In: IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2019, Baden-Baden 2020, pp. 93-113.

Vadym Vasiutynskyi

The Psychological Dimensions of the Desacralization of post-Soviet Power in Ukraine: From a Communist Ideologist to an Actor-Comedian

As of 1991, the post-Soviet countries can be divided into two groups according to how the supreme state power is transferred.[1] Already onto its sixth president, Ukraine is amongst the countries where power is regularly transferred by the will of the electorate.

In accordance with the Ukrainian constitution, Ukraine is a parliamentary-presidential republic, with the Ukrainian president thus having significantly less power than, for instance, the presidents of Russia and Belarus. The social and psychological legitimacy of the post of president, however, vests him with much greater powers, approaching those of Vladimir Putin and Alyaksander Lukashenka.

Ukrainian presidents have readily taken advantage of this situation and exceeded the authority vested in them, and the public has largely accepted this without objections, especially those supporting a particular president.[2] This kind of power legitimization and personification means social development is psychologically more dependent upon changes in president, rather than parliament. The downside of this is a biased attitude to the president's actions – it is not only achievements that are attributed to the president, but also failures and drawbacks.

1 Cf. David Aprasidze, Consolidation in Georgia: Democracy or Power? Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2015*, Baden-Baden 2016, pp. 107-115; Azam Isabaev, Uzbekistan after the Transfer of Power, Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2017*, Baden-Baden 2018, pp. 91-108; Alena Vysotskaya Guedes Vieira, Pariah State No More: Belarus' International Actorness against the Backdrop of the Ukraine Conflict, Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2017*, Baden-Baden 2018, pp. 79-89.

2 Cf. Mykola Riabchuk, Spetsyfichna syla "slavkoyi derzhavy": instytualizatsiya avtorytaryzmu u postradyans'kiĭ Ukrayini [The specific strength of a "weak state": the institutionalization of authoritarianism in post-Soviet Ukraine], Naukovi zapysky Instytuty politychnykh i etnonatsional'nykh doslidzhen' im. I.F. Kurasa [Scientific notes of the Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies I.F. Kuras], 4/2013, pp. 105-126, available at: http://ipiend.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/riabchuk_spetsyfichna.pdf. #

In: IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2019, Baden-Baden 2020, pp. 93-113.

The Historical Transfer of Presidential Power in Independent Ukraine

The "Communist Ideologist"

The most outstanding event in Soviet political life after the anti-Gorbachev putsch of 19 August 1991 was the all-Ukrainian referendum held on 1 December. It legitimized the dissolution of the Soviet Union that had *de facto* occurred by that time. Ninety per cent of Ukrainians voted for independence.[3] The result was unique as, for the first time in history, the idea of Ukrainian independence dominated public consciousness on such a large scale. The patriotic aspirations of a considerable section of the Ukrainian society, although not a majority, was combined with their desire to avoid trends coming from Russia, namely: increasing instability, economic crisis, and signs of civil war.

Convincing evidence of this was Leonid Kravchuk's victory in the presidential election held at the same time as the referendum. Kravchuk, former Second Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) responsible for ideology, won 62 per cent of the votes. He overcame three national democratic candidates, who won less than 30 per cent of the votes in total.[4] The public were seized by a national communist mood, idealizing the socialist collective farms (kolkhoz) of a moderately independent Ukraine.

Kravchuk acted in the spirit of Soviet and post-Soviet traditions. Prohibiting the Communist Party *de jure*, he transformed its former committees into public administration departments, and most Communist Party bureaucrats retained their positions, changing state symbols, switching to Ukrainian, and continuing to rule the country according to the principles of the command and control system.

Regional differences became evident. Nationally-oriented politicians gained some power in Western Ukraine, in the capital city Kyiv, and some other major cities. Moving from west to east and south, pro-Soviet trends (which later turned out to be more pro-Russian) strengthened.

On the one hand, such "changes" appealed to the Ukrainian public, who were hoping for change, although preferably small, cautious, and smooth. On the other hand, the alleged "reforms" undertaken could not stop the evolving economic crisis and the political and psychological crises that followed.

3 Cf. VGO "Komitet Vybortsiv Ukrayiny" [All-Ukrainian Civic Organization "Committee of Voters of Ukraine"], Vybory Prezidenta Ukrayiny 1 grudnya 1991 [Election of the President of Ukraine 1 December 1991], at: http://cvu.org.ua/nodes/view/type:elections/slug:vybory_prezydenta_ukrajiny_1_grudnia_1991.

4 Cf. ibid.

The "Red Director"

The growing disaffection forced Kravchuk to declare early elections in 1994. He lost to "red director" Leonid Kuchma (45 per cent vs 52 per cent)[5] These results demonstrated a society split by identity: more Ukrainian in the west and the centre, and Ukrainian-Russian or purely Russian in the south-east.

In the same year, the Institute for Social and Political Psychology of the National Academy of Educational Sciences (NAES) of Ukraine started researching mass political consciousness with psycho-semantic monitoring based on annual surveys from an all-Ukrainian sample.[6] In the initial years, we identified the main dimension of public opinion: "pro- vs. anti-reform sentiments" – i.e. the public perception of the transition from socialism to capitalism. Since 1994, the attitude to kolkhozes has been central here.

According to our data, in the 1990s, Ukrainians decided whether they wanted to live under socialism or the new conditions of markets, competition, and pluralism. In general, people consciously and gradually accepted the new trends, which is quite clearly reflected in sociological surveys. At an unconscious level, however, there was a consistent desire to avoid tiresome changes.

President Kuchma evolved rather rapidly from a proponent of pro-Russian to one of pro-Ukrainian attitudes in the political sense. As for the economy, he emerged as the father of economic and social oligarchism in general. It was under his presidency that oligarchs became influential in the Ukrainian economy and politics.

However, Ukraine could hardly avoid oligarchization under the conditions of total economic collapse. The dominant "kolkhoz" mentality meant that the people were searching for a "good" leader who would manage and take care of everything. Disappointment in Kuchma in this respect grew over a very short period, but the 1999 elections brought him a rather easy victory in the second round over his key competitor, Communist Petro Symonenko (56 per cent vs 38 per cent)[7] – evidence that most Ukrainians did not want a return to the Soviet past. However, there was neither a clear vision of, nor agreement on the prospects for further development.

