

Formation and Reformation of Regional Political Regimes in the Transitional Unitary States (the Case of Ukraine)

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The article investigates a new phenomenon in conditions of functioning of the unitary Ukrainian state — formation and transformation of regional political regimes. Like most of the modern states that were formed after the USSR disintegration, Ukraine has influential local elites that essentially influence political and economic processes in the regions and thus form specific regional political regimes. This paper analyses the approaches to theoretical and methodological bases of studying the regional political

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regimes in transitional unitary states by the example of Ukraine. The authors have outlined the causes of emergence, singled out the conditions for the support of functioning of regional political regimes and determined the parameters of their investigation in Ukraine.

Keywords: regional political regime, political actors, regional elites, decentralisation

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Introduction

The 1960-1980s became the period of regional activity in Europe (this is proved by regional processes in Germany, France, Great Britain, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland) and other parts of the world (Canada, New Zealand, the USA and the USSR). These processes were caused by the regions' desire for gaining more independence and having an independent government elected by direct vote. Though, a certain success in their becoming more independent was compensated by the strife of the central power for regaining its lost authorities. All this stimulated the theoretical interest to the problem of regions and was manifested clearly in practical politics. For example, in Europe, there appeared the European Municipal Council (1951), which was later transformed into the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, the European Conference of Local Authorities (1957), the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (1979). The late 1980s started a new wave of regionalism that went beyond the system of centre-region relationships within a single state. The main factors determining the context of new regionalism became the international market and the emerging continental regime.

Michael Keating most aptly described the emergence of new regionalism. He pointed out that the power and authority of the state were "eroded from three directions: from above — by internationalisation; from below — by regional and local assertion; and laterally — by the advance of the market and civil society, undermining its role in economic management, social solidarity, culture and formation of identity and institutional structure" (Keating 2003: 81). All this brought new regionalism marked with "two interrelated features: it is not limited to the framework of a national state; it plays off regions against each other in a competitive struggle" (Keating 2003: 81). Furthermore, this is the regional identity that Keating considers the critical component in constructing regions as social and political spaces and systems of action (Keating 2003: 92; Keating, 2008).

The problems of the transformation period that Ukraine is going through need in-depth consideration in terms of the functioning of political power in the centre and at the local level while revealing and describing its characteristic features. Due to this, especially important becomes research into a new phenomenon in a unitary Ukrainian state — an investigation of regional political regimes. These regimes, while reflecting the processes of political subjectivisation of regions and their growing impact on the state policy, need scientific examination. They also call for the development and implementation of an efficient model of multi-level political relationships. This model provides for both considerations of interests and powers in the "centre-region" system and re-examination of general approaches to state administration.

The topicality of this research is determined by the fragmentary study of the problem of the functioning of regional political regimes by Ukrainian scientists and the necessity of

investigation of both positive and destructive potential of these regimes. The research also takes more considerable significance due to threats and challenges the Ukrainian state and society face. They are caused by the development of the decentralisation process, the conflict in the east of Ukraine, and Russia's occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea by strengthening populist nationalism. They are also conditioned by the emergence of problems with countries that share boundaries with Ukraine and have an impact on certain regions of our country. In this context, it is necessary to search for and investigate the bases for both splits and confrontations and the foundation of loyalty origination in the process of interaction of the centre and the regions, factors that provide for the emergence and support the functioning of regional political regimes, as well as the reasons that render impossible the opposition of the civil society to authoritarian tendencies at the local level. An important task that also adds relevance to this subject area is the substantiation of directions in the state policy that could prevent separatist endeavours in the regions.

The object of this research is regional political regimes.

The subject of the study is the formation and transformation of regional political regimes in transitional unitary states by the example of Ukraine.

The purpose of the research is to determine the bases for formation, analyse the peculiarities of functioning and specific features of the transformation of regional political regimes in Ukraine as a transitional unitary state.

Materials and Methods

One of the seminal works researching the regions can be considered a book by Walter Isard, "Methods of Regional Analysis: an Introduction to Regional Science," that was first published in 1960 (Isard, 1960). Analysing this book, one can conclude that regional science originated from consideration of the analysis of social and economic information. Though, Isard noted that investigation of a region should assume studying not only social or economic but also political factors, what is more — in their interaction. In other words, regional science is a particular study at the crossroads — it should be based on the interdisciplinary methodology of cognition.

