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Public activity in the process of political mobilization

This research reveals aspects of social activity as being central elements of the modern political system, which aims to maximize the potential of its citizens and its collective (group) elements, such as socio-political groups and organizations. This is specified in the formation of the civic position of man, the intensification of self-organization, and the autonomous activity of citizens. Due to this intensification, there have been changes in paradigmatic ideas about the state, such as those surrounding the practical activities and the role of public organizations, the possibility of developing agreed directions of political activity, long-term goals, decisions on socio-political development and the preservation/strengthening of a state's international status.

The aim of this research is to provide a comprehensive political analysis of the phenomenon of social activity and political mobilization, examining its semantic characteristics and highlighting the importance of mobilization as a factor in activating the political participation of citizens.

Achieving this goal involves solving the following tasks:

1. To reveal the forms of public activity and the factors affecting them;
2. To examine the problem of activation and the features of involvement;
3. To identify and substantiate theoretical approaches to understanding the essence of political mobilization and, on this basis, to clarify the nature, forms, and direction of mobilization factors of enhancing the political participation of citizens;
4. To identify the awareness and mobilization potential of civil society;
5. To consider the latest means of network communication and application problems.

This research aims to examine public activity as a form of institutional and extra-institutional involvement of citizens in the political process. An important task of a democratic state is to develop effective policies to promote the development

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of civil society and to support civic activism. The level of civic activity can also be an indicator of the democratization of a political regime.

American analyst Jean-Louis Cohen and sociologist Andrew Arato argued that civil “society means the whole set of forms of existence of independent groups (associations, institutions, groups, lobby groups)” (Cohen, Arato 1999: 32). According to Taylor, the concept of civil society means the existence of public organizations which are independent from the state (in the sense that they are not directly managed by the state) (Guo 1998). Another American researcher Lewis noted that the term civil society is a complex one that indicates system organizations, institutions that are located between the state and public sectors, non-governmental organizations, independent media, trade union organizations, and social movements etc. (Lewis 2001: 45).

Therefore, it can be argued that public activity is based on the behavior patterns of its members. Anna Zalewska and Beata Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz distinguished six types of civic behavior:

- Passive civic behavior includes behavior that expresses the national identity, a sense of belonging to the state or the nation, and respect to national character and patriotism;
- Semi-active civic behavior is expressed in devotion to the state and state institutions, as well as in participation in elections (voting);
- Active social civic behavior is expressed in volunteer work to benefit local society and the surrounding environment, representing the local community and solving local problems;
- Active political civic behavior includes the desire to participate in governance by joining a political party;
- Active, focused on change, civil behavior is manifested in attempts to monitor actions of the government, as well as legal and illegal protests;
- Active personality-oriented civic behavior is aimed at personal development, independence, financial stability, and entrepreneurship (Zalewska, Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz 2011: 71).

Serhei Patrushev distinguishes two types of civic activities:

1. public participation – adaptive public activity, associated with the realization of universal human rights and freedoms and the respective competencies (knowledge, skills behavioral skills, and abilities) which ensure the achievements of individuals, groups, and social purposes in existing institutional conditions;
2. civil action – non-adaptive public activity, connected with the problems of the implementation of universal rights and freedoms, to ensure equality of civil status, overcoming the gap between formal and real rights in everyday life, eliminating barriers in the way of civic participation, and removing restrictions on the exercise of rights in those or other areas (Patrushev 2011: 271–272).

Civic activity is a consequence of the involvement and desire of society to take an active part in all spheres of public life, including politics.

Public activity means the activities of society to address issues of achieving goals and cooperation with other people. Civic activity aims to bring attention to the most important problems of society, utilizing the means of mass media, state bodies

of power, and other institutions of the state, which can influence the agenda and bring to light ways to solve these problems.

The most advanced forms of social activity can include political activity, such as: the struggle for property rights, especially related to non-payment of wages and illegal construction; ecological movements; protection of human rights or more precisely the fight against their violations.

For non-political social activity, the so-called new social movements play a leading role. Classic “grant” public organizations play a much smaller role in this form of social activity – although they are more numerous and better organized, their activities affect large groups of people much less.

