

THE CONCEPT OF POST-SOVIET HABITUS: INSTITUTIONAL AND VALUE DIMENSIONS

The article justifies the heuristic potential of the post-Soviet habitus concept as a theoretical alternative and an analytical tool for investigating the internal factors that determine the specifics of the state's political process. Also a two-level conceptualization of the Post-Soviet habitus through institutional and value dimensions is presented. The concept is extrapolated on the example of Ukraine: the heterogeneity of the Post-Soviet habitus is considered as the instrument for mobilizing the collective identity within the specific conditions of a hybrid armed conflict.

Keywords: post-Soviet habitus, institutes, values, hybrid armed conflict.

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КОНЦЕПТ ПОСТРАДЯНСЬКОГО ГАБИТУСУ: ІНСТИТУЦІЙНИЙ І ЦІННІСНИЙ ВИМІРИ

Обґрунтовується евристичний потенціал концепту пострадянського габітусу в якості теоретичної альтернативи і аналітичного інструменту для дослідження внутрішніх чинників, що визначають специфіку політичного процесу держави. Також представлена дворівнева концептуалізація пострадянського габітусу через інституційний і ціннісний виміри. На прикладі України здійснюється екстраполяція концепту: гетерогенність пострадянського габітусу розглядається з точки зору інструменту мобілізації колективної ідентичності в рамках специфічних умов гібридного збройного конфлікту.

Ключові слова: пострадянський габітус, інститути, цінності, гібридний збройний конфлікт.

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КОНЦЕПТ ПОСТСОВЕТСКОГО ГАБИТУСА: ИНСТИТУЦИОНАЛЬНОЕ И ЦЕННОСТНОЕ ИЗМЕРЕНИЯ

Обосновывается эвристический потенциал концепта постсоветского габитуса в качестве теоретической альтернативы и аналитического инструмента для исследования внутренних факторов, определяющих специфику политического процесса государства. Также представлена двухуровневая концептуализация постсоветского габитуса через институциональное и ценностное измерения. На примере Украины осуществляется экстраполяция концепта: гетерогенность постсоветского габитуса рассматривается с точки зрения инструмента мобилизации коллективной идентичности в рамках специфических условий гибридного вооруженного конфликта.

Ключевые слова: постсоветский габитус, институты, ценности, гибридный вооруженный конфликт.

In the modern political science discourse internal state factors that influence the specifics of the political process are predominantly considered in terms of structural or anthropological peculiarities. These broad concepts include a range of more specific components – historical, ethnic, linguistic, cultural characteristics etc. Within some

approaches structural or anthropological factors are analyzed in the form of concepts such as identity, mentality or political culture. However, such terminological abundance as a result leads to the situation, when in fact typical socio-political phenomena are multidirectionally studied within the framework of «different-caliber» categories. Basing on the principle of Occam's razor, we propose to investigate the structural factors with a help of one category, which, in our opinion, integrates the existing varied terms regarding internal factors of the political process, namely – by applying the concept of habitus.

Thus, the topicality of this study is the necessity to revise the categorical and conceptual apparatus concerning traditional approaches to the definition of structural and anthropological factors as internal state triggers of the political process. The purpose of this article is to justify the heuristic potential of the structuralist concept of habitus in terms of a possible terminological alternative as well as to perform an attempt of deploying that category for analysing Post-Soviet «heritage» of Ukraine.

From our point of view, precisely the application of habitus concept, firstly, corresponds to the logic of the «posttransit» paradigm of research, that pays much attention to the study of informal aspects of politics. Secondly, it is able to systematize existing approaches to the study of historical, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural factors of the political process. Thirdly, the utilization of habitus concept can offer a completely different perspective on the analysis of socio-political phenomena in Ukraine, in particular in the context of: the causes of the nature's deformation of Ukrainian state-political modernization, the peculiarities of reforming state institutions (primarily within the framework of the «European Union - Ukraine Association Agreement»), as well as the reasons and essence of the hybrid armed Ukrainian-Russian confrontation.

In socio-political sciences French scientist P. Bourdieu was the first to promote the widespread use of habitus concept. Bourdieu's theory of habitus was developed at the end of the 1960s, during his ethnological studies in Algeria, and was first mentioned in the preface to the collection of works on ethnology «Outline of a Theory of Practice» (1972). A further thorough development the theory obtained in «The Logic of Practice» (1980).

The concept of habitus P. Bourdieu, undoubtedly, has both theoretical origins preceding the appearance of the term and similar parallel concepts that, in essence, explain the identical phenomena, but with the help of different theoretical categories. And also the derivative theories: the most striking «deviation» among which, in our opinion, is B. Latour's actor-network theory. Latour, despite the radical rethinking of traditional sociological methodological principles, still agreed that the most powerful intuition of the social sciences is that we are forced to act by forces that we do not control [1]. Therefore, the conception of habitus was largely influenced by the ideas of G. Leibniz, E. Husserl, M. Mauss, C. Levi-

Strauss, F. de Saussure, L. Wittgenstein, M. Merleau-Ponty, N. Elias, E. Panofsky et al.