Further regional research covered not only administrative regions within one state but also regions embracing a number of states. Investigators analysed regions as economic, cultural and political spaces or social solidarity spaces. By the late 20th century, the practice of political regionalism had spread and acquired new forms. An example can be the foundation in 1985 of the Assembly of European Regions (AER). Besides, the European Parliament adopted the "European Charter of Regions" (1988), and the AER adopted the "Declaration of the Assembly of European Regions on Regionalism in Europe" (1996).

The "Declaration of Assembly of European Regions on Regionalism in Europe" is interesting first of all with its defining the concept of region, in particular its political and legal essence. So, the Preamble to this document determines that 1) "the regions have different statuses, which vary according to their history, their culture and their constitutional principles and characterize the territorial organisation of each state"; 2) the regions act in "the institutional framework of their own country, which have a federal, decentralised or autonomous structure"; 2) "the regions have different origins and functions, with some historically based on distinct communities, ethnic groups or even nations, and others created as administrative districts, exercising powers delegated to them by the state"; 3) "people through historical, linguistic,

cultural, social, economic and geographical ties, increasingly identify themselves with their region, the variety of which, constitutes an inexhaustible richness”; 4) “the regional reality justifies the participation of the regions in state bodies and actions at an international level”; 5) “the regions, within the national legal order, are an indispensable element of democracy, decentralisation and self-determination, by allowing people to identify with their community and by increasing the opportunities for their participation in public life” (Declaration, 1996).

The Declaration also forms a particular legal basis for defining a region (Article 1) and states the following: “the region is the territorial body of public law established at the level immediately below that of the state and endowed with political self-government,” “the region shall be recognised in the national constitution or legislation,” “the region shall have its own constitution, the statute of autonomy or other law which shall form part of the legal order of the state at the highest level establishing at least its organisation and powers,” “regions within the same state may have a different status, in keeping with their historical, political, social or cultural characteristics,” “the region is the expression of a distinct political identity, which may take very different political forms” (Declaration, 1996).

It is also worth paying attention to Article 3 of the Declaration and to its Appendix, which states the powers of the regions, in particular: regional economic policy; regional planning, building and housing policy; telecommunications and transport infrastructures; energy and environment; agriculture and fisheries; education at all levels, universities and research; culture and media; public health; tourism, leisure and sport; police and public order (Declaration, 1996).

Thus, the essential factors that stipulate the formation of regions are historical, cultural and institutional. They are different for each country. As Europeans view it, regions are an element of democracy, decentralisation and self-identity. They serve a wide range of functions. Regional variety is inexhaustible. A region can both be part of a state institution (at the subnational level) and a subject of international activity. The analysis of the above Declaration allows drawing a conclusion that, by taking this Declaration, Europe proved both shifting away from the perception of continent realia in centre-periphery relations to the polycentric configuration of the European space and a transition to a new stage of self-organisation.

In Ukraine, the concept of “region” is used widely. The term “region” is used in a broad sense to denote a territorial area of any size, which was defined by various features or a complex of features. Due to these features, the same territory can be divided into various regions that differ in content. In physical geography, regions are singled out as territorial units, integral and specific by their natural features. In economics, a region is part of a territory that has a stable system of links between economic subjects and particular specialisation in the economic complex of a nation or a supranational formation. In geopolitics, a region is part of the worldwide space, as a supranational territorial formation — the unification of countries into an economic and/or political block, a community. Intrastate interpretation of a region is under government control, which defines regions as separate administrative and territorial units (oblasts, districts), as well as the unification of a number of such units according to territorial, economic or other principles. In political science, a region is, as a rule, a territory with its own political or administrative structures, which, in the social hierarchy, are mostly between the national level and the local level of state authorities. A region here is a component of a particular spiritual and political and territorial society, with rather clear borders and relatively integral life-sustaining infrastructure. Sociologists generally define a region as part of a state territory which has vivid distinctions from other regions by specific features —

natural and climatic life conditions, history, ethnic makeup, language, culture, religion, etc. and they investigate the interaction of these factors (Vermenych, 2012).