The "Orange Patriot"

By 2004, the trends that were structuring society were becoming clearer. Kuchma's second term was close to its end; new presidential elections were

5 Cf. Dostrokovi prezidents'ki vybory u 1994 [Early presidential elections in 1994], *Mynule ta Teperishe [Past and Present],* 7 June 2016, at: https://mtt.in.ua/ist-ukr_1991-2010_vybory-presidenta-1994/.

6 Cf. Vadym O. Vasiutynskyi (ed.), Psykhologiya macovoyi politichnoyi cvidomosti ta novedinky [Psychology of Mass Political Consciousness and Behaviour], Kyiv 1997.

7 Cf. Tsentral'na vyborcha komiciya, Vibory Prezidenta Ukrayiny, 1999, Redkol.: Mikhaĭlo M. Ryabets' (golova) ta in. [Central Election Commission, Election of the President of Ukraine, 1999, edited by: Mikhailo M. Ryabets (Chairman) and others], pp. 287, 289.

approaching. The oligarchic end of the political spectrum offered "sound businessman", Viktor Yanukovych, as a successor. His ideas were attractive to the Russian-speaking population in the south-east. He was opposed by Viktor Yushchenko, heading the faction standing for patriotic reform.

According to opinion polls, Yushschenko had a few per cent lead over Yanukovych in the second round, whereas the national exit poll recorded a nine per cent lead for Yushchenko.[8] Nonetheless, the election outcome was manipulated in favour of Yanukovych, which resulted in people coming to the Maidan to protest – the "Orange Revolution". Yushchenko won the second round with 52 per cent versus 44 per cent.[9]

The election returns highlighted the division of Ukraine even more clearly: The more pro-Ukrainian centre and west voted for Yushchenko, the less pro-Ukrainian south-east voted for Yanukovych. This equal division turned out to be a strong source of social development (in contrast to, for instance, Russia and Belarus, where the absolute majority elected the president they favoured and, subsequently, gave up their own status as political subjects). In Ukraine, representatives of the two sides could do nothing but co-exist, take into account their opponents' opinions, and compromise.

In the 2000s, the dimension of "anti- vs. pro-Russian sentiments" became the most significant issue affecting public opinion. A pivotal choice had to be made by the Ukrainian people: to become either an independent democratic Ukraine that would be part of Europe, or a nationally and ideologically indistinct Ukraine that would belong to the "*Russkiy Mir*" ("Russian world").

The language issue became central to this dimension: the dominance of the Ukrainian language, first and foremost as the only official language, at one extreme; and Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism, with the Russian language often in a position of priority, at the other.

Public expectations of patriotic reform peaked during Yushchenko's presidency. However, his indecisiveness and inactivity, the discord on the "orange" side, and the absence of obvious positive outcomes led to a drop in his popularity.

The "orange" authorities tried to lead society by fostering reform and patriotic spirit. According to our monitoring, however, for the five years from late 2004 till the beginning of early 2010, public opinion shifted in the opposite

8 Cf. Fond Demokratychni initsiatyvy imeni Il'ka Kycheriva [Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation], Ostatochni rezul'taty Natsional'noho ekzyt-polu"2004 u druhomu turi vyboriv Prezydenta Ukrayiny (za danymy obrobky oryhinaliv anket opytuvannya [Final results of the national exit poll 2004 in the second round of the presidential election in Ukraine (according to the original survey questionnaire)], 27 November 2004, at: https://dif.org.ua/article/ostatochni-rezultati-natsionalnogo-ekzit-polu2004-u-drugomu-turi-viboriv-prezidenta-ukraini-za-danimi-obrobki-originaliv-anket-opituvannya

9 Cf. Vidbulosya pereholosuvannya druhovo turu vyboriv Prezydenta Ukrayiny (2004) [The second round of the Presidential election in Ukraine took place], *Ukrayins'kyĭ kalendar*, 26. December, at: http://www.calendarium.com.ua/ua/vidbulosya_peregolosuvannya_drugogo_turu_viboriv_prezidenta_ukraini_2004.

direction: pro-reform and patriotic spirit in particular weakened, with moderately pro-Russian views gaining the upper hand.

The "Sound Businessman"

Therefore, it was logical that Yanukovych would win the 2010 presidential elections (with 49 per cent of the vote compared with 45 per cent for Yulia Tymoshenko[10]). The oligarchs who changed their tune in the "orange" period promptly restored their economic and political capital.

It should be noted that during Yanukovych's presidency, the economy developed rather successfully. At the same time, the most profitable industries were monopolized; large amounts of capital flooded out of the country in different ways.

As for foreign policy, Yanukovych seemed to support Ukraine's uncertain move from Russia to the West. However, he played the game, signing agreements in turn, either with Russia, or with the West, and avoiding decisive action. This was reflected in an unexpected refusal to sign an agreement with the European Union in December 2013. Again, we recorded a contradiction between official policy and public sentiment: Yanukovych was attempting to push Ukrainian society closer to Russia, leaving reforms aside, but the public "balked" and moved in the opposite direction. The patriotic climate gained momentum again, from 2011 onwards in particular.

Whilst it had previously been a prominent aspect of public sentiment, significant differences in the "attitude to power" were foremost under Yanukovych. People began to realize that development did not occur due to actions of the authorities but arose from the ground up.

After Yanukovych failed to sign the agreement with the European Union, there was a sizeable protest rally in Kyiv, after which a group of young people stayed for an overnight "tea party". The meaningless and brutal expulsion of this small group of young people increased the growing disaffection and brought about the second *Maidan*, or the "Revolution of Dignity".

This was not the only act of violence on the part of the authorities. The two subsequent *Maidan* shootings – one in which a few people were killed, then the mass shooting of the Heavenly Hundred – resulted in an explosion of public outrage. Yanukovych fled the country.

