

# SCIENTIFIC ELITE IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

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## ABSTRACT

*Purpose: The purpose of the article to determine the philosophical and legal content and the essence of the concept of “scientific elite” and its role in the formation of e-government as one of the main factors of the information society.*

*Methodology: The methodological basis for the Article is a system of philosophical approaches, general scientific, special scientific and legal methods. The interdisciplinary approach has ensured multifaceted research of the development of the information society. Besides, dialectical, synergetic, systematic, historical, comparative and prognostic methods were used in the course of the study.*

*Results of the study: The article analyzes the current, but insufficiently researched problems regarding the role of the scientific elite in the processes of establishment, formation and development of the principles of e-government. The emphasis is placed on clarifying the features of one of the main components of the information society on the way to its transformation into a knowledge society-the introduction of e-government as an effective means of implementing the constitutional right of citizens to participate in public administration.*

*Practical implications: According to the results, it was concluded that in the context of e-government (in the information society) a person, whose level of knowledge and intelligence does not meet the requirements of the time, cannot belong to the elite. The knowledge of computer science and other modern areas of knowledge does not make a person elitist. It seems that the signs of elitism should first of all remain high spirituality, nobility, sophistication, deep inner need to be useful to people and the Motherland.*

*Value/Originality: The authors emphasizes the fact that only those whose level of knowledge and intelligence meet the criteria put forward by modern civilization can belong to the elite in the information age. Thus, the key role of the scientific elite in the further development of the information society in Ukraine is substantiated.*

**Keywords:** Elite, Scientific Elite, Theory of Elites, Criteria of Elitism, Information Society, E-Government.

## INTRODUCTION

Elite is a decisive lever of any State, its key subject. Until the radical renewal and formation of political, economic and scientific elite takes place, the reformation of the State system is not possible. It is the elite who are responsible for making strategically important decisions, on which depends not only the fate of the country, but also of each individual citizen. The vector of elite activity is aimed at expanding the democratic foundations of State formation.

The processes of State formation and development of the country also require scientific elite. A modern State can be effective only if it is based on democratic principles, and it is impossible to form truly democratic State without the appropriate participation of the elite in the development of legislative regulations and public relations.

The relevance for the scientific elite is due to objective processes of change occurring in modern civilization in general, not just in our country. Certainly, these factors include the following: the changes in the pace of the progress; the transition of a mankind to an innovative type of progress; the formation of informational society.

The role and importance of the scientific elite in all spheres of life and activity of society is significantly increasing under these conditions. This fact requires a significant increase in both scientific knowledge and knowledge in general from any society.

Science as an area that produces new knowledge, and education, which provides humanization of knowledge, should be a top priority for modern society. And this is what will enable as many citizens as possible to gain through knowledge. Only in this way can the modern scientific elite be formed.

It may be noted that the most authors have examined various aspects of elitism at the theoretical and practical level, focusing primarily on the study of political, public management, national, regional and other categories of elites. But the issue of transformation of scientific elite in the development of information society, including its role in e-government has not been studied by lawyers or specialists in other areas of knowledge.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The methodological basis for the Article is a system of philosophical approaches, general scientific, special scientific and legal methods. The interdisciplinary approach has ensured multifaceted research in the development of the information society. The dialectical method made it possible to examine the dynamic development of the information society. The synergetic approach has played an important role, as the law in the information society is designed to provide a mechanism for legal regulation of public relations related to information and communication technologies. The systematic method allowed studying various aspects of the information society in their unity and interconnection. The historical method was important in analyzing the evolution of the approaches to understanding the information society. The comparative method was used to clarify and compare the development of the information society in the USSR, Ukraine and the countries of Western Europe. The prognostic method allowed determining the priority areas of the development of the information society in Ukraine.

The theoretical basis of the work are scientific works in the area of the theory of State and law, constitutional, information law, philosophy, political science and sociology.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Modern science does not provide an immediate clarity on the prerequisites for the formation of the foundations of the information society as a stage of development of human civilization. Thus, according to Bell (1973), the genesis of human civilization should be considered as a process divided into three types of social organization:

1. Pre-industrial (mining), which is characterized by low dynamics of its development;

2. Industrial (production), an important feature of which is the focus on scientific and rational knowledge towards transforming and subjugation of nature by man, which is not unique to science but also to the whole way of thinking of society;
3. Post-industrial (intellectual), during which society is being formed under the influence of intellectual technologies, the basis of which is information and knowledge, receipt, processing, assimilation, use and transmission of which is carried out using telecommunications and computers. The process of formation of this type of social organization must be studied not only in terms of economic processes, but also in relation to the emergence of new trends in the social and spiritual spheres.