«The limits of my language mean the limits of my world», – wrote the philosopher L. Wittgenstein [2]. L. Wittgenstein allocated a significant role to language as a phenomenon that is inextricably linked with the human reality, and moreover, which affects the perception and interpretation of that reality. The concept of the form of life (*Lebensformen*) introduced by him, in fact, reflects the interdependence of human value orientations in the process of learning the world on the linguistic activity. It means, in general terms, that language directs and to some extent defines the practice, language becomes a certain form of «exis», if to draw parallels with the concept of P. Bourdieu. In general, any rules, according to L. Wittgenstein, always constitute a compressed manifestation of practice, they are inseparable from forms of life.

Separately, it is important to mention the concept of the collective unconscious proposed by the classics of psychoanalysis – Z. Freud and C. Jung. The main idea of the collective unconscious is that human behavior is guided not only by its individual motives, but also reflects the behavior of the meta-society to which person belongs. It is possible to draw some parallels between habitus and archetypes of K. Jung as structures constituting the essence of the collective unconscious. «There are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life. Endless repetition has engraved these experiences into our psychic constitution, not in the form of images filled with content, but at first only as forms without content, representing merely the possibility of a certain type of perception and action. When a situation occurs which corresponds to a given archetype, that archetype becomes activated and a compulsiveness appears...» [3].

This explanation of the archetypes that K. Jung viewed as «patterns of instinctive behavior» is extremely closely correlated with the core of habitus notion, especially with the notion of «experiences» that corresponds to «practices» in structuralist constructivism. However, P. Bourdieu's habitus goes much beyond the boundaries of psychoanalysis, allowing to analyze «mental disorders» now in the framework of the political interaction between individual.

Certainly, at this context J. Habermas concept of life-world that is also pretty close to habitus should be emphasized. In his theory of communicative action J. Habermas defines life-world as a «background knowledge» or a

collection of unprolematized beliefs that actors are unaware of and which are oriented for reaching a mutual understanding. Such background knowledge arises as a result of joint residence in a particular community. This is a kind of «universe of predetermined self-evidence», «always and already known obviousness», «repository of samples of interpretation» [4]. Thus, the main function of life-world, according to J. Habermas, is the promotion of getting a consensus on specific topics discussed due to the already existing consensus on the implicit, unconscious range of issues (agreed upon «by default»).

J. Habermas also noted that, in the narrow sense, life-world is a culture, patterns of behavior in society, the necessary skills for participation in the process of communication. To the sphere of life-world he attributed the family, the educational system, science, religion, art, relations among friends, voluntary associations. In addition, J. Habermas' life-world is an important concept for the analysis of modernization. As a result of modernization, society is considered to be split into systems (market economy and bureaucracy) and life-world [5].

Interesting observations on the determinism of the individual decisions also demonstrate some breakthroughs in the field of neuroscience. «... by measuring your brain activity, I can know that you're going to have the urge to lift your finger before you know it yourself» [6]. An English neurobiologist C. Frith gives that thesis, explaining the experiment of B. Libet in 1983, when participants were asked to raise their finger every time they had a desire to do that. At the same time, the electrical activity of the brain was measured. It turned out that the desire to raise a finger occurs about 200 milliseconds before a person actually does it. Although, the greatest discovery was that the change in the brain activity takes about 500 milliseconds before a person raised the finger. In other words, the brain activity had showed that the participant of the experiment was going to raise the finger 300 milliseconds before the participant reported that he indeed had a desire to do so. «We think we are making a choice, when, in fact, our brain has already made the choice. Our experience of making a choice at that moment is therefore an illusion» [6].

Consequently, we can conclude that one way or another our decisions are determined in advance, even if we consider them to be spontaneous. In a certain sense, the unconscious decision occurs before the conscious intention.

And one of the main roles in that process plays the social environment or habitus.

Habitus is a key category in the entire P. Bourdieu's scientific contribution. Hence, there are many ways of describing and defining this concept, proposed by the scientist (the most metaphorical among them are, for example, «the art of invention» or «a virtue of necessity»). In the further analysis we will rely on the following two definitions of habitus: «the system of dispositions acquired - schemes of perception, thinking and action, which guarantees the identity and consistency of practices in time» [7]. Also, habitus is a «system of incorporated classifications that determines preferences that are perceived as an avocation and orientates evaluative judgments» [8]. Overall, in essence, habitus – it is a kind of subjectification of objective social relations, attitudes and practices.

