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**Региональный политический процесс:  
особенности, структура и влияние  
политических элит**

**Regional political process: features,  
structure and influence of political elites**

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**Аннотация.** В представленной статье анализируются особенности региональных политических процессов. Показан процесс трансформационных издержек в политическом процессе. Показано влияние уровня и качества политических элит на процесс принятия решений. Рассмотрен процесс формирования элит, включающий рекрутирование, имитирующего институционализацию. Показана роль социальных институтов для вхождения во власть. Подвергнуты анализу дифференциационные методы и пути рекрутации политических элит, обозначены принципы элит (формальные и неформальные).

**Ключевые слова:** политические элиты, региональный политический процесс, рекрутирование элит, консолидация, социальные институты, селекция элит

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**Abstract.** The article analyzes the features of regional political processes. The process of transformation costs in the political process is shown. The influence of the level and quality of political elites on the decision-making process is shown. The process of elite formation, including recruitment, imitating institutionalization, is considered. The role of social institutions for entering into power is shown. The differentiation methods and ways of recruiting political elites are exposed, the principles of elites (formal and informal) are outlined.

**Key words:** political elites, regional political process, elite recruitment, consolidation, social institutions, elite selection

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The regional political process is diverse in its components. Its content and dynamism are affected by the institutionalization of power structures, the functioning of power structures, and the activities of the ruling elite. In the Russian regions, during the period of transformation costs, the process itself has various costs and deformations. In recent years, during the NWO period, the unification of regional diversity is manifested in the regions, but the difference continues to manifest itself in the regional level of political culture, in the degree of media bias, in the behavioral motives of regional elites, etc. The Russian Federation has developed its own scientific schools for studying the regional political process in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Krasnodar, Pyatigorsk, Astrakhan: Kryshantovskaya O.V., Golutvina O.V., Mokhov V.P., Varutmyan A.A., Usmanov R.Kh., Karabuschenko P.L., Agaponov A.P. and others [1,2,3,4,5,6].

The level and quality of regional political elites greatly influences the regional political process.

The study of the formation factors of political elites is of particular interest for political science, since the model of their formation directly affects the level of social representativeness, qualitative composition, professional competence and type of activity of the regional elite.

The composition, factors and principles of the formation of regional political elites, as well as relations between the federal and regional elites, evolved as powers were distributed between different levels of government - local, regional and federal. The complex process of developing relations between the center and the regions over the past 15 years has led to the fact that the principles of relations between the capital and the regions have changed: the positions of the regions have strengthened, they have become a serious political force, as they received new powers [7, p.145].

The process of elite formation includes recruitment, intra-elite consolidation and mobility, institutionalization and legitimization of elites [8].

Political recruitment is the involvement of individuals and groups in active political activity. Its variation is elite recruiting. The most important parameters of routing are its mechanisms and channels [9]. In modern elitology, mechanisms are considered as the principles of promotion to the elite. They are influenced by the type of social system and its patterns of stratification.

Recruitment mechanisms are divided into traditional and competitive. Traditionalist mechanisms include the following: consanguinity, community, religious and ethnic affiliation, knowledge of the official language, property and class qualifications, personal loyalty to the group, protectionism. Competitive mechanisms are, for example, the nature of education, profession and skill level, personal qualities of the candidate in terms of suitability for the position [10].

“The channels of recruitment (the formation of elites) are the ways to move to the top of the political hierarchy. They can also be formal and informal. Official recruitment channels include, for example, appointments from above, elections, winning a competition for a position; unofficial ones - devotion to the leader, belonging to the “team”, etc.” [11, p.30].

In different countries, the process of forming an elite has its own specifics, but at the same time there are universal channels for the formation of elites, such as: political parties and socio-political organizations, the bureaucracy, confessional organizations, trade unions, economic institutions, the business sector, the army and law enforcement agencies, the system education, culture and sports [12, p.210].

An important mechanism for entering power, achieving power are social institutions:

- political parties;
- bureaucracy;
- the church and near-church religious organizations (this recruiting channel is typical for Islamic countries and countries with a strong influence of Catholicism, however, in the modern political process in Russia, the influence of religious institutions is increasing, and the church is becoming one of the important political actors);
- unions;
- economic institutions (this recruitment channel is typical for Russia);
- the army (in modern Russia there is a tendency to increase the number of former military men in power structures at the regional level);
- education system (perestroika period in Russia).

