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POLITICAL ELITE

AND POLITICAL CULTURE: A POLITICAL-PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM OF GOVERNANCE AND SUBORDINATION

ÉLITE POLÍTICA Y CULTURA POLÍTICA: UN ANÁLISIS POLÍTICO-FILOSÓFICO DEL PROBLEMA DE LA GOBERNANZA Y LA SUBORDINACIÓN

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ABSTRACT

The formation of elites in a society may have a rationale, depending on how “elite” is defined. If it is understood as a group of highly trained and talented people who have achieved a position of power and leadership due to their dedication and effort, then the formation of an elite can be seen as something positive, whereas if it is defined as a group of people who have acquired their position of power and wealth due to political, family or economic connections, then the formation of an elite can be considered problematic, since it can perpetuate inequality and exclusion in society. Considering this, the objective of this work is to carry out a political-philosophical analysis of the relationship between the political elite, governance and subordination. The importance of studying the relationship between these variables and how they interact is given that it can help citizens to better understand how political decisions are made and how power is exercised, in addition to allowing the identification and addressing of inequalities and subordination in society. Although the human being has been organized hierarchically since ancient times (which generated elites where power was concentrated), it was not until Vilfredo Pareto and Max Weber that this phenomenon was addressed scientifically, and to this day it generates interesting and controversial political-political debates. ideological

Keywords: Political elite, power, governance, political culture

RESUMEN

La formación de élites en una sociedad puede tener un fundamento, dependiendo de cómo se defina la “élite”. Si se entiende como un grupo de personas altamente capacitadas y talentosas que han alcanzado una posición de poder y liderazgo debido a su dedicación y esfuerzo, entonces la formación de una élite puede ser vista como algo positivo, mientras que si se define como un grupo de personas que han adquirido su posición de poder y riqueza debido a conexiones políticas, familiares o económicas, entonces la formación de una élite puede ser considerada problemática, ya que puede perpetuar la desigualdad y la exclusión en la sociedad. Considerando esto, el objetivo de este trabajo es realizar un análisis político-filosófico de la relación entre élite política, gobernanza y subordinación. La importancia de estudiar la relación entre estas variables y cómo interactúan está dado que puede ayudar a los ciudadanos a comprender mejor cómo se toman las decisiones políticas y cómo se ejerce el poder además de permitir identificar y abordar las desigualdades y la subordinación en la sociedad. Si bien el ser humano se ha organizado jerárquicamente desde tiempos antiguos (lo que generó élites donde se concentraba el poder), no fue hasta Vilfredo Pareto y Max Weber que este fenómeno se abordó científicamente, y hasta la actualidad genera interesantes y polémicos debates político-ideológicos.

Palabras clave: Élite política, poder, gobernabilidad, cultura política.

INTRODUCTION

The history of management practice is very old, although in the past was very different compared to present. Ceramic tablets found in Sumer dating back to the III millennium BC contain information about commercial deals and laws. This shows that the management practice existed in ancient Sumer. It is known from the archeological excavations that even in the period of the primitive community, people united in organized groups and performed joint activities, more precisely, they were managed. The emergence of large organizations in ancient times clearly shows that they had a management structure. Over the years, the management of some organizations has become more complicated and difficult, and the organizations themselves have become stronger and more stable. An example of this is the Roman Empire, which existed for hundreds of years. The Roman legions, led by generals, had a clear structure of command, which allow them great victories over powerful states of Europe and the Middle East, whose flight, planning and discipline were poorly organized. Despite the existence of organizations throughout history, no one thought of managing them scientifically and systematically until the 20th century. Then, as a field of science, management is relatively new, being a fundamental in economics and political science. However, since each era has different development characteristics and ownership relations, the attitudes toward organizations have been diverse.

Among the different theories on administration, the theory of elites is interesting to investigate. According to Maloy (2016), in political science elite theory is a theoretical perspective according to which (1) a community's affairs are best handled by a small subset of its members and (2) in modern societies such an arrangement is in fact inevitable. These two tenets are ideologically allied but logically separable and their management has also been different. In contrast to this, theories such as Marxism address the need for power to be established in the working class, although ironically if history is consulted, even in the countries that followed that ideology, political elites were also established, which seems to validate the theory.

