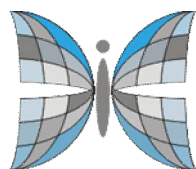




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PARTICULARISM IN POLITICAL DECISION- MAKING: CONSTRUCTIVE OR DESTRUCTIVE

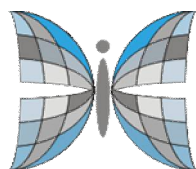
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This paper is aimed at the impact of particularism in political decision-making. It is argued that political decisions are particularistic according to the goal and circumstances, in which they are made. It is still unclear, which consequences – good or bad – particularistic component of political decisions may lead to. The focal question is to what extent the particularism in political decisions can help in resolving social problems or does harm to society. In the framework of the network analysis, the article presents organizational and procedural examples of particularism predominance and political means of its balancing. As an illustration of completely particularistic system by institutional and practical means of decision-making, the case of Ukraine is showed. It is ascertained that the dominance of particularism in political decision-making can lead to ambivalent effects: being highly destructive for stability of the system it can be saving for democratic modes of governance.

Keywords: *particularism, political decisions, political networks, groups of interests, clubs.*



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Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and
Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

Introduction

Contemporary political discourse is essentially based on criticism of the decision-making, which explicitly focuses on the exclusive benefits for particular groups of political elite or top business circles. Meanwhile, true democratic governance must aim at the multiplicity of needs and interests of society. The problem of representing interests in decision-making was highlighted in a number of theoretical studies but remains unsolved. Should a political decision meet the overall interests of a society according to Aristotle's tradition? The aim of politics in its sense is to achieve common public wellbeing. Is a political decision always a decision ad hoc, in sense of implementing unique interests of those who take it or unique circumstances under which it is made? Moreover, in modern societies there is a wide spectrum of overlapping (or even conflicting) social interests, which aggregation is difficult to implement through traditional patterns of political representation.

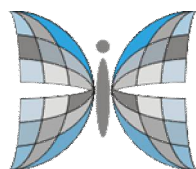
The political decision can be determined in two dimensions:

(i) as a technological transfer of political power into governing social processes, or (ii) as a central element in transfer of political demands of different social groups into the means and methods of regulating social relationships which are clear for the whole society. Political decisions differ from other types of administrative decisions due to their specific role in regulation of social relationships in highly indeterminate environment, co-existing with the conflict of interests of groups regarding public goods distribution. The latter characteristic of a political decision proves the presence of a particularistic element in its basis.

Etymologically, particularism means 'seeking separation'. There are several discourses within social sciences, which deal with various categories of particularism: ethical, cultural, political. In the ethic discourse, the particularism applied to decision-making is studied in the framework of theoretical debate as for implementing moral norms and rules, e.g. whether following moral norms contributes to making a better decision? In this context, particularism is defined through opposition towards universalism, principals, generalism. Scientists, who use that approach to decision-making, insist on the fact that following rules and moral



V.N. Karazin Kharkiv
National University



SCS Journal

Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

norms can contribute to the development of optimum decisions (see Horgan and Timmons 2007). On the contrary, proponents of particularism claim that following strict rules and regulations may result in ineffective decisions, as important details or contextual specifics are often ignored in them (see Dancy 2004: 78-89, 193-199). The intermediate, hybrid definition of particularism in decision-making is proposed in the terms of 'moral realism' (see DeAnna and Martinelli 2015, Zamzov 2015) or 'rule of sensitive particularism' (see Schauer 1991: 94-100). It is stressed that decisions should rely on normative principles and provide results needed for society. At the same time, the overall possibility to follow norms and rules is presupposed by the circumstances, in which a decision is made.

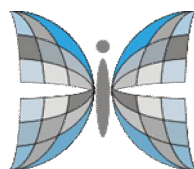
In studies of particularistic practices in social and cultural context, scientists tried to identify cultural differences in decision-making styles related to complex decisions (see Dabić, Tipurić and Podrug 2015, Sangmpam 2012, Sachdeva, Singh, and Medin 2011). In this sense, particularism 'seeks, in general, to affirm the identity and peculiarity of local or regional political features' (Sangmpam 2012: 51).

