DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-2-24

POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE POLITICAL CLASS OF UKRAINE IN THE CONTEXT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

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Abstract. The article provides a theoretical analysis of the political responsibility of the political class and examines the main areas of its violation in modern conditions. Today's Ukraine needs a strong political class capable of bringing the country out of the war, ensuring economic stability, improving the quality of life of its citizens, and gaining international prestige. The relevant problem cannot be solved without an effective mechanism of political responsibility of the political class. The goal is defined, which implies characterizing the political responsibility of the political class of Ukraine. The author examines the structure of the political class, highlights the key areas of its responsibility to Ukrainian society, and outlines the main manifestations of the ineffectiveness of the institution of political responsibility. The specifics of the political responsibility of the political responsibility. The specifics of the political responsibility of the political responsibility. The specifics of the political responsibility of the political responsibility. The specifics of the political responsibility of the political responsibility. The specifics of the political responsibility of the political responsibility. The specifics of the political responsibility of the political responsibility of the political responsibility of the political responsibility.

Key words: responsibility, political responsibility, political class, ruling class, subject of political responsibility.

Introduction. The Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, terrorist and aggressive actions on the Ukrainian land, and whereby the introduction of martial law in the state as a special political and legal regime led to changes in all spheres of public life. Success in overcoming the ensuing challenges and threats caused by military aggression necessitates mobilizing political class, making informed decisions, and, most importantly, strengthening its political responsibility. This involves, first of all, effective leadership of the country and ensuring its security and progress.

Thus, the problem of responsibility of the political class is crucial for modern Ukraine. The fact that today's Ukrainian society needs a strong political class capable of bringing the country out of the war, improving citizens' welfare, and contributing to economic stability and international standing advocates the above thesis. It is impossible to settle the problem without an effective mechanism of political responsibility.

The political responsibility of the political class is also of particular relevance for Ukraine because a large part of Ukrainian society knows and has always known how to solve, if not all, then most of the problems in relations between society and government.

The variety of definitions and transformations of the concepts of "responsibility", incl. "political responsibility", is presented in the works of foreign authors. Therefore, M. Weber laid the foundation for the ethics of responsibility (Weber, 2013, 1994). H. Jonas, who developed the theory of human responsibility for the consequences of their activities to future generations based on ontology, puts philosophical and political content into the concept of responsibility (Jonas, 2001). The works of the German philosophers E. Fromm and K. Jaspers et al. are also essential for understanding responsibility. (Blikha, Tsymbaliuk, 2021: 98-102).

In modern Ukraine, a paradoxical situation has arisen regarding the study of political responsibility by political science. Publicists and politicians widely use this term, while political scientists avoid it

in their works. However, T. Tarasenko's thorough research, which elucidates the peculiarities of political responsibility in local self-government as a form of public authority, deserves attention. Based on the analysis of the historical experience of Ukraine and foreign countries in implementing political responsibility within local self-government, the author formulates a value-oriented concept of political responsibility as a factor in rationalizing public affairs management in the interests of the "local population" (Tarasenko, 2020). It is also expedient to refer to the monograph "Political Responsibility of Society" by M. Samuilak, who provides a theoretical analysis of the political responsibility of civil society and considers its hybrid deformations in modern languages (Samuilik, 2010)

As for the concept of "political class" by the Italian sociologist and lawyer G. Mosca in the early 20th century (Mosca, 1939), it has become widely used in political and political science research to interpret many political processes. Over the past century, the problems of the political class have been thoroughly analyzed in the scientific political literature. Moreover, they still appear relevant in foreign and domestic political science.

Thus, V. Pareto, R. Michels, M. Weber, R. Mills, G. Sorel, J. Ortega y Gasset, J. Habermas, R. Dahrendorf, D. Rustow, A. Lijphart, J. Schumpeter, and others cover the issues of formation, functioning, and recruitment of the political class, including political elites. Studies by M. Howard, R. Dahl, J. Linz, A. Stefan, R. Cornel, and others mainly deal with the features of political elites' role in countries in transition.

