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## **STUDYING MASS POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND BEHAVIOR: LESSONS FROM THE FIRST MONOGRAPH**

The article presents the retrospective analysis of the content of collective monograph “Psychology of Mass Political Consciousness and Behavior”, published in 1997. The results of the research are examined in connection with the current socio-political processes in Ukraine. Particular attention is paid to the model of political and semantic space of the Ukrainian society which was an effective tool to generalize the peculiarities of mass political consciousness development and formed the basis of the 20 year-long monitoring. The course of events has confirmed a number of findings made in the book: the characteristics of mass consciousness maturation; division of Ukraine into nine political and ideological regions; the differences between the political and ideological positions of the main social and demographic groups; the psychological factors of social tension in Crimea and Donbas; strengthening the tendencies to ideological pluralism; weakening identification with the state; formation of the Russian-speaking citizens’ Ukrainian patriotism. At the same time, it is stated that previously discovered psychological advantage of official position influence on mass consciousness becomes less actual gradually. Four scenarios of the society development presented in mass consciousness by then and their actual implementation at a later period have been considered.

*Key words:* mass political consciousness and behavior, model of political and semantic space of the Ukrainian society, reform and anti-reform attitudes, anti-Russian and pro-Russian attitudes, scenarios of society development

Laboratory of Mass Psychology and Communities (initially Laboratory of and Masses and Organizations) was created as one of the first two academic Institute’s divisions (Scientific and Practical Center of Political Psychology then). The first subject of laboratory research performed in 1994-1996 was “Scientific and Methodological Backgrounds of Social Psychological Trends Analysis and Forecast in Social and Political Life of Ukraine”.

The first monograph in the Institute was the result of the research carried out. It was published in 1997 and revealed conditions and content of mass political consciousness in Ukraine at that time. Psychological, economic and ideological determinants of social tension in social and political life, social and psychological aspects of political parties were revealed [2]. Today, after almost two decades of Ukrainian society development, mass consciousness and political psychological science addressing our data and

conclusions is of great scientific and historical interest. It is interesting to verify if combination of our logic and intuition in the study of mass consciousness proved the importance of information written in the book of O. Donchenko [ibid, p. 6]), and can help us to understand up-to-date social and political processes.

The pattern of political and semantic space of modern Ukrainian society is one of the most notable achievements of the study described in the book. (A fundamental contribution to its development was made by Kalachnikova L.) [ibid. 42-60]. The pattern appeared to be a very effective tool for content and dynamic characteristics generalization of mass political consciousness since 1994 until today and reflected monitoring results throughout 20-years (Fig. 1).

The pattern is based on two important vectors underlined from the content of respondents' perceptions about public and political life of society. These vectors competed with each other for social and psychological significance in different periods of time. Sometimes they yielded to the third (relation to the state power). The name of the first vector "reform – anti-reform" attitudes was successfully defined from the very beginning. The second one was not defined. Obviously, that was due to its significant value: we mean the attitudes (and opposition) to everything Ukrainian and Russian; it begins from the language, and goes to the problems of independence, history, culture, mental contents and symbols, political orientations, etc. We called patriotic, pro-Ukrainian, state, anti-Russian the appropriate attitudes at one side of the scale, and pro-or anti-state on the other side.

*Figure 1. Dynamics of Ukrainian citizens' mass political consciousness in the period of 1994-2013.*

The name of "anti-Russian – pro-Russian" attitudes, reflecting an extremely high level of influence on Ukrainians' mass consciousness actually "Russian" factor seems to be the most appropriate today. (For example, that factor was mentioned to be the most significant one affecting voting results during elections and referendums [ibid, p. 64]. Such a pattern was observed for many times during the survey as a greater actualization factor in the election period. Mass consciousness was shown to differentiate easier national independence problems, the ones of language, attitudes towards Russia rather than economic and even ideological issues. That's why citizens are strongly guided by pro or anti-Russian positions of political power rather than by their economic slogans.

Annual generalization of mass political consciousness is represented in the pattern. The nature of data dissemination for the first three years gave reasons for making the optimistic conclusion that the development of Ukrainian population political consciousness is characterized by gradual but

steady transition from the left and left-of-center (communist-socialist, anti-reform, pro-Russian) to centrist and right-of-center (national-democratic, reformist and patriotic) attitudes. However, it appeared to be more difficult (and more interesting) [1; 5]. Public consciousness development in 1994-2013 consisting of five cycles is represented in the pattern.

The *first cycle* is related to the period of 1994-1997. In 1994 in the beginning mass attitudes were predominantly left-of-center. And later in 1995-1996 a marked shift to the right was noticed. But no significant changes were observed in 1997.

