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Pathologies of post-soviet political choice and possible recipes for their overcoming

The article examines the process of political choice, its features and components in the post-Soviet domain, the role of the political choice in two interrelated dimensions of political interaction: politics and policy. Firstly, in the struggle of individual and collective political actors for votes in the electoral process. Secondly, in the process of public administration, where the choice is an important component of political decision-making. It is noted that the post-Soviet model of political choice is characterized by certain pathologies originating from the Soviet period: formation of the "party of power", centralization, orientation of the informational influence "top – down", lack of the dialogue and traditions of parliamentary debate, populism. Among the newest political choice pathologies the mediatization of politics and the emergence and development of mediocracy are observed. In the globalized environment the informational space becomes an arena of political infighting and the mediatization of politics threatens the subordination of political debate and the broad political dialogue in visual media format, especially – TV. It is well-reasoned that one of the possible ways of overcoming the political choice pathologies is rationalization of the electoral process and public administration. Using the theory of public choice, the recipes of facilitating of rational choice model formation in the public domain are stipulated. The rationalization recipes include: the necessity of debate implementation as the element of the parliamentary activity and the electoral process, the determination of its rules based on the scientific model of argumentative discussion and the transfer of these rules to the media space and everyday lives of citizens.

Key words: political choice, post-Soviet politics, mediatization, political debates, rationalization of choice.

У статті розглядається процес політичного вибору, його особливості та компоненти в пострадянському просторі, роль політичного вибору в двох взаємопов'язаних аспектах політичної взаємодії: політології та політики. По-перше, у боротьбі індивідуальних і колективних політичних суб'єктів для голосів у виборчому процесі. По-друге, у процесі державного управління, у якому вибір є важливим компонентом прийняття політичних рішень. Варто зазначити, що пострадянська модель політичного вибору характеризується певними патологіями, які походять від радянського періоду: формуванням «партії влади», централізацією, орієнтацією інформаційного впливу «зверху – вниз», відсутністю діалогу й традиції парламентських дебатів, популізмом. Серед новітніх патологій політичного вибору можемо назвати медіатизацію політики, появу й розвиток медіакратії. В умовах глобалізації інформаційний простір стає ареною політичної боротьби, тому медіатизація політики загрожує підпорядкуванням політичної дискусії й широкого політичного діалогу у візуальному форматі засобами масової інформації, особливо телебаченням.

Таким чином, одним із можливих шляхів подолання політичного вибору патологій є раціоналізація виборчого процесу та державного управління. Використовуючи теорію суспільного вибору, передбачаємо шляхи полегшення раціонального формування вибору моделі в суспільному надбанні. Шляхи раціоналізації включають у себе необхідність впровадження дебатів як елемента парламентської діяльності та виборчого процесу, визначення їх правил, заснованих на науковій моделі аргументації обговорення й передачі цих правил у медіа-просторі та повсякденному житті громадян.

Ключові слова: політичний вибір, пострадянська політологія, медіатизація, політичні дебати, раціоналізація вибору.

В статье рассматривается процесс политического выбора, его особенности и компоненты в постсоветском пространстве, роль политического выбора в двух взаимосвязанных аспектах политического взаимодействия: политологии и политики. Во-первых, в борьбе индивидуальных и коллективных политических субъектов для голосов в избирательном процессе. Во-вторых, в процессе государственного управления, в котором выбор является важным компонентом принятия политических решений. Следует отметить, что постсоветская модель политического выбора характеризуется определенными патологиями, происходящими от советского периода: формированием «партии власти», централизацией, ориентацией информационного влияния «сверху – вниз», отсутствием диалога и традиции парламентских дебатв, популизмом. Среди новейших патологий политического выбора можно назвать медиатизацию политики, появление и развитие медиакратии. В условиях глобализации информационное пространство становится ареной политической борьбы, поэтому медиатизация политики угрожает подчинением политической дискуссии и широкого политического диалога в визуальном формате средствами массовой информации, особенно телевидением. Таким образом, одним из возможных путей преодоления политического выбора патологий является рационализация избирательного процесса и государственного управления. Используя теорию общественного выбора, предусматриваем пути облегчения рационального формирования выбора модели в общественном достоянии. Пути рационализации включают в себя необходимость внедрения дебатв как элемента парламентской деятельности и избирательного процесса, определение их правил, основанных на научной модели аргументации обсуждения и передачи этих правил в медиа-пространстве и повседневной жизни граждан.

