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## ELITES' INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION STUDIES WITH THE USE OF CONTENT-ANALYSIS

*In the article methodological value, advantages and drawbacks of content-analysis in the sphere of interstate political elites communication studies were shown; the method was reviewed in historical perspective; examples of modern content-analytical studies of international communication were given. The author present procedure and results of his original study of public communication between Ukrainian and Russian political elites.*

**Keywords:** content-analysis, politics, international politics, communication, interstate communication, political elite, interstate relations, Ukraine, Russia.

УДК 323.396:329.15:303.1] (477)

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## CPSU AND KOMSOMOL ACTIVISTS WITHIN THE CURRENT UKRAINIAN POLITICAL ELITE: ANALYSIS OF BIOGRAPHIES AND CONNECTIONS <sup>1</sup>

*In this paper, social networks perspective is applied to the analysis of biographies of the ex-Komsomol and ex-Party activists who are among of the Ukrainian political elite nowadays.*

*There are two main questions to be answered:*

*(i) whether these actors who are members of Ukrainian political elite have common biographical experience they can rely on;*

*(ii) whether their network positions make them influential, or are they so-called 'central players' within their subnetwork and overall network of political elite.*

**Keywords:** political elite, social network analysis, Ukraine

In the late USSR, CPSU and Komsomol were those structures whose active members gained privileges in the access to various resources [1]. Membership in these institutions enabled selected groups of people to multiply their social capital that assisted in transformation of accumulated economic resources into political power and vice versa.

Researchers who explored elites in the states in transition over the last decades primarily focused on relations inside the 'ruling class', including elite circulation and recruitment [9], governing and non-governing elites struggling between each other [14], elite consensus [8]. And since the concept of 'power elite' is examined as power circles or interlocks in

elitist perspective [13; 19], connections are the important component for successful social activity. This statement is explored by researchers of 'embeddedness' in economic sociology, 'interlocking directorates' in corporate community [5], and political affiliation of business [17].

The role of informal ties within power authorities in new EU member-states including Czech Republic, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria is described by Grødeland who argues that "informality is ... a leftover from communism" and that 'blat' practices remain to be widely spread in the region even after the collapse of the USSR [7, p. 217–252]. During post-Soviet transformations, connections are

<sup>1</sup> Дане дослідження мережі колишніх комсомольських та партійних активістів, які є членами сьогоденної політичної еліти України, також ініціювало матеріали для доповіді, представленої на Міжнародній конференції «Двадцять років потому» («Twenty Years Later») у Празі 6–7 жовтня 2009 року.

also mentioned together with 'blat' as the 'everyday currency' grounded in both personal informal relationships and in access to various resources [10]. As mentioned by Miller and colleagues in the study of corruption in post-communist space, people in former Soviet republics as well as in CEE states tend to appeal to connections with government institutions when solving different issues [12, p. 68–78]. This kind of informality in 'doing things' is argued to be a reaction to institutional instability or attempt to survive in transitioning society during rapid social, political and economic changes.

Consequently, Granovetter's statement about the embeddedness of economic action with social structure [6, p. 481–510] together with interpersonal trust as one of the basics of social capital [18] and through social network perspective [11, p. 3–31], lead to the following question: whether informal structures remained as networks of elite members in post-communist societies or these practices changed with political and economic transformations? Grødeland argues that elite members in CEE countries tend to prefer informal solutions rather than legal or institutional scenario. The possible explanation of this fact might be that during a period of transition when old norms are eliminated but new ones are still to be formulated, actors need to reach consensus regarding the interpretation of norms. Interpersonal trust then becomes the basic condition for effective interaction – at least until formal and informal rules become institutionalized.

#### **Methodology: social network analysis perspective**

Andersen and Jack [2, p. 193–210] provide an example of the role of social networks in fostering entrepreneurial activity, emphasizing the significance of social relations as a "resource for social action" in business. The authors argue that interpersonal connections play a key role in entrepreneurial success. They also stress that a particular level of interpersonal trust between economic agents impacts the frequency of transactions due to the reduction of transaction costs associated with trusted parties. Accumulated social capital therefore can stimulate profitable socio-economic interaction.

Kryshchanovskaya provides example of how interpersonal and institutional ties were used for business success and entrepreneurial activity during the 'Komsomol economy' period in the late Soviet Union [1]. She analyses post-Soviet business-elite formation and concludes that these groups developed not least because of the embeddedness of the Komsomol in the apparatus of the Communist Party as political elite in the USSR. After state authorities and the Party legitimized the right of Komsomol-related organizations to run commercial activities and to deal with cash, a rapid accumulation of mon-

ey and then property by active and entrepreneurial Komsomol leaders occurred. Many of these individuals later became so called post-Soviet 'oligarchs' [15, p. 99–123]. Thus, interconnections of different elite members and organizations might result in benefits to the actors of economic arena. A good example can be found in the research of Ukrainian banks' affiliation with political authorities and its impact on banks outcomes [4, p. 537–557].

