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ELITIST PERSONALITY IN POLITICS

The features of the Ukrainian political elite formation, its efficiency and effectiveness and its influence on the economic and political transformations are researched in this article. It is stressed that the conciliation in the activities of Ukrainian elites, which existed during the first stage of transformation in Ukrainian society, has come to an end as soon as achieving the independence was not perceived with euphoria anymore and Ukraine entered the next stage of development that we can call the period of a “wild capitalism”. The new social stratification of Ukrainian society develops in 1990s and at this time the main part of political and economic elite emerges. The author believes, that Ukrainian elite of the transitional period must be called quasi-elite, because its features presented to the European audience absolutely don't correspond to Ukrainian realities. Special attention is paid to the problems of correlation between the tendency to conformism and the status of a politician. The author justifies the necessity of conducting special empirical research aiming at assessing the conformism level among the high-rank public servants. In addition the phenomenon of an elitist personality and its role in Ukrainian history is overviewed.

Keywords: elite, political elite, transformation, quasi-elite, conformism, elitist personality.

Introduction

During the periods of social and political changes and modernisation transformations the so called “subjective factor” becomes very popular and wide-spread in political science. The development of the whole country and its civilisation future depend at such time mostly on the choices made by elites and politicians. Increased role of subjected factor remains one of the most important parts of historical and political process. These problems remain crucial and for the modern Ukrainian state, because the political leadership even now, after twenty five years of independence, still can't offer a definition and put an end to the discussions on the topics: “who are we” and “what are we trying to build?”. One of this uncertainty's reasons is the problem of human resources; more precisely it is lack of unordinary and bright personalities with high intellectual, professional and moral qualities in political establishment who are also capable of effective administration and have a sense of responsibility and moral duty.

As a well-known English thinker Francis Bacon once noted, it is not a secret that most of politicians are not educated in the spirit of duties and respect to common good; instead they measure everything through their personal interests and consider themselves to be the centre of the world as if all lines must lead to them and their destinies, they absolutely don't care about the “ship” of state even if it is in the middle of disaster and want just to escape themselves on the “boat” of their own prosperity benefit¹.

Nowadays, Ukraine is undergoing the difficult social transformations process, our values, priorities and ideals of social and political sphere are being redefined and reassessed and that causes many different problems in mass consciousness which vary from apathy, apoliticality, confusion to emerging of extremists movements and disappointment in “everything new”². Disappointment and despondency were those factors that led Ukrainians to the squares and streets in the 2013-2014-s years. Democratic changes in all spheres of life in our country are the consequences of the past revolutionary movements. The events of 2013 opened the new ways of citizen's mass participation in politics. Real preconditions for political competition have emerged offering the new opportunities for political self-realisation. Now as never before, there is a need for a personality in politics, a leader, who is able to generate and implement innovative ideas, which would positively impact the life of Ukrainian society. It might seem strange but the Euromaidan of the 2013-2014 years and the following events didn't lead to appearing of the new bright and outstanding personalities

¹ Бэкон, Ф. (1977). Сочинения в двух томах. Том 1. Москва: Издательство «Мысль».

² Березанська, О. (2011). Соціалізація особистості як основа формування і втілення системи політичних цінностей на національній основі. *Політологічні студії*, вип. 2, 205–215.

in Ukrainian politics. Those people who managed to get involved into politics after the Euromaidan didn't create one integrated team and were not able to create new political parties and social movements. Apparently Ukrainians now don't trust politicians and other people related to politics because of ongoing skeptical attitude towards politics in our society. The revolution heroes adored on the barricades easily lose people's support at polling stations. The power of the crowd is often used by politicians to achieve their own goals. In such situation the political, intellectual, business and cultural elite must have taken responsibility for democratic transformations, but it became clear that even the elitist level of political conscience of Ukrainians is too low to contribute to successful modernisation reforms.