Ключевые слова: политический выбор, постсоветская политология, медиатизация, политические дебаты, рационализация выбора.

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In the discourse of national political science a well-developed system of rational argumentation for the implementation of the ambitious project – the transition from the post-Soviet politics to the democratic political interaction – was formed. Mainstream political actors publically call themselves democrats, under the idea of democracy almost all the political parties, projects and organizations are placed, except explicit fringes. But democracy, paraphrasing Soviet propagandists, is still “on the horizon” it remains the matter of faith.

The study of political choice in this article is focused on two processes: electoral and administrative. In the case of electoral choice the main actor is a citizen, and in public politics – government officials, who are organized, able to determine the agenda of public life, legal and procedural terms of political choice, including the electoral one.

During the political changes of the last decades in the political framework well-organized groups that have access to power, economic, informational and political resources of impact and try to monopolize this framework, were formed. Such groups have no rational reasons to consider the thoughts of unorganized or less organized social groups and the society as the whole. In this respect, the choice of an autocrat is not much different from choosing an oligarchic form of administration. The logic of the autocrat, like the oligarchy, involves neglecting public interest, concerns about the retention of power (in the context of autocracy, it also applies to solving the problem of inheritance) and maximization of its own resources.

The interconnection of the electoral process and the governance is especially apprehensible for countries that are at the stage of democratization. Election campaigns really enhance the increase of legitimacy of the public administration, but not always ensure the efficiency in solving social problems. Permanent changes in the electoral legislation, the opaque financing of election campaign, the use of the administrative resource etc. prevent the consolidation of democracy, the trust in government institutions and the consolidation of Ukrainian society.

In political theory two basic approaches to the interpretation of the phenomenon of political choice are developed: “existential” and “marketing”. The first one relates to the philosophical tradition of existentialism and connects choice with freedom (the freedom of choice), responsibility (the responsibility for selection), suffering and fear. The situation of choosing is the time of the highest tension of spiritual and physical forces of an individual, which happens several times during his life (or does not take place at all), has a fundamental moral character and means “either ... or”. The second approach, on the contrary, emphasizes the “commonplace” and triviality of the phenomenon of choice, which is primarily associated with the needs of an individual, services and goods.

The choice in this case moves to a public domain, appears as an important part of public administration, decision-making in management, realization of political interests.

In the contemporary political discourse, the image of “Knight at the Crossroads”, which illustrated the situation of choice, is changed to the model of “Man with a remote control” (or another gadget) who “turns over” channels, websites, computer games, services, goods, parties, leaders, ideologies. A modern citizen has a lot of choice options that can either be alternative or can not.

One of the major controversies related to political choice is that the topics, which draw people’s attention during an election campaign, are usually different from the variety of problems which must be solved in the process of public administration. This creates the conditions for the emergence of pathologies that are defined as “ugly, abnormal deviation from the norm” [5]. As post-Soviet political process convincingly demonstrates, the pathologies of political choice are often quite well “disguised” under the norm, as in the post-Soviet societies there was no public discussion and reflection of latent individual and collective attitudes, desires and expectations, which constitute the basis for public legitimating of power.

The discrepancy between electoral and post-electoral logic in the actions of politicians leads to the loss of voters’ trust, the public attitude to politics as a “dirty business”. But from the functional point of view – to the percentage fall in citizens’ turnout to the polls that during five parliamentary election campaigns has fallen by almost 13% (from 70,8% in 1998 to 57,9% in 2012).

H. Kolbech notes that regarding public politics there are two fundamentally different points of view both in the scientific literature and in the working knowledge of experts: the first one deals with the authorized choice, while the second one – the structured interaction. The approach of the authorized choice means that politics is really “government decision-making” and is focused on such decisions. The questions are asked about the problem, which the government are trying to solve, the options that are offered, the way in which the decision will be made and what the result is. The approach of the structured interaction does not involve one person, who makes a decision, for solving an exact problem of politics: it focuses on the range of participants in the game, the diversity of their situation and problem understanding, the ways of interacting with each other and the results of this interaction [6].