Scientific elite plays a special role in these processes as an integral part of any society, which includes its best, most prominent representatives, able to move civilization forward, contribute to the development and prosperity of both the community and humanity as a whole. Theoretically, the chance to get into the social elite should be determined by spiritual, intellectual, organizational, physical and other personal qualities. In practice, the whole officially recognized history contradicts this seemingly obvious postulate. Unfortunately, from ancient times to the present day, we can observe that the elite do not include the most worthy of its representatives, and they automatically include themselves those who have acquired sufficient power to do so.

As Gaetano Mosca (1994), one of the authors of the theory of elites, notes in this context, it is obvious that

*“Even the most superficial analyses one thing becomes obvious among the constant phenomena and tendencies manifested in all political organisms. There are two classes of people in all societies (from the underdeveloped or those who have barely reached the foundations of civilization to the most developed and powerful) the ruling class and the managed class. The first one, always less numerous, performs political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the benefits of power, while the second one, more numerous class, is governed and controlled by the former in a form that is now more or less legitimate, more or less arbitrary and violent and provides the first class, at least externally, with material means of subsistence and everything necessary for the life of the political organism” (Femia, 2017).*

It should also be noted that this applies not only to political power, but also to any other spheres of public life—economic, cultural, scientific, etc. Perhaps that is why the hypothesis of the divine origin of the elite is gaining popularity again, and even the idea that the elite of, for example, Hindu, Sumerian, Egyptian, Central American and Chinese civilizations were either Gods, or descendants of gods, or aliens. Such an interpretation, even in the era of high technology, is associated with the constant psychological need of both the individual and the ethnic group as a whole to be involved in something significant, great and divine.

The elitist differentiation is most visibly reflected in the Aryans, who have colonized India and the surrounding regions three times in the last seven and a half thousand years. They singled out the elite castes of Brahmins (spiritual leaders) and Kshatriyas (warriors, rulers) to whom they belonged, and the castes of Vishyas (artisans, merchants, farmers, etc.) and Shudras (servants), to whom millions of aborigines belonged.

A similar social differentiation took place in other societies of the ancient world, in particular, in the Semitic—Babylon, Assyria, Israel and Judea. The justification for the elitism of certain social groups can be found in the Vedas, the Mahabharata, and the Egyptian Book of the Dead, the laws of Manu, Hammurabi, Plato’s treatises, biblical texts and the Qur’an.

The scientific elite as a special component of society began to stand out in ancient Greece, later in medieval, Christian Europe, where from ancient times there were two approaches to the knowledge of scientific knowledge: anthropocentric and geocentric.

The modern understanding of the elite is beginning to emerge in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and is associated with the dominance of positivism as the main methodological approach in the philosophy of science and a colossal breakthrough in science and technology. Science seriously took on theology and philosophy at this time, became an indisputable authority and even acquired the features of a kind of religion with regard to the worldview. Belief in science and scientists, scientific progress has been going on for more than a century and a half. However, the role of scientists in the invention of new types of weapon in three world wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (including the last one “*cold war*”) negatively affected their image as “*priests of science*”.

In fact, it was military needs that led to the promotion of the scientific and technical elite among the scientific elite. These elite took on the political and military elite even in totalitarian societies (Italy, Germany, and the USSR). Perhaps the need for modernization and scientific and technological development led to some kind of competition between scientific and technical elite and ideological elite (as the main one at that time) in the late 20's of the 20th century in the USSR and at the same time an alliance or interaction with political elite (which replaced ideological one) and military elite. This process lasted in the USSR until the mid- 80's of the twentieth century, when ideological elite tried to take revenge, reforming in search of a new ideology for Soviet society. And if the process of reforming the ideological elite in China, which began in 1979, was completed successfully and realized the possibility of its union with the economic, scientific, technical and political elite, in the USSR such attempts ended in the collapse of the latter. As a result, smaller States and smaller, by all means, national elite appeared on the ruins of the great empire, with the humanitarian elite already prominent. At the same time, the term “*elite*” began to be used not in the sense of “*the best*”, but in the sense of “*the richest*”, “*the most popular*”, “*the most active*”, etc., and is still defined mainly by criteria for influencing socio-political processes and financial capacity.