To all intents and purposes, there was no need to flee but the cowardice he had thoroughly concealed in the previous years, using his surroundings to pretend to be a strong and bold leader led him to do so. Such an image was intended to take control of the people and to convince them that the best way to interact with the leadership was obedience and readiness to accept any of its decisions.

10 Cf. Rezul'taty vyboriv 2010. Druhyĭ typ [Election Results 2010. Second Round], *Ukrayins'ka Pravda*, 7 February 2010, at: https://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2010/02/7/4730368/

It proved to be one of Yanukovych's critical mistakes with regard to psychology: Most people had already abandoned unconditional obedience. The unrest in the Russian-speaking regions that followed the *Maidan* shooting and the flight of Yanukovych triggered the Russian military invasion, occupation, and annexation of Crimea, the partial occupation of the Donbas, and the bloody war that continues there to this day.

The "Hated Saviour"

The governmental crisis at the beginning of 2014 manifested itself in many ways, with the president's flight; early presidential elections; a change of government; the indecisive actions of the armed forces; general perplexity and negative expectations of the future; economic recession; and the rapid growth in social tension. Under these conditions, Petro Poroshenko won the first round of the presidential elections with a convincing vote (55 per cent)[11], which resulted from the unification of society in the face of internal and external threats. Poroshenko promised to end the war, to unify society, and to sell his business.

In 2014-2015, against a background of armed hostilities and economic recession, Ukraine succeeded in restoring its defence capacity and re-equipping the army, gaining global support for Ukraine from Europe and from the US in the first instance. Ukraine undoubtedly owed these achievements to Poroshenko, which most of his enemies recognized.

Important changes in public sentiment followed. Against a background of stronger patriotism, social cohesion increased from the west to the east, and public opinion became more polarized in parallel. Whereas previously Ukrainian society was characterized by a large group of proponents of Ukrainian-Russian linguistic and cultural coexistence, now the majority of those who had adopted a vague or ambivalent position became pro-Ukrainian, and the minority pro-Russian.

Another mark of change was the large-scale volunteer movement that cut across virtually all segments of the population – region, age, profession, and religion. Thousands of volunteers collected money for the army. In the crisis of state institutions, the civil society that was actively taking shape supported, and perhaps even saved, the armed forces.

Since 2016, the situation in the Donbas has stabilized to some extent. Active hostilities have ceased, although constant exchange of fire continues, bringing almost daily news of military and civilian casualties.

In this period, we have witnessed an unexpected phenomenon – a sharp surge in the public disapproval, even active hatred, towards the central Kyiv

11 Cf. Zakonodavstvo Ukrayini [Legislation of Ukraine], Povidomlennya Tsentral'noyi vyborchoyi komisiyi pro rezul'taty pozachergovykh vyboriv Prezidenta Ukrayiny 25 tranya 2014 roku [Report of the Central Election Commission on the results of the snap election of the President of Ukraine on 25 May 2014], adopted on 3 June 2014, at: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/n0001359-14.

authorities, above all President Poroshenko. For instance, interviews with residents in both Mariupol, the largest city of the Donbas controlled by Ukraine, and Lviv, the biggest Western Ukraine city, show that people, while desiring peace and economic prosperity, hated Poroshenko with equal intensity in both cities. Although this is understandable in Mariupol, it is rather surprising in the pro-Ukrainian Lviv.

At the same time, two more trends can be observed: The first is a certain weakening of patriotic sentiments that is likely to be due to the fatigue of war and the critical reaction to patriotic slogans used by the increasingly less popular authorities. The second is a drastic shift to the left in economic and ideological views and a strengthening of anti-reform sentiments. The gap between the conscious rejection of socialism and the not quite conscious commitment to economic equality and governmental paternalism widened again. According to VoxUkraine, 73 per cent of respondents actually support leftist authoritarian values.[12]

Such a drastic shift to the left was perhaps the main psychological factor behind Poroshenko's failure in the 2019 elections (24 per cent of votes cast in the second round, vs 73 per cent for Volodymyr Zelenskyi[13]). Poroshenko seemed to represent unrealized expectations about the end of the war and the improvement of material well-being.

The pro-Poroshenko arguments that initially had a rather strong influence gradually yielded to negative ratings that would have been less prominent but for the strong impact of highly charged Russian and pro-Russian media. It is sufficient to mention that more than half of the twelve to 14 national television channels were owned by tycoons dissatisfied with Poroshenko's policy to varying degrees.[14] Criticism of him became generalized in the Ukrainian media sphere: His actions were interpreted negatively as a matter of course.

A sort of meme has even become very common: "The enemy is not in the Kremlin, it is in Bankova Street" (the location of the presidential administration). In the all-Ukraine survey we conducted early in 2018, 46 per cent of respondents (vs 39 per cent in 2017 and 41 per cent in 2019) agreed with the statement that it was the current Ukrainian government who unleashed an unnecessary war in the Donbas, that the war continued because Poroshenko benefitted from it, and that it resulted from his agreements with Putin – his "bloody business".

12 Cf. Tymofiĭ Brik/Oleksiĭ Krimenyuk, Sprava nalivo: shcho dumayut ukrayintsi pro derzhavnyĭ control' ekonomiky ta osobystykh svobod [From right to left: what do Ukrainians think about state control of the economy and personal freedoms]? *VoxUkraine*, 5 June 2019, at: https://voxukraine.org/uk/sprava-nalivo-shho-dumayut-bilshist-ukrayintsiv-pro-derzhavnij-kontrol-ekonomiki-ta-osobistih-svobod/.

13 Cf. Vybory Prezidenta Ukrainy 2019 [2019 Presidential Elections in Ukraine], *Obozrevatel*, 22 April 2019, at: https://www.obozrevatel.com/ukr/president-2019/rezultati-viborivzyavilisya-pershi-dani-tsvk.htm.