For political science the research of the post-Soviet choice phenomenon of a citizen at the polling station, an official at the bureau, an experienced parliamentarian – a lobbyist or an ambitious young politician at a crowded meeting is a fundamental thing. Indeed, the process of political science formation included such a direction as “political science of post-

communism” and was at the phases of opposition and deconstruction towards Soviet social science.

D. Stone opposes academic logic to political methods. She confirms that when they talk about politics or gossip about it in the academic circles, one cannot ignore the categorical denial of political methods in the name of rational analysis. Moreover, in the academic circles it is contemptuously believed that political methods prevent the right policy [24]. The political analysis, according to D. Stone, would not care about the objectivity and established rules, but to see political demands in analytical concepts, formulation of problems and policy instruments [24]. It was well understood in the Soviet times by the representatives of the endless departments of “Scientific Communism”, “Historical Materialism” and “History of the Communist Party”. By its destructive force the army of “social scientists” was not inferior to Soviet economists. Let us recall an old Soviet joke. L. Brezhnev on the Red Square inspects the parade and after all the tanks, armored vehicles, aircrafts and missiles a battered truck with a dozen of feeble men and middle-aged women in glasses and raincoats starts moving. L. Brezhnev is asked about what these civilians of strange appearance are doing among the grand military parade. L. Brezhnev says: “Theses are our economists. You cannot even imagine what harm they can do”.

According to A. Sharp, “the choice of an economic system is not a choice to have or not have decision making and planning; rather, the particular economic system selected simply indicates who will make resource-use decisions and plans. In the market economy, the consumer is king. That is, consumers decide what allocation of resources between competing production processes maximizes their well-being. Markets then coordinate this information and bring about any needed reallocation. None of this applies in the command economy...” [22, p. 46].

But not only these politological and political factors make the political choice difficult. The logic of democratic elections itself foresees the alternativeness: a politician should be chosen between different candidates. An alternative necessarily implies a difference; in viable (democratic) elections it is a competitive difference.

The logic of political actions is aimed not just at defending a particular position or own principles (of the party program) of social development, but also in competition with other politicians who are competitors in the political domain. On the one hand, the political battle in the election campaign is an open sphere of interactive symbolic communication of political actors towards power, getting of which allows to focus on serving the public benefit.

On the other hand, the assurance of the government legitimacy allows to distinguish the “trap of free elections”, “unreliability of the choice

factor” that can lead to the phenomenon common to the citizens of all the post-communist countries – disappointment in the elections. For the participants of the democratic transit L. Diamond’s idea about the existence of a significant difference between the “electoral” and “liberal” democracy becomes apparent: “The latter is not limited to the system of democratic elections. It also possesses such features as control over executive power; independent judicial power that enforces the abidance of the law supremacy; protection of the freedom rights of an individual, speech, meetings, conscience, the right to choose and to be chosen; protection of minorities’ rights <...> no censorship. In case of electoral democracy there exist a system of government and administration, formed as a result of relatively free and fair elections, but there are no guarantees of many other rights or freedoms that exist in liberal democracies” [16].

The condition of regular and free elections is necessary but not sufficient to ensure an effective (“good”) administration.

The complex of interrelated problems of legal, economic (the structure of ministries and departments, which remain Soviet basing on their organizational and sectoral characteristics), political and cultural nature complicates the performance of functions appropriate for a modern democratic administration by the post-Soviet state.

K. Minogue confirms that “the echo of the past always illuminates. Cui bono? The Romans used to ask. Who benefits? In an egalitarian world, everyone is equal, except perhaps the managers of equality. And certainly in the foreseeable future, there will be endless and not unprofitable work for those whose business it is to spell out in ever greater detail the rules of the game of life, and to adjudicate conflict, and to teach the benighted what thoughts a just society requires. Politics will have died, but everything will be politics” [20, p. 111].

The centralization of power and the concentration of authority in the condition of an uncertain responsibility of individual and collective government actors lead to the abstraction of administration decisions from society (administration entities). The state apparatus and the nomenclature are perceived by society (perhaps we could say the same about self-identity) as a self-reliant system that is not interested in cooperation with community and does not require feedback for selection, approval and implementation of political decisions.