At present, historians single out four historical and geographical regions in Ukraine, ethnographers distinguish between 3 regions, economists speak of 9 regions, statisticians mark out 27 regions. This is because the process of region delineation assumes different criteria and the region itself is a designed space. In other words, Ukraine is rather diverse in terms of its history, geography, economy and other aspects, including politics. This is proved by the electorate's partisan preferences, results of presidential, parliamentary and local elections; specificity of regional political conflicts; special regional political and cultural peculiarities of certain territories determined by historical factors; particularities of organisation and functioning of criminogenic structures, etc.

All these facts give ground to state that in Ukraine, there are administrative regions that, being influenced by various factors and conditions, form their own methods of management organisation in certain territories. It means the creation of regional political regimes, in other words, regional methods of political power organisation. These regimes provide for the interaction of formal and informal political and economic subjects, based on formal/informal game rules, concerning the mechanisms of access to power, influence on the decision-making process, allocation and reallocation of resources, forms of region-centre interaction, organisation of vertical and horizontal communication in the region, the essence of social values as a means of mobilisation of citizens of certain territories (Karmazina et al., 2018).

In Ukrainian political discourse, the concept of "region" has actualised first at political and legal as well as practical levels. So, as initiated by the chairmen of regional councils, the chairmen of Kyiv and Sevastopol city councils of public deputies, in conformity with the Decree of President of Ukraine "On Regional Councils" (dated September 20, 1994) there was created a Council of Regions — a presidential "consulting and advisory body" (On the Council, 1994). Thus, politically and legally, the name "region" in Ukraine was given to oblasts and their cities and towns represented by heads of oblasts and representatives of city councils of public deputies. At the end of the year 2000, the Council of Regions was liquidated. It was replaced with a presidential National Council on Coordination of Activity of National and Regional Authorities and Local Self-Government Bodies, headed by the President. The Council was aimed at "increasing the efficiency of state-building in Ukraine, providing for coordinated cooperation of executive authorities and local self-government bodies, uniting national and local interests in solving crucial issues of social development" (in conformity with the Decree of President of Ukraine of December 13, 2000) (On the National Council, 2000). Moreover, soon this body saw its further transformation. In 2005, there was created the "National Council on State Management and Local Self-Government" as a presidential consulting and advisory body (On the National Council, 2005). This National Council was liquidated in early 2008. Instead of it, following the Decree of President of Ukraine dated February 21, 2008, there appeared the "National Council on Interaction of State Authorities and Local Self-government Bodies" (On the National Council, 2008). And this structure did not also last long. In April 2010, it was replaced with a Council of Regions (On the Council, 2010). The Council of Regions stopped its activity in accordance with the 2014 Decree of President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko (On Liquidation, 2014). And in several months — in April 2015 — President issued a Decree "On the Council of Regional Development" (On the Council, 2015). All these decrees on the creation of relevant councils had no mention of democratisation, development of civil society, power transparency, while the main purpose of

the decrees was to strengthen the presidential vertical in the regional context.

The analysis of the above decrees, the “Conception of State and Regional Policy” (On Conception, 2001), and a number of other laws enables us to conclude that Ukraine’s regional policy, over the whole period of its independence, has been narrow-directed and it still is. The regional policy covered mostly social and economic, financial, local self-government, and decentralisation issues. Ukraine’s current normative legal base that deals with regional policy proved and still proves that statesmen and politicians have no clear understanding of the necessary introduction of a political component in the content of the regional policy. In other words, the regional policy in Ukraine does not practically touch upon issues related to politics (political consciousness, political culture, possible separatism, etc.).

The political region studies in Ukraine as a field of scientific research is in its beginning. So far, there are a limited number of works analysing regional political phenomena and processes. Among them are the works by such scientists as F. Baranovsky, T. Vakulova, V. Gaponenko, M. Gordienko, S. Dyak, T. Yereskova, I. Zhdanova, A. Kolodiy, R. Komarov, S. Makovsky, P. Minenkova, L. Nagorna, T. Panchenko, V. Romanova, N. Rotar, O. Tarasenko. Fundamental in this field is a research of the scientific team of Ivan Kuras Institute for Political and Ethno-National Research “Regional Political Regimes in Ukraine: Formation Basis, Specific Performance Features, Transformation Peculiarities” by Karmazina M., Bezv T. and Rotar N. (Karmazina et al. 2018). One should also note the work by V. Yaremchuk “Regional Political Regimes in Ukraine: Lviv region (1990-2017)” (Yaremchuk, 2018).

