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The elite of the information society: challenges of modern world

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The elite of the information society: challenges of modern world. The article substantiates the importance of forming a new generation of elite of the information society capable of facing the challenges of modern society to meet the needs of various social aspects. In the course of the study, the factors and principles determining the uniqueness of modern society are revealed. The post-industrial society is characterized by the availability of modern information resources and technologies, as well as developed information structure, where necessary information resources are constantly updated. The essential features, regularities of formation and functioning, role and main tasks of the new elite are analyzed. The problem of elite influence on the policies of governments of different levels is studied. The elite is determined to play a key



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role in the formation and development of social strata, which perform managerial functions significant for individual citizens and the country as a whole. A distinctive feature of the new elite is possession of information and knowledge, not material values. Its influence is due to scientific competence and the position of a leader in commercial, political and scientific institutions. Therefore, capital as the main constituent of influence is replaced by knowledge. Intelligence, information and knowledge are proven to be important factors of both technological progress and social self-determination. Moreover, the key for society development task of the new elite is integration of two polar social classes, the intellectual class and unskilled workers. Thus, modern education system, which combines studying the aspects of information activities and traditional research issues, should provide the basis for the formation of the new elite.

Keywords: *information society; elite; information; knowledge; leader; power.*

Introduction. The 21st century can be described as an era of innovation, change, intelligence, and globalization, which requires acquisition and development of basic competencies in information, communication, intellectual, legal and social spheres of public life. The ways of learning something new are changing fundamentally and hence knowledge itself, which is necessary for a modern person. Modern information society, requires significant changes in the fields of science and education, and therefore the formation of multifunctional, interdisciplinary core competencies. It is the society of global communication, where the use of information and communication technologies in management becomes open and dynamic, with developed operational feedback and reduced time for coordination and making management decisions (Poyasok & Besspartochna, 2015, p. 32). Thus, the society requires modern students to form competencies that can provide the basis for such abilities as competitiveness, purposefulness, independent decision-making, development of different approaches to the implementation of the action plan, as well as forecasting and comprehensive analysis of problem situations. Solving this problem requires permanent reforming and restructuring of the existing education system. Creating a new world or reformatting the old civilization is the main objective of learning. It is about both transferring knowledge, and the ability to use it properly. Hereafter, inability to manage economy and technology is not caused

by the lack of the necessary knowledge, but by the lack of those people who can solve problems on the basis of knowledge in both crisis and anti-crisis periods.

Therefore, the purpose of the research is to study the essential features, role and main tasks of the elite in the information society in order to determine the moral and ethical direction of its further development. Consequently, the main tasks of the research are identified as follows: to study the main characteristics and principles that determine the uniqueness of modern society on the basis of empirical data; to identify the factors of transformation that strengthen the position of the information society; to elicit the features of the new elite; to analyze the influence of the elite in determining the policy of governments in regulating the global world.

A number of scientific methods are applied to reveal various aspects of the phenomenon of the elite. These methods include as follows: the system method, which allows defining the elite as one of the elements of the political system endowed with its inherent functions, and information exchange between the society and elite; the structural-functional method that allows determining the structural elements of the elite; the synergetic method, which enables considering the elite from the prism of the theory of universal patterns of development of complex self-regulating dynamical systems; the method of analysis and logical generalization, which is used in the selection of materials for research to formulate practical recommendations for formation, development and functioning of the elite.

Literature review. The analysis of recent research of the elite suggests that the concept of elite, the laws of its formation and functioning have been the subject of research at different time periods, from ancient China, Greece and Rome to the present time. From French *elite* is translated as the best, chosen or selected part. In political and sociological theory, it is a small group of people who control a disproportionate amount of wealth or political power. Thus, this concept refers to the leading segments of society that guide social progress as a whole.