Among the domestic studies of political elites as a structural component of the political class, it is worth noting the contributions by M. Holovatyi, M. Kozlovets, A. Kruhlashov, M. Ilin, B. Kapustin, O. Kolesnykov, D. Korotkov, I. Kresina, S. Naumkina, V. Kremen, O. Kryshtanovska, O. Kucherenko, T. Naumenko, M. Obushnyi, A. Pakhariev, L. Perevoznyk, M. Pohrebinskyi, V. M. Piren, V. Polokhal, V. Timashov, V. Tomashevska, V. Fesenko, et al.

The political responsibility of party elites became the research subject of such Ukrainian scientists as A. Halchynskyi, Yu. Badzio, P. Kraliuk, I. Belebeha, L. Herasina, S. Pazynich, M. Mykhalchenko, M. Riabchuk, H. Shchokin, M. Trebin, et al.

Main body. As we can see, the object of scientific research of Ukrainian scientists involves party and political elites and their responsibility, and the problem of political responsibility of the political class in Ukraine is almost understudied, including in crisis.

Therefore, the present article aims to highlight the essential characteristics of the political class and its political responsibility in the context of the relations between society and government.

The goal's achievement is possible upon the implementation of the following tasks: theoretical interpretation of the concepts of "political class" and "political responsibility"; analysis of the structure of the political class in Ukraine; substantiation of the ineffectiveness of the institution of political responsibility of the political class in independent Ukraine; identification of the specifics of political responsibility of the political class under the war in Ukraine.

Materials and methods. In the course of the present research, systemic, structural-functional, institutional, historical methods, etc. were used. Thus, the systemic method made it possible to consider political responsibility as a system, and the structural-functional analysis allowed for studying the structure of the Ukrainian political class as a subject of political responsibility and its place in the political system of society. Institutional and historical methods assisted in considering the functioning of the institute of political responsibility of the Ukrainian political class.

Results and discussion. Each of us faces some challenges in determining the nature of the problem of political responsibility. The chaotic use of the term "political responsibility" by the media, non-governmental organizations, and individual citizens brings even greater confusion. First of all, it makes one wonder: what is political responsibility? For what actions, how, and to whom are politicians responsible? Should a politician bear political responsibility in a particular situation? Is it sufficient in the context of a perfect "breach"? Is the very fact of the "violation" necessary for its occurrence? Is the politician solely responsible for their political activities, or are their actions as a private person, outside the public and political sphere, also the basis for political responsibility? In other words, can a politician act non-politically at all?

In the scientific literature, the range of opinions on the essence of political responsibility largely varies: in a broad sense, it is interpreted as any unfavorable measures imposed on a public official for their behavior that deviates from political, legal, and other norms; in a narrow sense, it is understood as a reaction of the state and society to the fact that a public official committed an offense that is prosecuted by law (Lazebnyk, 2024: 369).

In the context of the topic under study, we will dwell on the activity-based approach, which allows us to assess and characterize political responsibility from different perspectives. Thus, on the one hand, we will consider political responsibility as positive and negative consequences of the political class actions. On the other hand, we will try to connect the committed act with many factors and public opinion (condemnation and approval). According to the activity-based approach, responsibility entails restraining from wrongdoing (Lazebnyk, 2024: 369-370).

As for the understanding of the political class, there are several approaches in the political science literature. One of them is substance-based, mostly represented in the works of supporters of the Marxist theory, where the political class is defined as a community of people that really exists. Regardless of the desire and their own will, the class members are its representatives; they are the bearers of class relations, and their political behavior meets the class fundamental interests. The interaction of real people generates class consciousness, relevant interests, political culture, and ideology. The particularity of the substance-based approach to understanding the political class implies that each class member represents it and carries its morality, values, essential features, and lifestyle, including responsibility.

If we proceed from the fact that in Marxist theory, social classes are determined by their role in the social organization of labor, their place in the historically established system of social production towards capital goods, resources, and the size of the share of social wealth that was assigned to them, then by analogy, the political class itself should be determined by its position in the system of political relations production. Therefore, the political class is the main subject that organizes and controls the production of political relations (Rudych, 2009(B): 5). In turn, the essence of political relations is to regulate and legitimize systems of inequality and maintain their stability. To this end, the political class establishes political institutions.