Georg Sorensen in his “Democracy, Dictatorship and Development. Consequences for Economic Development of Different Forms of Regime in the Third World” notices that “<...> the restructuring of the economy meant that there was room for improved welfare as well as for auto-centric growth” [23, p. 13]. Moreover, “the original argument was that democratic regimes were less able to curb consumption to the benefit of accumulation and economic growth” [23, p. 11].

The problem of citizen's political choice in the voting booth is to elect the best among all other candidates according to specific criteria. Defining the selection criteria is a personal decision of every voter or a group of voters united by certain social (age, ideological, gender etc.) features.

In the "Post-Communism Political Science" [3] it is noted that "pathologies" of post-Soviet politics and "sociopathies" of post-totalitarian society are "the ambivalence of political consciousness with conformist-nihilistic orientation, deprofessionalisation and vague of status-prestigious criteria of human interaction, deactualization of values. Sociopathies as a specific pathology of post-communist society can destroy the "social organism" or restrain its democratic development. The formation of society and individual's self-esteem, without which, after all, you can create in one single country anything except a civilized state, which would arise among the civilized international community respect and interest in its further development is connected with the overcoming of these pathologies".

The pathologies of post-Soviet political choice include such phenomena as populism, moralization and paternalism. According to E. Bystrytsky "The essence and the risk of populism is that it deliberately avoids the complex reality of interests of different groups of people. A populist appeals to each of us individually. He divides people into social atoms and leaves them alone in order to promise to satisfy each one separately and all together at the same time" [2]. But the greatest threat to democracy is "tradition, rather wait for the benefits from a good, but fair leader than fight for independence from the chief for free labor in your favor. It is traditionally a different self-understanding than that, which in the West is truth-written: an individual does not receive rights from the state, he, according to his own nature, has indispensable and undeniable rights which no one in the world can deprive of" [2].

One of the main challenges to rational political choice in post-Soviet politics is the organization of interaction of large social groups on Republican basis: "Rationality is an action according to the rules; but only rationality of rules and goals themselves, the achievement of which should serve their implementation – is quite another matter" [13].

Analyzing the processes of politics democratization in Ukraine on the edge of 80s – 90s of the last century, the researchers of post-communism called the changes, which took place during that period, "epochal", wrote about the need for rationalization of political action and the need to examine the fundamental assumptions, concepts and theories of political science, its attempts to determine the nature of political choice and its pathologies again.

These objectives remain relevant to modern political discourse after new scheduled "crucial", in

terms of democratic governance and preservation of the country's integrity, elections in 2014, and not less epochal changes that have occurred during this time and are associated with the democratization of Ukrainian society, external and internal political challenges for Independence.

In modern cognitive conditions the belief in the omnipotence of human mind, the decline of the "spirit of Enlightenment", which in due time provided a theoretical grounding for the priority of economic goal-rationality, are rethought and criticized.

Like everything else in life, politics is about hard choices, and the nicest thing to do with a hard choice is to evade it. Semantic abracadabra helps. A quite new sense of 'politics' has emerged to do this work, and unless we keep track of it we are all at sea in understanding the modern world. The essence of this new meaning is that 'politics' is made to cover every small detail of life. It is a semantic drift which happens quite unselfconsciously [20, p. 107].

In political theory quite a skeptical attitude towards the theory of rational choice, in the form it was represented in the model *Homo economicus*, was formed. It is rather inclined to talk about the choice on the principle of limited rationality. This approach allows treating the understanding of political choice principles more critically: from the electoral choice to the choice of optimal constitutional and institutional policy. Democratization, from the standpoint of the theory of public choice, is interpreted not as a result of natural, free from interference structuring, but as a result of planning and creating the appropriate legal framework and political institutions.

If individuals respond to incentives, they are rational, and thus the basic explanatory principles of political theory should be the principles of rational individual choice: individuals make choice (or act) rationally if their actions are determined by their preferences, which are rational themselves. Preferences are rational if they are complete and transitive, i.e. take into account and rate all the alternatives.

It is fully concerned the political choice which takes punches on all the sides in the post-Soviet time: the formulation of the "overall" interest (M. Olson), the emergence of the post-Soviet "maximizers" of economic and political benefit, profits and resources, partial constraint of civil rights and freedoms.