Society transformation and the emergence of quasi-elite

The transformations in the Eastern Europe of the end of 1980-s and the beginning of 1990-s modified the social structures, inherited from socialism. At the same time, the new structures, caused by free-market transformations, have emerged. This all happened in the atmosphere of recusal of the egalitarian slogans and collectivists strategies of social development. The ideology of personal success began to dominate in social discourse. Alongside democratisation, the new channels of different social groups' interests' articulation have emerged, namely – political parties. For example, political leadership in Czechoslovakia has fully changed in contrast to former soviet republics, where nothing of this kind happened after 1991. But in Czechoslovakia the transformations were fostered by the victory of the Citizen forum at the 1990 elections, which united the majority of anticommunist powers. During the first years of Ukrainian independence, all projects of market and democratic reforms were based on simplified ideas of elite groups about liberal values, according to which the reforms of post totalitarian society are aimed just to achieve formal features of political democracy and economic prosperity. With the idea that the substance of free-market economy lies in dominance of private property, Ukrainian reformers considered fast privatization to be their main goal. As a result the way the institutional transformation in property system was held, appeared to be unnatural to the system of transitional society. All public policy reform projects have left aside the tasks of formation of social structures (non-economic) that could provide social efficiency of free-market economy. This “neoliberalism” indicates the unsatisfactory level of elite group's strategic culture. The abovementioned factors lead to destruction of the state's ability to formulate and implement decisions in the best interests of the entire society, instead of the interests of administrative and business groups. Destruction of state's ability contributed to establishing of oligarch capitalism with certain features of formal democracy and free-market, corruption spread as a form of sub-legal regulation of business and political elites' activities, poverty among population and on-going social tensions¹.

At the beginning of transformation of Ukrainian society, the main role was played by coordination in elite activities. But this coordination came to an end as soon as achieving the independence was not perceived with euphoria anymore and Ukraine entered the next stage of development that we can call the period of a “wild capitalism”. The new social stratification of Ukrainian society developed in the stormy 1990s and at this time the main part of Ukrainian political and economic elite emerged. Let's note again that the process of social stratification and elite establishment still continues and it is far from finishing. In our opinion, the Ukrainian elite of transitional period should be called quasi-elite, because its features, presented for the European audience, absolutely don't correspond to Ukrainian realities. Ukrainian elite still didn't manage to carry out complex and qualitative socio-economic transformations, to pass a test on moral and professional maturity etc. And even more, we can say that inside Ukrainian quasi-elite a new contra-elite has emerged, aimed at achieving and holding power. The fact that quasi-elite is closed is due to unwillingness to share authorities, privileges and sources of enrichment etc. The ways of vertical mobility and the channels to enter high-rank elite groups remain closed to people from other groups of society.

The administrative-political quasi-elite dominates now modern Ukrainian society, it is vertically structured (regional and local level) and tries to use administrative resources to control and influence other elites and sub-elitist groups (business elites, and also information, intellectual, scientific and cultural elites etc.). A characteristic feature for replenishing the first elite layer is the rotational scheme: “administrative-political elite – business elite” and it is to stress: these two elites are mostly united.

The monopolization of power by a small group of people and the existence of a formal and informal decision-making centres appear to be the specifics of Ukrainian power division. The next step is to include

¹ Валецький, О. (2007). *Держава і реформи в Україні: аналіз державної політики в умовах трансформації суспільства*: монографія. Київ: Національна академія державного управління, 217.

people from the closest circle (like assistants, advisors, consultants, relatives etc.) to the highest elite level. There are a lot of half-elitist, non-elitist and non-professional persons in the groups of influence in Ukrainian politics. This feature of the Ukrainian high political elite formation is played back in vertical shift – in the highest levels of regional power and in horizontal shift – in other power centres (government, parliament, central administrative staff of political parties and social movements).

The analysis of elite's establishment mechanisms is a very important part of their description. The new Ukrainian elite have already passed the period of "initial stabilisation" and it is already mostly balanced, but this process is not over yet. Ukrainian elite is becoming again closed and isolated from the society. The trend of "aristocracy" discovered by Gaetano Mosca is coming into action. In G. Mosca's opinion, it's this ruling class who carries out all political functions, possesses power and takes advantages of it.¹ It is possible that this elite may undergo some changes, but they are not connected with welcoming new people; the situation is rather opposite, the changes are connected with young elite generation coming to power and replacing older generations. This stage is characterized by institutionalization of the Ukrainian elite, making it more similar to the western elites. But on the other hand, frame rotation remains as it was before. Now the rotation can be described by the following pattern: "political elite – administrative elite – business elite". The above-mentioned trends of establishing of Ukrainian elite and its social context show clearly the public-private cooperation specifics in modern Ukraine. These trends indicate the presence of authoritarianism at all levels of Ukrainian elite. In this context, we can use the notion "elitocracy", which means that elite groups concentrate great potential and resources of influence on society but aspire to be separated from people. The representatives of elite groups are now concentrating not just political power but also the right to dispose of the wealth and resources of society as well as people's freedom and lives, but citizens have not delegate this right to anyone. In our opinion, it is absolutely justified that the notion "elite" is perceived mostly negative in Ukrainian society.

