POLITICAL REPRESENTATION:
HISTORICAL SOURCES AND INSTITUTIONAL DETERMINANTS

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Summary

The article identifies historical sources for studying the phenomenon of political representation and its institutional determinants. The idea of political representation has been most developed in modern European philosophical and political thought. It is directly related to the formation of the institution of parliamentarism. The social contract theory became the basis of parliamentarism and representative democracy. It is the parliament that has long determined the institutional determinants of political representation, including parliamentary election patterns and political parties. In modern conditions, the institutions of mass media and public intellectuals also play an important role for political representation and representative democracy. Thanks to the Internet, the scale of citizens' participation in political communication, and therefore their political participation, has significantly expanded. The mass media institute creates conditions not only for informing citizens, but also for their interactive participation in the decision-making process of the bureaucracy. The role of the mass media institute during electoral campaigns is also ever grows. In the process of mediatization of politics, the institutional determinants of political representation are transformed – from opposition activities to political parties and parliaments. Mass media shape public opinion, determine the agenda, influence the interpretation of the public good and evaluate the activities of political actors.

Key words: democracy, political institutions, democratization, political representation, bureaucracy, political parties, mass media institute.

1. Introduction

Modern democracies function most effectively in a representative form. The idea of political representation related to the theory of social contract and equal rights of citizens was implemented in the European countries of the modern era in the form of parliament institutions and political parties. Now representative democracy is experiencing another institutional crisis related to the development of mass media, the Internet and communication technologies for influencing public opinion (political advertising, public relations). The representation is being fragmented. Political parties are turning into media projects with a blurred ideological doctrine. As A. V. Kroytor and D. V. Yakovlev noted, "In the process of parliamentary elections of 2019,

ideology was not a determining factor. The "Servant of the People" party, which won by a wide margin and received the majority of votes in parliament, pays little attention to ideology. Internal party discussions regarding ideological doctrine have continued so far. On the contrary, parliamentary old-timers, who have a relatively comprehensive ideological doctrine, received minimal electoral support. This is an alarming signal that will lead to a decrease in attention to ideologies in the next elections. The features of party programs and their ideological components are determined. It is proved that political parties of Ukraine are the universal type parties of blurred ideological orientation" *(Kroytor & Yakovlev, 2020).* The dysfunctionality of modern party systems as forms of political representation has been noted *(Vinnykova, 2018).* Parliaments are no longer a place of political rational debates between representatives of large social groups (classes), the initiative therein is also intercepted by the mass media. The role of public intellectuals in the process of communicative development of political representation through rational argumentation is being increased. The focus in the political representation research activities is also being shifted from the institutions of parliament and parties to the mass media and public intellectuals. At the same time, it is necessary to reinterpret the intellectual sources and historical interpretations of the essence of political representation in a new context. This determines the **relevance of the topic on studying** sources and institutional determinants of political representation.

The objective of the article is to identify historical sources and institutional determinants of political representation. This objective requires the following **research-and-development tasks** to be completed**:**

- outlining the range of historical sources of political representation**;**

- exploration of ideas that have become the basis of representative democracy;

- considering the current institutional transformations of political representation, namely, the growing role of the mass media institution.

Research methodology. The historical method was used to determine historical sources. The range of intellectual sources of the political representation theory has been outlined. These are the works of N. Machiavelli, T. Hobbes, J.-J. Rousseau, S. Montesquieu, J. Locke, J. S. Mill, et al. Using the institutional method, the institutional determinants of the political representation system and the mediatization of political representation in modern democracies are determined.

To achieve the objective of the article, the author followed the **logic of presenting the material** – from historical sources of political representation to modern institutional transformations caused by the growing role of mass media in ensuring political representation.

2. Historical sources of the political representation idea

Democratic political regimes need to rely on public opinion, and their legitimacy is based on the support of the majority of citizens. One of the main demands for democracy is to ensure political representation. The process of forming a modern system of political representation in democratic countries has lasted for hundreds of years, and it continues to this day. Institutions such as parliament and political parties have become the backbone of the political representation system. Another institution of a democratic society is the institution of elections, designed to ensure real political representation of citizens' interests in the activities of public authorities.