In political science particularism is recognized as instrumental category for analyzing electoral processes, activity of political parties, correlation between legislative and executive power branches and political expenses (see Kriner and Reeves 2015, Suiter and O'Malley 2014, Kernell 2010, Milner and Mukherjee 2010). Particularism is a characteristic of political decisions oriented on lobbying individual goals and interests resulting in narrowing or excluding a wide range of representation of social interests from policy-making. Therefore, particularism is defined as 'policies which emphasize the special interest of a given power, even at the price of disrupting existing organizations or power relationship' (Wallenstein 1984:243). Other study rely on particularism as 'the ability of policymakers to further their careers by catering to narrow interests rather than broader national platforms' (Gaviria et al, 2000: 8).

Nonetheless, there is a lack of research, which could provide methodological impetus for adequate analysis of the role of particularism in political decision-making. Taking all stated above



V.N. Karazin Kharkiv
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SCS Journal

Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and
Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

together, a question arises: In which way particularism in political decision-making affects the power institutions and public control. Are particularistic practices obliged to be a destructive factor for the political system?

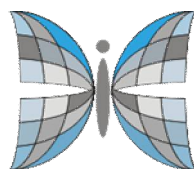
The purpose of the present work is to identify the most common particularistic practices and their impact on the consequences of political decisions. Two aspects will be considered: the theoretical one involves assumptions of the theory of political decisions, with special focus on policy network analysis, and the analytical one, which is based on reviewing forms of political particularism (groups of interests and clubs) and particularistic procedure practices (logrolling, electoral particularism, localism). In this paper I suggest to determine particularism in political decisions through the category of goal-setting and accordingly through the interests of participants of decision-making process. I consider political particularism as the pursuit of private interests by individuals or groups within the political decision-making. I assume that political particularism can possess two options of goal-setting: the first – when some actors place their interests up to the public ones and try to use the latter for their benefit, the second one – when particularistic interests are not discordant with collective ones and may encourage the decisions that meet common goods. It should be notice that studying particularism in political decision enables to go beyond the individual modes of governance and focus on the effects conditioned by specific decision-making practices.

Methodological Basis of Studying Particularism in Political Decisions

In further analysis, the key categories are political decisions and the interest connected with them. Therefore, it seems appropriate to turn at this point to theoretical approaches bind the understanding of interests of decision-makers with goal-setting and their activity. What first comes to mind is rational choice theory and incrementalism. In the framework of rational choice theory, the interest is presupposed by rational calculation and profit, which can be received from decision-making (see Hastie and Dawes 2010, Twersky and Kahneman 1986). Political particularism in this theoretical understanding is characterized by the rent-seeking



V.N. Karazin Kharkiv
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Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and
Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

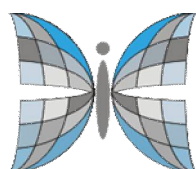
behavior of politicians and governmental officials. As a political market brokers and suppliers of goals, they are trying to ensure private interests in the framework of existing institutional restrictions (see Congleton and Hillman 2015). They can respond to the demands of rent-seekers and simultaneously act as racketeers who require rents under the threat of unprofitable decisions of particular interest groups. Politicians and officials, engaged in government regulation, act to maximize their own benefit which is expressed either in the form of increasing taxes or in the form of bribes and kickbacks. According to the principles of the rational choice theory, it seems impossible to assemble the exhaustive list of interests and priorities and to turn them into public ones. Interest groups' rent-seeking behavior distorts permanently the process of goal-setting and contributes to the occurrence of different forms of fail state.

Incrementalism is based on the assertion that interest is the main source that motivates political actors on certain actions to achieve goals (see Anderson and Harbridge 2010, Lindblom and Woodhouse 1993). However, the dynamics of decision-makers' preferences and their contractors, and the difference in their interpretation of their needs presuppose transforming decision-making positions and interlocking conflict of interest. This situation enhances the fragmentation of shared actions, emphasizes inner conflicts between the participants of decision-making. If the certain actors' interests are not taken into account, then they start to resist and activate the opposite flows in goal-setting, which increases governmental expenses. But, neither the theory of rational choice, nor incrementalism give a full picture of interactions of participants during the process of decision-making as they do not detect exposure of value or socio-cultural aspect of particularism in decision-making. Analytical patterns of studying political decisions have to take into account peculiarities of a certain situation, in which they were formed and implemented. Besides, the process of generating of political decisions often remains hidden from public. It seems that network analysis is the most appropriate means of assessing particularism in working out political decisions.