The most productive in investigating the regional political regimes — the problem that covers knowledge on the interfaces of many sciences (politics, political geography, geopolitics, economics, demography, history, sociology, and others), is the application of the interdisciplinary methodology of cognition, in particular, a combination of legal and sociological approaches, structural and functional, as well as behavioural methods of cognition, which assume the study of both formal and legal norms and informal (real) practices in the regional policy, while attracting a wide range of subjects — competing groups of political actors and pressure groups.

The analysis of triggering conditions, functioning, and transformation of a regional political regime has its own algorithm that assumes investigation of the following parameters: geographical, geopolitical, historical and political, ethnonational, social and economic, cultural and legal conditions; the resource base and methods of resource allocation between regional and national players; formal and informal political “game rules” in the region, including peculiarities of interaction of formal and informal political actors; mechanisms of accessing the power and the decision making process at all levels of power organisation; strategies of interaction and communication of political and economic actors and the society in the coordinate power system.

When investigating regional political processes, one should note that processes within regional political regimes are not linear. They have their rate and rhythm, which, under the influence of internal and external challenges and threats, can come into discord with the national regime, especially in conditions of instability, weakness and hybridism of the latter. Though, they can be entirely synchronous with the government at the national level. Everything depends on the political environment and the level of satisfaction of regional interests at the central level.

Moreover, the concept of “region” does not always embrace the territory of the whole oblast. It can cover, for example, an electoral district or an area controlled by individual businessmen. An illustrative example in this context can be Kyiv oblast, where large

landowners, for instance, the Zasukha spouses (Anatoliy and Tetyana) who own the Rassvet farming company (that was a kolkhoz (collective farm) before 1993) and other related businesses, provided themselves with easy continuous elections to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (the Ukrainian parliament) in an electoral district No 94. Nowadays, the Zasukhas' regime has degraded to the local level and covers only the area with their businesses. A similar situation is with the Suslov family (Yevgeniy Suslov, his parents — Ivan and Nataliya, uncles — Vasiliy, Gennadiy and Nikolay), who owns the Skvira agricultural corporation and several related businesses. Their sphere of influence covers Skvirskiy, Volodarskiy, Tetiyevskiy and Stavyschenskiy districts of the Kyiv region. The control over this region allowed Yevgeniy Suslov to be easily elected to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in the lists of “Yulia Tymoshenko's block” (2006 and 2007).

Causes of the Emergence of Regional Political Regimes in Ukraine

There is no single model of the formation of regional political regimes in Ukraine. They were formed at a different time of representatives of various social layers (Kyiv oblast — latifundium (large landowners); Kharkiv oblast — criminal elements; Dnepropetrovsk oblast — partisan actors of the former Communist Party of the Soviet Union; Zakarpatiye — mafia family clans). The periods of their existence were also different. With time, under the influence of various factors, some regimes degrade. They are replaced with other groups, which, in their turn, lose influence under competitors' pressure. In some ways, these processes are cyclic, as the change of personalities does not change the methods of a region's economic management.

The first and the most intelligible basis for the emergence and functioning of regional regimes is the historical path of our country, especially when the Ukrainian territories were parts of different states and different political regimes (Russian Empire, Austrian and Hungarian empire, the USSR and Eastern European countries between the two world wars). This influenced the political consciousness, culture, and behaviour, and created the ground for local people to support the idea of the uniqueness of “their” region, declare the commitment to traditions (often political myths and stereotypes, ideologies, religions, foreign political orientations) and historical memory (their European values for some citizens and belonging to Slavic peoples, the “Russian world” for others). The tradition factor (“one's own” values and the difference of the past) is dominant in the issue of the formation of regional political regimes. This served as a primary basis for contrasting and singling out a “unique” region — regional elites actively use this idea for political and economic manipulation in the process of satisfaction of their own (often narrow group) interests.