If the concept of modernity, as manifested in the ideologies of liberalism, conservatism and socialism, is out of dominance of goal-rationality (instrumental mind). Post-Soviet society should solve the problems arising from the socialist model of modernization and the traditional sources of solidarity should be replaced by the reflexive construction of political relations and regulatory agreements. Rationality serves one of the fundamentals of modern era establishment, democratic political institutions. Without rationalization it is impossible to imagine the

processes of secularization (according to Max Weber – “disenchantment” of political field), liberalization of economic, political and media spaces, pluralization, formation and development of the law-governed state and civil society, professional administration (bureaucracy), public policy, science and education, technological progress.

Understanding a linear model of progress, which provided a powerful impetus to a “Soviet man” and was based on universality of rationality, was changing in the process of post-Soviet and post-modern societies formation. Accordingly, reflections are also changing with respect to the rationalization of political choice.

In the post-Soviet conditions instead of market rationalization of costs a different political game take place, in which politics and economics require permanent “loans” from the past. Two political pathologies of choice are directly related to the post-Soviet politics. First of all, the erosion of institutional line between the state and the market: the state is divided into administratively-political and commercial sectors, and the “party of power” controls them. Secondly, the permanent reallocation of capital and property without an effective mechanism for saving and capital accumulation.

The research of sources, subjects and pathologies of variable choice domain are found in the works of members of the theory of rational choice and the public choice theory, the “agenda setting” theory, the theory of information society and globalization, and so on. The representatives of the rational choice theory and the public choice theory K. Arrow, J. Buchanan, M. Friedman, J. Waldvogel, H. de Soto, G. Tullock, M. Olson et al. believe that a rational political choice involves the formulation of goals of social development, the search for the most effective means of its achievement, the calculation of costs and benefits from implementing a certain strategy, taking into account the behavior of other actors and the evaluation of the overall situation.

However, after unsuccessful attempts of rational choice expansion to theory and practice of democratic reforms in the 90s of the twentieth century, the “first wave” of public policy studies from the standpoint of rational choice theory in post-Soviet countries was asleep.

Nevertheless, the landscape of political science in Ukraine has changed. A wide range of Ukrainian scholars’ works written with the use of the elements of the rational choice theory concerning the democratization of political cooperation, the establishment of civil society institutes, political technologies, mass media, gender politics, neopatrimonialism, elites and leadership, political coalitions, political argumentation and discourse testify to the total consensus in terms of the heuristic potential of the public choice theory.

A political theory takes into account the limitation of the provisions of rational choice based on the model of

selfish maximizer of benefit – Homo economicus. The difficulties that arise in the process of transformation of individual rational decisions and collective action are essential. K. Arrow, M. Olson and their followers claim that the transfer from individual to collective rationality is unattainable.

In the early 1950s, the economist Kenneth Arrow (subsequently a Nobel Prize winner) wrote down a list of reasonable requirements for a democratic voting procedure. Then Arrow set out to find all of those voting procedures that meet the requirements. It turns out that there aren’t many. Arrow was able to prove with the inexorable force of pure mathematics – that the only way to satisfy all of the requirements is to select one voter and give him all the votes. The only “democratic” procedure that meets the minimal requirements for democracy is to anoint a dictator! [18, p. 53].

In the Ukrainian scientific discourse a wide range of issues related to electoral choice has always attracted much attention of politicians, citizens, experts and mass media. Predominantly, discussions are focused on the critical analysis of the negative effects of electoral process. The application of public choice theory to study the conditions and pathologies of choice in Ukraine is due to the emergence of new non-standardized situations in the post-Soviet politics that require appropriate means to analyze and improve the efficiency of public policy.

In the meantime, the issues of “positive” construction of political choice democratic domain in general (not just the interaction of political actors) are paid much less attention. Perhaps it is considered that in the circumstances where administrative resources and other illegal means of political campaigns will not be used, the election campaigns in Ukraine will automatically meet the criteria of openness and become democratic.

The political choice of the last decades has created an alternative to the political development of post-Soviet era: from the “media show”, with meaning-playing, or government’s censorship, to the possibilities of political action aimed at achieving compromise and consensus.