Related to the above, Pakulski (2018) highlights that, in all such societies, a bureaucratization of power facilitates domination by political elites that consist of top politicians, heads of state agencies, business tycoons and managers, leaders of organized labor, media moguls, and leaders of consequential mass movements. This way, elites mobilize the populations over which they preside for various causes and measures. Then, effective governance depends upon talented and skilled leaders imbued with political will, confidence, and foresight. Elite theory concentrates

on the extent to which elites are endowed with these qualities and on shortcomings that produce political decay and lead to replacements by new elites better endowed with such qualities.

One of the most controversial and researched issues is the relationship between political elites, democracy and governance since political elites, who occupy formal decision-making positions in governance, have a direct influence on political, social, and economic development (Persson & Sjöstedt, 2015) as well as they can also direct the political views of those over whom they rule (Persson & Sjöstedt, 2015). This can make it difficult for subordinated groups, such as marginalized communities, to have their needs and interests represented in decision-making processes. In some cases, the subordination of certain groups may be reinforced or perpetuated by policies implemented by the political elites or may be a result of deeply rooted power structures within the society. Then, the relationship among political elite, governance, and subordination can be complex and varies depending on the specific context and societal norms and for this reason understanding and addressing issues of subordination within governance structures is an important aspect of promoting equality and justice in society. With this in mind, the objective of this work is to carry out a political-philosophical analysis of the relationship between the political elite, governance and subordination.

DEVELOPMENT

In modern political science, the issue of the existence of the elite in society is accepted unambiguously. Elitology as an object of study is found in the field of political science, sociology, history and psychology. If earlier in political science studies, "leadership" and "the role of the masses" were discussed, now the leading role is played by the elite. It is a fact that the real political processes are in the hands of the minority - the elite - who make important political decisions for the development of society and concentrate power in their hands. But some political scientists do not consider the term "elite" scientific, and they justify their opinion in such a way that if this term means the ruling class, it does not have any new content. That is, if with its help, the class stratification of the society is replaced by the superficial elite-mass division, it is not correct, because the ruling upper class with the class structure of the society, does not deny its connection with the power of the socio-political system.

Some proponents of the theory of political pluralism oppose this term. They consider it possible to apply the concept of elite to less organized societies, they do not consider it acceptable for the analysis of the political system

of “industrial” and especially “post-industrial” society. At the present time, there are many different conceptions of the correct distribution of the ruling minority and the ruling majority in society. At the same time, there were always ironic approaches. Also, these approaches include the following pessimistic forecasts:

- in real life, the elite is at the highest level of government and does not let the masses into politics.
- the ruling elite uses the position to gain power, wealth and fame.
- there are big differences between the elite and the masses. It is practically impossible to overcome these differences.

It should be noted that the problem of preventing the division of power between the governed and those who govern has been discussed in ancient times. Confucius, Plato, Machiavelli are enough to mention those who came up with this idea. But at that time, this idea did not find social support. The first classical scientific concept was developed by Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, and Max Weber at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (Pakulski, 2018a). Their works describe the qualities of the elite, selection criteria and forms, interactions between the elite and the masses, and its direct role in society. They said that in any society, the division of the elite into the ruling minority and the ruled majority is inevitable. They noted that the power belongs to the elite because it is chosen by its special qualities. It is possible to come to the conclusion that the elite is a group of society with high management talent. The elite is formed mainly as a result of naturally selected individuals with high management quality.

In modern times, there are different directions of elite theory. Elite’s “Value”, “Democratic elitism”, “Pluralist elite”, etc., are considered the modern theories of the elite. Since each of these theories is of special political importance, the study of the political elite is also of particular importance (Wedel, 2017). In general, the political elite is a privileged group that concentrates power in its hands and makes important decisions for the life of society. Modern societies are characterized by an internal social-political womb with different differential structure, but an integrative political elite. Political elites are characteristic of all societies and states and its existence is determined by the following:

1. Psychological and social inequality of people, their unequal opportunities, aspirations and activities in political life.

2. Legal division of labor, which requires professional labor, as conditions that ensure the effectiveness of labor.
3. High social importance of management and its stimulation.
4. Use of a wide range of management activities to achieve different types of social management, it is known that political management work directly depends on the determination of values and resources.
5. Impossibility of general practical management over political leaders.
6. Political passivity of large masses of people, vital interests that usually do not belong to the political sphere.