Two key elements of transition were not achieved in Ukraine, namely: the transformation of the old structures into new political institutions, acting in accordance with democratic procedures and political consensus. The formation of multi-party system, reflecting the social structure of society, still didn't take place in the past 25 years of Ukrainian independence. The process of reforms has become an object of manipulations by political leaders due to the lack of democratic traditions. Many factors, such as manipulating of media by public authorities, lack of separation of powers, have led to emerging of political regime balancing between democracy and authoritarianism.

Ukrainian elites (political, economic, intellectual etc.) are still in the process of development, but in each society there is a group of people that defines during certain period of time the character of society, tries to move social progress forward due to its activeness and energy, becomes the main representative of ideas and spirit of society, defines political and geopolitical goals. This group may be very small, with social and religious differences, but it exists almost always. The need for such group, known earlier as aristocracy, is obvious and now we call such group "national elite". Its function is to keep the state stable and prevent its destruction².

At the present stage of socio-political development in Ukraine, the political elite has a lot of influence on society, but the challenges that our country is facing, making the problem of elite's quality very crucial. In our opinion, one of the most important reasons affecting the elite's quality is conformism of Ukrainian politicians.

Conformism as a way of Ukrainian political elite existence

The detailed analysis of conformism level among Ukrainian politicians is a very important scientific and practical problem; finding solution to this problem is related to the increasing of intellectual, creative and professional potential of Ukrainian politicians and their ability to make independent and responsible decisions. In addition, the importance of such studies is caused by the fact, that the need for a *Personality* in politics is very strong in Ukrainian society.

The phenomenon of conformism is usually viewed in two dimensions: socio-psychological and socio-philosophical. Many scientists have shown interest in this phenomenon, in particular: A. Schopenhauer, A. Tocqueville, J. Mill, K. Marx, F. Engels, G. Tarde, E. Durkheim, S. Ash, M. Sherif, R. Merton and others. Despite numerous theoretical researches, there is no consensus among scientists about nature and essence

¹ Mosca, G. (1939). *The Ruling Class*. New York, 50.

² Сенченко, М. (2006). Хто буде при владі: еліта національна чи псевдо еліта. *За Українську Україну*, 13, 4-10.

of conformism. There are many ways of defining the notion "conformism", but it was not our goal to present them in the article. Let's concentrate on socio-political aspect of this phenomenon and base on the definition from encyclopaedic dictionary of political science. So, conformism (from late Latin *conformism* – similar, relevant, consent) – passive and adaptive admission of existing standards in one's behaviour, full recognition of existing orders, norms and rules under pressure of external circumstances, contrary to the own beliefs. Conformity to social norms may be obvious (coercion) or latent (influence of traditions and the opinion of the majority). Conformism is a social and psychological point of a person, which reveals in attempts to avoid independent decisions and to adopt the existing behavioural standards and evaluations etc. Conformism is usually wide-spread in totalitarian society, regardless of its socio-economic base. Promotion of conformism with the measures of ideological influence leads to "melting" of an individual in social organisations, stereotypical thinking and losing an independent opinion¹.

This definition contains an emotional element and tells a reader that conformism is a negative phenomenon. But it is almost impossible to give an unambiguous estimate of conformism from scientific point of view. Sometimes people understand conformism as solidarity, patience, obedience, social passiveness etc., but it's necessary to distinguish between these concepts. Each phenomenon has its own negative and positive sides. Let's give some examples. The most positive aspect of conformism might be integrity promotion in society, especially during the "hard times" of its history. And even more, we can claim that due to conformism, Ukrainian people have survived during all the centuries before gaining independence in 1991. This phenomenon has also a negative side, in particular: conformism limits the ability of people to think independently and to make decisions; under the pressure of state authoritarianism, conformists' conscience is being formed, which can evolve in a certain mentality type, characterized by unconditional obedience to authority etc.