14 Cf. Vitaliĭ Chervonenko, Portnov, Medvedchuk i oliharkhy: khto vplyvattyme na TB pid chas vyboriv [Portnov, Medvedchuk and the oligarchs: who will influence TV during the election], BBC News Ukrayina, 31 August 2018, at: https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-45367720

Minor improvements in the economic sector were not duly appreciated, but rather served as a source of irritation. Public opinion was dominated by beliefs such as "there can be no improvements", "everything is bad", "there is nationwide total poverty". No unbiased data, including that from abroad, could shake the conviction of most citizens that life could not be worse anywhere else. Ukrainian citizens felt the need for and took psychological comfort in the sense that they were universally impoverished.

When communicating with the people in his capacity as president, Poroshenko made two major mistakes. The first related to his business links. He claimed to have sold his corporation but the actual success of the business made many people think he had held on to the rewards. And there were too many business partners in Poroshenko's entourage, which to some extent suggested that political power was being used for personal enrichment.

If a significant number of citizens are convinced that their president is dishonest, the president and other authorities should be concerned and prompted to take certain steps. Poroshenko should at least have provided explanations to his citizens in connection with certain specific accusations on many occasions and in detail. For unclear reasons, he did not consider it necessary to do so. His infrequent communication with journalists and answers to topical questions did not serve as an adequate counterbalance to the loud country-wide accusations against him. This lack of necessary public communication was his second, critical, error.

Poroshenko seemed to have realized his dire situation immediately prior to the elections. He rushed to remedy it, but it was too late. Ignoring the public's problems and demands created a negative image of his personality and activities, which led to his defeat.

The Psychological Implications of the Change in the Ukrainian Population's Attitude to the Authorities

The Stages of Societal Psychological Development

The aforementioned changes in presidential power in Ukraine reflect major transformations in the minds and behaviour of its citizens with regard to the function and role of power in their personal and social life. The three stages of change correspond to the three attitudes discussed above: attitudes to reforms, attitudes to Russia, and attitudes to the authorities.

What underlies these changes is likely to be the uncertainty avoidance principle proposed by Geert Hofstede.[15] It can be argued that the Ukrainian people, who were deprived of certainty in 1991, are trying to restore the clarity

15 Cf. Geert Hofstede/Gert Jan Hofstede/ Michael Minkov, Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival, New York 2005, pp. 187-234.

of development benchmarks. As the course of events has prevented them from doing so, they are forced to change their attitude to their present-day reality and future prospects, bypassing sources of uncertainty in order to achieve certainty.

In this sense, the psychological aspect of the first stage in the development of public consciousness in the 1990s – the shift from a socialist discourse to a capitalist one – can be defined as a desire to preserve the status quo under new conditions. The reforms were perceived more at the superficial and symbolic level; they did not produce any tangible effect on deep psychological mechanisms and the nature of social relations. The customary relationship between the overlord state and its vassal citizens persisted.

The obvious inefficiency of such a relationship forced citizens to revise their attitude to the authorities, and in the 2000s, as societal development entered its next stage, the focus shifted to searching for a government capable of introducing changes according to a certain pattern. Ukraine's political orientation became a more fundamental issue. Society divided into two groups: one looking for ways to develop national democracy based on Western examples, the other favouring Russia.

The ideological confrontation under the conditions that brought about alternating victories for each of the groups encouraged citizens to vote "against the other" rather than "for their own" nominee. The trend towards changes "contrary to the anti-model" became obvious: If we do not win, let them lose. In this environment, neither political force was in a position to win significant support amongst the population.

With such a strained attitude to the authorities, the third stage of societal development began in the 2010s, with citizens electing the authorities at random, as if they hoped those who deserved their vote might eventually be elected as a result of several consecutive elections.

The Socio-psychological Dimensions of Political Power

The socio-psychological incarnations of political power we have outlined above seem appropriate to give a more meaningful description of what citizens expected from the authorities. This is related to the public's image of a "perfect" power – a set of ideas of how the authorities should be in order to be successful, attractive, and trustworthy.[16]

The *paternalistic-demagogical* incarnation symbolizes citizens' emotional dependence on the state leadership, and their desire to regard the authorities as a kind and fair guardian, parent, and defender who will provide emotional comfort and security, satisfy hunger and thirst, give praise, and, if necessary, criticize. All that is required of the citizens is to obey and love the authorities.

16 Cf. Vadym Vasiutynskyi, Interaktsiĭna psykholohiya vlady [Interactive Psychology of Power], Kyiv 2005, pp. 411–432.

Changes in the context of this incarnation follow the path of a gradual, sinusoid reduction of such dependence. When disappointed with the existing authorities, people began to search for a substitute they could "love" again. Each subsequent negative experience weakened their motivation, and the electorate, who had "deceived themselves" once again, expressed much less excitement concerning the new leadership, so the intervals between infatuation and disappointment became shorter and shorter. At the same time, the need to remain dependent is still rather strong, and the lack of this option gives rise to psychological discomfort.

The second incarnation – *pragmatic-regulatory* – concerns the expectation that the authorities will guarantee law and order. This is a desire, for a "strong hand" that sets necessary controls, permitting all good things and prohibiting all bad ones. Development in the context of this incarnation means a transition from loyal sentiments via a decline in the managerial capacities of the authorities and undermining of trust in them, until citizens come to perceive the authorities as an equal partner.

Without a doubt, Ukrainians' now prevalent mistrust in their authorities is an obstacle to establishing a relationship of equal partners between the authorities and society. Most citizens regard the probability of creating a strong and efficient state leadership as low. However, they still feel the need for such a power, and the hope that it will manifest increases at each election or following mass protests.

The third incarnation – *manipulative-paranoid* – embodies social values, citizens' expectations of the authorities with regards to defining the meaning of collective existence and setting attractive benchmarks for social development. The changes that are occurring are leading citizens and society in general to gain agency over their value and meaning.

Soviet society was guided by goals and values defined by the Communist Party. For most Ukrainians, national post-Soviet values and meanings were to replace the Soviet ones, thus filling in the value-and-meaning gap. While a patriotic minority perceived the new circumstances as expected and desirable, the majority passively agreed to the substitution of old values with new ones. The Russian-Soviet oriented minority gave in to the situation to a greater or lesser extent, while preserving their inner value-related non-conformism.