In the early 1990s, two groups of former members of the USSR Communist Party from the Dnepropetrovsk and Donetsk regions claimed for power and the relative status in a newly independent state. These regional elites strove for the strengthening of their power both at the regional and central levels. And it is the regional control of the elites that was the base for gaining and retaining the power at the local level, keeping and restoring themselves in the political structure and extending the power at all levels. Similar processes were in the Lviv region, where the regional elite strove for distancing from the Soviet “values.” Soviet dissident Vyacheslav Chornovil, Head of Narodnyi Rukh (People's Movement) of Ukraine, Chairman of Lviv regional council advocated federalisation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic or formation of autonomous Galichina within the Ukrainian SSR (Demianchuk, 2015). Similar

processes were in the Ternopil region as well.

Complicated was the situation in Crimea, which ended up in the creation of autonomy within Ukraine. The characteristic feature of the regional political regime in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea was both presence of separatist forces (pro-Russian and Tatar) that pressed the regional and central power and functioning of powerful organised crime groups (OCG) — “Seilem,” “Greky,” “Slaviane,” “Imdat,” “Adar,” “Dzyuba’s group,” “Sakhan’s group” and others. And their activity could wane and rise. Such status quo on the peninsula was not only in the 1990s and the 2000s, but it also retained until the very occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. These and other informal political actors pressed the formal institutions, formed non-traditional institutions, created and supported illegal political practices.

An example of a personalised regional regime can be Dnepropetrovsk region of the 1990s, with Pavel Lazarenko as a leader. A starting point for him was the positions in the district and regional committees of the Communist Party of Ukraine and the executive committee at Dnepropetrovsk regional council. He later occupied the positions of President’s representative in Dnepropetrovsk region, Head of Dnepropetrovsk Regional State Administration, Vice-Prime Minister and Prime Minister of Ukraine. He was also a Verkhovna Rada deputy of two convocations. Besides, he had his political party — the All-Ukrainian union “Gromada.” According to some web-based media, he used to form with the big business special business relationships that could be described as extortion. For his political services (lobbying and running protection), he demanded a share in a company or a bribe of 50% of the company’s profit. And his field of interest included the sale of natural resources, and wheat, and dairy products, and natural gas (Senik, 2013).

An example of a regional clan regime can be Zakarpatiye, where there has been formed, and still acts, though with a certain loss of impact, a regime of the Baloga clan. Here not only a certain personality but the whole clan acts as a “master” of the region. This regime has its own peculiarities. Thus, Viktor Baloga’s career grew as follows: first, he was the director of LLC “Ray-Promin,” later, he became the chairman of the board of directors for LLC “Krasky.” Besides, he was reportedly responsible for the “Mukachevo common fund” (a “common fund” is a criminal slang word that means the mutual-aid fund in a criminal community) (Shufrich, 2007). Baloga’s political career started with membership in the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (united) — a political force of Viktor Medvedchuk. It became the party of power after Valeriy Pustovoitenko’s People’s Democratic Party lost this status. Having got membership in the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (united), Baloga became Mayor of Mukachevo town, then Chairman of Zakarpatiye Regional State Administration, later a people’s deputy, twice a minister in Yuriy Yekhanurov’s and Nikolay Azarov’s governments. He was also Head of the President’s Secretariat with Viktor Yushchenko as President of Ukraine.

According to web-based media, he captured Zakarpatiye with his brothers Ivan and Pavel, a cousin Vasiliy Petevka and other relatives. He was also supported by “Tsymbora” of Zakarpatiye — the local “mafia” consisting of mostly fellow villagers, brothers-in-law and others (Bekalo, 2016). Here the Baloga clan reached great success and got unlimited power for decades (all appointments in the region were approved by the clan only) and control over the region’s financial resources (first of all, the control over the customs office, more exactly — the grip on smuggling) (General Moskal Lashed Out, 2018).

Politically, the Baloga clan first supported different political forces and later created his political project — “Yedyniy Tsentr” (Single Centre). The Baloga’s also supported all Presidents — from Leonid Kuchma to Pyotr Poroshenko, which helped them to remain the “kings of Zakarpatiye.”

However, they were not always on friendly terms with Presidents: the Balogas took to blackmail and also used the “Rusyn card” (Rusyns are a self-identity form of Zakarpatyiye citizens. The clan also took care of ordinary people of the region, granting them material support for keeping children, disabled, orphans, Romani people and others (Smirnov, 2015).