Even without conducting special researches, we can claim that the majority of people are conformists. The main reason of conformal behaviour is in human psychics, because most of us are concerned or even scared of dramatic changes in our lives. This type of behaviour can be seen among Ukrainian politicians. They change their mind frequently, resort to manipulations and lies, transfer from one political party to another, so they, just like other people, accommodate and survive (*according to Darwin*). But in our opinion, it is wrong to explain everything to mentality and psychological characteristics of human personality. As we are not analysing all people in this article, except of one group of society, very privileged and empowered, it is necessary to research the phenomenon of conformism in some more detailed manner. The political leadership is responsible for establishing social norms of behaviour, morality and other rules. And even more, conformism among politicians can lead to the crisis of the political system, and we had this example in Ukraine in 2013. It was fear of being kicked out of the group and going against the will of the leader, that prevented all empowered politicians from resisting unlogic and unjustified acts of president Yanukovich. By the way, the desire to subordinate to a strong leader is inherent to many people and the Ukrainians are no exception. Our fellow citizens have answered the question: "Do you agree or not that several strong leaders can do for our country more than all laws and discussions?" the following way (see the table below)².

	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2015
yes	52.3	40.5	42.0	49.3	58.7	65.7	62.4	63.5	61.2	20.7	58.5
no	30.3	17.0	17.2	14.5	21.4	18.7	20.8	19.6	20.6	16.0	23.1
not sure	16.9	41.7	40.8	36.1	19.8	15.6	16.7	16.8	17.8	63.0	15.3
didn't answer	0.6	0.8	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.3	3.1

¹ Шемшученко, Ю.С., Бабкін, В.Д., Горбатенко, В.П. (ред.) (2004). *Політологічний енциклопедичний словник*. Київ: Генеза.

² *Українське суспільство: моніторинг соціальних змін* (2015). Збірник наукових праць. Київ: Інститут соціології НАН України. Вип. 2(16), 538.

The data from the table can give us a reason to state, that the nature of conformism in Ukraine is related to our society's system of norms and values. This system was shaped under the influence of our soviet past, and it reveals in mass consciousness through such qualities as political passiveness, unwillingness to be proactive, orientation to a strong leader etc. And here we have to figure out some issues. There is an idea that in politically restrictive societies, risk of non-conformists' movements rises dramatically and it leads to increased level of political participation of citizens, emerging of opposition and new political leaders etc. But this approach, at first sight, contradicts our conclusions about the nature of Ukrainian conformism. The solution for this problem is to be searched in understanding the political regime in the Soviet Union. The soviet authorities managed to suppress all attempts to show discontent among citizens due to totalitarian mechanisms of control, and finally it helped to raise fear of the ruling system in mass-conscience. Sigmund Freud, the well-known psychoanalyst, considered intimidation and violence to be very important and dominant factors in promotion of social conformism. That's why we can suggest that Ukrainian conformism emerged as a result of genetically inherited fear. Only as time goes by, the new generations of Ukrainians will be able to get rid of fear and phobias, so the conformism level will be absolutely different.

The nation that was living under foreign oppression and the culture which was undergoing total ruination, usually begin to achieve new mental features. So the people of such nation usually develop an ability to abide to the rulings of strangers (mimicry), they formally admit alien ideals and norms and become conservative to keep their own ethnical characteristics, acquire a complex of inferiority. Ukrainian experience shows that political culture of enslaved nation is increasingly characterised by conformism, neglect of its own traditions and symbols, domination of alien values and norms in social consciousness and social relations, increasing amorality and psychology of slaves. The mentality undergoes deformations: it actually has two controversial sectors; at the low level there are own features but they are "covered" with new mental characteristics. The political culture undergoes the same transformation. And it's no wonder that there is a stable component of pro-Russian subculture in modern Ukrainian political culture, which can successfully compete with the actual Ukrainian political values¹.