The main characteristics of habitus are the following. **1. *Habitus is inextricably linked with practices.*** Habitus is directly related to the so-called practical sense (understanding what makes sense or is important is defined within and by a particular social environment) and practices (regular, repetitive, habitual actions of the everyday life). **2. *Habitus underlies the double structuring.*** Habitus is the generic principle (*principe générateur*) of practices that can be objectively classified and at the same time it constitutes the system of classification of these practices (*principium divisionis*). This is a well-known Bourdieu's thesis on the «double structuring» of social reality. «The system is observed in the *opus operatum* [from the Latin products, the results of action] due to the fact that it is laid down in the *modus operandi* [from the Latin way of action] » [9]. **3. *Habitus is a product of the position in the social space.*** «Like positions which products they are, habituses are differentiated, but they also differentiate» [7].

4. *Habitus generates and unifies, determines the lifestyles.* It is a force that «reduces its own internal and relational characteristics of a particular position in a single lifestyle, in other words, in a single ensemble of people's choice, goods and practices» [7]. **5. *Habitus constantly structures the previous experience.*** Depending on the structures created by the previous experience, new experience, transforming the original structures, is also realizes a single integration of experiences «statistically common to all members of the same class». However, it is important to stress, that the direction of such integration is determined largely by the first

experience. **6. *Functional elements of habitus are «ethos»*** (a set of learned moral rules and norms) **and «exis»** (behavior, physical dispositions, ways of external self-presentation). Habitus can be investigated diachronically (in terms of primary and secondary habitus), as well as in the form of sociological generalizations (class and group habitus).

Proceeding from the fact that practices generate habitus and vice versa, P. Bourdieu identifies two mechanisms that influence the development of habitus: internalization and exteriorization. Both processes are ways to assimilate and reproduce social practices. Interiorization is the practical digestion of dispositions how to produce practices, when the agent unknowingly imitates the practices of other agents, learns what is right and correct, and what is condemned or even punished by trial and error process (assimilation of ethos of habitus, its value component). In the same way, there is a «upbringing» of the corresponding type of exis (practical or bodily manifestations of habitus: gestures, style of clothing etc.) [10]. One of the manifestations of internalization is incorporation, when certain social relations or their consequences are «incised» in the body of the agent in the form of stable dispositions (certain speech styles, distinctive movements). The original habitus, which sets the main vector of its further development, is formed in the family, then it «crystallises» in the school, after it – within the work team, university community etc.

Exteriorization is connected with the so-called «filtration» of further solutions based on the internalized habitus. That is its practical implementation, when agents begin to perceive social being from the perspective of the established by practices a certain point of view. Although practices are unconsciously reproduced by habitus, they are always accompanied by partial reflections, which, according to Bourdieu, is an obligatory element of «practical sense».

But the most significant function of collective habitus is its direct interrelation with the process of institutionalization. In addition to the feature that habitus to some extent determines the social trajectory of individuals, it also models the needs and demands for the creation of institutions of a certain type that would correspond to the social feelings and tastes. Thus, we have a basic thesis that institutes and holders of institutional positions form each other. Or, if to translate this idea into a terminological language Bourdieu, habitualization is the mechanism of

institutionalization (the logic, also proposed by P. Berger and T. Luckmann). That is the process when habitus acts as a peculiar social motivation for the creation of institutions, while taking into account the influence of the previous «structuring structures». And that is also the crucial argument in favour of applying the category of habitus rather than mentality or identity.

«Between habitus and the institutional position there is a dialectic relationship: new positions change responsibilities, and new responsibilities depend on habitus interpretation of how an institution should act» [11, p. 15]. That is why the period of the institutional transformation during radical social changes is the period of the greatest uncertainty and unpredictability of future habitus trajectories and newly created institutions. «The institution, – P. Bourdieu notes, – even when it comes to economics, can be completely viable only when it is stably objectified not only in objects, that is, the logic of a separate field, but also in bodies, that is, in a stable inclination to recognize and fulfill requirements of this field» [7, p. 48]. Moreover, habitus or a practical feeling is something that allows to «dwell» the institutions – «the advantage of incorporation, which exploits the ability of the body to seriously perceive the magic of social» [7, p. 48].

According to that interrelation of habitus and institutes there is, hence, a transformed way of defining values, not the classical Kantian one, referring to which values are represented by ethics and morals. Values in the meaning that we use in our approach – a modern or post-classical, pragmatic perspective – direct us to M. Weber and his famous work «Protestant Ethic and the The Spirit of Capitalism». From this point of view, values are seen as a kind of response to specific living conditions that are formed under the influence of certain cultural, social and political factors. In Weber's case – under the conditions of the ethical demands of Protestantism, which condition the formation of «economic thinking» (the traits of diligence, reasonableness, thrift, materialism), which contributes to the development of capitalism institutes.