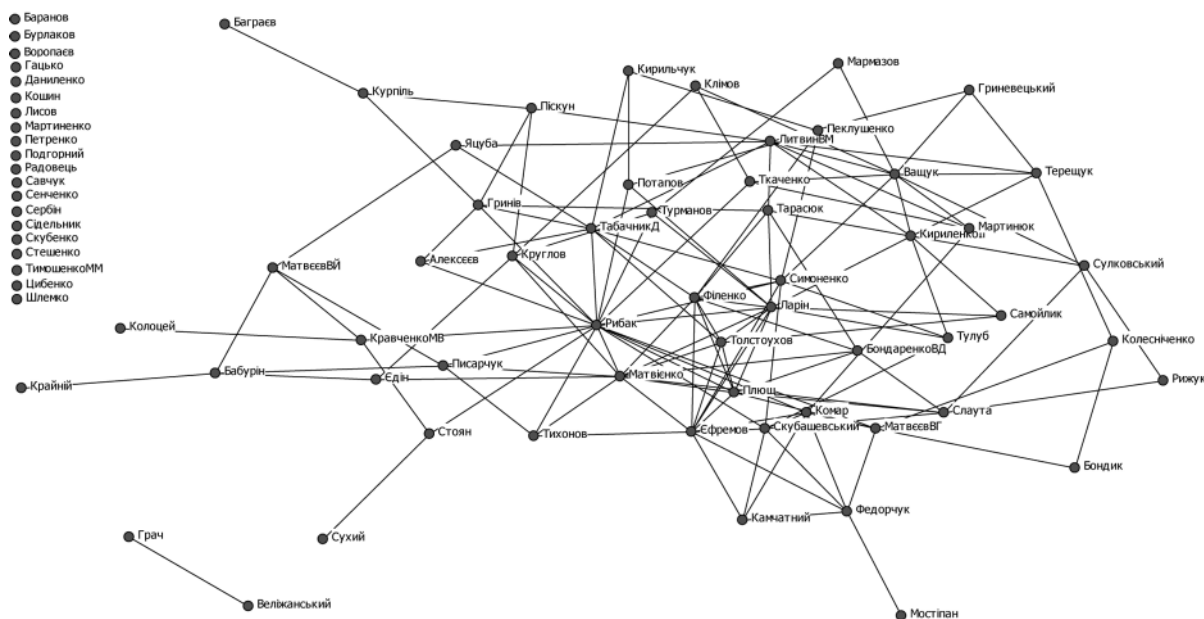
In addition to the assumption of existence of elite networks and interpersonal ties, pictures of these connections are to be drawn as well. Sociologists of post-communist states have recently stated to apply network approach and generate maps of political elite networks, including specific studies of the 'old-regime' networks within the current elite [3]. This paper contains an attempt to answer the question about former CPSU and Komsomol activists within the political elite in Ukraine and their relational patterns.

As it was mentioned below, one should investigate 'elite networks' in order to understand the functionality of elites influence on state decision-making. Thus, social network analysis (SNA) approach to the analysis of political elites was applied due to several reasons. It leads to the depiction of status-roles interaction between actors who occupy governing positions, and allows for the inclusion of the aspect of influence on decision-making into the analysis [16]. In addition, the SNA approach is closely connected with communication processes and resource exchange, including investigations of how social capital is accumulated. Finally, the network perspective broadens analyses of inter-individual connections by focusing on interpersonal ties, but at the same time not limited to exact groups.

#### **Research Results**

This paper contains the analysis of network structures taking the evidences of elite-member horizontal mobility: change of governing position or combination of positions, when the result is in highly centralized information flows and power interlocks between corporations, banks, and state institutions. The starting point was the analysis of elite members' biographies with identification of possible network ties based on common biographical experiences (e.g. individuals who graduated the same university/ same faculty during overlapping periods of time; those who were or still are co-owners of the same company; those who were members of the same civic organization, etc.). The complete data includes 492 biographies of political elite members who now are the deputies of the Ukrainian Parliament, Ministers of the Cabinet of Ministers, and high-level functionaries within the Presidential Sec-

Chart 1. Network of Former CPU and Komsomol Activists as Members of Ukrainian Political Elite \*



All types of ties (state, economic, civic, educational, and kinship) are visualized. Visualization was conducted in NetDraw application, SpringEmbedding layout with Gower scaling applied.

retariat. Their official ‘life-stories’ were collected from the web-pages of state institutions, from periodicals, handbooks such as “Who is who in Ukraine”, and from the press interviews with them. Five types of ties were collected into a database, including political, business, civic, kinship, and educational ties basing on the principal of the overlapping periods of being affiliated with the same institution, enterprise, or organization, or being relatives.