Policy network analysis offers reasonable methodological tools to describe and differentiate groups of public and private entities



V.N. Karazin Kharkiv
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Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

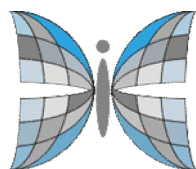
(organizations and individuals) engaged into the process of creating political agenda (see Song and Eveland 2015, Lazer et al 2010, Saaty and Vargas 2006, Heydemann 2004, McClurg 2003). Moreover, it can detect the interests of participants in decision-making. Networks are groups of actors arising around issues members of which share interrelation and common resources. Network' members cannot achieve the goals without the resources held by their partners. In this way, network analysis enables to outline goals, interests and motives of participants in working out decisions. The processes of making political decisions depend on subjectivity of networks, the manner of interactions between its participants and the degree of network openness. Networks with open access provide channels of direct communication between governmental institutions and citizens, thereby expanding the range of participatory practices for society in shaping the political agenda. In this decision-making format, a political particularism is balanced through engaging citizens into the political process that leads to consideration of a wide range of public interests. This can enhance the legitimacy of decisions.

In closed networks, the connections arise between individual actors and have informal character. In this case, the process of political decision-making occurs within a narrow elite circle or within the community, ethnic, family networks by acquiring them bureaucratic capital – these are 'networks of privilege' (Heydemann 2004). Network interactions can transform into patron-client relationship in which corruption acts as an alternative means of providing political interests. Corrupt practices occur if a shortage of opportunities to influence the public decision-making exists. The latter became a subject of trade, the goods, which can be distributed through the network marketing, and the networks turn into channels of distributing bureaucratic services. A narrow range of interests of network participants specifies political particularism in such formats of decision-making. Political decisions are being implemented as laws on public policy, focused, primarily, on the interests of the network participants. As a result, such decisions have low level of legitimacy in the perception of citizens or other political actors outside the network.

Figuring out the type of network connection in the political structure enables to allocate the central and peripheral actors,



V.N. Karazin Kharkiv
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SCS Journal

Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and
Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

density of interconnections, lobby capabilities of a network. Typically, the networks contain nodes with many connections – hubs, which essentially determine the network capabilities. They are formed on the intersection of interests of power holders and business groups that get an access to a shared profit via their participation in decision-making networks. Hubs are characterized by greater ability to exchange and obtain capital, information and self-occupied focal position. In this case, the organizational forms of particularism of decision-making are ‘interest groups’.

Organizational and Procedural Particularistic Activity

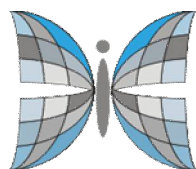
Interest groups or, as they are also called ‘special-interest groups’ (see Ramanna 2015:17) – are unities, whose purpose is to express and protect special interests. Their main difference from political parties is the goal-setting. Interest groups do not aim to come to power and fight for its conquest. They only try to influence the content of political decisions to implement stakes (Martini 2012: 1-3). Nonetheless, the ambiguous effect of interest groups on decision-making is underlined. For instance in the conception of selective regulating risks, particularism appears as an activity of empowered political groups aimed at creation of structures and mechanisms to organize a wide range of filters for social risks in sake of stability of the entire political system. In this sense, particularism is present in political decisions in order to ensure security and decrease complexity of the environment. Political systems manage to clean the collective expectations from a part of risks for public life, which may provoke social stresses (Zolo, 1991: 40). From this point of view, particularism has a function of ensuring stability of a political system.

In the perspective, which can be called destructive-consequent, interest groups adversely affect the functioning of the political system. Such groups act as providers of private influence on political decision-making. Everything that happens in politics can be seen as a result of ‘unfair play’ of various business groups. Arguments in favor of this vision are as follows:

- (1) The existence of interest groups causes inequality of opportunities for the influence on the process of political decision-making. Besides, business groups have more such



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Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

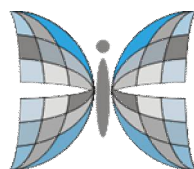
- opportunities opposed to those groups, which do not have sufficient resources.
- (2) More powerful interest groups try to create barriers for the redistribution of social benefits that badly affects the overall state of society and could trigger social conflicts in the future.
 - (3) The dominance of interest groups in political decision-making can lead to a monopoly on representation of public interests. This distorts the core principle of representation, which becomes reduced to transactions between interest groups and bureaucracy.

In the framework of another approach, which I term 'cumulative-consequent', particularistic interests are transformed into the common goal. In trying to achieve particularistic goals the actors can contribute to the accelerated decision-making by providing financial or organizational support. Such an approach enables to get more balanced decision. Particularism also helps to facilitate consensus and collective decision-making by overcoming the problem of considering of the multiplicity of interests.