Currently, in the regions of Russia, there is a mutual permeability of recruitment channels. So, businessmen often get into power, and retired politicians, on the contrary, go into business.

N.P. Gritsenko identifies several ways to get into the political elite [13, p.31]:

1. Bureaucratic way. This path is typical for the administrative elite. Before entering the elite, a person usually works in the executive branch.

2. Socio-political way. This path is characteristic of the party elite. Prior to entering the elite, candidates are engaged in scientific or social activities.

3. Economic path. Prior to entering the elite, the candidate is engaged in activities in the field of economics.

A.V. Ponedelkov and A.M. Starostin note that the main channels for recruiting political elites are social organizations, which turned out to be the most “persistent” in the course of breaking the Soviet socio-political structures. These include: bureaucracy, ethnic organizations, new economic corporations, former power structures and corporations, as well as organized crime structures. You can take any section of political elites (highest, regional, local), and we will see that representatives of these social structures undoubtedly prevail everywhere.

In some Russian regions, the nomenklatura principle of recruiting the elite dominates; the candidate enters the elite through his personal connections. In this case, the method of recruiting elites depends only on the personal sympathies of the leader, i.e. based on patron-client relationships [14, p. 57].

In regions with a high level of urbanization and cultural and educational activities (the Volga region, the Urals, megacities), competitive and public recruitment of elites prevails [15, p. 262].

As we can see, at present the channels for recruiting the political elite are becoming more diverse, the nomenklatura and competitive models of recruiting are coming into balance.

Modern researchers have identified several principles for the formation and functioning of the political elite:

1. The principle of anthropological and social determination of elites. Factors taken into account are the political inertia of a society in need of an active ruling elite; priority of administrative management functions over control ones; professionalization of labor, etc. [ 16, p.57]

2. The principle of elite circulation formulated by V. Pareto [17]. In accordance with this principle, the elite is periodically updated. New, developing elites are pushing out the old ones, which are losing their positions of power.

3. The principle of oligarchization of elites, based on the concept of R. Michels [18, p.3-15]. According to this principle, in any society, without exception, an oligarchic elite is formed.

4. The principle of civilizational originality of elites, which establishes that the nature of the formation, development and activities of elites depends on specific national and civilizational characteristics [19, p. 58].

All the principles of elite selection that exist within the political space of the region can be conditionally divided into two large groups: official (formal) and unofficial (informal).

Official principles are fixed in legal documents, first of all, in the electoral legislation and laws that fix the status of government bodies and political institutions. The generally recognized official principles are: the principle of equal access to elite groups and professional competence. Applicants for certain positions are required to comply with a number of political and formal conditions and qualifications.

Currently, the following requirements apply to such applicants at the regional level [20, p.67]: “Russian citizenship; possession of political rights; age limit, which establishes the minimum age limit for participation in elections. The usual age limit for public service is 60, but in many cases this can be extended; condition of professional activity, i.e. an official cannot be engaged in other paid activities, except for teaching, scientific and other creative activities; availability of a diploma of higher education for candidates applying for a public position; work experience for candidates applying for public office; the principle of competitive recruitment for certain positions” [21, p. 108].

Requirements for the professionalism and intellectual level of the political elite in modern Russia are clearly defined. The strengthening of the requirements for political efficiency is due to the fact that in our country the idea of a transitional market transformation has been promoted for a long time, and therefore society began to demand the results of this transformation [22, p. 113].

An increase in the managerial potential of the political elite became possible, for example, through the inclusion of sub-elite strata (the middle class) in it and the transition to an entrepreneurial recruiting system, i.e. representatives of different social groups could get into the elite on the basis of healthy competition and their personal and professional qualities.

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, it should be noted that the regional political process requires a thorough comprehensive consideration of the development of public federalism is largely

determined by the structure of the regional political space, where all political subjects actively participate, among which a special role belongs to political elites. The regional political process from the point of view of our study is the environment for the manifestation of the regional elite of their subjective qualities. The participation of regional political elites in the political process consists of a set of actions through which the elites influence the adoption of strategic political decisions.

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