The beginning of the *second cycle* (1998-2003) is characterized by the sharp shift to the left in 1998 (in particular, it was reflected in parliamentary elections of that time). The society remained at the same place for the next two years and on the same position in the left side of the political spectrum. In 2001 a sharp but short transition to the right was recorded. Positive results for the mass consciousness of pro-Ukrainian government of Viktor Yushchenko probably were considered the most obvious reason. Later there was a regress to the left in 2002. And the lack of measurable change saws noticed in 2003.

The *third cycle* was characterized by the significant turning point in 2004. It marked political transition of the society to the right. It found manifestation in the “Orange” Revolution and Yushchenko's presidentship. In 2005 the situation became more expressive.

However ineffective and unpopular right-to-center politics of the “orange” government caused the reverse effect. It was *the fourth cycle*. A significant shift of the society to the left was seen in 2006-2009. Mass attitudes were actually back to the level of 1994.

*The fifth cycle*. However, the actions of the next government, under the rule of Viktor Yanukovich, were not completely effective. That was the reason of appearing the opposite trends in the mass consciousness in 2010-2013. Society clearly took right positions, especially in anti-Russian feelings.

Thus, we should state government efforts aiming at certain direction caused inverse effect of the expected: mass wishes turned to the opposite direction to the one declared by the state power. It was due to government's low popularity.

An important property of mass political consciousness was found in the research report i.e. ambivalence. It is based on the significant mismatch between citizens' conscious proclaimed views and their unconscious posture [2, p. 47-49]. Up to 20% of respondents could give rather contradictory answers even in the same questionnaire. It depended on the content and description of the problems. For many times it had been an important reason

for unexpected fluctuations in Ukrainian mass opinion and sometimes it was leading to dramatic changes in social development.

Despite our optimistic expectations these fluctuations were growing rather than weakening. Mass consciousness was constantly changing; danger of social and political disaster became evident, especially after the events of 2004.

The lack of pro-Russian anti-reform, anti-Russian parties in the policy of the contemporary Ukraine seems to be important [ibid. 65]. There are reasons to believe that the Party of Regions tried to represent pro-Russian reforms and was successful in it for some time. However, its leaders' corruption outweighed reform intentions, and it led to the political forces collapse. The political party "Batkivshchyna" ("Motherland") was anti-reform, anti-Russian (national-communist) power. The image of its leader was the best in representing the specific features of the power. But the mentioned party lost its popularity because of political debates with the opponents.

Differences between political and ideological positions of the main social demographic groups, preserved mostly during the whole period of monitoring are described in the monograph. Ethnic Ukrainians, the youth, students and entrepreneurs tend to the right policy (reforms, anti-Russian). The left (anti-reform, pro-Russian) views are represented mostly by ethnic Russians, people of the older generation of retirees and workers. Political views of middle-aged, agricultural workers, service workers, housewives are closer to the center. Groups of respondents are arranged logically according to their income level: poor (left), rich (right) [ibid. 53-60].

Regional differences were revealed significantly and situation didn't change until today [ibid. 50-53].

The division of Ukraine into nine political and ideological regions offered in the monograph confirmed its practical reasonability for many times. In 1990s and during the "Orange" revolution in 2004 reform and especially patriotic views were spreading from Galychyna and Kyiv to other Western regions and then to the Center, and later to the North East. South-eastern regions opposed them according to the laws of polarization. However, the next decade is characterized by significant mental Ukrainianization: Ukrainian patriotism (often represented in the Russian-speaking communities) has increased significantly in the South and East, and it was less significant in the Crimean peninsula and in the Donbas region.

European Maidan in 2013-2014 was supported mostly in the central-northern and western regions, but it led to significant public opposition in the southeast. Pro-Ukrainian unions won in the most oblasts of Ukraine. We could win in the Donbas, if there was no Russian military intervention. In-

stead, the annexation of the Crimea is also a result of the Russian invasion; as well as a consequence of the relative predominance of pro-Russian people in the peninsula (actually it was not so big, as represented in the data of so-called “referendum”).

Pro-Russian dominance over the two decades of the development of Ukraine proved to be that decisive factor in the most complicated situation in the Crimea and the Donbas. Neither Crimea, nor Donbas was the object of special attention in the frames of our survey. But some of its parts were carried out based on the material of these regions.

It is interesting to see today which of the specific features became more important later were of use or weren't. For example, the inhabitants of the Crimea were noticed to have reform attitudes among representatives of all the south-eastern regions. That could be the psychological background for appearing pro-Ukrainians on the peninsula [ibid. 53]. Unfortunately, none of the governments of the previous presidents (Kuchma, Yushchenko, Yanukovych) paid attention to that phenomenon.

The level of respondents' anxiety of their social demographic and political ideological characteristics was defined in our research. [ibid. 109-111]. A. Tymchenko found that dependence according to the three parameters during interviewing the representatives of the Crimean peninsula.

