

TRADITIONAL AND NEW THEORIES OF ELITES

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Abstract. *Modern theorists of elitism seek to argue that the urgent requirements of high professionalism, extraordinary skills and knowledge, effective leadership, etc. do not contradict the democratic principles of the social order, but on the contrary, according to the same theory of behaviorism, the rapid institutionalization of the profession gives rise to all untalented and average, absolute automation of the work of political and deprives administrative elites of creativity. Elitists offer their own, original understanding of leadership, representative democracy, social equality and justice; justify the idea of pluralism of elites, the mutual balance of various social forces, the concept of consensus of social interests as a prerequisite for the development of democracy.*

The relevance of the research is determined by the following factors:

- *a significant number of theoretical ideas of Western supporters of the elitist approach to social and political processes are still little known to our social scientists, and therefore are not properly used by analysts;*
- *the lack of vision of a holistic picture of the sociological and political theory of the elites will not only stop the development of the country, but also leave room for unscientific, ideologically biased views and assessments.*

The purpose of the article is to investigate both classical and modern concepts of elitism, in particular: «theories of democratic elitism», the concept of pluralism of modern elites, «consensus unity of elites», neocorporatism. In order to achieve the set goal, it is assumed: to distinguish the political elite from other social elites, to analyze the genesis and evolution of elitist ideas in political thought, to determine the role and functions of elites in the conditions of current political transformation.

The practical significance of the article lies in the proof that the process of formation of elites is a purely hereditary, natural and necessary process in the history of any nation.

The degree of theoretical development of the topic is determined by the works of widely recognized scientists such as G. Moska, V. Pareto, R. Michels, M. Weber, K. Schumpeter, K. Mannheim, K. Popper, A. Gouldner, A. Giddens, etc.; and some domestic scientists, such as V. Lypinskyi, N. Ostrogorskyi, M. Drahomanov, M. Hrushevskyi, and others.

As a result of the implementation of the assigned tasks, conclusions were established: first, the ruling class is people who should be the highest manifestation of citizenship, the driver and conscience of society. Secondly, the real guarantee of successful state-building is a patriotic elite uncompromisingly devoted to society. Thirdly, the activity of the elite is an «optional» compliance with the requirements of morality, that is, where it is possible. It means the constant manifestation of responsibility or, as M. Weber said, the possession of «ethics of conviction», «ethical public», the presence of the qualities of «politician by vocation».

Key words: *elitism, aristocracy, meritocracy, Machiavellianism, stratification, bureaucratization, democratization, liberalism, oligarchization, entrepreneurial system.*

Plato was one of the first in historical philosophical and political thought to develop the topic of elitism, albeit somewhat refined, romantically and idealistically (quite typical of antiquity), for whom the elite was initially represented by a few sages who understand their wisdom as the essence of justice and are able to rule in accordance with it, and then by aristocrats who form an aristocratic republic or an aristocratic monarchy, strictly controlling all spheres of life [12].

We also find in the statements of Confucius that society is divided into «noble men» (ruling elite) and «low people» (commoners) based on their attitude to moral commandments [4]. He revealed the image of the ruling elite through social features; the former, in his opinion, adhere to their duty and act in accordance with the law, they are demanding, first of all, to themselves, unlike the latter, who only care about personal gain. According to his theory, compliance with moral norms gave the right to rule.

Political systems formed at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries in Western Europe and the USA, not only could not overcome the social problems of the early industrial society, which were discussed by such classics of Marxism as the Marx-Engels duet, K. Kautsky, R. Luxemburg, V. Sombart, etc.; and various liberal authors. The industrial capitalism of the «trust period» in developed countries and the contradictions of «catch-up modernization» in the countries of the «second echelon» of industrial development (which included the Russian Empire) in a number of cases exacerbated both economic and social problems inherited from the «gloomy morning» of industrial capital. In the conditions of popularity of left-radical ideologies (revolutionary Marxism, anarchism, syndicalism) among the poor, primarily proletarian strata, which made up the majority of the population of developed countries, strikes and picketing arose as a matter of course. The combination of democratic and liberal ideas in Western Europe led to the emergence of universal suffrage and mass, under those conditions, labor parties. Such a political situation in combination with economic crises that intensified during the period of «organized capitalism», geopolitical struggle for the division of the world gave birth to a systemic crisis of Western industrial society.