If we summarize different points of view, then we can comment that the political elite is a group of people who have a high position in society, power, active political activity and influence in one or another sphere (Kertzer & Renshon, 2022; Vergara, 2013). Two main issues should be noted in the given opinion. First, “political elite” and “ruling elite” combine different groups directly involved in state affairs. This includes political, economic, military, ideological and other elites. Second, unlike other groups that make up the ruling elite, the political elite is directly involved in political governance.

Therefore, the political elite is a group, a social stratum, which controls the society by concentrating the state power and ruling positions in its hands. These are mainly professional politicians with high weight, ruling functions and positions. In modern states, the political elite are monarchs, presidents, general secretaries, prime ministers, ministers, heads of legislative and executive bodies, deputies, members of the supreme court, state governors, heads of ruling structures, in provinces, regions, high diplomatic corps, etc. In the past, most of them graduated from one or two higher educational institutions, and most of them were large entrepreneurs (Bagirov, 2022, p. 34). But, although the political elite is a group of people with the basis of power, it has a complex structure and internal diversity. The internal division of the political elite conditionally depends on the extent of ruling functions. Based on the given condition, the following types or levels are distinguished: high, middle, administrative.

The successful implementation of the strategic elite is not determined only by the quality of personnel involved in the preparation of the political course. It also depends on the public opinion of the country and the state of reflection of these opinions in making political decisions (Broockman & Skovron, 2018). Undoubtedly, we are talking about the communicative type of the political elite. The main purpose of this type is to monitor the extent to which the

interests and demands of social groups of different strata of the population are reflected in political programs and realized in practical activities. The most important advantage of this function is to see the mood of different social groups and to respond quickly and accurately to changes in public opinion on various vital issues. Because of that, representatives of the political elite in each country should regularly organize visits within the country in order to establish close relations with various social groups.

As mentioned, the concept of “ruling elite” is broader than the concept of political elite. The main characteristics that condition it are its representation in high government positions, political structures, economy, military complexes and cultural spheres in the society. Because this part of society has high indicators and achievements in their professional fields, even if they do not directly participate in political administration (Bagirov, 2013).

Unlike the political elite, the ruling elite combines the economic, cultural, ideological, scientific, information and military elite. The economic elite is a social class that includes large capital entrepreneurs. The decisions made by the economic elite have no less impact on people’s lives than the decisions made by the government. The cultural elite includes more influential and well-known artists, representatives of literature, and creative people. The scientific elite includes the more talented part of the intellectual elite. Its role is determined by the development of science and technology. The military elite is the main part of the ruling elite. It plays an important role in the life of society and political processes. Although the military elite is not considered as an independent group, in any case, a part of it belongs to the political elite. It should be noted that the degree of influence of the political elite depends on the nature of the political regime and the level of militarization of the country.

Another common concept in the approach to the belonging of culture is the theories about “elite and mass culture”. Especially these approaches have taken a firm place in modern Western cultural studies. “The theorists of the concept of elite culture try to express the essence of this culture with the thesis “culture is for culture” or “art is for art”. The authors of this theory consider culture and art to be the property of only a group of people and declare that the masses of the people are deprived of this rich spiritual wealth and do not understand it. According to the authors of this concept, it is the representatives of the “elite” class who create and guide culture. The people, however, do not participate in its creation or benefiting from these resources.

As can be seen from this brief overview, theorists who reveal the issue of stratification of culture as well as the stratification of society consider elite culture as one of the main components of elitism. While some see the elite of the society in the ruling class, others associate it with the epistemological origin and attribute only thinking “brains” to this class. They are the enablers of social progress.