But in order to avoid subjective estimations of the above presented sociological survey, it is necessary to find out the correlation between the notions "strong leader" and "paternalism"; for instance in 2005 the Ukrainians' attitude toward Viktor Yushchenko looked like a belief in Messiah who must be absolutely honest. And after those presidential elections, the Ukrainians began to wait patiently for qualitative changes, forgetting that the republic (Latin – Republic) means, first of all, the common issue that requires solidarity and work from all of citizens. "In the states where people don't participate in public administration, they tend to be fond of theatre actors the same way they would have been passionate about the state affairs if they had right to participate in politics. If people don't have ambitious aspirations, it's a great disaster for republic. It happens when people are corrupted by bribes; people become indifferent, greedy for money but they are not interested in public affairs, don't think about government and its' intentions and stays in dumb tranquility"².

Formation of the political elite is a complicated and long process. During the years after achieving independence, a new regulatory framework was developed in Ukraine providing all the conditions for its effective activities. This effectiveness, by the way, can be measured by very simple criteria – people's quality of life. And we must clarify that we mean all population of the country but not any separate group of people. And the question of effectiveness remains open, because the establishment and existence of our national political elite is still an unsolved problem. But we are interested in studying the problem of a little bit different kind, namely: if there is a connection between politician's conformism and his/her political status; in our opinion the level of conformity is directly related to possibility to make independent decisions, which represents abilities of a politician to take responsibility and carry out political leadership. Apparently, this connection must exist. It is logical to assume, that high-profiled politicians are less conforming and vice-versa, but in order to confirm or refute this hypothesis, it is necessary to conduct special empirical researches using different methods.

¹ Козлова, О. (2014). Вплив ментальності на формування політичної культури українства. *Науковий часопис НПУ імені М.П.Драгоманова. Серія 22*, 59, 327-332.

² Монтескьє, Шарль Луї (1955). *Избранные произведения*. Москва: Государственное издательство политической литературы.

Right now, we can just state the obvious facts that directly or indirectly influence the level of conformity of Ukrainian politicians:

1. The political culture of Ukrainian politicians is characterized by authoritarian and patriarchal political values;
2. The spread of corruption takes place because of low levels of moral and ethical norms;
3. Incompetence and lack of professional knowledge is wide-spread among Ukrainian politicians, which leads to inability and unwillingness to take responsibility and to make decisions;
4. The Ukrainian politicians are usually involved in so-called client relations and this prevents social lifts from relevant functioning and makes politics, as professional activities, closed for different groups of population etc.

To sum it up, it is possible to come to preliminary conclusion about the nature of Ukrainian politicians' conformism, and first of all it concerns the administrators of different levels. Except the abovementioned factors, it's necessary to find out which external conditions and circumstances impact their conformity level. These circumstances, in our opinion, consist in working conditions in governmental organisations, which are functioning according to the principle of strict hierarchy. It's absolutely natural, that under such circumstances the conformity level of officials is very high. Any independent initiative may harm one's career because it's much safer to stay loyal to the senior officials and not to take responsibility.

The conformism's level of the leaders of the country is absolutely different issue because they are not that much under pressure. But there was no break-through, and we still don't have a leader, that we can be proud of. Why? Let's try to answer this simple and at the same time difficult question. Usually, all responses are focused on finding people with a certain set of outstanding qualities and abilities; as the result we imagine an ideal portrait of a leader, worth living in Olympus among Gods. Plenty of scientific works are dedicated to research of "great state men"; we know almost everything about "our great ancestors", but this knowledge is mostly useless for us (except for the fact that it makes us well-rounded). There is no key to raising or cloning great personalities. And this is right concerning arts, literature, cinema, science and, of course, politics. The great personalities whether exist or they don't. The nature of "creation" of leaders is a "mystery" and the thinkers of all times and nations tried to understand it. Some of these thinkers suggest looking for the solution in "creative instinct", "will to power" (F. Nietzsche), the others claim that a leader is "leader of masses" (G. Le Bon), stressing on social sources of the phenomenon (G. Tarde) etc. Understanding the phenomenon of elitist leadership, human mind power, ability to show own creative potential, produce new ideas, mobilise millions of people to fulfil the goals, remain the most urgent problems of political science.

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