The domain of choice in post-Soviet politics because of unstable rules requires the constant determination of current state affairs, which is formed in the process of interpreting and reinterpreting the actions of others. In this regard, the requirements concerning rational political actions in all areas of post-communist transformation, of society is extremely relevant to present-day Ukraine, for politics of which you can apply the name “crisis”, last but not least, because of the lack of reasonable solutions.

At the same time, at the process of political interaction nowadays, the new challenges to rational choice appear. One of these challenges – mediatization of politics (G. Oberreuter et al.), which

presents a potential threat to the emergence of a new form of totalitarianism – informational (A. Solovyov), the second one – the Soviet political heritage, based on the “party of power”, the third one – permanent changes in the electoral model and constitutional “reverses”.

In post-Soviet politics the principle formulated in “The Armchair Economist: Economics and Everyday Life”: “Instead of asking, “What social institutions led to such irrational behavior?” It is necessary to ask: “Why is this behavior rational?” [18, p. 16].

The main contradiction in the process of determining the optimal electoral system is to choose between a full representation and a structured parliament.

The Proportional distribution of votes in parliamentary elections provides a clear and relatively stable parliamentary structure – these are the main advantages of the proportional system. In addition, the proportional system enables the society to identify the political history of each party, its effectiveness in creating coalitions and its results in administration participation. Mutual impact of the electoral system and processes of the political system development in general and the structuring of parliament in particular were studied in the works M. Duverger, G. Sartori, J. Elster, J. Linz, D. Horowitz, S. Mainwaring, A. Lijphart et al.

The proportional system gives rise to the role and weight of political parties, which are gradually transformed into an effective institution that provides an interaction between government and citizens. Introduced in 2006 and 2007, the proportional electoral system has demonstrated its shortcomings (mainly refers to the “closed” list that prevents rational choice of citizens and does not facilitate the formation of a strong regional policy, and also leads to an increase in the role of party bureaucracy).

In the conditions of parliamentary-presidential model the proportional system of representative authorities formation creates the problems of stability of the executive branch functioning, because none of the political parties cannot obtain an absolute majority of votes (although, of course, this goal exists), and therefore – unable to create a one-party government. However, in this case, it is better not to talk about the coalition, but the quota government, where a special quota of positions belongs to the President.

The opponents of proportional system in the form in which it is implemented and used in Ukraine, namely the system of closed party lists in a single state multi-mandate constituency, give strong arguments of narrowing the electoral rights of the citizens who, not being members of political parties, are actually deprived of the opportunity to participate in the nomination of candidates for deputies.

The proportional system requires the formation of stable factions and coalitions of factions that take responsibility for voting and acting of the government and the opposition. The effectiveness of actions can

be evaluated, and each voter is able to rationalize his choice based on the political history of a party or bloc.

In its turn it promotes the growth and the enhancing the role of political parties in society, which in the long run will contribute to carrying political struggle in the dimension of ideological competition. The future of political parties will be determined in the ideological field and will not so much be dependent on the image technologies.

Despite the fact that a relatively short time period separates two election campaigns under the proportional system (which is likely to explain the financial and organizational unwillingness of one third of parties and blocs to participate in the elections in 2007), these election campaigns showed a number of general trends that lay the groundwork for the (possibly critical) analysis of implementation of proportional system in our country. Not fundamentally changing the proportion of forces and factions in the Parliament, they led to changes in the government coalition and the personal composition of the government. Comparing the results of the election campaign to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2007 and 2012, we can specify the following trends in political choice:

- reduce of voters' turnout (respectively 70,8%, 69,3%, 67,8%, 62%, 57,99%);
- reduce of the parties and blocs number that overcome the electoral threshold in a state multi-mandate constituency and get to the Parliament (respectively 8, 6, 5, 5, 5);
- increase in the percentage of voters who vote for “passing” parties and blocs (65,8%, 75,72%, 77,73%, 88,58%, 93,74%). More and more voters, even if they have different preferences, vote for parties and blocs who are likely to get to the Parliament.

Transformations in the electoral system cannot be analyzed separately from the process of formation and development of the party system, organization of electoral campaigns and parliamentary activity on the formation of the coalition and the government under several constitutional “reverses” between presidential and parliamentary-presidential models. The state patronage for some political parties allows calling them “cartel” ones. This name reflects the other side of the relationships between the “party of power” and the state – not just party support of the authorities, but also the assistance on the part of the state in party activity.