*First*, the anxiety proved to be significantly higher among the non-Tatar population rather than among the Crimean Tatars. Obviously, it was easier for the Tatars to cope with emotions considering the positive changes in the fate of their ethnic group. Most of the Crimean Tatars returned to their historical homeland and got positive perspectives of living in the Crimean peninsula. Instead non-Tatar people were worried and concerned about their future. Prospects for development of a community in the Crimea as a part of Ukraine were unreliable and sad. State policy of the three powers concerning the Crimean Russian-speaking population of the next years did not give grounds for worrying. That is the reason for it to be almost disloyal to Ukraine.

*Second*, the left, anti-reform and pro-Russian had higher level of anxiety in the Crimea and throughout the country compared with the right. It can be explained by the dominance of unattractive trends of changing society attitudes at that time to the right. We guess that society changes to the left caused constant anxiety increasing in the both parts of politics and ideology.

*Third*, anxiety level depended on public perception of mass protests. In case of no mass protests, the highest anxiety had respondents considering such actions as neutral or uncertain i.e. they were worried mostly without being biased in question causing protests. Instead, people with neutral or uncertain position showed relatively lower anxiety level in Theodosia and

the surrounding area where mass protests study took place just before the research was carried out. Experience in protests together with assertive position assists people in overcoming the tendency of anxiety.

Reasons for social psychological loss of Ukraine in the Crimean peninsula are given in the research. Those are: wasted opportunities of attempts to converse Crimean population to loyalty to the Ukrainian values, ignoring Crimean Tatars pro-Ukrainian position, lack of interest in real needs and attitudes of the Russian-speaking population, non-considering his anxiety. As a result, most of the Russian-speaking population of the Crimean peninsula considered Russia as the one for solving their problems and renewing “the Russian peace”.

Speaking about Donbas psychological factors of social tension were studied in our article. In particular, a survey of inhabitants of the town of Stakhanov, Lugansk region (a typical settlement of Donbas region) was made by A. Levtsun. [ibid. 95-104]. Satisfaction with life was considered one of the factors. In general data obtained from that survey can be applied to the inhabitants of any region. For example, they reveal that personal satisfaction and good financial situation influence the level of satisfaction with life. Obviously there is nothing unexpected in it. But however residents’ sense of superiority over the representatives of other regions should be mentioned. Real or imaginary higher level of financial security in the region was combined with the conviction that Donbas “feeds all the country”. So inhabitants of the region believed in their key role in the country.

The second factor, worth considering is that people who blame mafia for the low standard of living prevailing in the country have higher satisfaction level with their lives. Mafia was then a kind of an invisible enemy, focusing the main negative attitude. It seems that later, when Donetsk mafia in fact gained real power in the region, and in the country, the image of the enemy was transferred to someone else i.e. in conditions of deteriorating political opposition to adherers of Bandera, in particular to the semi-myth “Right sector”.

The next interesting phenomenon refers to the age differences. Youth was found to have less pro-Ukrainian conscious position in conscious expressions of citizens of all ages than representatives of other age groups. Instead, youth position was more patriotic. This phenomenon of conscious and unconscious positions mismatch was described as follows: “the youth has no idea of its own pro-Ukrainian position to be stronger than the one of the older citizens” [ibid. 53].

The youth of that time is today’s middle age generation which is the most active in social and political aspects and obviously is very pro-Ukrainian. So what happened to the fixed gap between the conscious and unconscious views of the Ukrainian youth of that time? We can guess that

dependence revealed was one of the manifestations of shaping modern Russian-Ukrainian patriotism. (Its features are described in an interesting way by M. Slyusarevskiy [4]). In 1990 pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian opposition was defined by the language, later this confrontation decreased slightly, although it is still significant. (There is more information about Russian-language community in Ukraine in our last collective monograph [3]). That's why the youth that 20 years ago was more Russian-speaking compared to middle and senior generations. In its conscious evaluations it "logically" preferred pro-Russian values but gradually pro-Ukrainian values got partially Russian-designed. That is why it became easier for Russian-speaking people to identify with them.

Differences between the main ethnic groups' views: ethnic Ukrainians, ethnic Russians and other small variety of groups are reflected in the pattern.

The Ukrainians and the Russians have the highest distinction in the "Russian" vector. The Ukrainians are naturally more pro-Ukrainian, the Russians are more pro-Russian. Representatives of other ethnic groups naturally are in the intermediate position between the Ukrainians and the Russians [2, p. 53, 56, 57]. However, it is remarkable that earlier they were closer to the Russians, and now they are closer to the Ukrainians. (Like a group of Russian-speaking Ukrainians previously tending to Russians, and now their position has shifted to Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians).