The ideas of social stratification, i.e. the division of society into *upper* and *lower* classes, *aristocracy* and *commoners*, find their justification in the works of Confucius, Plato, Aristotle, T. Aquinas, N. Machiavelli, and T. Carlyle. Modern vision of the theory of elites was formed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when the first concepts of elites were presented in the writings by V. Pareto, G. Mosca, and R. Michels. They consider the main characteristics of the elite to be as follows:

distinguishing features inherent in the representatives of the elite; relationships within the elite and with the masses; education, functions and the role of the elite in society. The term *elite* was coined by an Italian scientist V. Pareto, who defined it as a chosen group of people, the highest members of society, whose exceptional qualities give them power and glory (Mandziy, 2012). Prominent philosophers F. Nietzsche and M. Berdyaev described elite thinking as an opportunity given to man by God to improve himself in the process of life. J. K. Galbraith noted that 'the elite are supposed to be all those who bring special knowledge, talent and experience in the process of group decision-making' (Galbraith, 2004). According to D. Bell's concept of post-industrial society, the class division is based on the principle of knowledge and qualifications, and, therefore, the main classes are professionals (scientists, engineers), technicians, semi-skilled employees, and unskilled laborers. The ruling class of post-industrial society, the elite, consists of gifted people of all walks of life (Bell, 1967).

Results and discussions. E. Rohovskiy in *The USA: the Information Society (Economy and Politics)* asserts that the main characteristics of the information society are the accessibility of information resources necessary for professional activities or personal purposes, the availability of modern information technologies and means of communication, as well as creation of a developed information structure that enables constant updating of information resources necessary for social, economic, and scientific and technological development (Rohovskiy, 2008).

Complex transformational processes associated with a new stage of civilization development inevitably contain an ideological component, so the issue of choosing the moral and ethical direction of further development of our society becomes especially important. We can identify the following five basic principles that determine the uniqueness of modernity: individualism, differentiation, rationality, economism, and mass expansion. These principles reflect the capabilities and limitations of individuals in the modern world and outline contours of the environment that issues special demands on the individual and takes the form of a challenge. This circumstance became especially relevant during the pandemic. One of the most important manifestations of this challenge, which directly affects all social entities, is *massification*, i.e. entering the sphere of social activity of the masses.

These trends originated a long time ago, but today they are becoming the factors stimulating intensification of the search for the

solution to the problem posed by world development: how to proceed? Therefore, modern processes of transformation strengthen the position of the information society, in which the key role belongs to intelligence, information and knowledge. Nowadays, intellectual and information resources and knowledge are taking a leading position in life strategies and social practices of social entities. Thus, the problem of the elite arises as a problem of regulating the global world.

In our country, as in other countries, the elite plays a key role in the formation and development of social strata that participate in the preparation and adoption of important management decisions affecting the fate of individuals and the country as a whole.

It is important that over the past twenty years, despite the current state of affairs, society has asserted the certain idea that the basis of power is not status, but man's real ability to creative activity, and also to absorbing, processing and producing information and knowledge.

Among the characteristic features of the new elite we can identify several fundamental peculiarities. First of all, the main property that allows the representatives of the elite to occupy main positions is not visible tangible things such as land and capital, but information and knowledge; hence, the elite as the emerging ruling class is not as closed and homogeneous as the agrarian and industrial elites. It is not an aristocracy either, although this social group is replenished mainly by wealthy strata of society.

Secondly, its influence is due to the leader's position in business, political and scientific institutions. Accordingly, the technocratic class prevailing in the post-industrial society is represented by government bureaucracy, professional experts and technostucture, i.e. people involved in the process of formation and management of information flows. Since different social institutions are closely interrelated, belonging to technocrats is determined by the individual's ability to absorb information and generate new knowledge, although the position of professionals corresponds more to their scientific competence than their hierarchical power.

Finally, the new society is able to become less egalitarian than the previous (authoritarian), because capital as a factor of influence and power is replaced by knowledge. In contrast to labour, they are a rare factor of production that is in huge demand with limited supply.