Following the functional approach, belonging to a political class is determined not only by the natural existence of the class but also the functions performed in the political system, its position, and political stance. These functions include distributing public resources, strategic decision-making, maintaining public order, representing social interests, ensuring the stability of social development, etc. (Rudych, 2009(B): 5-6).

It is necessary to distinguish between integrated and disintegrated political classes. As for the first type, such a political class shapes a nationwide system of political values, rules of the game, and a system of social priorities. This framework makes it possible to comply with the requirements of political rationality since the model of cooperation of different layers of the political class dominates. Maintaining political stability contributes to economic growth, the benefits of which are more or less equitably distributed among different strata of the people.

Competition and a fierce struggle for distributing scarce material goods prevail within the disintegrated political class. In society, economic development is slowed down, instability increases, profits fall, and a constant redistribution of property takes place that ultimately causes the disintegration of the political class (Rudych, 2009 (B): 5-6).

Thus, in a broad sense, a political class is a group of people who directly or indirectly exercise power and participate in political decision-making and governance. The group forms power relations

and has personal privileges, professional qualities, high personal incomes, and a good financial situation (Manolov, 2012: 166),

The main essence of the political class is political participation through the "development" of rational policy and political decision-making that meets national interests and social requirements. This leads to stronger social positions of public officers, their rise above other social groups, and high social prestige (through political participation).

As for the formal criteria for "political participation", the approach to understanding the political class is presented in a well-defined sense. Indeed, it is accurate but insufficient to characterize the essence and structure of the political class meticulously. In another, more thorough sense, the political class can be considered as a unified subordinate entity that has its own substructure and individual parts, elements, and components. Like any other, the political class comprises internally established strata with general and specific characteristics. Some of these characteristics are essential because they determine the global understanding of the political class.

The political class has an internal structure. However, scholarly views are somewhat different in this regard. Some single out only the ruling political elite and the bureaucratic stratum. Some experts are convinced that the organization of the political class is more complex and consists of the political elite, the political oligarchy, and groups of people who gravitate to the political class and are part of the administrative hierarchy. In particular, Bulgarian professor G. Manolov attributes to the latter highly qualified specialists and experts, activists of political parties who make a political career, "representatives of society who directly serve the entire political class in one way or another" (Manolov, 2012: 171)

Domestic political scientist F. Rudych characterizes the political class as follows: "In the political space, some actors are inside a state corporation and own political capital. They make up the political class. It includes people who are engaged in politics professionally. The political class is the ruling class because it governs and has available public resources." (Rudych, 2009(A): 6).

A range of conceptual categories takes shape: the political class, i.e., all those involved in the governance of society, not excluding the opposition; the political elite as the most gifted (or those who think so), the leading part of the political class; the ruling class as those who really have power at the relevant stage; the ruling (government) elite: the vanguard part of the ruling class. The above range of categories makes no pretense of absolute truth – it is rather an attempt to determine the methodological context of the study of a new problem.

According to F. Rudych, the political class comprises the higher social strata, which are endowed with influence attributes and wield real power or seek power in the most crucial (ideological, political, economic, foreign economic, etc.) spheres of state life. In the scientist's opinion, the political class is formed by those members of society who technologically implement a particular political culture defined for a given period. The researcher refers to the parliamentary corps, administrative elite, judicial elite, elite circles of diplomats and the military, leaders of political parties and non-governmental organizations and movements, heads of influential political science centers, foundations, political technologists, and political journalists and commentators. In other words, it includes every-one involved in the government of the state and society as well as the opposition (Rudych, 2009(A)).

Speaking about the heterogeneity of the political class, it is essential to note that representatives of the official political class and the opposition belong to it. Both represent the interests of different, often antagonistic, social strata.

In the end, we dwell on the fact that the political class consists of the upper-class strata, which have the attributes of influence, have authority, or aspire to it in the crucial (ideological, political, economic, foreign policy) spheres of state life. Therefore, the structure of the political class can comprise three fundamental elements (parts, components): the political elite, the political oligarchy, and various political strata that gravitate in the orbit of the entire class.