Two main questions were to be answered in result:

- (i) whether these actors who are members of Ukrainian political elite have common biographical experience they can rely on and
- (ii) whether their network positions make them influential, or are they so-called ‘central players’ within the network.

To answer these research questions, the subset of 76 actors was extracted (17 % of complete political elite network). It contains only those actors who have experience of being involved in Komsomol or CPU activities before 1991. All their biographies were examined taking into account positions of officials in the local or national Komsomol and Communist organizations if they were ‘employed’ there for at least two years as secretaries of all levels, deputy secretaries, managers of different branches or instructors/advisers.

It is worth mentioning that biographical patterns of these elite members differ between each other, because some of them were building party career for decades, others were more focused on scientific or economic spheres, so Komsomol and CPU organi-

zations might be perceived as contemporary places for them. It can be assumed that if one was active in the Party or Komsomol organization, he or she probably should be well-connected with other colleagues in order to coordinate their actions and then could gain a lot of benefits during late ‘80ies.

The current age of these elite members varies from 45 to 73 years old, although a half of the sample is between 50-60 years old. Regarding faction affiliation, one third of actors (N=23) are members of “Yulia Tymoshenko’s Block” (BYuT), one third (N=21) are in the “Party of Regions” (PR). And another 15 continued their activities being in the “Communists Party of Ukraine” (CPU). Only 3 actors are females.

UCINET software package was used for creating network data and for the further analysis<sup>1</sup>. Network data was 1-mode and multirelational where common affiliation with one institution/enterprise was represented as a tie between two actors.

In order to define actors with the highest possible level of influence, centrality measures were calculated. The analysis of Degree and Betweenness centrality measures assists in identifying both highly-connected actors and ‘cutpoints’ that connect different subgraphs and thus might appear as ‘gate-keepers’ of information flows [16].

Tables 1 and 2 contain rankings of TOP10 with actors who possess the highest degree and betweenness centrality values considering those ties they have with their ‘colleagues’ with CPU and Komsomol.

<sup>1</sup> Borgatti, Everett and Freeman (2002) UCINET 6 for Windows. Harvard: Analytic Technologies

mol past. In comparison, Degree and Betweenness centrality for the same actors in TOP10 rankings were calculated on complete aggregated network (N=492) considering all types of ties in order to compare network positions of 'old-regime colleagues' and other elite members.

**Table 1. Degree Centrality values of the former Komsomol and CPU activists within the current Ukrainian political elite network<sup>1</sup>**

Name	Age	Faction	Degree Centrality within subset of former CPU and Komsomol activists	Degree Centrality within complete network with all types of ties
Rybak	63	PR	18	57
Larin	47	PR	12	34
Matvienko	56	NUNS	12	34
Yefremov	55	PR	11	27
Vashchuk	62	Lytv	10	39
Filenko	54	BYuT	10	28
LytvynVM	53	Lytv	9	38
Plyushch	68	NUNS	9	22
TabachnykD	46	PR	9	32
Symonenko	57	CPU	8	25

**Table 2. Betweenness Centrality values of the former Komsomol and CPU activists within the current Ukrainian political elite network**

Name	Age	Faction	Betweenness Centrality within subset of former CPU and Komsomol activists	Betweenness Centrality within complete network with all types of ties
Rybak	63	PR	490,2	2736,4
Matvienko	56	NUNS	123,3	1095,8
Larin	47	PR	106,3	919,6
LytvynVM	53	Lytv	105,0	812,6
Vashchuk	62	Lytv	103,8	1118,2
TabachnykD	46	PR	99,8	955,3
MatveevVG	66	CPU	94,3	322,5
Hryniv	48	BYuT	89,9	1712,8
Pysarchuk	54	PR	76,8	141,0
Symonenko	57	CPU	73,5	672,8

Some of the former CPU and Komsomol activists appear to be 'central' from both degree and betweenness perspectives (i.e. *Rybak*, *Vashchuk*, *Matvienko*, *Larin*, *LytvynVM*, *Symonenko*), resulting in a higher level of influence as on their direct connections as on subgroups they join. It is important to explore whether the older elite members who have longer experience of being in politics become more central due to their more extended connections, or

