contract of a people-oriented state must envision not only a "state-to-people" but also a "people-to-state" flow of information. As Habermas argues, "the right kind of feedback between formal and informal public spheres is vital for legitimating the political system's actions" [8.342]. And, as Arnstein states, "Citizen participation is citizen power" [9.216]. Thus, online platforms for debating draft laws are proven not merely technical innovations but normative necessities.

Innovative Aspects of the Uzbek Experience. In the 2023 constitutional amendments, formally recognizing dignity and honor as the highest values served not only as a symbolic gesture but also as an institutional signal: it prompted the shortening of standard administrative procedure times, the introduction of "philosophical compliance" reviews, and the expansion of participatory budgeting.

Effectiveness of the Indicator System. The positive trends in administrative complaint median time and the Gini coefficient demonstrate that these people-oriented criteria can yield "political-ethical" results. At the same time, the variability of indicators in the details (across regions, genders, and age groups) revealed the need for more granular, ongoing monitoring.

Digital Inequality Challenge. Under e-government initiatives and platforms like "My Opinion," disparities in Internet access and digital literacy exacerbate the risk of new social stratification; therefore, it is imperative to include a digital inclusion index within the people-oriented state's indicator package.

Theory vs. Practice - The Policy-Lag Phenomenon. Although draft laws may rhetorically invoke dignity and justice, bureaucratic behavior often remains inertial -producing a “goal-outcome” discrepancy. Moreover, capability-based metrics (health, education, cultural participation) are scattered across multiple ministries and agencies, and mechanisms for consolidating them on a single platform remain underdeveloped. Aggregate indicators like the Gini coefficient can obscure subtle differences between regions and social groups; hence, a shift toward analyzing “multidimensional inequality” is necessary [10.7].

Future Research and Policy Implications. Dignity-KPI Integration, require each ministry to publish “dignity-respect indicators” in its annual report (e.g., average complaint-processing time, ease of fair judicial access, changes in the corruption index). Digital Inclusion, develop and incorporate a standardized digital inclusion index to monitor and mitigate e-access gaps. Multidimensional Monitoring, establish mechanisms for granular monitoring of inequality across regions, genders, and age cohorts, moving beyond single-dimension indices.

AI-Assisted Deliberation - Use artificial intelligence models to categorize and prioritize citizens’ comments on draft laws, while a mixed commission of experts and citizens ratifies the final decisions. Transnational Solidarity Mechanisms - To protect the dignity of citizens in migration flows, establish a joint “Human Dignity Fund” within the framework of Central Asian cooperation platforms.

The discussion demonstrated that the people-oriented state model, through its quartet of “dignity - justice - agency - participation,” becomes not only an ideological but also an operational concept. The Uzbek experience has shown how to adapt this model to national conditions, while vividly highlighting challenges such as digital inequality, multidimensional inequality, and institutional inertia. Going forward, dignity-based KPIs, AI-enabled public deliberations, and regional solidarity funds will serve as the main avenues for ensuring the sustainability and inclusiveness of people-oriented policies.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Digital Inequality Challenge. Under e-government initiatives and platforms like “My Opinion,” disparities in Internet access and digital literacy exacerbate the risk of new social stratification. Therefore, it is imperative to include a digital inclusion index within the people-oriented state’s package of performance indicators. Theory vs. Practice - Policy Lag. Laws may rhetorically invoke dignity and justice, yet bureaucratic behavior often remains inertial - creating a “goal-outcome” discrepancy. Furthermore, capability-based metrics (health, education, digital access, standard of living) are dispersed across multiple ministries and agencies, and mechanisms to consolidate them on a single platform are not yet fully developed. Aggregate indicators like the Gini coefficient can obscure subtle differences between regions and social groups; hence, it is necessary to move toward an analysis of multidimensional inequality [10.7].

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Third Problem, in participatory budgeting processes, inexperienced mahallas exhibit limited activity. The repeatedly rising share of winning mahallas shows that citizens with fewer resources and less time are being shut out. To remedy this, we recommend introducing a “One

Mahalla - One Mentor” model, simplifying online voting via USSD codes and Telegram bots, and extending the voting window from two weeks to one month.

Fourth Problem, administrative inertia and “policy lag.” Principles adopted at the foundational level are slow to translate into practice. It is proposed that every new draft legal act undergo a rapid “dignity, justice, agency, and participation” audit before submission, and that civil servants complete a three-month online “Dignity-First” micro-certification program.

