

DEFINITION OF A SUBJECT OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract. *The article considers the problem of defining the subject of political activity in the context of political transformation, which is an important component of the theoretical problem of political science. An analysis of various approaches and concepts to defining the subject of political activity, the differences between them, and a conceptual approach to defining the subject of political activity based on taking into account the main factors and their interrelationships is proposed. The author argues that it is possible to approach the definition of the subject of political activity only after defining the concept of «politics» and what meaning we put into this concept. Through consideration and analysis of existing approaches to defining the subject of political activity, the authors of the article proposed their own approach, which takes into account the main factors and the interrelationships between them. The proposed approach makes it possible to understand the complexity and diversity of subjects of political activity, and also allows us to understand that the definition of the subject of political activity should be based on a comprehensive analysis and take into account a number of factors.*

Keywords: *political subject, politics, political activity, political life, people's interests, social interests.*

Introduction. Understanding and explaining the nature of political relations, political activity, and their content constitutes the main theoretical problem of political science. One of the important aspects of this problem is the definition and understanding of the subject of political activity. In turn, the definition of the subject of political activity is inextricably linked with the concept of «politics.» In the future, we will consider and use the concepts of politics and political activity as concepts close in meaning.

There is a well-known comparison of politics with theater. Politics is a stage where a political performance full of conflicts and intrigues is played out with a multitude of actors - parties, leaders, groups. The clash between them constitutes the content of each episode of the political drama. The observers of a political performance are faced with the following questions: who is participating in it; what motives guide the participants; who is the hero and who is only a secondary participant; what are the hidden springs of the seemingly chaotic political struggle. To answer these questions, a comprehensive study is needed, one of the stages of which is to solve the problem of the subject of politics, that is, to determine the participants in the political process. In methodological terms, in our opinion, it is possible to approach the definition of the subject of politics only when we define the concept of «politics», with what meaning we put into this concept, and only from this we can determine the subject of political activity.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Most of the existing political science developments demonstrate the need for further development and improvement of methods for determining the subject of political activity. In general, recent research in the field of political

methodology shows that this is an urgent and complex problem. For example, from the point of view of the psychological aspect, the issue was considered by T. Andryushchenko, O. Dubas, N. Pribygolova, N. Kolesnikov, A. Ashurbenov, O. Lyknyk investigated the specifics of political science methodology. Tools for determining the subject of political activity were studied by V. Veretinsky, I. Balynsky, M. Borodchak.

The purpose of this work is to develop a scientific approach to defining the subject of political activity based on an analysis of existing approaches and concepts in this area.

Discussion/Results. The term «politics» refers to controversial concepts that cause discussions and disputes to this day. As a special sphere of human activity, the purpose of which is to orient social development in a direction favorable to man by defining common goals and agreed means of achieving them, politics arose more than two and a half millennia ago. However, since then, both the content of goals and the methods of achieving them have changed. The meaning of the term «politics» has also not remained unchanged. In its interpretations, certain properties of a given social phenomenon have always come to the fore, depending on the circumstances. Today, in political science, there are a large number of interpretations and definitions of politics, which are due to the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon itself and, accordingly, the complexity of its cognition. In this case, we will limit ourselves to analyzing three basic conceptual approaches to defining politics, which will allow us to look at the subject of politics from different angles. These will be functional, communicative and directive approaches.

In the functional approach, the essence of politics lies in the distribution of responsibilities and powers, subject to their coordination. Participants in political life perform strictly regulated roles, the division of which is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of politics and the preservation of the integrity of society.

The foundation of the system-functional tradition of considering politics was laid back in the era of antiquity by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato. The system-functional nature of the concept of politics presented in Plato's philosophy is due to the systemic nature of the hierarchy of being, which was depicted by the philosopher in his works «State» and «Politics» [1]. In the hierarchical structure presented in «State» as a model of an ideal socio-political system, each of the estates is inherent not only in a certain virtue, but also in a function. If we talk about the functions of rulers, then this is primarily management. Such a function is given by the wisdom of rulers as their main property and turns out to be decisive for the social order of an ideal state, at least in two respects.

First, it defines the characteristics of the state as a whole: «a state founded in accordance with nature would be entirely wise, thanks to a very small part of the population that stands at the head and governs, and its knowledge» [1, p. 190]. Political management is, thus, a system-forming function that ensures the implementation of certain plans and knowledge, the adoption of meaningful decisions and, thereby, the ordering of social reality.