It can only be added that the election campaign of 2012, which was held again by the mixing model, did not lead to “tectonic” changes in the organization of both internal party work and communication of candidates with voters. However, the proportional system has a number of positive outcomes for both the parliament and the government and for the democratization of political interaction in general. The structuring (one reason of which is the centralization of party structures) of party domain in general and the parliamentary one in particular are distinguished

among these outcomes. Proportional and mixed systems, even with significant shortcomings, is able to provide the representation of major political and ideological positions that exist in Ukrainian society, the formation of factions and coalitions of factions that take responsibility for voting and activities of the government and the opposition. The effectiveness of these actions can be evaluated, and voters are able to rationalize the political choice.

The political choice in post-Soviet politics is implemented under the direct influence of advertising and agitation political campaign. The positive image of a candidate is created in communication with journalists and voters who support this candidate. It does not look like a difficult task, taking into consideration the lack of competition factor in the direct dialogue with other candidates. A candidate needs to play a certain role on the stage, which has already been prepared by the team. He turns into the actor, who is demonstrated to the public as the part of a big show. The image that is created for the public is the so-called "imaginary person" that has to bear positive emotions. He allows only a monologue (in the best case – prepared answers to questions of positive-minded journalists or citizens), which turns the electoral race from the competition into the theatre.

Democratization involves looking for mechanisms of one of the main tasks solving: rational actions transformation of individual and collective political actors to the collective rational action with the satisfaction of public interest. The democratization process of political interaction is inseparably linked to the rationalization of social relations. The development of science, law, market economy and representative political institutions, independent mass media, not in the least is the result of secularization, desacralization and rationalization of political world.

Rationality serves one of the fundamentals of the formation of modern era, democratic political institutions. Without rationalization it is impossible to imagine the processes of secularization (according to Max Weber – "disenchantment") of political field, liberalization of economic, political and media domains, pluralization, formation and development of the law-governed state and the civil society, professional administration (bureaucracy), public policy, science, education and technological progress.

Rationality is connected with the based on an adequate understanding of the problem situation, which includes an agent, conscious control of own behavior; provides alternative behavior, choice of different modes of action. A rational actor is understood as a resourceful, restricted, expecting, evaluating, maximizing man (RREEMM) [1, p. 188].

The Nobel Prize laureate (2002) Vernon Smith believes that each person has "a sense of the market", which refers to decision-making and formation of

behavior in economic and political issues. However, rationality is fragmented in situations characterized by lack of actors' awareness; manipulation by mass media; activity of well-organized groups that practice opportunistic behavior; historically formed cultural and political traditions of paternalism; a regional division of the country and the prevailing regional identifications [7].

The rational behavior means that the actor has a plan and tries to maximize his own benefits while minimizing potential costs. Economic theory suggests the opportunistic behavior of actors when they follow their own interests, in particular fraudulently, including explicit forms of fraudulence (lying, stealing, cheating, etc.), i.e. a rational person is a "maximizer", who accepts only the best option. Political actors develop electoral strategies, calculate the benefit from their political participation and rely on the principle of benefit maximizing. This is an instrumental understanding of rationality, according to which individuals compare their expected benefits and costs, trying to maximize the former and minimize the latter.

M. Olson believes that the behavior of an individual often lies in the fact that he tries to enter the group that does not pay, and that others join the group paying the social costs. However, this game does not take into account the long term prospect, in which the actions concerning "pervasive interests" bring the greatest benefit (M. Olson opposes them to small-group interests). Because this incentive to "ticketlessness" it takes a long time for the emergence of collective action in most sectors and groups [21].

In the transition conditions economic growth serves an important factor of success. It is necessary to guarantee well-defined individual rights and the "absence of theft of any kind". M. Olson distinguishes two types of "theft": 1) violation of the subordinates' rights by an autocrat and confiscation of property; 2) theft by means of lobbying, which establishes favorable for groups of special interests legislative norms and sets prices and norms for salaries by means of cartelization or conspiracy.