When commenting on the sources of modern concepts of elite culture, it is important to mention their traditions of Enlightenment ideologies. According to this ideology, the enlightened elite makes the masses happy by giving them culture, but it should also be noted that conservative-aristocratic representatives of elite culture theories advise not to allow the elite to “massify” while providing culture and art to the masses. Otherwise, the authenticity and arrogance of the elite culture may be lost. On the other hand, the goal of the elite is to educate the masses while maintaining privacy and high culture, but not to descend to their level. This “aristocratic” option is considered the “alphabet” of the “elite culture” doctrine. F. Nietzsche was the brightest exponent of the “rebellion against the masses”. This philosopher advanced his elitist concepts in the following philosophical works: “The birth of tragedy from the soul of music” (1872), “Superhumanity” (1878), “Joyful science” (1872), “Thus spoke Zarathustra” (1884). Granier (1995)

In these works, Nietzsche’s elitism is manifested on the idea of “Superman”. This “Extraordinary” has a privileged position in society and is characterized by a unique aesthetic sensibility and perception. He notes that although the crowd plays an important role in society, he acts in front of everyone with his ordinariness. The author managed to reveal the real aspects of the cultural conditions of the period of the crisis of capitalism, and analyzed the “meshshan” culture, which is characteristic of this society. F. Nietzsche opposes this “aristocratic” culture, which is imperfect, unmotivated, hasty, and exposes those who descend to the level of the masses and distort art. F. Nietzsche and Spengler explained the decline of culture with the phenomenon of “massification”. Civilization replaces culture; the true moral elite cannot assert itself in “mass” art, it is replaced by a false elite consisting of paid exploiters and politicians. Spengler was proud of the eras and epochs of culture distinguished by their level of “refined and extremely beautiful”. The ideas, language and forms of these cultures belong to the minorities that make up the “people belonging to the higher type”. Granier (1995)

Spengler affirms that “renaissance is the creation of separate intelligences”. Apparently, he gives a one-sided interpretation of the history of culture, especially the

renaissance, and evaluates it only as a product of the elite (Mahmudov et al., 2012, p. 29). At the beginning of the 20th century, the elite ideas of Spengler, F. Nietzsche and A. Schopenhauer were summarized in the cultural concepts of X. Ortega-i-Gasset. The concept of the elite culture of the Spanish philosopher was opposed to the "mass civilization" and put forward the thesis "art for art's sake". He called it elitist art, supporting only professional art. Ortega-i-Gasset opposed the elitist type of aesthetic perception to the masses. In his work, he notes that earlier the masses "knew their place, did not claim anything, ... and now, suppressing and eliminating the minority, it strives to advance towards the stage of social life." Thus, the Spanish philosopher sees the tragedy of modern culture precisely in this. According to the constitution of Ortega-i-Gasset, the interests of the masses are purely material; they are rude and vulgar: their "vile, despicable intentions" are opposed to the high ideals of the "true, original elite". The Spanish philosopher predicts that if the mass invasion of culture continues, the world will return to its previous state - barbarism. Of course, The decisiveness and rigor in these views of Ortega-i-Gasset came from the idea of the development of the role of the masses in the history of culture. But in truth, the Spanish philosopher was in a certain sense wrong in this matter. Ortega-i-Gasset's opinion contained fear and danger. In fact, the opportunities and role of the people's masses in the progressive development of culture are significantly evaluated in the opinions expressed many times by culturologists and sociologists. Noé (2021) Ortega-i-Gasset's ideas and propositions about elite culture were analyzed in a unique way in his outstanding philosophical work "Dehumanization of Genius" published in 1925. In this work, the author explains new and old concepts of art and culture and reveals their public, social and cultural roots and signs. Touching on the problems of old and new art, Ortega-i-Gasset sees the difference between both arts in that the new culture is not addressed to the mass class of society, but to the elite. Based on this thesis, the author asserts the opinion that it is not necessary and impossible for the new culture and art to be popular, or rather, universal and understood by everyone! (Almond & Powell, 1966, p. 25).

An important aspect of culture is political culture. The level of development of political culture consists of the degree of democratization of all spheres of public life. In this regard, political culture is a synthesis of political knowledge and political experience, as well as political activity. According to political scientists, the political culture of the personality depends on the level of the political culture of the society as a whole, and the democratization of public life. That is, the role of political creativity of the masses is more clearly manifested in the activity of formal and informal social and

political organizations. Thus, the participation of society members in all spheres of social and political life creates the necessary conditions for the rise of the political culture of the society. Political scientists indicate the following elements of political culture:

- Political experience of society (class, social group, individual).
- The image and methods of political activity of personality and social groups.
- Political interests, knowledge, and beliefs.
- Political values, norms, customs, instincts.
- The level of perception of citizens about political relations and political power.
- Political institutions.