Secondly, political governance, according to Plato, is associated with the implementation of a special kind of virtue - justice, which consists in designating and observing the measure of each estate - knowing its main occupation, place in the hierarchy, not violating the established division of labor. «With the growth and improvement of our state,» Plato pointed out, «it is necessary to provide all estates with the opportunity to have their share in the general prosperity in accordance with their natural data» [1, p. 199]. Politics therefore determines not only the qualitative specificity of society, but also the essential moments of the process of maintaining this specificity.

The functional specificity of politics presented in the «State» is revealed by a model created taking into account the critical understanding of the real socio-political experience of the Greek policies. In the dialogue «Politician» Plato complements this image with an analysis of politics as a special knowledge as a kind of intellectual art. Here, as in the «State», the philosopher proceeds from the fact that political art solves the problems of management, and management of large masses of people: a politician is a shepherd not of individuals, but of herds, engaged in the herd, joint improvement of people [2].

As we can see, both in terms of the analysis of politics as a society within the framework of a holistic model and in terms of its analysis as a special knowledge, Plato consistently implements a single, system-functional in its essence research paradigm. An important feature of this paradigm is the recognition of the fact that the subject of political activity (individual, community), on the one hand, has a specific nature and qualitative certainty and can change its characteristics, on the other hand, requires external influence, intervention, management [2, p. 177]. But the main acting subject remains the managerial elite.

In antiquity, politics was interpreted broadly – as social ethics, determining generally significant norms of behavior of buyers, a set of rules establishing relations between rulers and subjects. The need for these rules was dictated by the growing need to optimize social relations. The beginning of the communicative tradition of political analysis was laid by Aristotle, who characterized politics as a special communication for people. The specificity of such communication is that it is “not determined by a conscious decision, but depends on the natural aspiration” of the beings entering into it [4, p. 107]. The natural foundations of politics are also emphasized by Aristotle’s thesis about the political essence of a person, who can live exclusively within the framework of the state. These statements indicate that political existence was considered by Aristotle in the spirit of the Greek worldview tradition as an inseparable part of the existence of the surrounding world, as an organic part of the cosmic order. However, on the other hand, Aristotle emphasizes the supernatural, artificial moment of political communication: according to the *Politics*, it is oriented not to everyday needs, not to short-term goals, but to the goals of achieving a good life in accordance with virtue [4, p. 107-108]. In Aristotle we find an important clarification, according to which «state relations set as their goal not instant benefit, but benefit for all life as a whole» [4, p. 203]. As we can see, these are not only sublime, ideal-normative, strategic goals, but also fundamental goals, basic in their meaning and at the same time goals that are not devoid of practical utility. What is political communication in Aristotle’s understanding? Human communication, as the philosopher believes, is characterized by some universal phenomena, since «a kind of justice and friendship take place in all social relations in general» and are found between all people [4, p. 203]. The correction of «kind» here is not accidental: Aristotle especially highlights «state justice» and «state friendship», thereby emphasizing the specificity of the political, which is not reducible to either the legal or the moral principle. Noting how both justice and friendship characterize the relations of people within a certain community, Aristotle indicates that the goal of the political (state) community is common benefit, as opposed to private benefit as the goal of other, non-political communities [4, p. 203]. The essence of political communication for Aristotle is to preserve the foundations of sociality, its phenomenon looks like the achievement of general justice and benefit either through civil friendship or in the process of administering justice. The philosopher is not tempted by the prevalence of precisely such an image of politics among his contemporaries. «However, the task of politics,» he states, «most people probably consider despotic rule to be and do not hesitate to allow actions towards others that they do not consider to be fair or beneficial towards themselves» [4, p. 233].

Meanwhile, in Aristotle we find another description of the phenomenon of social relations, which is applied to political communication: ...if there is exchange, there will be social relations [4, p. 157]. Political communication as a mutually beneficial, fair, adequate exchange is an image that naturally and organically complements the images of civil friendship and public justice, as Aristotle understood them. A politician in the communicative paradigm is both a participant in the exchange and its mediator, that is, a person included in communication, and not outside it and above it. The task of a politician, as it is seen at the level of a phenomenon in Aristotle, is to identify and maintain the course of political interaction.