One of the mechanisms, by which interest groups can influence the formation of decisions in legislative sphere, is logrolling. This is a simple way of indirect compensation, when political actors can exchange votes during hearings for different issues. This procedure cancels the demand that the voting for any issue should be beneficial for the majority of voters. This mechanism allows securing the support of stakeholders, and provides the latest to promote their interests in legislation. The classic form of logrolling is 'pork barrel' – a legislative mechanism that includes a set of small local projects. In order to obtain the approval, the decision-makers add to the bill a package of multiple proposals, often weakly related to the initial draft, yet profitable for different political groups. In order to ensure its passing, more and more new proposals ('pork') are added, until a conviction that the law should be approved by the majority. Ginsburg (2009: 30) notes the positive effect of this form of particularism on legislative processes 'that a certain amount of interest group activity can be helpful to stabilize a constitutional bargain – the optimal level of rent-seeking may be greater than zero'. Yet such practices of particularism



V.N. Karazin Kharkiv
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Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

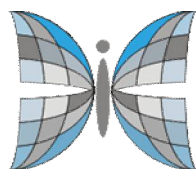
possess risks for democracy. Vitally important decisions (restriction of civil rights, freedom of speech or press, etc.) can be purchased through providing private additional discounts and satisfying of local interests (see Evans 1994). It is worth to note that the decision, taken as a result of logrolling, mainly supports the interests of certain groups, but not of an average citizen.

In the context of electoral process, particularism always occurs and may have ambivalent impact on decision-making. One of widespread practices of electoral particularism is localism, which 'in politics translates into particularism in policies – policies that distribute benefits to specific constituents' (Kernell 2010: 344). Localism is represented on the beneficiaries of geographically targeted spending. Exploring particularistic political spending patterns and interactions between parties and voters, parties and their representatives in the executive branch, Suiter and O'Malley (2014: 28-29) concluded that the allocation of resources at the ministerial level in conjunction with electoral system incentives leads to authoritarian forms of distribution, where ministerial priorities show the interests of the parties, which they represent in the government. The consequences of such a process may be excessive influence of regional elites on national policy-making. Particularistic systems and decisions, which they produce, have advantage of having information about preferences of their voters. Thus, they motivate legislators to focus on the needs of the electorate (at least part of it) and to create the mechanisms of competitiveness among political actors, which will boost the efficiency of the political process. Albeit they can create asymmetry in the representation of interests in decision-making, particularly in favor of certain regions. This situation has disintegrating potential for the state order. This may cause a desire in some regions to greater autonomy, calls for separatism or even radical changes in the territorial structure of the state.

Note that most of the political particularism is considered in the context of domestic politics. However, in foreign policy-making there is also a considerable particularistic component. Particularism in international affairs is not unique for unilateral strategies but also can be found in the institutionalized forms of global governance based on the multilateral principles.



V.N. Karazin Kharkiv
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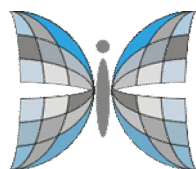
Decision-‘Clubbing’: Particularistic Patterns at the Multilateral Platform

One of the key advantages of network analysis approach to political decision-making, in my opinion, is that it best meets the current realities of the formation of political processes that include all levels of governance, from local to global. International politics is characterized by complex structured networks, containing hubs with many connections, where power and economic resources are concentrated. Actors, who perform at such sites or nearby, have more opportunities to influence decision-making than other members of the network do. In this sense, the network analysis is useful for studying political particularism in the frame of club decision-making.

Clubs can be determined as alliances with limited number of participants and non-public format of decision-making. In the simplest club-models the institutionalized procedures of decision-making are even not recognized as each club-member is considered to be club representative (Kawai, Petri and Sisli-Ciamarra, 2009:3). International organizations show steady tendency towards sticking to the club format of decision-making where a narrow circle of the most powerful states dominates, for instance as Quint (USA, Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany) in NATO. Scholars allocate ‘clubs of lobbyists’, which form within the international entities in order to promote common interests, ‘clubs of willing’ that is pattern of ‘selective multilateralism’ and ‘clubs of relevant’ (e.g. Group of 20) as autonomous multilateral bodies (see Rinke and Schnecker 2013: 24-27). Despite sharp criticism, the international club entities are used for informal negotiations and seeking for compromises. Clubs enable to prepare basis for a legally binding agreement, support decision-making processes within international institutions and in some cases to overcome impasses that hinder reforms of the multilateral system. The club decision-making model as a type of organizational form of particularism plays a constructive role when an operational ‘ad hoc’ solution is needed. A vivid example is a reactive decision on March 2014 of the G7 leaders on the Russia’s annexation of Crimea. The decision to stop participation ‘in activities associated with the preparation of the scheduled G8 Summit in Sochi in June’ (Statement by G7 Nations Summits >