Alikram Taghiyev notes that the first form of manifestation of political culture is the attitude of power. Power is the capacity and capabilities of a certain influence acting in a general sense, people's expression, authority, law, force, etc.; is the behavior that reflect the relationship of dominance and subordination. Another manifestation of political culture is the style of political activity. For example, the political life of the United States and France is more open, there are more opportunities for broad political activity. There are countries where not all people are given such an opportunity. Such societies are closed for political activity, allowing political activity of only a group of people. It is more a matter of forms and types of political culture; the question of form is the character of the social structure. Aliyeva (2010)

Taghiyev also notes that the third form of manifestation of political culture is the influence of citizens on decision-making and the level of their participation in it: it can be called the political mood of society. More precisely, who plays the dominant role in political processes: revolutionary, reformist, imperialist, nationalist, etc. forces. The fifth form of manifestation of political culture is what political exchange in society is based on: trust, compromise, agreement, etc. The analysis of political culture allows us to learn at what levels it exists: 1) political culture of personality; 2) political culture of large socio-political groups and movements. This includes the level of political culture of the society as a whole.

Political scientist Nurlan Galandarov puts forward the idea that some researchers value political culture as national spirituality. But this position appeared against the background of a narrow approach to the issue. If we approach the issue from a broad perspective, we can note that political culture is a complex set of values that form the basis of positions and behaviors related to the mutual relations

of citizens with the government, as well as individual positions and tendencies manifested among the participants of the political system. Political culture is one of the main indicators showing that it is based on fundamentals and political values, in other words, that democratic principles prevail in that country. Because political culture is the carrier of the following elements that allow determining the level of democracy:

- Citizens' attitude towards the political authorities is reflected in their behavior and - Citizens' attitude towards the political authorities is reflected in their behavior and opinions. Political culture is formed and developed on the basis of such behavior and opinions.
- The attitude of the political authorities towards the citizens of the country is also reflected in the political culture. For example, in relation to members of the society, the government either encourages them to participate in political life, does not prevent the activities of individuals based on democratic principles and norms, or prevents the political participation and socialization of individuals by any means. This, as a result, affects the level of political participation of individuals and, therefore, their political culture.
- The development of political culture increases the influence of citizens on political management. At the same time, active members of society influence the decision-making and implementation process. This has an unambiguously positive effect on government-society relations.
- Political culture determines the moral and psychological orientations and values of individuals who participate in governance and those who do not. This also acts as a factor that shapes political behavior and positions within the country. The factor in question is evaluated as an outline that determines the prospective development level of a country.

The political scientist also notes that political culture is one of the important components of the political system and acts as a fundamental factor that ensures the country's political development. According to him, the presence of strong political leaders in the society is considered as a necessary factor for the formation of a high political culture. "Because leaders with significant management experience and potential provide a high level of political culture by creating a legitimate political environment, which creates a foundation for the transformation of political values".

In the case of Azerbaijan, it should be noted that the changes in the social lifestyle of the population have had a positive effect on the political culture of the population. Sociological surveys show that the country's population is quite informative and active in relation to the political system. The people's opinion on the stability and continuity

of the political system is unchangeable. The respondents who stated that any official suffers from corrupt activities firmly believes that the government will fix these cases. Political culture is not formed as an abstract process regardless of space and time. Social reality, relations in society and between individuals, system of moral and ethical values, public opinion and traditions are factors influencing the formation of political culture. The mutual relations of political institutions within the political culture system regulates their relations with other elements of the social system through norms, values, and traditions. On the one hand, political culture ensures the legitimacy and efficient functioning of the political system, on the other hand, it indicates the level of the "rules of the game" of politicians and the forces they represent, and the attitude of the masses of people to political processes.

Therefore, political culture is one of the constituent parts of the moral potential of society. Separating it from general culture is in a certain sense conditional, because spiritual culture includes legal, moral, aesthetic, etc. fields are included in political culture in one form or another. One of the most important conditions for the development of political culture is the creation of a wide opportunity for political pluralism to become the norm of life, and another is the expansion of transparency regulated through values and traditions. Political culture is one of the constituent parts of the moral potential of society. In Azerbaijan, the political culture formed after the independence of is distinguished by different characteristics in the context of Azerbaijanism. Characteristics features are firm loyalty to statehood, the ability to quickly identify the strengths of the leader and not to be easily exposed to populism.

