

REVIEW

of the doctoral dissertation of Mr. Vladislav Myroniuk entitled “Consolidation of independent Ukrainian State”.

Relevance and justification of the chosen topic. The significance of this topic is fundamental, as it is due to the unresolved centuries-old problem of the formation of Ukrainian national identity, based on which the Ukrainian nation is being created. The complexity and controversy of this process explains the lack of a consolidated national idea, which makes the choice of this topic quite relevant. Repeated attempts to form a Ukrainian national identity to consolidate the Ukrainian nation were met with resistance and destruction by the Russian Empire and Russian society, which viewed the Ukrainian national process as a mortal threat to the Russian state and national identity.

This identity conflict made the creation of Ukrainian statehood much more difficult and sometimes impossible. Thus, the problem of state consolidation in Ukraine has been and remains a fundamental problem not only for its historical past, but also for its present and future. Based on this state of consolidation of the Ukrainian state, the author highlights the key problem, which is that, in his opinion, Ukraine has not formed a consolidated political identity. Therefore, he set out to identify the determinants of a common political identity that could serve as a contribution to the consolidation of Ukrainian citizens and the overall consolidation of Ukrainian statehood.

In order to achieve this goal, the author identified and successfully solved a number of main research tasks, which actually led to its novelty. The main problem that the author faced in this context was to find out how state structures can enhance the transformation of civic political identity for greater consolidation of the state. The author is convinced that the consolidation of citizens' political identity will help maintain a stable democratic state, which should be protected from democratic pathology. It also helps to qualify and develop the ability of leaders to position themselves in the public sphere. It also promotes an understanding of causal decision-making and a deep understanding of how individuals affect security and states (p.7 diss.).

To confirm this author's concept, the author set himself the following tasks: to study the state consolidation process; to determine the role of citizens, authorities and territory in the state consolidation of Ukraine; and to find out the existing political myths and their impact on the state consolidation process.

The scientific novelty of the results obtained lies in the comprehensive coverage of the political culture of the Ukrainian nation, the identification of the real impact of



existing political myths on civil and state consolidation, and the determination of the effectiveness of ethnic policy on the process of forming the Ukrainian political nation.

The degree of validity of scientific positions, conclusions, and recommendations. Vladyslav Myroniuk 's dissertation is distinguished by the validity of its scientific positions and recommendations. Thus, the dissertation contains several scientific provisions that are properly substantiated and make a significant contribution to the study of the chosen topic. As the main working hypothesis, which has been properly formulated, tested (verified) and confirmed, the author has suggested that "the complexity of the perception of political identity by the citizens of Ukraine has led to a low level of consolidation of the Ukrainian state" (p. 7 diss), which can also be considered an element of novelty.

The author chose constructivist and structuralist theories as the main research methodology (p.6 diss), which allowed him to: first, investigate how the process of state consolidation was implemented, and second, what turned out to be the main challenge that ultimately led to the failure of state consolidation. The author's model is based on the understanding of "consolidation" not only as a strong and entrenched democracy in society, but also as a strong state position in relation to the three state components: population, territory and government. Therefore, the choice of theoretical perspective is based on the main social aspects, which include the political culture of Ukrainian citizens and their interaction with each other, as well as the administrative and legal structures of the state.

The constructivist approach allowed us to test which social constructs can create or divide political identity. The structuralist theory provided the author with an opportunity to conduct an objective analysis of the interaction between individuals within the construct, as well as to delve into how this interaction contributes to the modification of these constructs in everyday life, which has a reciprocal effect.

Integrating the components of these theories made it possible to test their application in the context of the state civilization process. Such theoretical combinations have provided a perspective for analyzing this process, which leads to the strengthening or weakening of statehood, especially if we take into account the constitution of the components of the state.

The author's successful approach is to analyze the peculiarities of consolidation in democratic states in comparison with non-democratic states. In his study, the author paid great attention to the role of the national idea as a necessary prerequisite for the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation (pp. 65-68 diss.). The structure of state consolidation is sufficiently fully disclosed, among the elements of which the main attention is paid to the civilizational dimension, which includes such features as social conditions, dependence on ethno-cultural characteristics and others (p.25 diss.). Based on a detailed study of historical, cultural, and political factors, the author quite rightly



concludes that "the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation is far from complete" (p. 68 diss.) and explains the objective reasons for this complex process.

The second chapter of the dissertation is characterized by a clear and logical structure of presentation of the research results, which presents a comparative analysis of the main features of the ethno-cultural and political nations, on the basis of which a detailed description of Ukrainian culture and political culture of Ukrainian people is given, which is supported by the use of a wide range of statistical and demographic indicators. In the third chapter of the dissertation, the author shows the advantages of a unitary state in terms of territorial consolidation, but at the same time notes the imbalance of regional consolidation (pp. 107-109 diss.).

The dissertation quite clearly identifies the impact of such destructive factors of growing regional differences and the emergence of Donbas separatism as the struggle of financial and oligarchic clans and the large-scale activities of Russian special services in Ukraine (p.114 diss.), and also quite accurately identifies the causes of the emergence of Donbas separatism and the strengthening of regional Donbas identity. The tools and measures for overcoming regional differences and strengthening state consolidation presented by the author in this chapter are of considerable scientific and practical value. This is especially true for the decentralization reform in Ukraine.