However, this position does not cover all aspects of the problem. Although the two main social groups of industrial society, the working

class and industrial capitalists, have suffered significant destruction today, the current process does not lead to a homogeneous social structure, but rather to a phase of sharp polarization based on previously insignificant features. Substitution of money capital by intellectual one did not change the essence of the matter, as some society members have a scarce production resource, and some do not. Therefore, although a modern worker is better educated and trained, he has not taken an equal position with his opponent, the employer, yet.

The inconsistency of the information-post-industrial social structure shows that the class of technocrats is opposed by the class of performers and the alienated class consisting of representatives of endangered professions, members of closed regional communities, etc. In this context, the transition from the industrial society to the post-industrial one can be seen as a 'transition from a society of exploitation to a society of alienation' (Touraine, 1971, p. 95).

Thus, we can argue about the emergence in the post-industrial or, as it is now called, post-economic society, two fully formed poles of social confrontation. On the one hand, it is the upper class, whose representatives usually come from wealthier and well-educated family backgrounds who profess intellectual and cultural values and are employed in high-tech industries, and own or freely dispose of necessary means of production. That is, they either run industrial or service companies or hold senior positions in the corporate or government hierarchy. On the other hand, it is the lower class of the new society, which recruits unskilled workers or immigrants without proper education that is not included in the category of their values. Being motivated mainly by material reasons, they are usually employed in mass production, services, or are temporarily or permanently unemployed. So far, these embryonic social groups cannot be mentioned as an established class, but their significance is due to the fact that they are the poles of social attraction for those who formed the so-called middle class - the mainstay of the industrial society.

E. Toffler claims that today we are on the threshold of a new era - the era of synthesis that is characterized by return to large-scale thinking, the generalization of theory, and the composition of parts of speech into a single whole. Moreover, it is time of *clip culture* dividing our figurative series into small frames. They, in turn, need to be synthesized and create their own image series, which will be the basis of the configurable modular *I* of each individual (Toffler, 2002, p. 86). Someone has to synthesize the real picture of the world and its future development. Therefore, this need

should lead to the emergence of the elite of the modern society - many types of professionals whose main task is integration and synthesis. Representatives of the elite must penetrate into all activities and strata of society to manage the process of its development, which today cannot be carried out using old educational luggage.

The new *Third Wave* civilization cannot function with the outdated elite structure of the *Second Wave*: if the search for the *best* leader were not an illusion, we would solve the problem of inefficiency of political governments within the current political system. But even the *best* leaders today are helpless because they have to work in outdated social institutions. The *Third Wave* civilization requires a completely new type of elite since leaders are dealing with a much more decentralized, diverse society than earlier. Not only future, but also current government are and will be more temporary, collegial and consensual (Toffler, 2002).

The problem of the influence of a narrow circle of people, the elite, on government policies at different levels is the subject of study of many modern scholars. The results of their research can be divided into two categories. Firstly, elites are revealed to control all economic and political processes. In particular, the economic elite is claimed to be a 'superelite of society that runs government behind the scenes'. All other elites only use superelite' hints. All elected or appointed officials are either protégés or members of this category of society. Most often, the superelite *buy* politicians, because they are too busy to hold public office themselves. Moreover, the superelite can consider the public office to be a lower status of their life position. At the same time, the superelite prefer to influence the government indirectly, and money is not always the means (Frankel, 2005, p. 47).

Another view on the role of the economic elite in political life, particularly in the United States, suggests that it influences socio-political processes in the country and government decision-making, but these influences are slightly exaggerated.

Thus, the social boundary that divides the citizens of post-industrial society lies between two opposite groups, each of which is already fully positioned. Moreover, as this society develops, knowledge becomes a significant factor in both technological progress, and in social stratification and social self-determination. Analysis of the role of subjective human qualities in the modern society shows that new power is enclosed in information codes and representative images, around which societies organize their institutions, and individuals build their lives and determine their behaviour; this power is concentrated in human consciousness.