<sup>1</sup> The network was analysed as a valued data, thus the non-normalized values were used.

the level of influence is observed due to accumulation of the other forms of capital. Nevertheless, if to compare centrality values calculated on the subset of former CPU and Komsomol activists versus complete network, the level of influence of some 'central' actors is higher in the subset. i.e. *LytvynVM* and *TabachnykD* are more well-connected if to look at the complete network unlike *Rybak* who has high degree centrality either among former or among current colleagues. The picture is alike with betweenness centrality scores: *Hryniv* and *Vashchuk* are much more 'central' if to count their ties with all elite members, not only former Komsomol or CPU activists.

To conclude, the following assumption can be checked, specifically through in-depth interviews: former members of the Komsomol and CPU organizations might diversify their connections after 1991 in order to remain or even improve their elite positions. For the preliminary visual check of the statement above, the spacial structures of ego-networks of two central actors are shown on the Charts 2 and 3, for *Rybak* (PR) and *Vashchuk* (Lytv). The first one is the most central in term of degree and betweenness, but the second one has higher betweenness value which makes her position as a 'cutpoint' joining two subgroups.

## Conclusion

Former Komsomol and Communist Party activists continued to be in the power elite, and their share is 17 % if to take into account Parliamentary deputies, Ministers and Presidential Secretariat. Due to common biographical experiences they are well-connected; some of them possess high centrality values even in the complete network of almost 500 elite members and considering five possible types of connections.

To conclude, the former Komsomol and CPU activists are still in power 20 years after the USSR collapse. However, it is still a question on the level of real influence of this network. The centrality scores have shown rather possible influence that might arise basing on the common experience in the past, but with passing years things could change radically and those actors who graduated from the High Party School (the higher educational institution guided by the CPU) can be more distant now than they were before 1991. Thus, the following in-depth interviews with elite members are to be conducted in order to verify the network and to add new information about joint legislative initiative opportunities and coalition building. This objective is up-to-date due to the next Presidential elections taking place in the beginning of 2010, following by highly probable pre-term Parliamentary elections.