At first, Ukrainian society developed in the context of an opposition between the proponents of national democratic values and those sharing pro-Russian/pro-Soviet values. Under these conditions, the majority, who did not make a choice between the two ideologies, attempted to obtain the necessary direction from the authorities. However, as the authorities' reputation was increasingly undermined, the significance of the values they represented decreased, and threatened even greater anomie. This forced citizens to develop their own values that did not differ from those put forward by the authorities in principle but – importantly – were elaborated and adopted by society itself.

In the context of each incarnation, we will now define the leading trends in public opinion reflecting the psychological significance of these changes.

Paternalistic-Demagogical Incarnation: Affective Development Trends

The most significant aspect of the first incarnation was the reduction and weakening of citizens' emotional dependence on the authorities.

Emotional self-regulation. One particular expression of people's considerable, sometimes total, emotional dependence on authorities in the Soviet era was that their emotional state was largely determined by the tone and style of messages citizens received from the authorities. The rulers had in place the tools required to incite various states in individuals: goodness, delight, optimism, enthusiasm, interest, aggression, hatred, despondency, pessimism, and depression. This was facilitated by the absolute prevalence of the Soviet ideology of governmental psychological paternalism. The authorities allegedly took constant care of their citizens, and the citizens responded with gratitude and devotion.

A series of deep disappointments swayed this dependence and forced citizens to look for their own reserves of emotional self-regulation. The long process of transition to emotional independence engendered a paradox. On the one hand, successful or clumsy attempts made by the next government to influence citizens' emotional lives were received with rejection and antagonism. On the other hand, citizens still felt a consistent need to be subjected to emotional influence by the authoritative sources as a mark of "good leadership".

Alienation from authorities. Despite the persistent endeavours of the Soviet authorities to be loved, they remained separated from their citizens by tangible emotional distance. For those who accepted their power, it was close to perfection but, according to Max Weber,[17] also unattainable and bureaucratically cold. And if it was charismatic, its charisma was artificial, created to the tune of the Soviet propaganda.

Each subsequent disappointment with the authorities made them less attractive, dispersed their enchantment and magic, and that of their origins. In the eyes of the citizens, state leadership increasingly became the product of their own choice.

Power as a source of populism. Soviet populism as the basis of the ideological system lost its appeal to most citizens and was partially replaced with populism based on other ideological paradigms. Today's populism in Ukraine often resorts to the promises of universal wellbeing, social justice and – in recent years – quick restoration of peace.

Each subsequent wave of populism rekindles people's interest and even a certain enthusiasm. As a rule, its authors, having gained power, do not make their promises come true. After inevitable disappointment, the desire of some

17 Cf. Max Weber, Die drei reinen Typen der legitimen Herrschaft [The three pure types of legitimate rule), Preussische Jahrbücher 1-2/1922.

citizens/people to be favoured is revived again, though it is not so strong, and populism retains its hold on society and seems as though it may always do so.

Trust and mistrust in the authorities. The universal trust the Soviet authorities believed they had succeeded in cultivating among their citizens proved a delusion and, under the conditions of the systemic crisis, swiftly turned into prevalent lack of confidence in the Soviet leaders and authorities in general. The crisis of trust is one of the most characteristic features in contemporary Ukraine. For a long time, there has been no individual or entity in which a considerable section of the population could consistently place their trust.

In 2004-2005, Yushchenko secured a greater degree of trust than his predecessors, but generally no politician and no political force could secure sufficiently high and stable public confidence. Situation-based improvements in public trust resulted ultimately in irreversible decline. Moreover, the most popular leaders and parties have a few per cent of the "core" electorate.

Negative emotions. In the Soviet era, citizens' negative sentiments were regulated by directing them towards external or internal enemies. The authorities deliberately cultivated hatred. For example, "class hatred" was used as a tool to fight all sorts of opponents and competitors. Irritation with the authorities was thoroughly concealed and only permitted in certain cases, and with the permission of the authorities.

When emotional freedom was acquired, citizens relished the opportunity to express their hatred freely. Perhaps, this explains the intense hatred in Ukrainian society, which comes to the fore from time to time in relations between different groups of the population – ideological, regional, proprietary - but most commonly in citizens' attitude to the authorities. The authorities proved to be the "emotional" scapegoat, guilty of all possible sins *a priori*. The attitude of a large sector of the population to President Poroshenko in the final years of his presidency was a convincing example of this.

Hatred of the authorities is not a sign of liberation from dependence on them, but rather indicates a change from positive to negative dependence. Further development is likely to lead to a less emotional response and a more restrained attitude to towards the leadership.

A need to blame. High levels of tension in society support substantial expectations and the search for a way out. Finding who is to blame is a primitive but tempting way to take emotional co-ownership.

The desire to identify and punish corrupt officials has proven to be one of the strongest mass sentiments in the final years of the Soviet era and in post-Soviet times. None of the existing systems have lived up to these expectations. The public believes that most corrupt officials have never been punished, which is certainly the case. Moreover, the authorities in each existing system were indeed corrupt. The hope for justice was rekindled at each election, only to end in fresh disillusionment.

Our surveys suggest that the desire to provoke a sense of guilt and repentance is an important motif in the search for those who are to blame and attitudes

to them. In this sense, the authorities are, perhaps, the most convenient object of citizens' respective expectations. However, in the post-Soviet tradition, the authorities typically did not repent for mistakes, errors of judgement, or crimes.

Citizens' liberation from emotional dependence on the authorities in the post-Soviet era was reflected in the shift from seeing authorities as paternalistic and demagogic. People's ability to emotionally self-regulate improved; alienation from the authorities strengthened; populism became less attractive; the criteria for trust in the authorities became more stringent; and the collective readiness to hate and to blame increased.

The Pragmatic-Regulatory Incarnation Rational Development Trends

The second incarnation is bringing about order, which is dominated by a conscious attitude to the authorities and reasonable assessments of their activity.

Authorities' responsibilities. In the Soviet tradition, the authorities are omnipotent, omnipresent, and responsible for everything. The rights and duties of the authorities and citizens, as prescribed in law, are actually determined from the point of view of the authorities. The voice of a party leader at any level of hierarchy is more influential than the law.