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Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

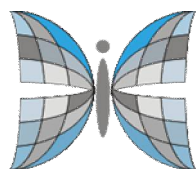
Road to the 2014 Sochi Summit, 2014) and It was clear signal to Russia about the unacceptability of aggressive unilateralism and perhaps even warned of a further offensive on Ukraine.

Yet, clubs as a form of political governance are characterized by exclusive membership, elitism, informality and lack of accountability. Therefore, legitimacy of decisions, taken within clubs, usually is under doubt in the eyes of the non-included (Vinnykova, 2014:92). Permanent 'clubbing' the process of decision-making within multilateral realm can produce effect of perceptive marginalization of non-club-members and provoke tension up to cleavages within international organizations. Ultimately, club-model particularism can discredit the mandatory nature of international law.

Global clubs and tendency 'clubbing' among member-states in international organizations are not the only forms of particularistic decision-making at the supranational level. A commonly known defect of policy-making in the EU is the dominance of national interests of member-states that makes it more difficult to reach a decision that will be beneficial for the whole community. Taking into account the highly heterogenic level of European governmental system, reaching consolidated decisions at the interstate level is an extremely difficult task. Nonetheless, it is not the pluralism of member-states' interests that causes the problem. Political particularism in the EU shows up through the fractionalization of the member-states into groups for lobbying separate interests during the elaboration of general European decisions (see Vinnykova 2015). Some alliances have institutionalized form, e.g. Visegrad Group (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Czech Republic). Others are mainly just political alliances expressing themselves through outlining their particular interests during decision-making. Geopolitical factors associated primarily with the geographical location or a shared experience of integration into the EU also strengthen particularism in decision-making as 'north-south' member-state grouping (see Blavokus and Pagoulatos 2011, Kaeding and Selck 2005). An informal, but also very important factor, causing some existing and potential conflicts, is the orientation of domestic and foreign patronage provided by the 'European core' – France and Germany. Due to the combination of geographical, historical and political reasons,



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Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

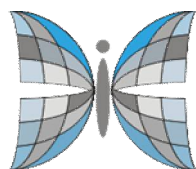
France has more influence in the Mediterranean region, and Germany dominates among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, thus controlling the entire Eastern vector of the EU foreign policy. In terms of network approach, France and Germany are the hubs of resources and political influence that determine patronage agenda in the region. However, this positioning has repeatedly provoked consolidated barriers to strategic decision making.

Yet, challenges from informal alliances are the most serious when political particularism embodied in institutionalized forms through the distribution of positions and preferred seats in the EU institutions. For last decade, an informal alliance of mutual support Germany and Poland clearly affected the allocation of top positions in the EU political Olympus. Polish Erzy Buzek the President of the European Parliament in 14 July 2009 – 17 January 2012 has been preceded by German politician Hans-Gert Pöttering (16 January 2007 – 14 July 2009) and succeeded again by German Martin Schulz (17 January 2012 – 17 January 2017). Former Polish Prime-Minister Donald Tusk took the position of the President of the European Council in 2014 and has been re-elected again on 9 March 2017. In addition, Germany and Poland dominate in the ten of twenty-three the European Parliament Committees. Six committees are led by Parliament members from Germany (Foreign Affairs, International Trade, Budgetary Control, Employment and Social Affairs, Culture and Education, Money laundering, tax avoidance and tax evasion) and four committees are headed by MEPs from Poland (Security and Defense, Industry, Research and Energy, Agriculture and Rural Development, Constitutional Affairs).

Though UK and Italy have 73 seats respectively in the European Parliament, that is more than 20 seats compared to Poland (51), they dominate only in two committees each. France with 74 MEPs in EP runs three committees: Budgets, Transport and Tourism, Fisheries. The rest Committees are headed by representatives from Belgium (Internal Market and Consumer Protection), Bulgaria (Regional Development), the Czech Republic (Legal Affairs) Lithuania (Women's Rights and Gender Equality), Romania (Environment, Public Health and Food Safety) and Sweden (Petitions). Other member-states are not represented in the heading the European Parliament Committees (see official web site of the



V.N. Karazin Kharkiv
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SCS Journal

Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and
Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

European Parliament Committees). The asymmetry in procedure and institutional opportunities for the benefit of several member-states is obvious.