At this point we are finally approaching one of the key objectives of this study, namely, the analysis of Post-Communist (Post-Soviet) institutions' formation, in particular, in Ukraine. This research problem is inextricably linked with the theories of democratic transit, which, as scientists point out, began with the collapse of the Soviet Union and ended (that means has

led to the formation of a consolidated democracy), apparently only in the countries of Central and partially Eastern Europe, leaving the rest of the states in the condition of hybrids that integrated principles of two main systems – Soviet and liberal Western (classic transitological works by S. Lipset, R. Dahl, J. Linz, A. Stepan, F. Schmitter, V. Bunce).

Therefore, the concept of Post-Soviet habitus lies within the framework of an involutory theory (or so-called path-dependent approach), that focuses on the dependence of socio-political transformations on past experience. In accordance with that theory, Post-Communist institutions are built on some institutional ruins (serving as a peculiar foundation) of state socialism, when the transition has not taken place «from the plan to the market, but from the plan to the clan» [11, p. 28]. An important role during such an involution plays the «archeology of knowledge», that is, the previous institutional representations and values. Thus, in the context of this theory, the logic of collective habitus will correct the essence and principles of the functioning of the newly created institutions.

In the broad sense, the Post-Soviet habitus stands for structural conditions, a certain starting point or a given vector, the «natural state» in which the Ukrainian state appeared to be after the collapse of the USSR, which has formed the foundation for further political transformations. In the narrow sense, the Post-Soviet habitus refers to the element of hysteresis in the modern state structure, that is, the existence of a stable («conservative») institutional and value stratum formed during the past historical period, which continues to be reproduced in the conditions of the modern Ukrainian state, and, thus, adjusts the selected socio-political trajectory (within the framework of democratic transit). The presence of the Post-Soviet habitus, first of all, deforms the process of creating new institutions (institutional dimension), but also affects the level of legitimacy of these “modern” institutions and state power in general (value dimension) if they are based on the opposite values to the Post-Soviet habitus. In other words, «Post-Sovietism» imposes a certain imprint on the process of institutionalization. The most striking examples of that are the deformed nature of Ukrainian parties that exist in the form of political substitutes, not institutes, systemic corruption and patron-client principle of state power functioning.

Consequently, what we mean by the concept of Post-Soviet habitus in the context of

the modern Ukrainian political process is embodied in the phenomenon of the gradual displacement of the Soviet, «old» institutions and their replacement with Post-Soviet, «new» ones. As a result, the nature of the state political modernization is deformed, since «unforeseen effects» happen, such as substitutional parties, patronage and clientele and the binding of corruption in the unwritten rules of the game. Meanwhile the value (traditionally conservative) component of the Post-Soviet habitus starts a conflict with the modern value component of independent Ukraine, what leads to a decrease in the legitimacy of state power, resistance to initiated reforms and creates favorable conditions for the cultivation of dissatisfaction and potential separatist sentiment among people.

The practical display of the heterogeneity of Post-Soviet habitus can be traced on the conditions of hybrid armed Ukrainian-Russian confrontation. In our opinion, such heterogeneity is gaining practical or instrumental implementation within the specific conditions that serve as a catalyst for activating its destabilizing component – in particular, the spread of separatist sentiment, which form the basis of violent political protest.

Such kind of peculiar conditions constitutes the phenomenon that the British researcher M. Kaldor describes as new wars. M. Kaldor investigates the evolution of the nature of the traditional military conflict in the context of globalization [12]. Since the 1990s large-scale interstate confrontations in the classical Clausewitz meaning are gradually transformed into so-called low-intensity conflicts, postmodernist or, most common typology nowadays, – hybrid wars. But the most important difference of the new wars is their purpose, that is not related to ideological or geopolitical interest, but foremost is connected with the policy of identity. New wars are rather wars with the population, not with the enemy, because their main task is to create a general interest in the constant support of the confrontation. And it is possible to perform by twisting the appropriate social sentiments and demands which collective habitus embodies.

Thus, summing up the main theses of the article, we should stress, that the principal result of this study is an attempt to investigate the current political process in Ukraine by using the concept of Post-Soviet habitus as the key analytical tool. It should be also emphasized that in the general form, of course, «Post-Sovietism» is inherent in all the former Soviet Union countries. However, in our particular

case, we use that specific marker in order to denote the traditional (conservative, inherited from the time of the USSR) an institutional component within the framework of the modern Ukrainian state, which automatic reproduction (under the conditions of the absence of another historical alternative) enters in confrontation with modern institutes that were formed during the independence. Finally, the specificity of structural factors, namely the presence of Post-Soviet habitus' heterogeneity elements has created favorable conditions, a certain «greenhouse» for the intensification of separatist sentiments that become a source of mobilization of the collective identity of the East region inhabitants. And that is how the practical potential of usage the peculiarities of the Post-Soviet habitus should be considered.

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