The exclusive role in the political class activities belongs to the political leader. The head of state should be the leader of the nation. Leadership implies a strategic vision and the ability to offer the nation a promising and scientifically grounded course of development for maintaining the national interests and well-being of the people.

The formation of the political class in Ukraine is a long process. However, during the period of Ukrainian independence, the issue of social inefficiency of the political class was repeatedly raised, which is primarily due to a gap to take into account the interests of society. Authorities in Ukraine have failed to demonstrate their ability to put national interests above party and business ambitions. We still witness protectionism, heredity, cronyism, the lack of a system for selecting talented personnel for governance, and, most importantly, political irresponsibility, which is a significant obstacle to national consolidation (Kobets, Madryha, 2019: 75.).

The main areas of violation of the responsibility of the Ukrainian political class can be considered, firstly, populism, which manifests itself in the proclamation of unfulfilled programs and unrealistic plans, and secondly, incompetence, which is evident in the inability and failure to effectively formulate and implement policies. According to the authors of the collective work "Political Responsibility of the Political and Administrative Elite in the Context of Reforming Public Administration in Ukraine", the third area concerns irresponsible policies, which are always ineffective and of poor quality (Rebkalo, Shakhov, 2012: 16).

It is worth mentioning that during 35 years of state independence, no politician has taken responsibility for numerous failures of state policy. At the same time, using the concept of political responsibility for speculative purposes, it is possible to justify the destruction of established norms and demand the dismissal of qualified personnel – that is what the destructive opposition does, speculating on political responsibility.

The situation changed significantly at the beginning of the war, as evidenced by numerous polls among Ukrainian citizens. It should be marked that the role of the political class during the war is critical since by making strategic decisions, it influences military operations, the maintenance of the national spirit, and economic mobilization. The good work of the political class can ensure the stability and prosperity of the country, while faulty actions can cause crises and serious problems (Rafalskyi, Maiboroda, 2023: 187).

In a study by the V. Vorona Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in December 2022, the respondents were asked "Are there any leaders in Ukraine who can be trusted with authority?". 60.2% of respondents answered positively and only 9.2% said no. For comparison, in 2021, the answers were almost the opposite: 25.7% answered "Yes" and 44.2% answered "No". According to the director of the above-mentioned institute Ye. Holovakha, despite economic difficulties, the war, and the "eternal" corruption, Ukrainians saw that there were people in society who could be trusted with authority and who would not shudder and would not be scared when it came to the crunch. The war changed Ukrainians, and this process is irreversible" (Shevuk, 2023).

However, the lasting war in Ukraine also changed the behavior of the political class and society. First of all, economic woes, which have undoubtedly worsened since the beginning of the full-scale military invasion, are not at the root of the problems of the Ukrainian political elite and the ruling class. The authors of the collective monograph "Adaptive Changes in the Political Field of Ukraine in War" call the crisis of representation of the ruling class of Ukraine, which generates all other crises of political development, the primary cause (Rafalskyi, Maiboroda, 2023: 186).

The book states that a just war consolidates society around government and only slows down internal conflicts. Moreover, the war cannot eliminate opposition sentiments because situational unification concerns only foreign policy guidelines. On the one hand, the vast majority of opposition actors (oligarchs, politicians, and representatives of civil society) have united with government institutions in the face of Russian aggression. On the other hand, the "closedness of government" has not disappeared for new political players: reshuffles of the same persons persist, and personnel changes do not go beyond the people of their environment (Rafalskyi, Maiboroda, 2023: 187).