The forms of political activity can involve group, mass participation, and individual activity. Thus, an ordinary citizen trying to influence policy can usually be joined to any group, party or movement with political positions close to his own. A member of the party, for example, by being active in the affairs of his organization and election campaigns, can constantly and effectively influence the government.

Therefore, when considering the activist interpretation of civil society we should emphasize its mobilization capacity, under which we mean the aggregate capacity of activation (gathering of forces and means, creating an active state of the people) which cover a network of social mobilization (to inform, educate, search for like-minded people, cooperation, etc.), and socio-psychological factors – the formation of the activist type of human consciousness.

Mobilization can be interpreted as a form of activity that is the result of the influence of political leaders or organizations on individuals, and is based on the suppression or distortion of free and rational political preferences of these individuals and acquired technological aspects.

Mobilization technologies can be defined as purposeful and systematically organized activities for the organization and coordination of social actors. It involves the consolidation of the public to achieve a political goal, carried out mainly through social networks and designed to achieve rapid and maximum results with given resources. This is a mechanism of political control in the course of interactions between the subjects of communication, but also through the use of a set of procedures, operations, and methods which are used to achieve political goals.

Political mobilization can use technologies to obtain the expected results. In modern conditions, it is necessary to develop algorithms and criteria for the use of technologies in the work of authorities and youth associations when trying to politically mobilize the youth.

Political mobilization and social activism are interrelated phenomena and can appear in different forms:

3. Direct management by using force technology, designed to implement a legislative pragmatic function and with oratorical power. These can be orders, threats, laws, instructions, and also mobilization by using indirect forms, such as through advice and recommendations;
4. Discursive forms of persuasion – advertising and PR. Their action is based on economic, financial, institutional and other resources and is realized through access to the media and the attention of a wide audience;

5. A mobilizing effect can be implemented through describing future or possible events, actions, and situations, for example in the form of examples, scripts, programs, and warnings. Rhetorical means often include an argument and a description of an undesirable alternative state of affairs;
6. Different types of content containing extremely dramatic and emotional rhetoric, or the use of original forms of its presentation (van Dijk 2008: 37–38).

Traditionally, socio-political mobilization of the population is performed by political parties and socio-political organizations. They transform the social expectations of a clear program of action into coordinated joint political action with financial and organizational resources.

Mobilization is developed through changes in the following areas:

1. increasing the degree of initiative. In this case, the values of the scale are limited by the complete passivity of the individual (object) and spontaneous activity of the actor (subject);
2. increasing gaps in the space-time continuum between the commencement of political action and the expected outcome, accompanied by energy circulation;
3. transition from adaptation to the creation/construction of one's own subjectivity (Bezruk 2017: 18).

The aim of mobilization is to impose the goals of the movement on the personal and private interests of its potential supporters. Thus, it is necessary to use incentives that encourage people to participate in the movement, marked by the balance of private interests, costs, and risks to induce action.

Political mobilization is usually based on an appeal to the familiar, the known values, and the old circle of their supporters.

In this context, Oleh Yanytskyi's observations on the types of mobilization and the states of both individuals and the community as a whole is interesting. The author identifies four such types, which at the same time are a kind of genesis of the mobilization process.

The first type is the personal or group mobilization status as a social norm. Internal mobilization supports the achievement of socially significant results and solves the set tasks. Thus, autonomous mobilization is a necessary prerequisite for the development of the individual and the accumulation of social and cultural potential.

The second type is mobilizing knowledge, which is produced by the feeling of being in a zone of natural or social risk. In these circumstances, individual or group mobilization of intellectual forces and means can happen.

The third type is closely related to the second. It involves readiness for mobilization, when not only a single individual, but the community to which he belongs, begins to realize that disaster is inevitable. In this case, there is a partial or complete mobilization of all available resources, which is expressed in readiness for action.

The fourth type is the highest form of mobilizing action when the disaster occurs and requires a set of efforts to eliminate its consequences. In this case, it is not just the people directly affected by the disaster who can be mobilized but also those who have been morally broken, who are motivated to voluntarily participate in the liquidation of the consequences of the fact of their existence (Yanytskyi 2012: 5).

Mobilization is opposed to the autonomous actions of individuals, which are understood as the results of rationality and not caused by any external factors.

Currently, one can observe a significant mobilization potential of the Internet in the process of political mobilization to revitalize society.