In the study of the communicative aspects of politics, an important role belongs to the theory of common means of interaction or symbolic mediators. According to this theory, politics is aimed at identifying the purpose of the community's existence, determining the common interests of all political subjects, developing general and binding rules of behavior for all, creating a language that is generally understandable for all subjects, which ensures effective interaction

and mutual understanding [5, p. 42].

Modern interpretations of the communicative concept of politics include the so-called «postmodern» understanding. The authors who developed in the 50s and 60s of the 20th century a view of politics as a system of communications and information flows include H. Arendt and K. Deutsch . The latest most famous constructions of the political sphere as a world of communications and communicative actions are associated with the names of J. Habermas and N. Luhmann . «The elements of society are communications. All communications,» says M. Luhmann , «occur only in society..., and each communication correlates with other communications» [6, p. 103]. J. Habermas notes that politics is reflected in a system of communicative actions that act as a chain of mediations (for example, in the relationship between capitalism and democracy), when the private and public spheres of society are communicated through such mediation mechanisms as money and power.

The communicative approach, being an expanded interpretation of politics, does not finally reveal the essence of the definition of politics. It is precisely because of its breadth of approach that it is quite difficult to define the subjects of political activity. Such an expansion puts at the center of political analysis, in addition to the traditionally studied political power, also various forms of political self-organization and communication of people. The communicative tradition of research is most optimal for considering and solving socio-philosophical problems of interaction between society and politics. A broad, comprehensive vision of political interaction within the framework of the communicative paradigm creates favorable opportunities for complementarity, and subsequently for the synthesis of different approaches in understanding the concept of the political, but this recently for defining the subject of political activity.

Proponents of the directive approach consider politics as an activity of leadership and management of social processes using mechanisms of power. The definition of politics through power is the most common in the political science literature. Typical, for example, statements in which politics is «the activity of individuals, micro- and macrogroups, which is aimed at establishing and maintaining political power» [7]. Sometimes in such definitions of politics, the emphasis is placed on state power as the most important form of public power: «Politics is a special type of human activity associated with obtaining and exercising power, primarily state power» [8, p. 7]. The identification of politics with relations regarding state power, its organization, distribution, and direction of activity allows us to imagine the content of the political sphere quite specifically.

One of the authors of this approach and the most famous concept of politics as a sphere of human and social activity in the 20th century, which influenced the main developments of modern models of political life, is associated with the works of the German sociologist M. Weber. The question of politics was raised by M. Weber in the lecture «Politics as a vocation and profession», read in 1918 before the audience of the Free Student Union. «What do we understand by politics?» - raises the question M. Weber. And he answers: «This concept has an extremely broad meaning and covers all types of activities of independent management. Speaking about the currency policy of banks, about the discount policy of the Imperial Bank, about the policy of a trade union during a strike; we can talk about the school policy of an urban or rural community and the policy of a board that manages a corporation, finally, even about the policy of a smart wife who seeks to manage her husband» [7, p. 644]. However, M. Weber notes that a strict definition of the category of «politics» is necessary. Weber believes that politics is a branch of social relations concerning power, «the aspiration to participate in power or to influence the distribution of power, whether between states or within a state between groups of people that it contains» [7, p. 646].

The main idea of Weber's theory is that politics is a special type of human activity, is, on the one hand, an enterprise as an apparatus of legitimate rule, and on the other - a specific professional activity that permeates all of social life. Society and people are divided depending on their place in this general social «enterprise» into:

- 1) «politicians on occasion» (for example, voters);
- 2) «part-time politicians» (party activists for whom politics is not yet their main field of

activity);

3) «professional politicians» (statesmen, officials, dismissed party functionaries, etc.).

Thus, according to M. Weber, politics as a sphere of public life is formed only with the emergence of the state administrative apparatus as the «headquarters of the political enterprise» of the entire society, as well as with the separation of managerial activity into a special profession of people associated with the control and distribution of power.

The definition of politics through power is inherent in many thinkers: M. Machiavelli, U. Pareto, D. Marx, Lenin and others. In our opinion, the directive approach to the definition of politics and the political reveals this phenomenon better than other approaches and concepts. Will anyone deny that politics, having many approaches to defining its essence, is somehow connected with the phenomenon of power in all its aspects. However, such definitions do not reflect the essence and social purpose of politics. Applying them, we have a question - what is the meaning of political power, whose interests does it reflect? The subjects of politics in the directive concept are only those who are connected with power and belong to it, and these will be representatives of the state apparatus and the political elite. In this case, what kind of democracy and democratic principles of state building can we talk about? Power, by which politics is defined, is not a goal, but only a means of politics, with the help of which certain social goals are achieved. The most common of such goals is the satisfaction of the interests and needs of individuals and social communities. Both state bodies, political parties, and interest groups are mechanisms for expressing and implementing public interests. Therefore, the directive definition of policy requires some addition [9].