For the democratic political development of the society and for the purpose of carrying out reforms, the optimal option is formed when the elite has an advantage over the ordinary citizens. Other variants of the ratio of competition between elite and mass activism lead to slow changes and the emergence of authoritarian regimes. The most unfavorable situation for political development occurs when the credibility of the political participation of the elite and the masses simultaneously falls to a minimal level. This leads to the decline of the society and the political system, in other words, it causes the disintegration and fragmentation of the social system that is a whole. An important feature of the liberal direction of political modernization theory is its negative attitude to authoritarianism. According to the liberal scenario, such a development of events is also possible:

1. democratization of society.
2. in the conditions of increased competition of the elite, but low activity of the main part of the population, the

ground is created for the formation of authoritarian regimes and the delay of changes.

3. the superiority of political participation over the competition of elites and the delay of changes.
4. the minimum level of credibility of the elite and the level of political participation at the same time leads to chaos and can give rise to dictatorships. Supporters of a conservative approach to political development (S. Huntington, H. Lintz, etc.) associate the source of modernization with a noticeable conflict between the involvement of the population in political life and institutionalization. By institutionalization, they mean the existence of necessary structures and mechanisms for the commonality and coordination of interests. They believe that the modernization of society is more related to the strength and organization of democratic political institutions than the level of them. An authoritarian regime that controls the rules can ensure market transition and national unity.

It is possible to conclude that the transition to democracy should be carried out gradually, in the course of achieving success in reforms related to economic and social relations. That is, the main task of the political elite should be to ensure the balance between the changes occurring in various spheres of the modernizing society. This way, supporters of the conservative approach to modernization do not deny democratic values in the transition to democracy and they also understand political modernization as a transition to democracy.

As is known, S. Huntington distinguished three waves of democratization. The first wave began in the United States at the beginning of the 19th century and continued until the end of the First World War. The second wave started after the Second World War and the third wave of democratization began in 1974 with the overthrow of the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal. T. Karl and F. Schmitter call the democratic changes in the post-socialist countries the fourth wave of democratization. Let's note that the concepts of "Elite" and "mass society" are the topics embodied in the works of modern sociologists and cultural experts. Addressing the topics of "elitism" and "mass society", these theorists try to clarify the history, structure and social dynamics of modern society. American sociologist U. Kornhauser confirms that these concepts have become one of the main phenomena in modern cultural studies and sociological literature.

Over the centuries, elitism was evaluated and embellished as the teachings and theories of "mass society", bourgeois ideology, products and results of capitalist exploitation. Hundreds of works and scientific researches have been examined and analyzed. These analyzes were delivered

in the years of the Soviet establishment in the USSR, as well as in countries with a communist ideology that chose the socialist system, as well as in Azerbaijan, as a teaching alien to "our society". Such theories are supposedly impossible in the communist system. In fact, the root of these problems should be sought in the formation of these teachings and theories in the development of history. It would not be correct to treat the new teachings of the theories of elitism as a mere repetition of the old idealistic view of the role of the masses and the individual in history.

The authors of these teachings try to provide more scientific analyzes of modern social relations, look for the newest arguments and try to firmly convince that only after studying the correct position of the problem of elitism and "mass culture" can one find the reasons for the dynamic events, peace and wars characteristic of our time.

Elite and "mass society" theories are closely related to other cultural and sociological theories that have become widespread. These are teachings about social stratification, social mobility, "transformation of capitalism" that interpret the essence of monopolistic imperialism. The progressive American sociologist Barclay writes that the genealogy of elitism has been passed down from Plato to Nietzsche and then to Hitler. There is some truth in this statement.

For hundreds of years before Marxism was formed, such an idea held a dominant position that there were individual outstanding personalities from the exploiting class who took the historical process forward and developed it, and that the masses of the people did not have any historical creativity. The first sparks of these theories we find in the ideas of the ideologues of the slavery aristocracy.

The essence of their advice is the idea that history is created by people chosen by God: officers, priests, philosophers; and those who prostrate and obey them are slaves. Socrates taught that the society is governed by the "best people" who are the minority who acquire real knowledge. Plato believed that the state should be ruled by aristocrats and keep the demos (people) in their power. This categorically rejects the participation of the demos in state administration, evaluating it as a crowd alien to wisdom, characterized by untruthful views (Mamamdova, 2022).