The most significant scientific contribution of the author to the study of the chosen problem can be considered the characterization of the nature of the peculiarities of the ruling elite of Ukraine, set forth in the fourth chapter of the dissertation. Based on the definition of scientifically based criteria and characteristics of the elite, V. Myroniuk gives a fairly accurate diagnosis of the absence of such features in the Ukrainian political elite (p.145 diss.). Therefore, the author's use of the term "ruling elite" instead of "national elite" or "political elite" seems quite reasonable. Based on the historical approach and a wide range of statistical data, the work shows the peculiarities and problems of the process of formation of the ruling elite of Ukraine during the thirty years of Ukraine's existence as an independent state, the key characteristic of which was regional and geopolitical differences.

Each of the main chapters concludes with rather in-depth conclusions that reflect the main scientific provisions and answer the tasks set. However, in the final conclusion of the thesis, there is a certain imbalance between scientific and theoretical conclusions and practical recommendations in favor of the latter.

The practical significance of the results obtained is due to the relevance of the study and its scientific novelty. The main provisions submitted for defense may contribute to further comprehensive study of the selected issues. But most importantly, the practical recommendations presented by the author should be applied by the Ukrainian authorities and civil society to consolidate the independent Ukrainian state in its national, political and democratic dimensions, which should be the main priority of



state policy in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. These recommendations are why this thesis is of the greatest practical value.

Discussion points and remarks: Firstly, the author's statement, which he puts forward as an auxiliary hypothesis that "the ability of political authorities in Ukraine to regulate the level of civilizational consolidation was conditioned more by subjective factors (such as political will and personal interests) than by objective factors" (p.7 diss.) seems rather debatable. The downplaying of the objective factor in this context contradicts the objectivity of the historical process in which the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation and Ukrainian statehood took place and is taking place. The complexity of this process, the central geopolitical position of Ukraine, the absence of an established national elite, economic and social conditions, foreign policy confrontation and the international situation are all objective processes that have had a decisive impact on the formation of political power in Ukraine. The key among them were the transition from an authoritarian to a democratic political regime, from a stateless and colonial situation to state independence, from an administrative to a market economy. All of this led to the post-communist and post-Soviet transit, which resulted in the creation of an oligarchic - kleptocratic system with a distorted market economy, where the state performed the function of rent, when state institutions are rented to achieve super-profits by the "ruling elite" and financial and economic clans. Hence, the state itself was called a "rentier state", where corruption becomes a mechanism of state governance, and political parties are transformed into financial and political holdings to gain and use power in these corrupt interests.

Obviously, in this situation, the author lacked the addition of a neorealist approach to the constructivist and structuralist approach. It is no coincidence that the "analysis of state consolidation" and the verification of this auxiliary hypothesis turned out to be a real methodological challenge, as the author himself acknowledges (p. 7 diss.).

Second, it would have been desirable to clearly define the subject and object of the study. Instead, the author confined himself to indicating the subject field of research for each chapter of the dissertation. Thirdly, according to the author himself (p. 8 diss.), the work lacks not only field research, but also sociological research in general, which would be extremely necessary to measure the consolidation of Ukrainian society and the state, which is especially important in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, on which the resistance of the Ukrainian nation and its ability to resist large-scale Russian aggression depend. The sociological analysis presented in this study is based only on the parliamentary elections in Ukraine and does not address other dimensions of the consolidation of Ukrainian society and government in Ukraine.

Fourthly, when considering national consolidation, the author limits himself to the features of cultural identity, relying on the theory of constructivism. In addition, such an important component of consolidation as "national interest" is overlooked. In the context of the study of state consolidation, it would be worth paying attention to such



a modern phenomenon as the "deep state", which is quite relevant in contemporary scientific discourse and reflects new facets of this complex process.

Sixth. The analysis of the impact of the war on state consolidation in Ukraine, which is presented in the fifth chapter of the thesis, is mainly focused on the study of destructive, negative trends of this impact. At the same time, the constructive impact of the war on the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation and the ability of state institutions and society to resilience and survive is overlooked. The war is blurring cultural barriers and levelling regional differences between the East and West of Ukraine.

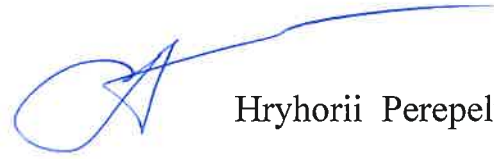
The general conclusion is that the dissertation work performed by Vladyslav Myroniuk is an independent and complete scientific research, characterized by scientific originality, and its results are reliable and substantiated. The value of this work lies in the fact that it is based on a solid scientific and theoretical framework, based on which specific practical recommendations are proposed.

Based on the above, it can be stated that Vladyslav Myroniuk 's dissertation on "Consolidation of the Independent Ukrainian State" meets all the necessary requirements, and its author deserves to be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the relevant field.


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