A real trial for the Baloga regime became the year 2015 when the clash of interests of two people’s deputies — Viktor Baloga and Mikhail Lanyo (a native-born from Mukachevo district, who is known as “Byuk” in the criminal community, his criminal group is engaged in smuggling in Zakarpatyiye) — resulted in an armed stand-off with shooting in the street and blowing up of a gas-filling station. Direct participants of these shoot-outs were law enforcement authorities — police and the National Security Service, as well as a paramilitary organisation “Pravyi Sektor” (Chervonenko, 2015).

In tough competition, particularly by way of murders and forcible takeovers, regional elites accumulated their first capital. A common practice was to create for this purpose the so-called “security structures,” which were more like private armies with clear commitment to satisfy a certain group interest by force. Such state of affairs washes out the state monopoly on the application of force and dramatically weakens the Centre in its relationships with the regions. Such “structures” were often used to quell people’s resistance. Moreover, private “armies” are an instrument of blackmailing the central power with instability in the region.

The mechanism for promoting by the Baloga clan of its regional regime can include business ownership, voters’ bribery, getting control over the region’s economy, manipulation with the national minority issue, and a number of other instruments of regional management, including criminal actions.

Nowadays, the Zakarpatyiye local elite keeps in mind an idea of a separate region that gets insufficient finance from Kyiv. This card can be played mainly in the coming 2020 local elections.

A compelling case for the analysis of reasons for the emergence of regional political regimes is Donetsk oblast. Here the regional regime appeared due to the occurrence of particular conditions and due to applying specific means (instruments), in particular (Karmazina et al., 2018):

- a) “freezing of political space” and political identity of the region citizens in the USSR coordinate system;
- b) promotion of “Donetsk” politicians at all power levels, with an appointed status of “owners” of Donetsk and Donetsk oblast;
- c) receiving the levers of influence on President Leonid Kuchma by way of supporting him in 1999 presidential elections and getting instead of the political, economic, and administrative control over their “own” private estate;
- d) indifference to politics and apathy of the majority of the region’s population due to severe financial conditions, for which the local elites turned the blame on the central power that did not appreciate an “ordinary worker” who had much better living conditions under the USSR;
- e) support by the local elite of the rhetoric of “uniqueness of the region” that “feeds all Ukraine,” the use of left ideology in political discourse, ideas of “Slavic unity,” orthodoxy, frequently open pro-Russian and anti-Ukrainian slogans encouraged by the Russian Federation; notably, in the issues of foreign political orientation, the elite itself was guided exclusively by the self-interest principle — to save the capital influence, and that is why it was situational and dependent on the political

environment, on a nationwide scale in particular;

- f) cleanup of the information field at the local level to promote their “own” interests and introduction of their “own” information agenda all over Ukraine, formation of suitable education and cultural policy in Donbas.

All this created a favourable ground for separatism that exploded in 2014 and allowed for the creation of the so-called “DNR” (Donetsk People’s Republic) and “LNR” (Lugansk People’s Republic).

Nowadays, parts of Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts that are under Ukrainian control face a confrontation for supervision over the process of creation of united territorial communities (UTC) between Viktor Medvedchuk and Rinat Akhmetov.

A powerful instrument of influence for regional elites is mass media that do not only realise the function of informing the dependent population of certain regions but also promote necessary messages conditioned by the current political situation and the state of relationships of regional and national elites.

The creation of “oligopolies” was well-aimed and supported by the second President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, who believed that it is such organisation of regional management that will provide for the necessary support of life sustenance in certain territories. He was convinced that such business will shoulder the infrastructure development and will make investments in high-technology products (Kuchma, 2007). At the same time, the variant with the creation of a powerful middle class was not supported by the central power. The efficiency of such an organisation could justify itself at the beginning of a new independent state. However, eventually, this brought about a situation in which game rules are formed by regional elites but not by strong government institutions at central and regional levels. Notable in these processes was the creation of free-trade zones (FTZ), provision of conditions for developing the border trade. Such state of affairs favoured the economic strengthening of regional elites and their regimes, and they successfully gained control over “local resources” (smuggling, ports, etc.), thus providing for their prosperity and accumulating funds to expand the influence and strengthen the control over the region.