The initial idealization of the "always right" authorities gradually turned into understanding and acceptance of the fact that the authorities were far from perfect, could be better or worse, and were made up of people of different levels of competence, ethics, and communicative and managerial skills. Citizens began to "find out" that the power was man-made, not "from God".

Ukrainians are increasingly hypercritical of pre-election claims and try to predict the future behaviour of a political force or political figure if they are elected. The authorities are no longer perceived as the main source of truth. Their resolutions and actions are subject to close and critical attention, not only from their opponents. The increasing establishment of ideological plurality in the media contributes to this trend. In this regard, the competition of oligarch-owned media proved more effective than the single party ideological monopoly.

At present, no public politician can count on favourable treatment by the media. In response to their political aspirations, they experience criticism, including outright lies and a multitude of interpretations of their work. Citizens learn to be more responsible when assessing the authorities' functions and duties, bringing a great deal of personal judgement to these assessments. Depending on their preferences and wishes, they may interpret the competence of the authorities more broadly, for example, when it concerns their duty to ensure social order, or more narrowly, e.g., when it concerns limitations on citizens. Increasingly frequent public discussions on these issues enrich citizens' interaction with the authorities.

Transparency of the authorities. The secrecy and mystery of the authorities has been replaced with a perception of accessibility, facilitated by the dissemination of all sorts of online resources and social media where the authorities are represented by real people and less frequently in the form of abstract images. Their private lives, character traits, intellect, and behaviour are a focus of interest.

Perhaps no politician is able and willing to be fully transparent to society. In this sense, Ukrainian society has not gained sufficient experience in the division between the private and public lives of politicians. Citizens demand to know about their politicians' personal lives, and it is becoming increasingly difficult for politicians to disguise their personalities and intentions, to create and maintain their artificial image.

A display of sincerity is one of the most highly prized skills in a public figure. However, the public can keenly assess integrity and gets wise to insincere public figures quickly. At the same time, politicians' constant psychological exposure causes displeasure amongst the population sooner or later, as it raises doubts regarding their effectiveness.

Citizen-authority relations. Citizens assess the authorities with increasing objectivity and boldness. The fear of state leadership that used to prevail in the past has mostly been dispelled, although the older generation and provincial residents have retained it to a certain extent. Instead, fear of authority is expressed in the fear of immediate bosses with the power to punish or forgive. At the collective level, citizens assess the authorities more captiously.

There is still a long way to go in achieving an equal citizen-authority partnership. However, there are more and more noticeable signs that this possibility and its necessity are gaining recognition amongst the public. Citizens learn about such opportunities from the media rather than their own experience, but they try to adapt the information they receive to their own needs, more or less actively. As for the authorities, they are becoming increasingly dependent on citizens and fear rejection, a fear that increases before elections.

At the same time, a number of beliefs prevail in public opinion and hinder the changes occurring: Those in power have more ample decision-making rights, and their decisions are the only right ones; ordinary citizens have no say, the candidates preferred by those "at the top" are "elected"; power should be given to those who have already stolen since they won't steal anymore, and so on.

Memes such as these were popular in the 1990s, when the electorate was attempting to overcome their post-Soviet lack of experience and thus avoided assuming political responsibility. Nowadays, such judgements are less prevalent and yield to more specific and unbiased opinions on those running for elections. Ukrainian citizens also began to reflect on the authorities' attitude to how they are perceived by the population. Today, citizens are much more competent in assessing how the authorities treat them, using both ideological and psychological criteria.

The efficiency of the authorities. Ukrainians are gradually giving up their habit of electing the authorities that they "just like" and that seem to be convenient and comfortable. More serious criteria such as efficiency are increasing in importance. The public is learning to assess leaders by the totality of their activities, rather than by individual actions. Whereas initially the authorities used to be assessed positively, with citizens only later beginning to oscillate between the positive and negative poles, now they tend towards a more balanced and unbiased assessment.

Before elections in particular, the more active section of the electorate uses and disseminates economic indicators and sociological ratings as arguments, as if to eradicate the magic of fancy language and provide more convincing evidence. The general interdependence of different indicators is hard for the electorate to grasp. For instance, the public finds it difficult to reconcile that any increase in salaries triggers price hikes, that any tax reductions threaten pension payments etc. The desire for things to "go well everywhere" still prevails amongst the masses. If everything is going more or less well, but something somewhere is "a bit poor", the subjective importance of that poor aspect increases, and the authorities are assessed negatively rather than objectively.

Division of power and business. One important aspect of attitudes to the authorities in contemporary Ukraine is citizens' assessment of the government's links with business. In most cases, the separation between the authorities and business that was formally and informally declared has not been implemented. The clearest example is the previous president Poroshenko, who allegedly abandoned his business, albeit so unconvincingly that his real or imputed business interests were one of the most forceful arguments used by his opponents in the election campaign.

Ukrainians cherish the "socialist" ideal of a politician who works altruistically for the benefit of the nation, for a little payment. Even a slight increase in deputies' and ministers' salaries leads to an avalanche of universal indignation. A series of public scandals resulted from the publication, according to a law adopted in 2016, of data on deputies', ministers' and judges' property and income. Information on the politicians' assets registered in their spouses' and relatives' names was a particular subject of discussion.

The systemic nature of state authority. The Soviet authorities taught individuals to perceive them as strong and monumental. The Communist Party's nomenclature boasted of its systemic nature, claiming that it stood for reliability and the highest expediency. Anti-Soviet discourse often concerned the need to "break the system". There was a popular anecdote about a plumber who was wanted by the KGB because of his words about the "need to change the entire system".

However, the systemic nature of authority implied not only strength and reliability, but also a certain alienation from the public, the advantages of which were perceived rather abstractly. Understanding authority as systemic

usually meant it was inert, indifferent to the individual, and its bureaucrats inaccessible.

For most citizens, systemic authority is personified by politicians speaking about problems unrelated to the daily life of ordinary people and, as such, appearing uninteresting and unnecessary. On the contrary, those who focus on ordinary people's problems seem non-systemic, defending individuals' interests sincerely. This creates a large space for populism.