Such representative images are so powerful that today belonging to a particular class is determined not by property status or social origin, but by person's vision of his place in society. P. Drucker assumes that modern 'intellectual workers do not feel that they are exploited as a class' (Drucker, 1999, p. 81). Therefore, the actual post-economic relations develop only among those who consider themselves postmaterialists and behave accordingly. Having reached a certain level of well-being, a person only prepares the initial preconditions for the formation of intellectual and cultural (post-materialist) motivation, but does not necessarily become a post-materialist; by adopting such a system of values and acting in accordance with it, he gets a real opportunity to enter the elite of the new society and achieve a high level of well-being without much effort.

All these factors seem to indicate man's growing potential in the transition to a post-economic society, but this impression is wrong. Obviously, the ability to produce new knowledge distinguishes people from each other to a much greater extent than material wealth; moreover, this ability cannot be instantly acquired as it is largely determined at the genetic level due to intergenerational relations. The more a new upper class absorbs the most decent members of other society strata, the more the potential of the rest will decrease. Reverse migration that was quite possible in the economic (industrial) society, where the entrepreneur became a shopkeeper again after bankruptcy caused by the crisis, in this case is not inevitable, because the knowledge gained can be infinitely improved and is almost impossible to be lost. Therefore, there are already sufficient grounds today to assume that the emerging society will be extremely polarized. And this will cause as acute contradictions as in previous stages of social development.

Conclusions. Thus, the new elite can play an exceptional role in solving important tasks of the modern society. The analysis shows that it should consider the needs and challenges of the information society and respond to them in a timely and adequate manner. The qualitatively new elite is the one that is ready to ensure the implementation of such basic modern principles as individualism, differentiation, and rationality. The elite of the information society aims to develop intellectual and information resources and knowledge, which are system-forming factors of activity and existence of society and the state, and therefore should be used as the most effective means of ensuring national interests and overcoming contradictions in various spheres of state and public activity. In the post-industrial society, the main place is occupied by information

and educational technologies created by professionals with high cognitive, mental and spiritual abilities. Consequently, we need leaders who have critical-thinking skills, and are intellectuals of a high spiritual level, able to perform integration, innovative, cultural and educational functions, since their implementation is not in high demand at the present stage of our society development. Such elite cannot be found by chance, it must be created. And this is the modern educational system that should be its foundation, where the traditional sphere of research of the educational process is filled with the issues of information activities.

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Abstracts

ОЛЕНА ЛЕВЧЕНКО, ТЕТЯНА ДЯК, ЮРІЙ ГРИЦЮК. **Еліта інформаційного суспільства: виклики сучасності.** У статті обґрунтовано важливість формування нового покоління еліти інформаційного суспільства, спроможної приймати виклики сучасності для забезпечення потреб у різноманітних соціальних аспектах. Вивчено чинники та принципи, що визначають своєрідність сучасного суспільства. Виявлено, що постіндустріальне суспільство характеризується доступністю сучасних інформаційних ресурсів і технологій, а також розвинутою інформаційною структурою, у якій можливе постійне оновлення необхідних інформаційних ресурсів. Проаналізовано сутнісні ознаки, закономірності формування та функціонування, роль та основні завдання нової еліти. Досліджено проблему впливу еліти на визначення політики урядів різного рівня. Встановлено, що еліта відіграє ключову роль у процесі формування і розвитку соціальних верств, які здійснюють значущу для окремих громадян і країни в цілому управлінську діяльність. Відмінною особливістю нової еліти є володіння інформацією і знаннями, а не матеріальними цінностями. Її вплив обумовлений науковою компетентністю та становищем лідера у комерційних, політичних та наукових установах, адже основний фактор впливу, капітал, замінюється знаннями.

Доведено, що інтелект, інформація і знання є вагомими чинниками як технологічного прогресу, так і соціального самовизначення. Ключовим завданням нової еліти є інтеграція сформованих у постіндустріальному суспільстві основних соціальних класів, інтелектуального класу і некваліфікованих робітників, для розвитку суспільства. Зазначено, що новітня освітня система, яка охоплює вивчення аспектів інформаційної діяльності разом з традиційною проблематикою досліджень, повинна стати базисом для формування нової еліти.