Chart 2. Ego-network of Rybak

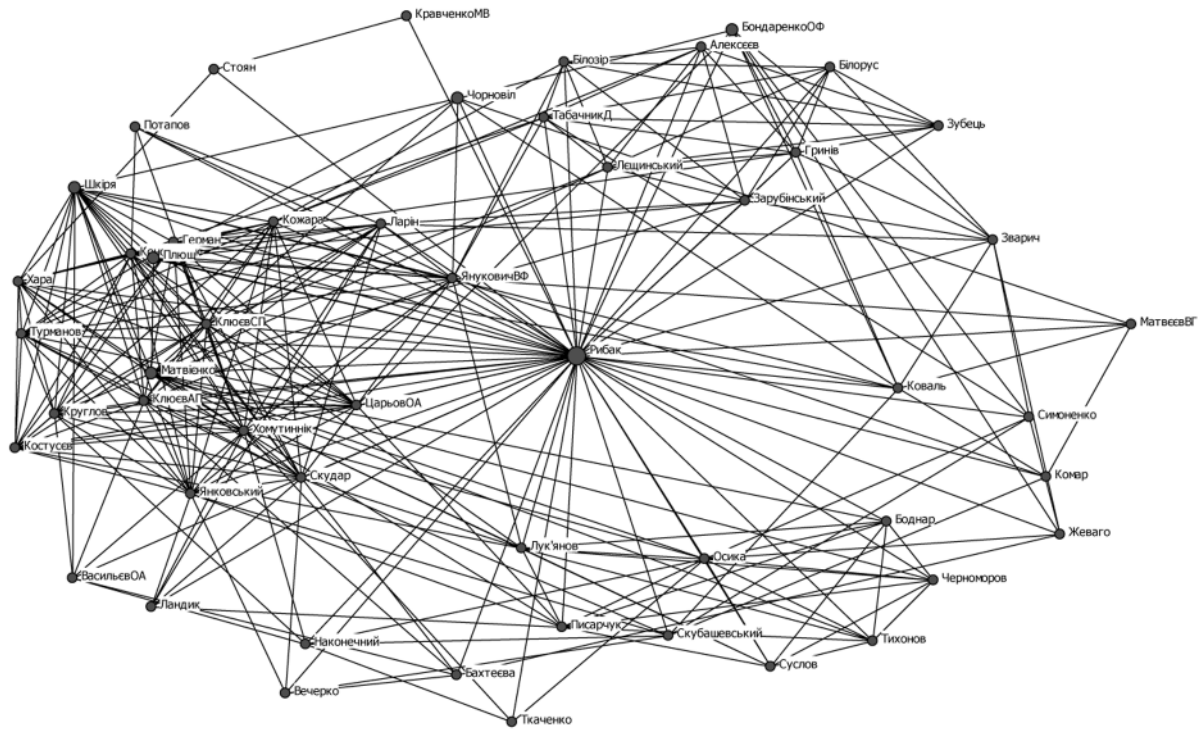
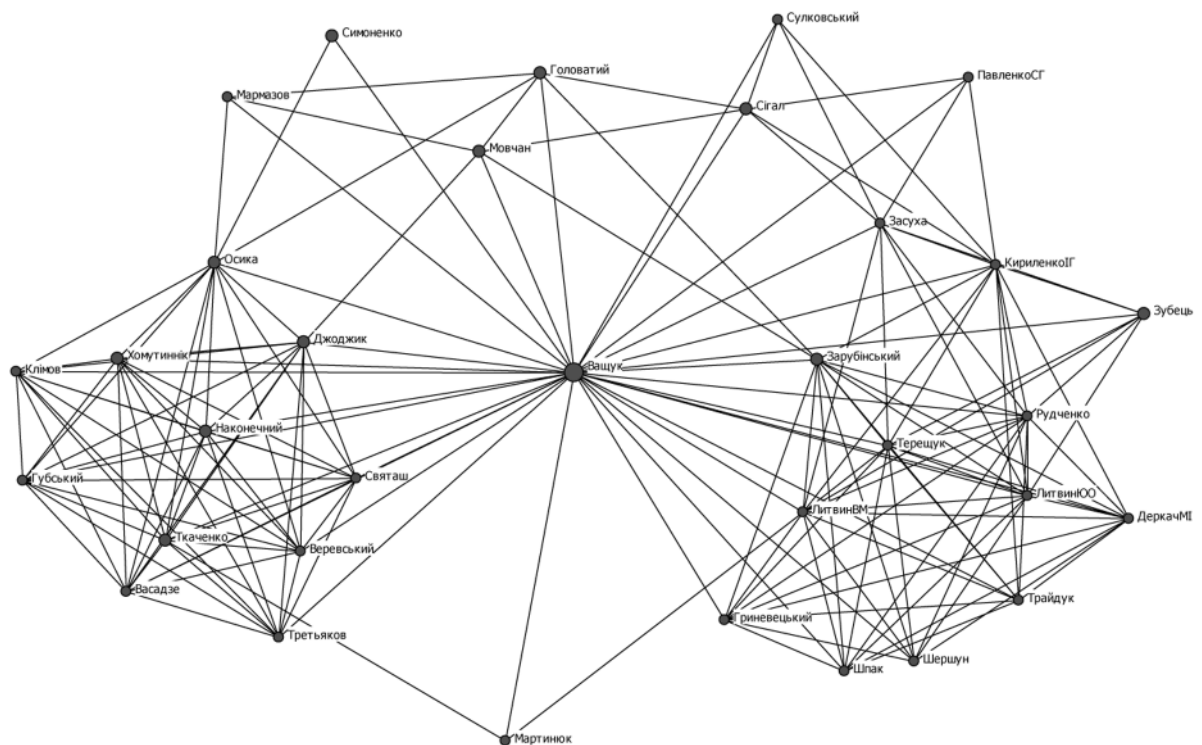


Chart 3. Ego-network of Vashchuk



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*Костюченко Т.*

## **АКТИВНІ ДІЯЧІ КПУ ТА КОМСОМОЛУ СЕРЕД СУЧАСНОЇ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ПОЛІТИЧНОЇ ЕЛІТИ: АНАЛІЗ БІОГРАФІЙ ТА ЗВ'ЯЗКІВ**

*У даній статті наведено результати застосування аналізу соціальних мереж як підходу у дослідженні зв'язків між представниками української політичної еліти, котрі до 1991 року активно займалися комсомольською та/або партійною діяльністю у регіональних чи центральних організаціях. Результати дослідження дають відповідь на два основних питання:*

*(i) чи ці актори пов'язані через співпадіння у біографіях і мають спільний досвід у різних сферах діяльності, до якого можуть апелювати зараз;*

*(ii) чи їхні позиції у мережі є впливовими (у термінах показників центральності) всередині їхньої мережі та у загальній мережі політичної еліти.*

**Ключові слова:** політична еліта, аналіз соціальних мереж, Україна