Decadence of liberal Christian ideology and culture, Hegel's positivism and Descartes' rationalism became the most important factors of this crisis.

The expression of this systemic crisis in the socio-political sphere was the reduction of the role of parliaments and the growth of the influence of the bureaucracy, the activity of «pressure groups» that expressed the interests of, first of all, the financial and industrial oligarchy, and related corruption. One of the bright and at the same time deep works analyzing the crisis of constitutionalism and liberal ideas was the book of the famous Russian lawyer and political scientist P.I. Novgorodtsev «Introduction to the philosophy of law. The crisis of modern legal consciousness» (1909). This book analyzes, in particular, the works of three critics of «party building»: the American turn-of-the-century sociologist Bryce, the German philosopher of law Holzendorf, and the interesting Russian sociologist N. Ostrogorsky, who will be discussed below.

Consequently, the tendency to bureaucratization and oligarchization of parties, regardless of their ideological color, as well as the crisis of parliamentarism, became obvious. These phenomena, combined with the growing influence of the left, gave birth to a desire for «strong power» in the wealthy and middle classes. The desire to overcome «rotten liberalism» and to prevent the Russian scenario, which happened precisely in the «weak link» of the Western world, prompted the formation of classic elitist concepts that theoretically substantiated a kind of «natural

right» of the rich and noble to power. At the same time, each of their authors was a great thinker and sociologist, and the fact that their ideas were directly used by the fathers of Italian fascism should not lead to relying on R. Michels, G. Mosca, and V. Pareto as «black shirts».

G. Mosca (1858 – 1941), still at a young age, published in 1884 the work «Theory of Government and Parliamentary Government». It already contained the main provisions of classical elitism, but the Italian researcher did not use the term «elite», which has become established in modern socio-political science (it was introduced into science thirty years later by V. Pareto, which was the source of a dispute between these scientists about priority). «In any organized society», – Mosca wrote, researching mainly historical material, «political leadership is carried out by a minority» [6]. Mosca called it the «political class» or the «ruling class». The political class can rule by both democratic and authoritarian methods. The formation of the ruling strata takes place according to a set of qualities – prowess, wealth, priesthood, which give birth, respectively – to the military, financial and church aristocracy. Mosca called inheritance, elections or co-optation (replenishment with «fresh blood» from the middle classes acceptable to the rulers) as methods of formation of the «political class». Rejecting «black power», Mosca admits that either the middle classes or the aristocracy can rule. Mosca rejects liberalism and democracy precisely as the power of the middle class, which leads to the degeneration of the elite. Mosca examines the «rule formula», the political formula, i.e. the instrumental nature of power, talks about scientific politics, the use of exact science methods in sociology. In «The Ruling Class», Mosca argues, using the example of the Roman Senate, the Venetian nobles, and the English aristocracy, that the art of management – an important trait of statesmen – has always been more characteristic of the minority: the rich, influential, or educated. Thus, the hierarchy of priests, the religious system of either Brahmanical India or medieval Europe actually usurped, monopolized education, and prevented the spread of new knowledge. Alternation in society of tendencies towards stabilization and renewal of the «elite» class from the «low» class creates a certain rhythmic unfolding of the historical process. The «molecular renewal of the political class» persists until a new «period of social stability» arrives.

The creator of the term «elite» was another Italian thinker, who is also recognized as one of the founders of modern political sociology, V. Pareto (1848 – 1923). The phrase «Extravagant Etilist», which was given to him by the historian P. Rakhshmir. Pareto is an educational engineer, one of the creators of the theory of mathematical economics, a philosopher and a sociologist. He published his most famous works while working at the University of Lausanne (Switzerland). Among Pareto's contributions to social and political science are the justification of a systemic approach to politics, the creation of the theory of elites and the theory of ideology. Pareto's ideology, of course, under the influence of psychoanalytical and behaviorist concepts, is considered as a derivative of «residua» – a remainder (sensual, affective, unconscious sphere of the human psyche). Anticipating the future systemic and structural-functional approaches to society, Pareto rejects the ideological, normative and axiological view of politics and insists that it is only necessary to «provide maximum welfare for the majority through scientific efforts» [8]. According to Pareto, the political elite, like no other strata in society (which mostly has a conservative tendency), is characterized by the «combination instinct»: the ability to imagine and think creatively, to generate something new.