When reading T. Deshko, we find the definition of political representation as an institution: "the will of the people is expressed through the formation of a representative body on an elective basis, which is responsible for making the most important decisions" *(Deshko, 2004).*

The very first attempts to establish effective political communication between citizens and the authorities in the form of political representation date back to the era of antiquity. In ancient Greek civilization, the reforms of Solon and Pericles were aimed at introducing elements of representative democracy – improving the institution of elections, the institution of citizenship, the formation of collegial representative authorities, and so on. This stage in the development of representative democracy is called proto-parliamentary. As Ya.Pechenka points out, "it is rather erroneous to believe that before the emergence of parliaments in medieval Europe, Western civilization did not know the attempts and ideas of representing interests at the national level. The fundamentals of the practice in representing interests can be found in antiquity. In ancient Athens, over the period of IX–IV centuries, the evolution of the state system was characterized by a gradual weakening of the People's Assembly role in the direction of increasing the positions of representative institutions… The same applies to the state and political development in the history of Ancient Rome, especially in the Republican period of its history. The Roman Senate, being one of the most influential bodies of the state, was created as a representative institution first of the interests of the Rome's urban aristocracy, and later of the provincial one" *(Pechenka, 2013)*. Although this is a rather controversial issue and political representation is always associated with the new time. In the Middle Ages theological doctrine prevailed, according to which the church, while representing the Divine Will in the "Earthly City" (Augustine the Blessed), restricts the power of the monarch. The Renaissance brought political representation back to the "earthly dimension" (power represents the class, the city, the state, etc.). Thanks to N. Machiavelli, who emphasized the autonomy of politics from the church, the logic of political representation no longer needed religious justification.

Parliamentary representation in Europe is directly related to the formation of a class society, when each class receives its own "quota" in parliament.

Let us agree over the idea, "representation during feudalism was exclusively class-based. Only in England did it have a dual character – both class and territorial. During the times of feudalism, class-representative institutions were first partially, and later completely formed on an elective basis. At the same time, the right to vote extended only to privileged segments of the population. It was not a popular representation in its modern sense. On the one hand, such institutions were formed by a narrow, rather small electoral corps, on the other hand, even their internal activities were determined by class division" *(Pechenka, 2013)*.

Further on, the deputy, as a representative of a certain class, receives a clear order (instruction) from the voters regarding his/her own actions, and the institution of recalling deputies who do not fulfill the order is formed. Parliaments, which served as an instrument of political struggle between monarchs and feudal lords, are gradually turning into representatives of the will of the bourgeoisie – the powerful European middle class. The emergence and dissemination of the ideas of democracy and market economy in the political and legal field of European countries was based on the concepts of popular sovereignty, social contract, separation of powers and, most importantly, natural human rights.

The works of T. Hobbes, J. Locke, J.-J. Rousseau, J. S. Mill, which should be attributed to the intellectual sources of the political representation idea, substantiate the role of Parliament as an institution of supreme power, which controls the government on behalf of the people. The will of people, in a condition of democracy, is expressed directly during elections and, indirectly, through the activities of deputies who are delegated the authority to make political decisions.

According to P. Rozanvallon, "The democratic project has historically been assimilated with the ideal of identification between citizens and those who rule them. Accordingly, everything revolved around the problem of the quality of representative communication… While

many liberal or conservative theorists have contrasted this desire with the more restrictive perspective of power as an ability legitimized through elections, citizens have consistently viewed precisely in terms of identification what is hidden behind the expression of "representative democracy" *(Rozanvallon, 2009)*. In Ukraine, the dependence of deputies is noticeable not so much on voters as on the party, or rather, on the party leadership and faction leaders. That is why the deputy's relations with the voters (at least in terms of recalling the deputy) and with the party leadership and faction need to be clarified and detailed. *(Bedrak, 2014 a)*.

The development of the political representation theory is conditioned by discussions on the essence of individual and collective representation and its content – individual electoral districts, parties, nations.

3. Mediatization of political representation

From the very beginning of implementing the political representation idea, the leading role was assigned to communication. Horizontal communication between citizens ensured the formation of social interests in the "melting pot" of democracy, and vertical communication contributed to the articulation of social interests, communicating them to the institutions of power. For N. Bedrak, political representation is one of the forms of communication between the government and society. She notes as follows: "In order to ensure political representation, political actors direct their activities to the aggregation of public interests, their articulation. On the other hand, members of the public (activists, mass media, civil society institutions) present the interests and demands of public groups in the plane of public policy, broadcast them to decision-making centers through political communications" *(Bedrak, 2014 b)*.