The virtual image of the authorities. Dreaming of perfect authorities and facing constant disappointments, citizens are easily attracted by illusions created by the media, most often as a result of purposeful influence. However, were it not for the need to generate an image of the desired political reality in the public consciousness, and the public's readiness to respond to these tempting images, creating these illusions would be ineffective. Both the enticing image of perfect authorities and the negative image of the current leaders support constant interest in potential/possible changes in power. This is facilitated by the growing technologization of social life and, consequently, the hybridization of public sentiment.

Throughout the three decades of the country's independence, the Ukrainian public has steadily demanded "new faces". Paradoxically, people who seek power without having showcased themselves beforehand are unlikely to win the electorate's support. Where new candidates have been able to establish themselves in politics, they were usually known for their activities in other sectors. The population transferred their previous assessments of these individuals into politics, which had a motivating effect for creating an attractive political future.

In the pragmatic-regulatory incarnation of authority, citizens have made more stringent requirements for the responsibility, transparency, and efficiency of their leadership; citizens' consideration of their attitudes to the authorities has intensified; they perceive the authorities' systemic nature and reliance on business more negatively; and public and political life increasingly takes place in virtual spaces.

The Manipulative-paranoid Incarnation: Value Development Trends

The third incarnation reflects the role the authorities play in the changes in value and meaning in public opinion: that of the author of benchmarks for society.

Political and ideological plurality. The strict suppression of any manifestation of dissenting views by the Soviet authorities not only resulted in fear of repression, but also the profound belief that it was useless having an opinion different from that of the leadership. The official myths prevailing in all areas of social life were perceived as justified and appropriate. Just a small minority of the population welcomed liberation from the Communist Party's dictate; the majority initially felt sceptical and distrustful.

Gradually, citizens got a taste for freedom of opinion and political plurality, although extreme plurality, as it was perceived by many, caused irritation and disquiet, first, because it often forced citizens to determine their standpoint unambiguously, and second, because five to seven parties seemed sufficient. Since they had to make a choice out of two or three hundred parties, many voters had the impression that the parties were too numerous and, as such, confusing.

Pluralism increased disorientation in the world of politics and deepened psychological discomfort. This resulted in the pronounced, then slightly decreasing, and then re-increasing readiness of many citizens to partially reject the advantages of democracy for the sake of societal and ideological order.

Political and ideological polarization and radicalization. Aggravation of social tensions forced individuals to define their political preferences more clearly and gravitate towards different extremes. Dissent was most evident in the attitudes towards Russia. According to our studies, the Russian dimension has the greatest weight in the political structuring of society. Ukrainians' pro- and anti-American, European, Polish, Jewish and other sentiments, taken together, are far behind pro- and anti-Russian ones.

This polarization brought with it the radicalization of certain groups. Society gradually gained experience of the very existence of radical views and standpoints, and of the assertive response to their usually tough talk and dangerous action.

The differentiation of moderately patriotic opinions and radical forces' calls that exacerbate the situation is important from a psychological point of view. If even Western societies, with their much longer experience of dealing with radicals, do not always manage to assess their actions adequately, Ukrainian society is unsophisticated in this respect, and finds it hard to address these objectives. However, a lack of necessary experience does not prevent most citizens from adequately assessing right- and left-wing extremists, who receive less than five per cent of votes in quiet periods. Citizens are increasingly reluctant to express support for radical parties and look to more centrist and respectable ones. At the same time, the centrists, on the one hand, attract voters with their moderate and well-balanced standpoints but, on the other, repel with their incoherent principles and unsteady positions.

Public self-government. Gaining collective agency in different areas is the main psychological basis for the development of public self-government up to the formation of civil society.[18]

Failed or unpopular decisions and actions on the part of the authorities, on the one hand, aggravate citizens' negative attitude to them and, on the other, induce them to independently search for a way out of the situation.

18 Cf. Iryna Solonenko, Ukrainian Civil Society from the Orange Revolution to Euromaidan: Striving for a New Social Contract, Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/ IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2014*, Baden-Baden 2015, pp 219-235.

These trends were most perceptible in three spheres, the first of which was economic wellbeing. When the Soviet welfare system collapsed, the self-sufficient production of food, additional jobs, going abroad to earn a living, and establishing one's own business were key to getting the upper hand in the crisis. In all of these cases, the economic support of the authorities was not highly necessary. Many citizens, especially the middle-aged, got a taste for independent earnings or private entrepreneurship.

The second sphere was civil engagement in political processes. It is worth examining the first and second *Maidan* specifically (the Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity), when the feeling of civil dignity surged and the sense of justice became more acute. Once things calmed down, the public mood "relaxed" to some extent, but at a new norm.

The third sphere was only evident for a short period but was strong and impressive. The large-scale volunteer movement in 2014-2015 saved the Ukrainian army from defeat in confrontation with Russian and separatist troops. Thousands of volunteers, supported by millions, took part in the movement.

Psychological legitimization of change. Citizens became more and more convinced that the authorities were dependent on them and established to serve them. Whereas in the past, the leader's word bore greater weight than the law, now the law increasingly yields to the citizens' collective wishes expressed by one politician or another. If a law is not considered good, or is altogether bad, the authorities are seen to be justified if they violate it.

Such "revolutionary expedience" infringes on the system of power but, supported by a majority of the population, pushes the system to change. Of course, to what extent the supposed changes will be beneficial for society cannot be determined in advance. In this sense, we can only express and compare different points of view. And again, the most ancient political and psychological issue – that of the majority's rectitude, be it electoral or revolutionary – re-emerges.

It is also worth considering another aspect of the prospective usefulness of change: the generational aspect. Our studies suggest that age-related political and ideological differences in Ukrainian society were the second factor in terms of significance after regional differences. The previous years' political experience proved that the middle generation's preferences were the most appropriate for development. However, the values and goals set by the youth are more suitable in terms of legitimizing change at the stage when social conflicts arise.