Voters like politicians are entities who rationally pursue goals of getting maximum benefit or advantage. Explaining the results of political processes, the theorists of public choice refer to the deductive methods of formulating versions about which incentive and restraining factors are faced by individuals, which calculations they are guided by. A systematic study of individuals' behavioral strategies has brought researchers to new approaches concerning traditional issues of political science, and led them to asking questions that have never been asked concerning the nature of political phenomena (the idea of the phenomenon of "rent-seeking", when the groups who have a monopoly make the government protect, with the help of regulatory process, their dominant positions).

According to “*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*”, “rational choice is the division of, or approach to, the study of politics which treats the individual actor as the basic unit of analysis and models politics on the assumption that individuals behave rationally, or explores what would be the political outcome of rational behavior. Rational choice writers usually define rationality narrowly in terms of transitivity and consistency of choice” [25, p. 421].

The problem of rational choice is decided depending on the presence or absence of information, which actors are guided in their actions by. In today's world the hopes of democracy are associated with the development of political communication domain. Although the involvement of broad social groups in the process of politics formation makes it difficult to make rational political decisions due to the increase in politics participants number.

One of the current challenges to democracy – the mediatization of politics – changes the system of public interests representation, transforms social, political and economic reality. This is because mass media create new forms of cooperation in the public administration sphere, promote openness and transparency of political institutions, give citizens the opportunity to participate in the discussion of social and political issues (the Internet). In the development of mass media we can see an effective means of providing feedback, participation of citizens in the political agenda formation.

On the one hand, in the political sphere the assumptions about the availability of complete information, its adequate understanding and use by voters seem unrealistic. On the other hand, collecting information for an adequate political choice requires time and other resources, because of small potential benefits for each voter; a rational citizen invests few resources in acquiring political information.

The models, which explain the decision-making process in terms of rationality (rational choice), such as the model of “economic man” and “rational organization” (M. Weber), are passing into history. Complete, comprehensive information, which could be called rational, is required for decision-making, but this is not possible in modern conditions – not because of the lack of information, but because of its redundancy. The understanding of the rational choice under the current conditions is presented by the theory of socially meaningful choice in terms of information and temporal shortage. Significant difficulties are arising in the transformation of rational decisions and actions of individuals to collective decisions and actions. M. Olson and his followers confirm that the transition from individual to collective rationality is unattainable.

Thus, the rationality of collective action is not the sum of individual rationalities, for democratic

development it is necessary to define a public interest. However, conflicts can be deep, be applied to many areas of public life – from politics, ideology and economics to religion, language and national identity. It acts as one of the main problems of rationalization in post-communist societies, provides grounds for speculation by various political forces and destroys the agreement on the public interest.

Summing up the research results of the choice process and its pathologies in post-Soviet politics we have come to the following conclusions.

Firstly, the rational choice in politics is one of the most important mechanisms of post-Soviet society democratization. In the process of electoral choice and decision-making in public politics, individual rational actions are capable of being transferred into the rational public policy. The conflicts that arise during the transformation from the individual rationalities to the collective one can be solved under the conditions of democracy, because they become open. Democracy has created an effective mechanism for political discussion (i.e. – political bargaining), has proven its ability to provide country economic development through the creation of a competitive political environment. However, the involvement of broad social groups in the political process makes the procedure of rational political choice difficult (both quantitatively and qualitatively), and one of the latest trends – mediatization of politics – changes the system of representation of public interests in accordance with the requirements of mass media format and rating, especially – TV. There is a real threat of bringing the political choice to the level of mass media shows with meaning-playing and meaningless dialogues. This leads to the emergence of new challenges towards the members of mass media (the transformation of socially important information into the product, the absence of structural changes in the relationship “state – mass media”, the transformation of politics into the media process). The absence of a rationally-reasoned dialogue in mass media not only complicates the interaction between political actors, but also introduces a new important factor to political communication – the silence of population.

Secondly, the political debate has become the response to the impact of mediatization. Rational choice requires not only alternativeness, but also competitive alternatives. Argumentation, specification of rules and forms of public discussions, their complexity, sophistication and elegance provide evidence of the maturity of democracies. On the contrary, the facilitation of social problems, populism, demagoguery, the tendency to monologue, or even the avoidance of debate, its ignorance bears evidence of the eliminating of rationality from political domain.

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