In the context of regions’ emancipation, it is necessary to mention a tendency to creating regional political parties, for example, the Political party “Odesskaya Partiya” (Odesa Party), the Political party “Patrioty Volyni” (Volyn Patriots), the Political party “Khersontsy” (Kherson citizens), the Political party “Ukrainskaya Galitskaya partiya” (Ukrainian Galytska party), the All-Ukrainian Union “Cherkaschane” (Cherkasy citizens) (Department, 2017). And all this is possible despite the statutory ban on the creation of regional parties in Ukraine.

Summarising, we can single out the following reasons for the emergence and functioning of regional political regimes in Ukraine:

- a) the invariability of elites/clans/political and business groups that accumulate control over regional resources and form economic conditions, and make it impossible to strengthen the middle class and provide for its growth, blocking the full-fledged development of civil society;
- b) using the “idea of the region” (“unique” or “separate”), the combination of regionalism and populism (in particular, the manipulative criticism of central power), propagation of “regional psychology”, implementation of the special policy of regional identity;

- c) creation of informal institutions generating relevant political and economic practices that substitute for official, formal institutions and rules, as well as the creation of one's "own" (regional) system of punishments and rewards, intimidation and enforcement;
- d) flirtation by the local elite of the border region with the authorities of the neighbouring state, feeding of regional separatism, blackmailing of the central power with these issues.

Parameters for investigation of regional political regimes in Ukraine

In our opinion, for direct investigation of a regional political regime, it is useful to use a methodology model proposed by S.Skaaning. Having compared ten definitions of political regimes, the researcher has singled out four relevant principle characteristics that allow investigating a certain national or regional political regime, in particular (Skaaning, 2006):

- a) group's access to political power (institutional design);
- b) structuring of interaction in the political centre of power (horizontal links);
- c) interaction of the regime with society (vertical links);
- d) mode of operation of political actors (indicates the difference between autocratic and democratic regimes).

Application of this methodology to investigation of regional political regimes in Ukraine assumes the involvement of a total number of certain sources, in particular: 1) official statistics that allow determining the resource base of a regional political regime; 2) electoral statistics that allow identifying major political actors of a regional political regime; 3) legislative and other normative and legal acts (decrees of President of Ukraine and resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine) providing for the definition of the institutional framework of regional political regimes; 4) official materials reflecting the process of functioning and the decision making procedure by regional state administrations and regional councils; 5) periodical materials that give the possibility to single out specific features of the system of horizontal and vertical links of regional political regimes.

A foundation for the might of "local kings" is a monopoly for the region's resources disposal. It is resources controlled by the business that turn economic subjects into major players in the formation of political coalitions. They allow the regional political regime to: strengthen and support the subjectivity in interaction with the central power; influence the region's social structure to achieve the desired result in politics; get mobilised for reaching the desired goal.

Thus, it is the complex of resources available to the political regime that allows to become firmly established and to be reproduced. The resource complex also defines the following features: the regime's institutional design; specificity of vertical links expressed in interaction with the national centre of power; type of horizontal relations and links expressed in the interaction of the regional political regime with the region's social field; peculiarities of application of technologies of authoritarian or competitive mobilisation for achieving the goals set.

The institutional design of a regional political regime is a set of political institutions determining its normative and functional frameworks. In our opinion, in Ukraine, it is determined by parameters of political processes at the national level, in particular:

1. The presidential discourse that positions the regions of Ukraine as a factor of

- political and economic risks actualising the necessary development of relevant regional policy. However, it does not consider the necessity of their formalisation. Such a situation causes uncertainty in the sphere of competencies and authorities. It pushes the regions to formalise their official and unofficial levels of interaction (Rotar, 2017).
2. Electoral legislation which forms and legitimises subjects of a regional political regime. Several types of election systems have been tried throughout Ukraine's independence. The elections of 1994, 1998, and 2002 were based on the majority system. At that time, the primary competition was between the candidates who did not refer to party affiliation as a marker of electoral identification with the voter, which brought about insufficient structuring of regions' political space and increasing the potential of informal networks in the structure of regional political relationships. The 2006 elections were based on the proportional system, which consequently facilitated the politicisation of local self-government and accelerated the formation of regional political regimes, where local self-government institutions acquired the features of political subjects. The mixed system was used in the 2010 elections. The 2015 elections were based on a combination of basic principles of proportional and majority election systems.
 3. Specificity of formation of regional policy principles with the core idea of the centre policy towards the regions, which leaves aside politics as a process and becomes institutionally formed as a regional political regime (On the Principles, 2015).
 4. Realisation of regional policy that is reflected in the government policy, in particular, in the activity of the Ministry for development of public communities and territories of Ukraine, which "provides for formation and realisation of state regional policy, state policy in development of local self-government, territorial organisation of power and administrative and territorial arrangement" (Statute, 2014).