Ethnic differences are less noticed, but still significant in the reforms. There is an interesting fact: the Russians whose education level and material support are higher than the one of Ukrainians could tend to reforms, but they steadily behind in this respect. Focus on the Russian is obvious to be associated significantly with the Soviet rejection of market-capitalist relations and ideological pluralism.

But the group of "others" has gradually stepped on the most reform position. There is rather obvious explanation. Members of this group focus all their interests on gaining material wealth, they identify themselves partially with Ukrainians but not with the Soviet or the Russian.

The attitude to power is an important factor in the Ukrainians' mass consciousness differentiation. This vector had always been in third or fourth position by the role. Recently especially during the presidency of Viktor Yanukovich it appeared to be the most important one. The words that Yanukovich had united the country were setting the majority of citizens against themselves; those were not empty words. Thus we can say that our conclusions about the official political position to be a priori psychological advantage in influencing public consciousness [ibid. 66-67] is not up-to-date. Indicators of political attitudes after 2004 (as abovementioned) proved it. The influence of the official power apparently is important for individu-

als and groups of lower civil and political positions. But their problem and the one of the power is that as a rule these individuals and groups are passive in social and political life; they are neither against the government, nor protect it.

Nowadays the conclusion about Ukrainian citizens' mass consciousness maturation seems to be of great importance [ibid. 45-46]. Some attributes of this process, of which we could guess as the one taking place were observed at that time. But that process was not so clear to be stated for sure. Our pattern showed that all the way to the maturation was confusing and inconsistent. But in general we can assume that Ukrainians' mass consciousness had a very complicated maturing way and it became ahead of the state power, and the party elite.

Ukrainians' level of distrust in the state was found to be higher than the one of Russians, but identification turned out to be weaker in the researches of N. Hazratova about the unconscious in the person's attitude to the state. As a result of three ethnic groups' comparison (Ukrainian, Russian and Uzbek) Russian identification relations with the state were the strongest, Ukrainians have the weakest ones, and Uzbeks are identified strongest with the authorities [ibid. 69-71, 78-81]. This gives reason to explain Ukrainian more active neglecting of government (especially during both Maidans) compared to the Russians' contrast consolidation around their power and government.

Two opposite characteristics were found by O. Baryshpolets in the trends in the ideological pluralism. Ukrainian citizens were just trying to accustom to it. On the one hand, it is a painful perception of the fact of ideologies plurality, caused by reaction to the long hyper-ideology, fatigue of the crisis and aversion to the politics. But on the other hand, Ukrainian mentality as a positive factor of pluralism: tolerance, prudence, calmness predominance over temper, categoricity over irony [ibid. 137-138]. Perhaps these latter features helped our society to keep the relative peace for a long time and as was noted by O. Baryshpolets and M. Mylinevskiy, created favorable psychological background for development of the multiparty system in Ukraine [ibid. 149-156].

Another conclusion of O. Baryshpolets refers to the lifetime of the party as a political union. A party exists in the society until there are complex values that are the basis for party's activity. "The party can be prohibited; people involved in its activity can be destroyed physically. However, the real term of the party death can be under conditions when the society completely loses of need in ideological values professed by the party" [ibid. 140]. This idea appears to be the most appropriate for the Communist Party in up-to-date Ukraine. Activation requirements for its prohibition reflect strengthening right attitudes in the society. But only the lack of the pro-



Communist ideas in the citizens' minds would mean a real political death of the party. (And it is hardly possible: the ideas of communism are unfortunately immortal). It's important to get rid of the "leader" in the mind rather than overthrow the monuments to Lenin.

Four basic scenarios of society development existing in the public consciousness at that time were described at the end of the monograph [ibid. 157-159].

"Protest-left" was recognized the most common and most likely one. Its role was in strengthen mass discontent, growing social tension, aggravating social contradictions, lack of faith in the political means of solving problems, political apathy and electoral passivity of the population.

"Politically centrist" is the second scenario reflecting hopes for the peaceful way out of the crisis, social understanding by means of the elite, gradual establishment of market economy and state independence.

"Politically radical" is the third scenario of going out of the crisis. It had to consist in the political and ideological polarization of society, destructive activity growth, and extreme political movements' intensification.

"Economic-democratic" was the most attractive but the least possible. It was focused on the economic reforms and development, social protection, stress reduction, democratic values promotion, national renaissance.

The way of Ukraine over these years reflect varying degrees of all four scenarios implementation, and almost in the same order as they were described. Low effectiveness of the "left" protests pushed society to the "centrist" attempts to develop. However, the lack of the proper state experience and political elites thinking as well as corrupt habits caused failures along the way as well as radicalization. The latter was represented mostly in Maidans and their positive and negative consequences. The most attractive "democratic" scenario has not prevailed yet, but was only manifested in certain features. However, its time seems to have come right now.

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