The Change of Power as a Result and Its New Desacralization Stage

The triumphal victory of Volodymyr Zelenskyi, a comedian, over the systemic politician Poroshenko marked the most important change in the development of Ukrainian society.

It is noteworthy that Zelenskyi was neither an ordinary clown nor a buffoon: There was much acute political satire in his speeches. *The Servant of the People,* a series in which Zelenskyi starred as an ordinary teacher who was suddenly elected president and who acted honestly, wisely, and decisively in his position was a highlight of his career. This image gave rise to a wave of nationwide sympathy that was later extrapolated to Zelenskyi himself. Sociologists began recording the steady rise in his popularity as a nominee to the position of president.

His election was a clear sign that Ukrainians' mentality had changed. Using the development trends outlined above, let us consider their clearest manifestations during the presidential and then parliamentary election campaign and in the post-electoral period.

Undoubtedly, the greatest strength of Zelenskyi and his team, the backbone of which are his peers from the artist's studio, is an easy and prompt response to society's demands in the form of spectacular media appearances, provocative mockery, and aggressive revelation of opponents, using popular memes and fakes.[19]

The clear victory of Zelenskyi and the *Servant of the People* party as a result of its leader's popularity allowed him to strengthen his power while violating procedural and even constitutional norms, actually changing the parliamentary-presidential political system into a presidential-parliamentary one.

The elections triggered the polarization and separation of society into two large factions: Zelenskyi's proponents, and his opponents, who consolidated around Poroshenko. Poroshenko's supporters position themselves as the Ukrainian patriots, in particular in connection with their opposition to Russian aggression, and they condemn Zelenskyi for his willingness to concede to Putin. Most of Zelenskyi's proponents do not renounce Ukrainian patriotism; however, combating corruption, improving welfare, and making agreements with Russia are much more important to them.

Besides political and ideological differences, some demographic and psychological ones were discovered. According to sociologists, demographic differences were mostly regional by nature (Zelenskyi's support increased from west to south east), age-related (he received most support amongst the youth), and educational (support for Zelenskyi correlated with a lower level of education).[20]

19 Cf. Valeriĭ Pekar, Chomu peremih Zelens'kyĭ: shist' rivniv peremohy [Why Zelensky Won: Six Levels of Victory], at: https://site.ua/valerii.pekar/22052/.

20 Cf. Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Khto za koho proholosuvav: demografiya Natsional'noho ekzyt-polu' 2019 druhoho turu prezidents'kykh vyboriv [Who

As for psychological qualities, according to the all-Ukraine survey we ran in April between the first and the second rounds of the presidential election, those who voted for Zelenskyi were comparatively less satisfied with life, felt less trust in other people, expressed a greater externality, and preferred intuitive solutions to reasonable ones. The answer to the question "Did you familiarize yourself with the election programme of the presidential nominee you voted for?" was representative: 19 per cent of Poroshenko's proponents and 36 per cent of Zelenskyi's proponents chose the option: "It was clear to me whom to vote for, without the programme".

The electoral results showed that emotions prevailed over logic- and value-based orientations. Comparing Zelenskyi's proponents and opponents using the affective components of the paternalistic-demagogical incarnation of power, it is possible to state that emotional self-regulation is rather poor in both groups: Both are too agitated.

The almost incessant negative emotion and the need to accuse is what "unites" both ends of the political spectrum psychologically. Zelenskyi's opponents mistrust the new authorities, cultivate their alienation from it, and accuse the authorities of all possible sins: lack of competence, populism, betrayal of national interests. The new president's followers are uncritically positive about the authorities, resulting in a record high level of trust in them in Ukraine.

In terms of features of pragmatic-regulatory development, the opponents and proponents of the new authorities share the requirement for the authorities to act with responsibility, openness, efficiency, and separate themselves from business. The former are more irreconcilable and rush to criticize any mistakes made by the authorities. The latter are much more indulgent, believing that the new authorities meet their expectations and turning a blind eye to minor misdemeanours.

Reflecting on their relationships with the authorities, Zelenskyi's opponents assess their actions comprehensively and strategically, while his proponents are satisfied with contextual assessments. The perception of the authorities' systemic nature is related to this assessment, too. The president's opponents favour the preservation or restoration of the authorities' systemic elements, regarding their elimination as a threat to the existence of the state in general. Zelenskyi's followers approve of the signs of the depreciation of the governmental system, they like the fact that those who govern the state are eager young people who act without bureaucratic delay.

Zelenskyi's opponents and proponents share one common feature: the vague and cautious attitude to the virtualization of the authorities' image. New leaders are proactive in introducing such an image into public consciousness

voted what: Demographics of the National Exit Poll 2019 of the second round of the presidential election], 6 May 2019, at: https://dif.org.ua/article/khto-za-kogo-progolosuvav-demografiya-natsionalnogo-ekzit-polu2019-drugogo-turu-prezidentskikh-viboriv; Andriĭ Sukharyna, Bitva pokolin': Khto, de i I yak holosuvav na vyborakh do Rady [The generation battle. Who, where and how voted in the Council elections], *Ukrayins'ka Pravda*, 13 August 2019, at: https://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2019/08/13/7223394/.

by insisting on digitalizing the system of governance. Zelenskyi's followers accept these proposals passively, just trusting their authors. The opponents believe that virtualization will help disguise the (in their opinion) unacceptable resolutions and actions of the authorities.

Regarding changes in social values as expressed in the manipulative- paranoid incarnation of political power, we can say that they are exposed to the prevalent influence of affective aspects of development. The political and ideological polarization of views is intensifying and, therefore, behaviour is becoming more radical. Consequently, there is less space for political and ideological plurality. The advantage is an opportunity for dynamic social development, while the drawback is the danger of large-scale social conflicts.

Two essential functions that could ensure positive development in the short term can be expected from the two most active groups of citizens. Zelenskyi's proponents are securing psychological legitimization of these changes. With their majority, they have *carte blanche* to almost any transformation of the state system. Zelenskyi's opponents are standing against any actions that seem ill-substantiated to them, moving society towards public self-governance and the establishment of civil society standards.