The institutional design of a regional political regime modelled at the national level is reflected first of all in peculiarities of functioning of the institution of head of regional state administration (RSA). It is this institution that, under conditions of the functioning system of distribution of power authorities in Ukraine, is the establishment around which the process of formation of regional political regimes is concentrated. This is connected with the range of powers of an RSA chairman, who heads the regional state administration, controls its activity, is responsible for fulfillment of its tasks and realisation of its powers in conformity with the Constitution of Ukraine, Law of Ukraine "On local state administrations," and other laws of Ukraine.

A supporting argument to the fact that it is the institution of an RSA chairman that plays the leading role in the structure of a regional political regime is the statement that the RSA chairman is a crucial spending unit of a regional state administration within the approved budgets. He is entitled to operate accounts and sign payment documents, account documents, other financial and banking documents. An RSA chairman, within the limits of his powers, coordinates the activity of Chief Directorate of State Treasury Service of Ukraine, State Financial Inspectorate, Chief Directorate of the Ministry for Internal Affairs of Ukraine, Region Directorate of Security Service of Ukraine, units of Armed Forces of Ukraine, Chief Directorate of the Ministry of Revenues, public prosecutor's office of a certain oblast. An RSA chairman controls the whole complex of power resources concentrated in the oblast (On Local

State Administrations, 2020).

Conclusions

The existence of regional political regimes is a challenge for effective state policy that sets to the central power a task of consolidating both regional elites and society as a whole. A vivid example of this was the events in Crimea and Donbas. Considering neither central power nor local electorate, regional elites are capable of changing the direction of the region's development. Furthermore, they are entirely focused on the retention of power, creating suitable conditions in the region. They care little about the region's problems, and their partial solving is just accompanying expenses on the way to retaining the full power.

As a rule, regional elites bargain their loyalty to Kyiv. Instead, they get a monopoly right to dispose at their discretion of the resources of their "own" region. Being supported by the regional elite, the central power allows the elite to act non-transparently, on the base of their own "game rules," often above the law, spreading extralegal political and economic practices. In other words, Kyiv authorities, either with their direct consent or "silent support," favoured the emergence and strengthening of regional political regimes.

In such a situation, the central power should form adequate state regional policy, in particular, by way of building efficient political institutions at the local level. For this, it is necessary to correct the deficiencies and contradictions of the Ukrainian legislation, mainly in part of the limitation of the activity of regional and national institutions, and their interaction should be based on a democratic footing. Moreover, this is the task of a higher level — to reform the whole political system of Ukraine, as the acting system leads to the formation of local authoritarianism. In this situation, it is the regional elites that provide for democratic elections and transformation of the regime toward either democracy or deepening authoritarianism and separatism.

A vital reform direction should be the development of civil society structures in the regions, as they restrain further political pluralism and create an alternative to the regional elite's hierarchy of motivations of local people's actions. The state should also create conditions for the formation of strong parties with developed regional organisations. Along with this, it is necessary to reinforce and develop the consolidating political identities, with this levelling out the ideas of "uniqueness" and "separability" of regions.

On the whole, it should be noted that the decentralisation reform — steps to forming a new model of authority distribution and local power responsibility — will fail without changing the clan organisation of regional management. These steps can lead to the "cementation" of non-democratic regional regimes and bring about new hotbeds of separatism.

In any case, the central power, without support in the regions, cannot be successful and will hang in mid-air, especially if the regional managers are opponent's representatives who will sabotage decisions taken by the central power. Due to this, stability or instability of the national power mainly depends on the positions of regional and local elites. Regional elites need support in several directions: candidate pool for central authorities, realisation in the regions of decisions taken, organisation of local people support in case of escalation in the country, organisation of a democratic election process with election committees, and regional agitation.

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