Pareto's position on the ruling class is formulated in his magnum opus, which he wrote for 4 years – «Treatise of General Sociology» (1916). He refers to this layer «individuals with the highest indicators in the sphere of social and political life» [5]. In his early works (before the 19th century), Pareto calls the execution of managers an aristocracy. But the inevitability of these two

strata (the elite and the governed) was formulated by Pareto even then. Pareto denies the classification of state forms by his colleague G. Mosca (city state – feudal state – bureaucratic state – representative state). But he agrees on the main thing – the recognition of the degeneration of the European elite («History is the graveyard of aristocracies», said Pareto, and the replacement of elites follows the principle of deterioration). Directly following N. Machiavelli, whose heirs, however, both Italian sociologists called themselves, Pareto divides the elite into lions (radicals, exponents of strong power) and foxes (tricksters who know how to flatter both the masses and opponents from the non-ruling elite). Moreover, most often «lions» come from natural selection. Pareto considered the European elite to be the kingdom of foxes («plutocratic demagogues»), and he saw overcoming total bureaucratization and mediocrity in the arrival of «lions» (just as M. Weber saw protection from bureaucracy in charismatic leadership). Pareto divided the elite into ruling and non-ruling elite. The first includes political leaders, the second includes people who have reached heights in the economy, science, and the spiritual sphere. In order to avoid the degeneration of the elite, it is necessary to replenish the ruling elite with the best representatives of the non-ruling elite. Modern socio-political science, using Pareto's idea of political (ruling) and non-ruling elites, usually speaks of «elite» and «counter-elite».

Pareto's «Treatise» is also interesting to us because in it Wilfredo expressed a speculative conclusion, saying that people who objectively do not meet the proposed standards can usurp the label of «elite».

R. Michels (1876 – 1936), a German scientist who accepted Italian citizenship at the invitation of the Duke of Italy B. Mussolini in 1926, developed the theory of oligarchy, which complements M. Weber's opinion about the inevitable general bureaucratization of industrial society. A complex social organization generates, accordingly, a complex organizational and management structure, in which the formation of a narrow ruling group is inevitable. The reluctance and inability of ordinary people to take responsibility, the need for professionalization and bureaucratization of management, the demand for stability of leadership inevitably give rise to oligarchy (the power of the few and, at the same time, the worst). According to Michels, the majority is only a pedestal for the rule of the minority, the oligarchy. «There is no contradiction between the doctrine according to which history is a process of continuous class struggle and the doctrine according to which the class struggle leads to the creation of a new oligarchy intertwined with the old one» [6], Michels wrote in 1991. Thus, Michels agreed with Marx in recognizing the importance of the factor of class struggle in the development of society. But he denied its role as a locomotive of progress. «Each revolution gives birth to a new oligarchy» – in this formulation, supporters of any radical transformations in our Motherland should remember Michels' «iron law of oligarchic tendencies».

Russian sociologist N. Ostrohirskyi (1854 – 1919). This author attributed them mainly to political parties, as structures created, regardless of ideological and political preferences, exclusively for the struggle for power. Parties are elitist-oligarchic structures that are responsible for the fact that parliaments have turned into a place of political battles, and not a representation of people's interests. All this was written almost a century before the battles in the State Duma at the turn of the millennium. Intellectual circles close to the Russian liberal party created at the beginning of the 20th century (later, the party of constitutional democrats) stood in the way of the publication of the Russian edition of Ostrogorsky's book, believing that such a harsh assessment of the activities of parties and party representation would hinder the struggle for constitutionalism. As we can see, the Bolshevik-style desire to silence one's opponents is nothing new for modern post-Soviet right-liberal politicians.

How many theories of elites were «located» at the current scientific stage? Next, we will talk about 4, but this list can be extended somewhat. Of course, the elitist (not stratification, i.e. class!) approach supplemented by the theory of social stratification, which is predominant in Western socio-political science, should be given prominence.

Several of the most common modern elitist concepts can serve as a basis for the typology and classification of theories of elitism:

- properties and characteristics of elites and their representatives;
- relations within the elite, the degree of its cohesion;
- methods and nature of relations between the elite and the masses;
- the role of the elite in society;
- methods and channels of recruiting (formation and replenishment) of the elite.

1) Machialist school. Representatives of this direction are based on the ideas of N. Machiavelli, most represented in «The Prince» and «Reflections on the First Decade of Titus Livius». G. Mosca and R. Michels are followed by supporters of this school (V. Pareto also considered himself a Machiavellian). The inevitable struggle between not always the best, but rich and influential strata for power over the «black» is a postulate of both the classics of elitism and neo-Machiavellianism (sometimes, especially when studying geopolitical processes, it is called political realism). Among modern Machiavellians, let's mention J. Burnham.