Fifth Problem, disproportionate interregional resource distribution. Some regions’ Gini coefficients remain above the national average. We suggest updating the “fair transfer” formula by converting infrastructure and digital-access metrics into a weighted index added to tax-revenue allocations, and requiring each Regional Council to publish a quarterly “justice audit” report.

Integrated Solutions. Make a “Dignity-KPI” matrix mandatory in all ministry reports. Under a “My Opinion 2.0” model, use AI to cluster and prioritize citizens’ comments. Establish a regional “Human Dignity Fund - Central Asia” to safeguard migrants’ dignity. In this way, the people-oriented state concept is solidly anchored across the entire chain - from theoretical principle to operational practice.

CONCLUSION

The philosophy of the people-oriented state rests on the synthesis of “dignity” and “justice.” Rawls’s principle that “justice is the supreme virtue recognizing each person’s inviolability” and Sen–Nussbaum’s idea of measuring freedom via capabilities both point to the necessity of embedding an inseparable duet of dignity and justice within any state model. Unlike paternalistic or populist approaches, this duet places citizens at the center as political-moral partners.

The socio-philosophical criteria - dignity, justice, agency, and participation - advance evaluation methodologies to a new level. By linking each criterion to precise indicators (for example, the median time to process administrative complaints or the rate of participatory voting), it becomes possible to measure both “outcomes + process.” As a result, state programs are assessed not only for “efficiency” but also for their “axiological legitimacy.”

Analyzing multidimensional inequality is crucial. Aggregate measures like the Gini coefficient cannot capture subtle disparities between social groups and regions; hence, there is a need for an interactive “dignity-justice” panel that combines metrics on income, digital access, education, health, and other dimensions.

Digital Transformation - Both Opportunity and Risk. While online platforms strengthen deliberative democracy, gaps in digital literacy and infrastructure risk deepening social stratification. Therefore, people-oriented criteria must elevate digital inclusion to a standalone indicator. Institutional Inertia and Policy Lag. Although dignity and justice have been enshrined constitutionally, additional mechanisms are needed for their full realization in bureaucratic practice (e.g., dignity audits, embedding axiological criteria into CBA).

Practical Recommendations. First, it is essential to identify visible inequalities and address them directly. As a first step, beyond the Gini coefficient, we recommend creating a multidimensional “dignity-justice” panel that links health, education quality, digital access, and living-standard metrics. Such a panel - visualized as an interactive map using household survey data at the mahalla level - would enable precisely targeted state transfers and infrastructure investments. Second Issue - Digital Divide. In remote areas, Internet speeds remain low and digital literacy is insufficient. Therefore, it is necessary to expand fiber-optic networks through a universal broadband fund and, in particular, establish IT clubs in mahallas targeted at women and

youth. This will not only improve equal access to digital services but also enhance citizens' active participation on platforms like "My Opinion."

Third Key Direction - Making Participatory Budgeting More Inclusive. Given that the share of repeatedly winning mahallas remains high, implementing a "One Mahalla - One Mentor" principle - where experienced mahallas provide methodological support to new participants - would be beneficial. Additionally, simplifying the voting process via USSD codes and Telegram bots and extending the voting period from two weeks to one month will ensure broader public engagement. Fourth Recommendation - Addressing Administrative Inertia. Introducing a "dignity-compliance" checklist requiring rapid expert review of every new draft legal act against the criteria of dignity, justice, agency, and participation will close this gap. A three-month online "Dignity-First" micro-certification program for civil servants will translate these ethical principles into practical skills.

Mitigating Interregional Resource Imbalances. It is necessary to update the "fair-transfer" formula by introducing a weighted index - adding infrastructure and digital-access metrics to tax-revenue evaluations. Requiring Regional Councils to submit quarterly "justice audit" reports will ensure constant attention to disparities across regions.

Finally, to elevate the people-oriented approach to a regional level, we propose creating a "Human Dignity Fund - Central Asia" solidarity fund. Through joint grants aimed at safeguarding migrants' dignity and promoting social justice, this fund would address transnational challenges in labor migration. In summary, these practical recommendations - a suite of measures encompassing multidimensional analyses, strengthening digital inclusion, simplifying participation, instituting dignity-compliance for administrative decisions, and ensuring equitable resource distribution - form an integrated roadmap for sustainably developing the people-oriented state concept on a solid axiological foundation.

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