In Plato's "Ideal State", artists, farmers and others are excluded from good occupations. Palton uses the same principle in his teaching about the "soul". According to Plato's teachings, the most intelligent part of the soul is concentrated in the philosophers - the ruling judges, and the affective part - in the heroism of the servant soldiers, in those who maintain discipline. In the working masses, the longing, greed, and desire part of the soul is manifested.

Slaves are only required to strictly adhere to the established laws, to be diligent and submissive. Plato saw the biggest flaw of democracy in the principle of “whoever does what he wants” in a democratic society and “working people uniting and organizing the strong side of democracy” in the majority.

In the Middle Ages, the ideologues of feudalism put forward such a doctrine that the masses should obey the rulers without question; these ideologues tried to imagine the world and society as a hierarchical ladder. The ideologues who justified the persecution of the masses of the people as the ruling class and attributed the development of civilization to this ruling class prevailed. Nietzsche says that the masses of the people are herds, they must be kept in the form of slaves by all means. They are something “no bigger than a bridge and a bridge, so that the chosen ones stand firm on high.”

The idealist theory, which denies the role of the masses of people in history and deems only the creativity of individual “chosen” people, representatives, ruling classes and groups to be necessary, has been used as a moral weapon by the ruling classes throughout history. In the elite theory the mass of people in history is a component of the idealist vision of the role of the individual. These views come in two forms. First, in theories about the hero and the crowd, the subject of history is a separate personality; secondly, in the theories of the elite, the subject of history is not an isolated hero, but the ruling class and their leaders as a whole. Both forms are close to each other and even complement each other since their creators are the same philosophers (E. Lederer, S. Hook and others) (Abbasov, 2006).

Philosophical idealism is the theoretical basis of elitism. By virtue of its existence, elite theories have a number of characteristics. Elite theory must prove that the working masses cannot live without the ruling classes without and their state apparatus; secondly, these theories exist so that they can hide the sharp difference between the exploiting class and the exploited class.

Even in ancient times, the ideologues who served the interests of the exploiters measured the subject of history not only with a separate representative of the ruling class, but also with a large social class that subordinated it. If Plato attributed the slave aristocracy to them, in the feudal society they were replaced by kings, and in capitalism by a group of separate owners who were “captains of industry”. Subjective idealists even saw the driving factor of social development itself in individual individuals and personalities. Subjective idealists, proceeding from the idealist solution of the main epistemological issue of social

life, deny the role of the working masses in the material life of society.

According to materialists, social life, which is characterized by its own laws, is an objective reality and is primary, while human consciousness is a reflection of its social existence and occupies the second place. However, by affirming the objective regularities of the historical process, materialists do not at all try to claim that history is an automatic process. On the contrary, according to them, people who have consciousness and beliefs perceive and understand the laws of the objective world and carry out their practical activities accordingly. Thus, materialists, including representatives of Marxist theory, based on this idea, confirm the active creative role of the masses, classes and strata, parties, and individual personalities.

The system of mutual political activities, figuratively speaking, constitutes the “main board” of any society. Political culture acts as the main regulator of this system. By the way, S. Verba also justified it in this way. The political realities of society are an indicator of the level of political culture of political subjects. But when the question of what the characteristic of the political culture in the post-Soviet countries is and what are its characteristics, the “Eurasia Dialogue” Charitable Foundation and the “Eurasia Monitor” International Research Agency (NGO) took a successful step towards finding an answer to this question within the framework of cooperation. In general, within the framework of partnership, since 2004, the “Eurasia Monitor” Agency has been conducting intensive research in the North Eurasian region. One of the research directions is the study of the characteristics of political culture in the four post-Soviet countries Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova. Based on this, a final analytical report was prepared based on the results of the sociological research conducted on the mentioned topic in accordance with the directions of the mentioned research. The part of the report related to Azerbaijan presents remarkable results about political institutions, political and cultural values of the country and their development trends in the post-Soviet period.