2) V. Pareto is sometimes attributed to the founders of the modernized, value-based, classical theory of elites, considering Moscow to be a pure Machiavellian. Pareto looked at the elites from the point of view of social and political anthropology, emphasizing that when the elite is «closed» to itself, refusing to replenish it with the best people from the non-ruling elite and the middle classes, the aristocracy degenerates (the best confirmation of this was the fate of the Russian nobility and the tsarist bureaucracy; then – communist nomenclature). N. Berdyaev, a wonderful representative of Russian emigre socio-philosophical thought, even formulated a kind of numerical criterion. If the elite is replenished from a broad layer of the upper and upper middle strata (5% of the population), then both society and the elite develop, and if from a narrow layer (1% of the population), then its transformation into a caste and degeneration is inevitable. This approach once again formulates the theory of meritocracy (the power of the best), known since antiquity (when aristocracy was called the power of the few, but the best and for the benefit of all). Among the founders and theoreticians of modern meritocracy, we can name the English sociologist M. Young, the influential American sociologist D. Bell, and T. Day, a representative of the neoconservative theory of elites.

3) A kind of left-liberal elitist concept was created immediately after the Second World War by the American scientist Charles Wright Mills (his follower was another American political scientist Ralph Miliband). Denying the Marxist, class approach and following, rather, the tradition of Michels-Ostrogorsky, C. W. Mills, a representative of the truly liberal (that is, free, protecting the rights and freedoms of every person) wing of the American intelligentsia, strongly criticizes the American elite as a cohesive and closed caste that expresses the interests of the financial and industrial oligarchy. Left-liberals consider the «commanding heights» occupied by representatives of the elite in society to be the main elitism characteristic.

4) But, apparently, the theory of democratic elitism (or the concept of pluralism of elites) prevails in Western science. Within the framework of the paradigmatic diversity natural to socio-humanitarian knowledge, a liberal approach (a classic of American socio-political behaviorism by H. Lasswell in the interwar years) and a structural-functional analysis (E. Holtman, S. Keller) coexist in it. The classics of democratic elitism, along with H. Lasswell, are J. Schumpeter and K.

Mannheim. With all the diversity of approaches, we will try to highlight the main thing that combines pluralistic and democratic concepts of elitism. The diversity of elites, political, party, and «pressure group» elites leads to the formation of an elite based on functional characteristics, and not on the basis of merit, position, nobility, or power. This makes it possible to largely overcome the «iron law of oligarchy», using free and competitive elections as a mechanism of mutual responsibility of elite groups to each other, each of them to voters, as well as the responsibility of citizens for their choices. The term «polyarchy», introduced by the American political scientist Robert Alan Dahl, is often used to characterize the political regime of modern countries. The concept itself, perhaps not too successfully (or multi-power, or the power of the many), is defined as the rule of a minority elected by the people in competitive elections, and is often used in modern Western literature. R. Dahl considers democracy as an ideal norm, and he proposes to consider real communities that claim to be democratic (both states and public organizations) as polyarchies. «In other words», writes V. Ivanytskyi, a modern researcher of the works of R. Michels, «political pluralism, inter-party struggle, and competition through power appear to be a well-known guarantee against the creation of an oligarchy» [6].

Let's try to typologize political elites. Of course, taking into account the complexity of the connotation of the «elite» category, but the researchers found a pattern that some elites differ from others mainly in their attitude to the ideal principles of elite recruitment and the corresponding axiological attitudes:

- some researchers believe that the real elite should be distinguished by the nobility of their origin;
- others include the country's richest people in this category;
- the third, who consider elitism a function of personal merits and advantages, are the most gifted representatives of society.

It is obvious that the upper layer of any modern society includes various political elite groups: economic, intellectual, professional.