In particular, social media has been used to spread protests in many cities around the world, including Kyiv, Moscow, Istanbul, Ankara, Cairo, Tripoli, Athens, Madrid, New York, Los Angeles, and Hong Kong. Social media platforms contributed to:

1. the exchange of information, necessary for coordinating actions of protest, such as news regarding transport strikes, the presence of police, violence, health care, and legal support;
2. sharing emotional and motivational content in support or opposition of protests, including messages on anger, social identity, the effectiveness of the group action, deprivation, considerations about fairness, justice, and ideological themes;
3. identification of differences in structural characteristics. As functions of political ideology, they are associated with informational influence and the success or failure of protests.

Despite the well-known fact that democratic governance presupposes the active participation of citizens in public affairs, this participation is not the most important form of activity for the majority of people. Therefore, civil society has a sense of active participation in political life, even when the citizen does not participate in the political process, but believes in their ability to influence it when needed. However, we can talk about the problem of the formation of so-called 'slacktivism' in our society.

Slacktivism means action in support of one or more form of social problem which can be characterized by involving little time, effort or commitment, or action that provides greater personal satisfaction than its social impact („Slacktivism" 2021).

This form of political activity has a rather small level of influence on real politics. Internet activity can replace classical forms of activity because of providing the individual with satisfaction in the fact that his political position has been expressed on the Internet.

For example, we can consider the experiment of the Danish psychologist A. Kolding-Jorgensen who created a Facebook group to protest against the demolition of one of the historic fountains of Copenhagen which, in reality, was not in danger. During the month more than 27,000 people joined the group protesting the demolition. However, no real actions were carried out by members of the group. Moreover, no one even expressed any intention to verify the authenticity of the information provided to the group (Tam 2018: 180).

One form of network slacktivism is so-called 'clicktivism' that includes signing online petitions, copying and using status updates or messages from social networks, or changing personal data or avatars on social networks for the expression of some civic position. One consequence of involving citizens in this form of online activity is the lack of any real responsibility for the depersonalized citizen.

Hashtag activism is another form of slacktivism, and involves attaching labels for certain situations and spreading 'hashtags' on social networks. This form of online activity should lead to a broader public debate and promote change. However, it can be questioned as to whether hashtag activism will lead to any real change, because users may have expressed their concerns, but they have not taken specific actions to change the situation.

Conclusion

Public activity is an integral part of civil society, which is itself built on a set of non-governmental institutions, relationships, and interests that help protect, defend and realize the interests and needs of the individual.

The formation of a person's political consciousness and its mobilization for active political action occurs under the influence of existing institutions that form the basis of formal and informal regulation of various spheres of human activity. At the institutional level, political mobilization is possible through the technologies used by political parties in the electoral process; civil society organizations, social movements; mass media, and Internet networks, which are transformed into the latest forms of horizontal and vertical communication. This also includes public authorities and local governments to ensure the participation of citizens in government, as well as formal governance processes. Mobilization is a factor affecting people's minds and feelings, their ways of thinking and political motivation, their ability to gain practical political experience, and obtaining skills of systemic political activity, especially among young people.

Internet resources provide an effective means of mobilizing the population to participate in political life. The Internet has enormous potential for disseminating political information. It is fair to say that the Internet can provide greater relative mobilizing growth, which is in line with the Internet model as a means of reducing financial and institutional barriers to successful mobilization.

However, the use of the Internet does not always entail any actions that can be traditionally understood as active political participation, so it is fair to point to the need for verification in the adoption of important issues. The mobilization of efforts, on the other hand, is a phenomenon with a relatively clear theoretical and empirical connection to important forms of political participation. The role of the Internet in political mobilization is a promising place to begin studying the effects of the Internet on political participation, equality, and the spread of political influence.

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Abstract

The article details the leading views on public activity and its behavior due to mobilization influence. The specifics of this impact on social groups and individuals are considered. The degree of public participation in the political arena, the features of its orientation, procedural organization, and factors that directly affect the growth of mobilization activity in society are considered. The role of the Internet in the formation and development of communication and mobilization opportunities is emphasized. Passivity becomes a problem because of the substitution of actual actions by ineffective public activity.

Keywords: active social behavior, autonomous participation, civil society, political mobilization, public participation, slacktivism, social activity