To prove the above, we refer to the report of H. Zelenko "Institutional Capacity of Ukraine in War", which was made at the meeting of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine on August 23, 2024. It stresses the ineffectiveness of the institute of political responsibility – one of the most important political institutions of the state, that can be evident in the following way:

- the absence of a rule of law on the mandatory resignation of the government upon the failure of the Verkhovna Rada to approve the government activity program. In other words, the government's activities without a program are part of the ineffectiveness of the institution of political responsibility of the political class;

- ambiguous (blurred) personnel subjectivity of the executive vertical. In Ukraine, the head of state has been delegated too many personnel powers (outside the executive branch), which contribute to the growth of his functions and the gradual appropriation of coordination functions toward the executive branch that are not inherent in the president. This leads to the degradation of the government and the disappearance of effective control over the presidential institution;

- unsettled coalition issue in the parliament and lack of requirements for party membership of officials who are members of the pro-government coalition in the parliament. Thus, the idea of the party's political responsibility disappears;

- the lack of a multi-stage public process of government formation (even in crisis), which indicates that open political practices are dominated by backroom dealing;

- in case of a negative assessment of the minister's report on government activities, the parliament is not authorized to initiate its resignation as well as to adjust the composition of the government to date, even with a negative assessment of the minister's report on its activities;

- inability to force a deputy to perform their functions, with the exception of the norm introduced into the law "On the Rules of Procedure of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine" in 2023 that the deputies are paid a salary provided that they attend at least 70% of meetings;

- the lack of a norm regulating the status of the parliamentary opposition, which creates a situation of uncertainty in the parliament and violates the rights of those voters who supported opposition deputies or parties;

- deinstitutionalization of the party system by turning political parties into business projects of discredit, w makes it impossible for society to effectively interact and influence the authorities (Zelenko, 2024: 55-56).

Conclusions. Thus, all of the above allows us to draw the following conclusions.

First. Modern studies present various approaches to understanding political responsibility. In the context of the topic concerned, we dwelt on the activity-based approach, which considers political responsibility, on the one hand, as the consequences of the actions of the political class (positive or negative) and, on the other hand, as one related to many factors and public opinion (condemnation or approval). The activity-based approach presents an idea that responsibility implies restraining from wrongdoing.

Second. A political class is a group of people who directly or indirectly exercise powers and participate in political decision-making and state governance. The group forms power relations and has personal privileges, professional qualities, high personal incomes, and a good financial situation. The main essence of the political class is political participation through the "development" of rational policy and political decision-making that meets national interests and social requirements. This leads to stronger social positions of public officers, their rise above other social groups, and high social prestige (through involvement in governance).

The Ukrainian political class, the establishment of which began with the declaration of state independence and continues to this day, is a group of people involved in the governance of society, including the opposition and the political elite as the most gifted leading part of the political class. Third. During the period of Ukrainian independence, the issue of the social inefficiency of the political class has been repeatedly raised, which is primarily due to the lack of the need to take into account the interests of society. The government in Ukraine failed to put national interests above party and business ambitions. We still witness protectionism, heredity, cronyism, the lack of a system for selecting talented personnel for governance, and, most importantly, political irresponsibility, which is a significant obstacle to national consolidation.

The main areas of violation of the responsibility of the Ukrainian political class can be considered, firstly, populism, which manifests itself in the proclamation of unfulfilled programs and unrealistic plans, and secondly, incompetence, which is evident in the inability and failure to effectively formulate and implement policies.

Fourth. The role and significance of the political class during the war are growing amidst the relations between society and government, as in the case of Ukraine. At the beginning of the war, the trust of Ukrainian citizens in the political class increased significantly, as evidenced by numerous polls among Ukrainian citizens. However, the long war also changed the behavior of the political class and society's attitude toward it. Economic woes are not at the root of the problems of the Ukrainian political elite and the ruling class, but the crisis of representation of the ruling class of Ukraine, which generates all other crises of political development, including the crisis of political responsibility.

After the victory, two risks await the political class of Ukraine: the first may be associated with a decrease in the trust of Ukrainians not only in the Verkhovna Rada but also in the ruling establishment of the country. The second is likely to include splits within the ruling elite as the core of the political class. Responsibility is an urgent issue for the existence of such an elite and the political class as a whole.

Highlighting the essential characteristics of the political class and its political responsibility in relations between society and government is only part of the general topic the author is working on. It also concerns the political responsibility of the political class amidst the national stability of Ukraine. The purpose of further research is to analyze the formation and development of the institute of political responsibility in Ukraine and study the foreign experience of the functioning of the institute of responsibility of the political class.

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