In our opinion, just as politics cannot be interpreted broadly and identified in fact with social activity, so it is impossible to reduce the entire content of politics to relations between classes in relation to power. For all the ambiguity of the concept of «politics», it nevertheless reflects a special sphere of people's life, associated with power relations, the state, political parties, socio-political movements, organizations, individual citizens, whose actions are designed to guarantee the viability of a particular society, the realization of their will, interests and needs. The essence of political relations lies precisely in the fact that these are relations that arise between participants in social communities in the course of their realization of their individual, group and common interests and require the use of state coercion. This is the whole originality of political relations in comparison with other types of social relations, their specificity as a form of activity, organization of people. Any social problem becomes political in nature if it is related to the interests of social groups or society as a whole and requires the use of coercive means, such as the state, for its solution.

Accordingly, politics in the proper sense of the word can be defined as a sphere of activity associated with the realization of the needs and interests of individuals, social groups, classes, nations, and society as a whole through the conquest, retention, and use of state power. Any politics, ultimately, is the interaction between people, accompanied by their differentiation and consolidation regarding the possession of power. It is the needs and interests of people and social groups that encourage them to participate in politics and to fight for the possession of the means of power.

Conclusions. Summarizing the above, we can define the subject of political activity. The subject of politics, thus, is a specific historical carrier of various political activities aimed at gaining, protecting and using political power in order to realize social interests. The subject of politics is a carrier of active, purposeful action. The driving force of politics is the interests of people, certain social communities, groups, nations, etc. These interests are expressed and protected by parties, socio-political organizations, representative bodies of the state. Without interest, politics is dead. We can say that in politics there are no eternal enemies and eternal friends, but there are eternal interests. The objective basis of interest is needs, and of all needs, economic ones are the most decisive. Therefore, behind various initiatives and actions of political subjects, interests are openly or disguised. Based on the extent to which a country's strategic political course expresses the fundamental interests of the broad masses of the people, national interests, politics can be considered popular or anti-popular, national or anti-national.

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პოლიტიკური აქტივობის სუბიექტის განმარტება პოლიტიკური ტრანსფორმაციის კონტექსტში

აბსტრაქტი

სტატიაში განხილულია პოლიტიკური საქმიანობის სუბიექტის განსაზღვრის პრობლემა პოლიტიკური ტრანსფორმაციის კონტექსტში, რაც პოლიტიკური მეცნიერების თეორიული პრობლემის მნიშვნელოვანი კომპონენტია. შემოთავაზებულია პოლიტიკური საქმიანობის სუბიექტის განსაზღვრის სხვადასხვა მიდგომებისა და ცნებების ანალიზი, მათ შორის განსხვავებები და კონცეპტუალური მიდგომა პოლიტიკური საქმიანობის სუბიექტის განსაზღვრისათვის, ძირითადი ფაქტორების და მათი ურთიერთდამოკიდებულების გათვალისწინების საფუძველზე. ავტორი ამტკიცებს, რომ პოლიტიკური საქმიანობის სუბიექტის განსაზღვრასთან მიახლოება შესაძლებელია მხოლოდ „პოლიტიკის“ ცნების განსაზღვრის შემდეგ და რა მნიშვნელობას ვანიჭებთ ამ კონცეფციას. პოლიტიკური საქმიანობის სუბიექტის განსაზღვრის არსებული მიდგომების განხილვისა და ანალიზის შედეგად სტატიის ავტორებმა შემოგვთავაზეს საკუთარი მიდგომა, რომელიც ითვალისწინებს ძირითად ფაქტორებს და მათ შორის არსებულ ურთიერთკავშირს. შემოთავაზებული მიდგომა შესაძლებელს ხდის გავიგოთ პოლიტიკური საქმიანობის სუბიექტების სირთულე და მრავალფეროვნება, ასევე გვაძლევს საშუალებას გავიგოთ, რომ პოლიტიკური საქმიანობის სუბიექტის განსაზღვრა უნდა ეფუძნებოდეს ყოვლისმომცველ ანალიზს და გაითვალისწინოს მთელი რიგი ფაქტორები.

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