The modern elite of the Western world (perhaps to a lesser extent Europe, to which Ukraine aspires), is financial-oligarchic elite that includes business, political, and military elite. Scientific, including scientific and technical elite, is left with a service function and much more modest role than in the 20th century (Bowles, 2012; England, 2018).

Certain metamorphoses also took place in the society of Ukraine with the change of elite. The dominance in the mid-90's of the 20th century of political, industrial and agrarian elite in the background of the decline of scientific, technical and cultural elite has been replaced by the dominance of financial/political elite (which have traditionally united) in the background of the prosperity of humanitarian elite. But at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century all these elite have been transformed into a single one—the dictatorial oligarchic elite, and science, technology, culture and their elitist representatives continue to play secondary and service role (Sabur, 2017).

The changes in modern Ukrainian society, especially since the proclamation of the independence, affect all spheres of its life. Among them, the changes in the system of its management are extremely important and decisive for the whole society.

Nowadays, the inefficiency of public administration in Ukraine is directly related to the inconsistency of elites with today's challenges. Some researchers point to the absence of elites in Ukraine's public administration. However, no one denies the urgent need of Ukraine for “*real*” elite.

Besides, there is a situation in the information society today when a large amount of information and consumption of new knowledge requires the revival of the scientific elite with a focus on the integration of scientific knowledge and relevant professional skills, i.e. there is a social order for the intellectuals of a certain kind (Farrant, 2009; Walgrave, 2016). After all, the

elite, focused only on the satisfaction of their own interests, is a pseudo-elite, and only talented enthusiasts, whose interests generally outweigh their own, move the society forward. Stagnation or going in circles always lead to regression, and then to destruction, as evidenced by ancient and modern history, in particular, domestic one (Rosen, 1998).

It is obvious that the requirements of time for information support of the financial and oligarchic elite determine the need for highly qualified specialists in the area of information, bio- and other technologies. The need for such elite specialists is constantly growing. The revenge of scientific elite and as its entry into the forefront of history, as well as technological revolution is rooted here (May, 2003).

Negative attitudes towards elites have become a common phenomenon in modern Ukrainian society. Excessive expectations of the first half of the 1990s have logically turned into frustration, and nowadays the assessment of the elites becomes increasingly critical. The critics of elite intellectuals, political technologists, and journalists, which rarely rely on more or less explicit factors, have become a part of our culture.

However, it must be acknowledged that assessing the quality of the ruling elites is not so simple. Indeed, what exactly should be evaluated? Their ability to govern? The ability to be responsible for other people? The ability to be the driving force in the development of their country? Or anything else?

When it comes to the scientific elite in general and the scientific elite of Ukraine in particular, the question also arises as what it is and by what criteria it is determined. For example, there are six national academies of science in Ukraine, with about a thousand academics and corresponding members, and tens of thousands of people working in the academy system. So are the members and academics of the academy the scientific elite? Tens of thousands of employees also work in higher education institutions. Among them are thousands of doctors of sciences and tens of thousands of candidates of sciences. Are these people the scientific elite? And with the growing competition for the scientific titles of oligarchs, politicians, officials, their desire not only to obtain PhD and doctoral degrees, but also to become members of the academies of science, there are serious doubts whether the possession of a candidate's or doctor's degree, even the membership in the academy indicates the affiliation to scientific elite (Kostytskyi, 2012).

The next circumstance, which, in the view of Kremen (2012), significantly increases the importance of scientific elite are the new conditions, which people are facing today-these are multidimensionality, diversity of information and communication environment. Thus, it is impossible to prepare a person to function in this multidimensional, multifaceted, often contradictory information and communication environment without developed elite. Therefore, it seems that special attention should be paid to the issue of globalization and its challenges. After all, globalization significantly complicates the entire system of social relations, contributes to and causes the fact that some of the functions that were previously performed within States now extend beyond their official boundaries and acquire a regional or even global dimension. And the formation of interactions between different nations and different States also requires the national scientific elite of each country to cooperate and understand the national elite of other States.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be argued that in the context of e-government (in the information society) a person, whose level of knowledge and intelligence does not meet the requirements of the time, that is, it does not meet the criteria of elitism put forward by our civilization, cannot belong to

the elite. But the knowledge of computer science and other modern areas of knowledge do not make a person elitist. This is a matter of definition. It seems that the signs of elitism should first of all remain high spirituality, nobility, sophistication, deep inner need to be useful to people and the motherland. Today, despite the destruction of previous elites—aristocracy and intelligentsia—it was to be hoped that a new generation of elite—the scientific one—will finally emerge and play the positive role it claims for.

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