The inevitable difference in people's abilities and aspirations, the need for professionalization and institutionalization of administrative work, the high importance of the latter for society, and a number of other factors inevitably lead to the formation of a ruling layer. Accordingly, it should be considered not only as a «caste» or a clan of people engaged in «dirty work», but also as a recruited, called by society, stratum, which has indisputable privileges and is endowed with great responsibility. The following types of elite classification are generally recognized:

- a) Classification of the ruling layer into elite and counter-elite;
- b) Ways of replenishing the elite, functional features of the society to which this elite group belongs, allow us to talk about open and closed elites;
- c) Hereditary and value elites differ according to the source of influence (origin, on the one hand, or status, functions, achievements, on the other);
- d) Different proportions of the combination of the most important stratification factors (income, status, education, professional prestige) among representatives of the upper and middle classes allows us to talk about the upper elite, which directly makes political decisions, and the middle elite, the upper part of the middle class.

While Western elites are, as a rule, oligarchic groups of owners, the replenishment of the elite of the USA and Western European countries comes precisely from the upper part of the middle class, mainly people of liberal professions who have diplomas and degrees from prestigious universities.

In the context of our problem, the issue of elite recruitment systems is at least one of the most important. Unlike professional elite communities, the political elite is an open system.

Civil society faces the task of forming, replenishing the elite, and continuous control over it. The criteria of the elite of a democratic society are its effectiveness, social and organizational representation, organization and integration (not casteism and corporatism, but cohesion both within the elite and the elite with civil society for successfully solving the tasks facing the country), horizontal (between the elites and within elites) and vertical (elite replenishment) mobility.

The most important forms of elite recruitment are the guild system and the entrepreneurial (entrepreneurial) system (the terms were introduced by the American political scientist B. Rokien). The characteristics of the guild system are a limited range of applicants for managerial positions, a large number of institutional filters (formal criteria), the decisive importance of the manager's opinion when appointing a position. Inevitably engendering casteism, unjustified privileges, low-grade patronage and careerism (the finished version of the guild system is the nomenclature system of our recent past), the guild system, at the same time, provides, under the condition of its effective application, professionalism, competence, responsibility. It is these criteria, in addition to personal devotion to superiors, which an applicant for a position that requires participation in decision-making must have. Abroad, the system of guilds prevails in the formation of the administrative bureaucracy (executive power apparatus), as well as the top and middle corps of managers in the private-corporate sector of the economy.

The entrepreneurial system is, first of all, the system of elections of self-government bodies and representative authorities, as well as the first persons of administrations of various levels, the system of elections in public organizations of various types, sometimes – elections for lower and middle positions in the private sector. In these cases, the circle of candidates for an elected position is very wide, the channels of getting into this circle are diverse, one of the important characteristics of a candidate for an elected position is his ability or the ability of a team of his assistants and advisers to create an image. An indisputable disadvantage of the entrepreneurial system is the need to combine different (and, quite often, that contradict each other and do not combine in one person) qualities in an applicant for a position:

- the ability to «sell oneself» as a socio-political «goods», on the one hand, and qualities necessary for any responsible person;
- the ability to make decisions, work with specific people, not the «electorate», competence and professionalism, on the other hand.

Conclusions. Tracing the development of the concepts of elitism in the history of sociological and political science, we come to the opinion that the main trend of their evolution was the shift of emphasis from stratification factors, from the provisions of the «natural hierarchy» of all communities, the inevitability of the selection in the social structure of the «ruling class» or «leading strata», etc., to institutional factors that arise from the functional characteristics of elites, bureaucratization and professionalization of socio-political management of public affairs. The rising theses of the classics G. Moska, V. Pareto, and V. Lypinsky were developed and concretized in the concepts of «caucus» by N. Ostrohorosky, «iron law of oligarchy» by R. Michels, managerial bureaucracy and «politics as a profession» by M. Weber. In the last quarter of the 20th century these trends led to the formation of the theory of democratic elitism, which combined the productive ideas of classical works and the sociological achievements of the analysis of modern social phenomena: the principles of civil society development, changes in the social structure and the role of mass political parties, the principles of corporatism and pluralism, as the basis of democratic consolidation.

The neo-elitist model of interpretation of the functioning of social mechanisms of power, social management, adoption and implementation of political decisions is based on conceptual provisions that do not contradict the principles of democracy, liberal freedoms and social justice. On the contrary, it is emphasized that intelligently determined activities of national elites can make a democratic system more democratic. Modern social studies of the processes of democratic transformation show that the constructive interaction of elites becomes a condition for the stability of the political system, and their autonomy becomes a condition for the development of democracy. Decentralization of control over various types of public resources – material, informational, scientific, administrative, symbolic, psycho-personal – will act as a guarantee against the usurpation of power, prevent abuse and corruption in power structures.

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