The most vivid particularism in the EU decision-making occurs during budget approval (see Bailer, Mattila, and Schneider 2015). In addition to the fact that every member-state always tries to get as many preferences as possible, there are groups of countries, which have similar views at the expenses. During negotiation on the Financial framework of the EU for 2014-2020 emerged at least two alliances in attitudes toward the issue of 'cutting spending'. 'Friends of Better Spending Non-Paper' (Austria, Germany, Finland, France, Netherlands, Sweden), advocated a more efficient budget allocation. In opposite, 'Friends of Cohesion' (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic and Spain)' expressed concern about excessive cuts (Mendez, Wislade and Bachtler 2012: 10). There were other watersheds in the issue of budgeting that provided different coalitions among member-states (see Uilenreef 2016, Mendez, Wislade and Bachtler 2012: 11-12). But what should be highlighted that due to dominance of particularism in passing the EU budget, such an essential component of functioning of the European Union as expenses on foreign political activity (Global Europe) received only 6,1% of the general European expenses for 7 years (Multinational Financial Framework 2014: 9). It is worth mentioning that cohesive foreign policy with an advanced infrastructure ensuring could help in preventing many problems including migration crisis.

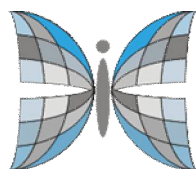
One can give numerous examples of particularism in political decision-making embedded into institutionalized forms and official procedures. Nevertheless, what happens when particularism in decision-making becomes dominant in the creation of political agenda in the whole system of governance?

Overwhelming Particularism: the Case of Ukraine

Modern Ukraine is an example of the consequences of the transformation of public policy-making into a 'systemic



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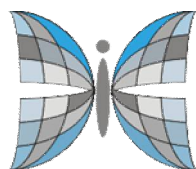
Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

particularism' of decision-making. For many years, Ukrainian political system was functioning according to the principles of clan-oligarchic governing. Policy-making served the interests of several family-based financial and industrial groups, which formed tight networks of decision-making. Particularistic clan-serving interests were embodied in legislative sphere. It decelerated several strategic reforms in economic, legislative and social spheres. Political particularism in decision-making became the only possible *modus vivendi* of governmental process in Ukraine. Subsidizing policy-making to the interests of financial and industrial groups and rent-seeking governmental officials led to total corruption that reached all levels of governing and all spheres of social life, including 'three whales' of state well-being: education, medicine and military service. Particularism was enhanced by localism. Social and cultural specificities of Western and Eastern Ukraine provided a strong basis for dividing electoral fields and lobbying interests of local political elites and business groups included into clan governing networks. Changes to electoral legislative basis contributed to electoral particularism. The election law was changed during almost every electoral cycle, and that was an effective particularistic, but still normative mechanism, by which Ukrainian power elites formed conditions for carrying out elections with guaranteed results.

Localism was strengthened by different external priorities of the inhabitants of Western and Eastern Ukraine; that, respectively, were integration with the EU and Euro-Atlantic structures versus cooperation with Russia and further deepening into Eurasian entities. With rotation of power elites, the priorities of domestic policies and foreign strategies were also changed. For instance, at the time of Leonid Kuchma's presidency the idea of diverse vectors of foreign policy was dominative, meanwhile at the time of Viktor Yushchenko's presidency the priorities in foreign policy turned exclusively to the enhancement of interrelation with the USA and EU. The period of Viktor Yanukovich's presidency can be characterized by clear double standards in foreign policy: an official declaration of integration into the European Union co-existed with actual lobbying of economic interests of ruling clans, primarily from Donetsk region, oriented towards Russia. The influence of particularistic interests of ruling elites from Donetsk ruined the possibility of signing the Agreement on Association



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SCS Journal

Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and
Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

between Ukraine and the EU in 2013, with which at least half of Ukrainian population was connecting its future. Traditionally Luhansk and Donetsk regions showed lower level of support towards European perspective than other regions. As a pattern of selectivity to decision-making one can recognize the official refusal from signing the Association Agreement. The rejection of the fact that the strategic choice for the whole state is determined solely by the interests of Yanukovych family's network eventually led to social unrest and protests, which quickly escalated into armed confrontation between pro-government forces and citizens. The consequences of social and political crisis in Ukraine was annexation of Crimea by Russia, separatism in Luhansk and Donetsk regions ended with a self-declaration of quasi-state entities, and a medium scale military conflict with thousands killed or wounded plus over a million of refugees or 'internally displaced' citizens.