Ключові слова: інформаційне суспільство; еліта; інформація; знання; лідер; влада.

ЕЛЕНА ЛЕВЧЕНКО, ТАТЬЯНА ДЯК, ЮРИЙ ГРИЦЮК. Элита информационного общества: вызовы современности. В статье обоснована важность формирования нового поколения элиты информационного общества, способной принимать вызовы современности для обеспечения потребностей в различных социальных аспектах. Изучены факторы и принципы, определяющие своеобразие современного общества. Выявлено, что постиндустриальное общество характеризуется доступностью современных информационных ресурсов и технологий, а также развитой информационной структурой, в которой возможно постоянное обновление необходимых информационных ресурсов. Проанализированы сущностные признаки, закономерности формирования и функционирования, роль и основные задачи новой элиты. Исследована проблема влияния элиты на определение политики правительств разного уровня. Установлено, что элита играет ключевую роль в процессе формирования и развития социальных слоев, которые осуществляют значимую для отдельных граждан и страны в целом управленческую деятельность. Отличительной особенностью новой элиты является владение информацией и знаниями, а не материальными ценностями. Ее влияние обусловлено научной компетентностью и положением лидера в коммерческих, политических и научных учреждениях. Основной фактор влияния, капитал, заменяется знаниями. Доказано, что интелект, информация и знания являются весомыми факторами как технологического прогресса, так и социального самоопределения. Ключевой задачей новой элиты является интеграция сформированных в постиндустриальном обществе основных полярных социальных классов, интеллектуального класса и неквалифици-

рованных рабочих для развития общества. Отмечено, что новая образовательная система, изучающая аспекты информационной деятельности и традиционную проблематику исследований, должна стать базисом для формирования новой элиты.

Ключевые слова: информационное общество; элита; информация; знания; лидер; власть.

OŁENA LEWCZENKO, TETIANA DJAK, JURIJ HRYCIUK. Elita społeczeństwa informacyjnego: wyzwania współczesności.

W artykule uzasadniono doniosłość kształtowania nowego pokolenia elity społeczeństwa informacyjnego, zdolnej przyjmować wyzwania współczesności dla zabezpieczenia potrzeb w rozmaitych aspektach społecznych. Przebadano czynniki i zasady, które decydują o osobliwościach społeczeństwa współczesnego. Stwierdzono, że społeczeństwo postindustrialne charakteryzuje się dostępnością współczesnych zasobów i technologii informacyjnych, a także rozwiniętą strukturą informacyjną, w której jest możliwa stała odnowa niezbędnych zasobów informacyjnych. Przeanalizowano istotne cechy, prawidłowość formowania i funkcjonowania, rolę i główne zadania nowych elit. Zbadano problem wpływu elit na ustalenie polityki władz różnych szczebli. Ustalono, że elity odgrywają rolę kluczową w tworzeniu i rozwoju warstw społecznych, które realizują istotne dla poszczególnych obywateli i całego kraju działania zarządcze. Cechą wyróżniającą nową elitę jest posiadanie informacji i wiedzy, a nie wartości materialnych. Jej wpływ jest uwarunkowany kompetencją naukową i stanowiskiem lidera w instytucjach komercyjnych, politycznych i naukowych, ponieważ główny czynnik wpływu, kapitał, zostaje zastąpiony wiedzą. Udowodniono, że inteligencja, informacja i wiedza są istotnymi czynnikami zarówno postępu technologicznego, jak i społecznego samostanowienia. Zadaniem kluczowym nowych elit w celu rozwoju społeczeństwa jest integracja głównych klas społecznych, klasy intelektualnej i robotników niewykwalifikowanych uformowanych w społeczeństwie postindustrialnym. Zaznaczono, że najnowszy system edukacyjny, obejmujący badanie aspektów działalności informacyjnej wraz z tradycyjną problematyką badań, powinien stać się podstawą ekonomiczną formowania nowych elit.

Słowa kluczowe: społeczeństwo informacyjne; elita; informacja; wiedza; lider; władza.