Certain findings of the said report are reflected below. In the mentioned report, first of all, it is noticeable that the fact of the existence of some unique features of the Azerbaijani political culture although it is not confirmed by all the experts. Some of the respondents emphasize that the political culture in Azerbaijan has its own characteristics that distinguish it from other countries. Azerbaijan is a unique country located at the intersection of East and West. Although a significant part of its territory belongs to Asia, Azerbaijan is a European country. Naturally, this has a serious meaning and importance for our mentality. We

are fundamentally different from other countries, as our political culture with national characteristics benefits from history and traditions.

Experts take two positions on this issue. A group of experts does not differentiate the political culture of Azerbaijan from the trends of political culture that exist in the post-Soviet space in general. The political culture incorporating new qualities in the post-Soviet space began to take shape in the early 90s after the collapse of the USSR. Almost all states have gone through similar historical processes in some more successful ways, and others in a more complicated way. However, it did not become a process that allowed for the existence of fundamental changes related to the mentioned topic or the establishment of forms of political culture with deeply different characteristics. The expert group from the second point of view believes that the backward aspects or non-existence of the unique features of the political culture in Azerbaijan compared to other states are determined under the influence of the globalization trend.

In the current situation, when we talk about the political culture of the era of globalization, it is not correct to classify the states by division in this sense. From this point of view, raising a specific question about the national political culture is not considered appropriate in the mentioned sense. In our opinion, as a whole, the factors that exist in the political culture system of other countries operate in a fundamental way in the working mechanism of the political culture system of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and these factors have a great influence on the state and the public.

Throughout its socio-political history, Azerbaijan has been a territory where interests and spheres of influence of foreign actors intersected. Under such conditions, the main features of its political culture emerged. Undoubtedly, the influence of certain foreign countries with which Azerbaijan has historical relations over the centuries is not excluded here. These countries are mainly Russia and Turkey. But at the same time, it is impossible to keep Iran out of this process, because Azerbaijan has had various forms of relations and ties with this country throughout history. In such circumstances, it is possible to say that the political culture of Azerbaijan is a kind of symbiosis of different cultures. In this regard, we should not forget the Soviet period, which left deep traces not only in the political, but also in the general culture of the country (Mamamdova, 2022).

CONCLUSIONS

Political elite refers to a select group of people who have significant influence on political decision-making and the

direction of the country or community in which they are located. These individuals often have access to resources and powerful social circles, and occupy positions of authority in governments, political parties, international organizations, businesses, and other important institutions. Historically, attitudes towards the political elite have varied depending on the political and cultural context in which they find themselves. In some societies, the political elite has been considered a privileged and corrupt elite that abuses its power and benefits from the exclusion and exploitation of the majority of the population. In other cases, they have been seen as a class of wise and experienced leaders who work for the welfare of society. In modern democracies, the political elite is seen as a group of leaders elected and selected through democratic processes and accountable to society as a whole. However, there are often concerns about corruption, favoritism and unrepresentativeness within the political elite, which can lead to a loss of trust in the broader political system.

The attitude of elites and governance has been very varied throughout history and in different political contexts. In some cases, the elites have used their power to benefit themselves and their interests, to the detriment of the majority of the population. This can include corruption, a lack of transparency, and manipulation of political institutions to maintain their power. In other cases, elites have worked to promote the common good and to create more just and equitable societies. Therefore, the quality of governance varies widely depending on the attitude and behavior of elites. Governance can be inclusive, participatory and oriented to solve the problems of society, or it can be exclusive, authoritarian and oriented to maintain the status quo. So, since the attitude of the elites towards governance can influence the quality and effectiveness of public policies, the trust and support of the population towards the political system is a fundamental aspect for the stability of the state apparatus.

The relationship between political culture and elites can be complex and multifaceted, since both are interconnected and influence each other. Elites can influence political culture by establishing the norms and values that govern the political system and society in general, for example by promoting democracy, equal opportunity, freedom of expression and other democratic values that shape the political culture of the society. In turn, political culture can influence the attitudes and behaviors of elites for example, if the political culture is favorable to citizen participation and transparent decision-making, elites are more likely to adopt political practices that reflect these values. However, in history there have also been tensions between political culture and elites, especially if elites are

perceived as corrupt or unrepresentative of the interests of the broader society. In these cases, political culture can be a force that questions and challenges elites and seeks to change the political system to make it more just and equitable.

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