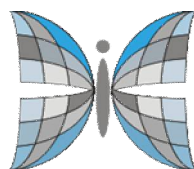
Although the change of government finally let Ukraine to sign the Association Agreement with the EU and to carry out a general course of reforms aimed at Western standards, the whole situation is a clear example of which consequences the particularism in decision-making may have, if it has a long-term dominance, i.e. becoming a fundamental principle of the entire state system. However, despite tragic results, in Ukraine the dominance of particularism in both inner and foreign policy appeared to be the main factor that prevented strengthening of autocratic tendencies up to the level of establishing of authoritarian regime, as it happened in several post-Soviet states: Russia, Belarus, Middle Asia countries. Again as a paradox, such a double negative influence of particularism on the political system saved a weak but still democratic form of governance.

Is it Possible to Overcome Political Particularism?

As mentioned earlier, despite the overall orientation of political decisions towards socially significant problems, it seems hardly possible to take into account the whole spectrum of public interests. Politics is the realm of intersection of interests and searching for compromises. That's why, by contrast to legislative or organizational decisions, political decisions will always possess some element of particularism. Political decisions are always



V.N. Karazin Kharkiv
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SCS Journal

Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

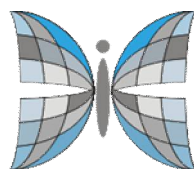
decisions made ad hoc. At the same time, a significant misbalance on the involvement of interest in a favor of a certain party or limited number of participants (political leader, interest group, reference group – local, ethnic, family or religious) results in low level of legitimacy of the decision from the side of other participants of political processes. Is it possible to overcome the disproportionate political influence of political particularism in political decision-making? Researchers pointed out that the basis of dominance of political particularism is low ability of social layers to aggregate their interests (see Ramanna 2015: 165). This thesis can be hardly argued against. Paradoxically, despite growing operational opportunities for establishing communications, various social groups become increasingly invalid to articulate their interests in the area of political representation. Such a tendency towards vanishing of possibilities of standing for collective interests is related to a gradual decrease of working class and the occurrence of numerous spheres of individual employment, happening on the background of a crisis in political representation and ideological affiliation.

Yet political particularism can be defeated or at least reduced to a safe level for the system by ‘the existence of multiple independent branches with veto power over policy initiatives’ (Gaviria et al 2000: 9), as well as by the mechanisms of engagement citizens and NGOs into the process of decision-making through wide range of political representation. For the decision-making at the supranational level, the particularism can be lowered down via more open forms of club governance and wider engaging of non-major actors into the process of formulation of global agenda, developing institutional mechanisms of participation by private and public organizations in international policy-making.

Indeed the state governing system, at least in democratic regimes, has been designed to ensure the interests of all citizens, including a guaranteed right of disaffiliation. There are examples of highly heterogenic system, where political particularism does not act against general interests of society. Such countries show stability in functioning of a political system and economic development, high level of life and social insurance, low level of corruption and high degree of trust towards authorities. In international welfare ratings, they occupy top positions. For instance, Switzerland



V.N. Karazin Kharkiv
National University



SCS Journal

Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and
Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

despite having all prerequisite to localism and scholarly recognized tendency of decline of corporatist model (see Sciarini, Fischer and Traber 2015), still enables to find a balance of interests between various governmental and non-state actors, public preferences and interest groups. In Switzerland, the balancing mechanism is based on regular and compulsory referendums on various issues of public life. In such conditions, regular plebiscitary decisions prevent misbalanced character of decision-making and excessive political particularism. As one can see, political particularism according to its organizational forms and procedure models, on the one hand can help reduce the risk by speeding up decision-making, on the other hand, has ambiguous impact on the consequences. The problem that needs to be addressed at any level of governance – from local to global – is the introduction of mechanisms to prevent excessive growth of particularism in decision-making in terms of its destructive functions.