The main contradictions of political representation are associated with the communicative dimension. Among them, there are contradictions between the selfish interests of the representative and the interests of the community that he/she represents in power; his/her freedom of activity, his / her own ideas about justice, the common good and the need to follow the "orders" of voters.

It should also be noted that there are long discussions about the scale of the representative mandate: "who exactly does the political actor represent – all the voters of a particular district, the most active of them, residents of the oblast (region), the country as a whole, the interests of the party, lobbying groups or pressure groups? These problems of political representation are solved in communicative interaction between representatives and society with the participation of "information intermediaries" – mass media" *(Bedrak, 2014 b)*.

The mediatization of political representation is due to the growing influence of mass media on political reality. Let us agree on the following: "The media discourse is the most widespread. It not only broadcasts other discourses (primarily political), but also forms the agenda through using its own criteria for selecting and presenting information. The discursive formation of media is determined, in particular, by the rating and format criteria. Rating is measured by the number of views, i.e. media coverage. The format means that the communication strategy is built in such a way as to reach the largest audience and improve the rating. Consequently, rational political debates are often excluded from the media space. Instead, the discourse is formed by entertainment talk shows" *(Yakovlev, 2020)*. As a result of the mediatization of politics, there is a threat of irrationalization of political representation, and in our opinion, public intellectuals are able to prevent this threat. More and more researchers are turning to this problem, and D. Yakovlev notes: "The rationalization of political communication is designed to mitigate the negative impact of the mediatization of politics, and the institutionalization of

public intellectuals as an intellectual elite is intended to counteract the strengthening of the mediacracy as "servants of oligarchs". Public intellectuals in Ukraine, as part of the intellectual elite of society, refusing to be identified with the "post-Soviet intelligence", offer their own rational visions of democratization and modernization of the Ukrainian society. At the same time, looking for their own place in the public discourse from "image makers", "political technologists", "creative class" and another version of "servants" of the "oligarchic-lumpen" alliance to the intellectual elite. In political communication, public intellectuals apply the technology of open letters, statements, and appeals. By appealing to the public, public intellectuals perform an important function of rationalizing political communication" *(Yakovlev, 2022)*.

Mass media in modern conditions perform the functions of political representation that were inherent in parliaments. In addition to the legislative one, even here the media is able to form an appropriate public opinion, which will eventually force parliamentarians to adopt a particular law. For example, we are talking about such functions as aggregation of public interests (the development of social networks and messengers has only improved this function of the media), communication (the media form a public space for exchanging political information and for the political dialogue), the function of legitimation (media is one of the most effective institutions for criticism and control over the actions of public authorities and the opposition). The media perform a monitoring function and the function of determining the political course through the formation of the public agenda for the society and government.

Because of the mediatization of political representation, well–established democratic procedures and institutions are being changed – from elections to parties and parliaments. The danger of mediatization is especially sensed in transitional countries (such as Ukraine), which stopped at the "electoral democracy" station. Due to the fragmentation of social interests and public groups, it depends on the media which of the interests will be represented on the public agenda, and therefore in public policy. In Ukraine, the influence of oligarchic groups on the mass media and, accordingly, on the public agenda, is noticeable on the political discourse in general.

4. Conclusions

The political representation idea, which originated in the era of antiquity, received a powerful impetus in the European philosophical and political thought of modern times from the concepts of social contract, natural human rights, separation of powers, etc. That were particularly those ideological sources that formed the political representation system, and the parliament determined the institutional determinants of political representation and representative democracy. Political representation, which for centuries has been associated with the institutions of parliament and political parties, is undergoing significant transformation in modern conditions under the influence of the growing role of mass media. It is fair to say that mass media perform important functions in the modern system of representative democracy: the function of aggregation of public interests, communicative function, legitimation, monitoring function and the function of forming the public agenda of society and power. In the process of mediatization of politics, the institutional determinants of political representation are transformed – from opposition activities to political parties and parliaments.

The mass media institute creates conditions aimed at not only informing citizens, but also for their interactive participation in the decision-making process of the bureaucracy. The role of the mass media institute during electoral campaigns is also constantly growing. Mass media shape public opinion, determine the agenda, influence the interpretation of the public good and evaluate the activities of political actors.

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