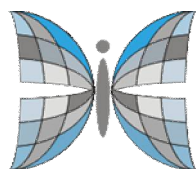
Conclusions

This work summarizes the most common views on forms and practices of particularism in political decision-making and on consequences it may have. In this study I was guided by several assumptions. First, the analysis of scientific literature on the question of particularism allows to find out that a political decision as a mechanism for power implementing has a particularistic nature. It should be stressed that even being exercised in the form of legislative acts in the area of public politics, a political decision always contains a particularistic component. As politics is a sphere of intersection of interests and searching for compromises, the strict following moral norms and rules for the benefit of public well-being seems to be a priori impossible.

The second assumption is that the key category in the analysis of political particularism should be the interest of decision-makers. Dominance of a narrow range of interests in political decision-making is the manifestation of particularism. Therefore, this study considered the forms of decision-making, which limit the number of participants on the inclusion of interest, e.g. 'special interest groups' and clubs. Procedures that enhance the particularistic component in political decision-making, such as logrolling and localism, and a practice of excluding a certain number of issues out



V.N. Karazin Kharkiv
National University



SCS Journal

Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and
Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

of political agenda for the benefit of ruling elite, have been revealed.

The third assumption is the relevance of the network analysis as a methodological approach to studying particularism in political decision-making. Network analysis is the best to determine interests of participants, value-regulatory and socio-cultural context of political decision-making. The level of particularism for any approved decision can be assessed via identification of the hubs in the network, where power resources are concentrated, coupled to the estimation of the degree of the network's openness for the public engagement.

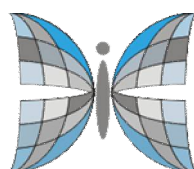
The analysis of theoretical developments and empirical studies showed that particularism has an ambiguous effect on consequences of decisions, and on the entire stability of the political system. It is important to note that despite all declared principles of pluralist democracy, at each level of governance – local or global – there is always a tendency to form interest groups or clubs fractions.

Particularism in political decision-making can carry out a positive function in the case of accelerating the adoption of necessary laws or public reform. Through lobbying their particularistic goals, business groups or professional associations may contribute to the improvement or speeding up modernization of certain sectors. The electoral particularism in decision-making can serve the needs of individual communities, whose interests at the national level are not always sufficiently represented. Sometimes, the political system can benefit from particularism, which prevents the development of the full-scale autocracy.

However, usually particularism creates the asymmetry in the inclusion of interests in favor of a narrow range of politicians or affiliated interest groups that can destructively influence public policies and badly affect the stability of the political system. Permeability of particularism into the public policy contributes to the development of shadow schemes of distributing social goods and strengthens the corruption. The long-term imbalance towards particularistic practices in political decision-making may slow down the economic growth and reduce the well-being of the



V.N. Karazin Kharkiv
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Studies of Changing Societies: Comparative and
Interdisciplinary Focus Vol. 1'2017

society, but also may lead to the destabilization of a political system by provoking social and political crises.

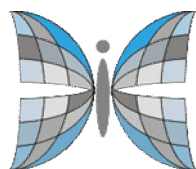
On the example of modern Ukraine one can see that a continual creation of policies in favor of interests of clan networks or oligarchic groups, which can be defined as 'systemic particularism' in policy-making, had destructive consequences for the economic and social situation in the country and for the integrity of public system. Supranational entities, like the EU, also suffer from essential particularism in making political decisions, despite the declared universalism and pluralism of interests as the fundamental principles of their functioning. This can be achieved through switching on / off the 'club mechanisms' of policy-making or via fractionalization into formal or informal alliances for lobbying common interests or getting local benefits from participating in supranational governance. Embodied in institutionalized forms, the excessive particularism in decision-making may penetrate into all spheres of a public control system and then eventually lead to disintegration processes, triggering conflicts. Yet, in spite of certain degree of particularism present in any political decision, it potentially can be balanced with other particularistic-driven actions, from what public interests would benefit. However, it requires the presence of effective institutional and procedure mechanisms for active engaging of citizens and public organizations into generation political agenda at all the levels of governance.

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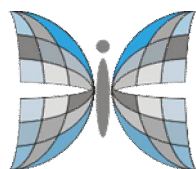
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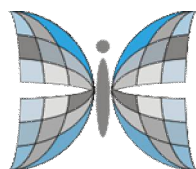
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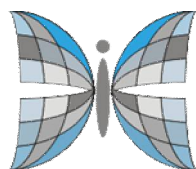
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Conflict of interest statement

The author declare no actual or potential conflict of interest including any financial, personal or other relationships with other people or organizations that could inappropriately influence their work. The author alone is responsible for the content and writing of the paper.