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**Corruption of the Politicized University:
Lessons from the Orange Revolution in Ukraine***

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This paper argues that corruption is used on a systematic basis as a mechanism of direct and indirect administrative control from the state level down to local authorities and administrations of public and private institutions. Informal approval of corrupt activities in exchange for loyalty and compliance with the regime is commonplace in many countries. This paper explains how corrupt regimes maximize their position in terms of loyalty and compliance by using the example of the 2004 presidential elections in Ukraine. It presents mechanisms by which political bureaucracies politicize universities in order to influence students and channel their electoral power during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine.

Key words: corruption, elections, politicization, students, university, Ukraine

JEL Codes: I23, I28, P36, P37

Introduction

Ukraine has a strategic location between Europe and Asia, remains geopolitically indecisive, squeezed between the West and Russia. This geopolitical position predetermines high interest in the country. Surprisingly, little was said about this nation since it gained independence after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. Strategic developments in the region, including the interests of the European Union, NATO,¹ and Russia, warrant more focus on Ukraine in the near future. The battle for Ukraine so far has been a very bleak. More attention to the country's political development may be expected over the next few decades. Political life in Ukraine remains terra incognita, indeed. Ukrainian authorities constantly face serious challenges. The ruling regime is not monolithic, but consists of competing groups. These groups' future political prospects depend heavily on the popular support they can receive from the public.

Recent political events in Ukraine that have become known as the Orange Revolution and its aftermath raise questions about their moving forces. Answering these questions presents an opportunity to learn from the events. This paper addresses the role of universities in political changes in Ukraine, and more specifically, the mechanisms by which universities are turned into active political players and the grounds on which these mechanisms operate.

On the one hand, students are involved heavily in political actions and the voting process. On the other hand, higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ukraine are notoriously corrupt. The question to be researched is how these two might be linked? This paper presents the concept of corruption as a mechanism of administrative control and shows how it may be applied to HEIs in order to politicize them and channel student power to benefit certain candidates in the presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine. It uses comparisons with other former Soviet republics to better highlight the issue and sustain the line of argumentation.

Political challenges

The current political crisis in Ukraine is not a new phenomenon for the country but falls in line with several previous political crises, including the Orange Revolution of 2004, and the period of confrontation of 2006.² The President's attempt to dismiss a malfunctioning Parliament manifests deeper contradictions between the existing political structure and the real balance of political powers. These include the issues of Unitarian state versus federalism and presidential versus parliamentary forms of government. Yushchenko dismissed Verhovna Rada³ due to its inability to form a majority coalition a year after the elections and function properly. He warned parliamentarians about such a step before. The President also issued an order to start preparation for new parliamentary elections.⁴

The balance of powers changes constantly. If during the Orange revolution Yushchenko managed to ensure support of the large part of students, then Yanukovich would appear to be the favorite. According to the results of the poll, conducted by the Kiev International Institute of Sociology in October of 2008, in the 2009 presidential elections, the leader of opposition, Victor Yanukovich, would receive 44.2 percent of the votes, while the current President, Victor Yushchenko, only 15.9 percent.⁵

The opposition continues to accuse President Yushchenko in an attempt to usurp political power in a way similar to Pinochet's coup.⁶ The President insists that the elections will happen according to his verdict, but the postponement of the elections is unavoidable.⁷ The former President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, states that, "In Ukraine, the governmental authorities are such that it is not clear who they belong to."⁸ Kuchma hints at the state of near anarchy in Ukraine's politics. Different branches of the state, including executive, legislative, and judiciary,

pull the country in different directions. Moreover, even within branches of the government, contradictions are rife. The Minister of the Interior, Lutsenko, calls his subordinates to interact with other law enforcement agencies only through the leadership of the Ministry.⁹ The lack of real authority results in the lack of subordination. Some ministers refuse to leave their positions, ignoring the Presidential orders.¹⁰ By doing this, they appear to be in solidarity with the Members of Verhovna Rada, who also refuse to accept the Presidential order of dismissal. Legal loopholes and discontent between the executive and judicial branches create a sense of anarchy. Judges cancel the President's order for new parliamentary elections and the President in response fires judges, closes courts, and restructures Kiev's administrative court system.¹¹

All of the political players use external forces to settle their political scores. They appeal to the public with facts and arguments that are of interest to the majority. The issues at stake include playing the language card, as is the case with Russian language status in the interpretation of Yanukovich, and attracting credit from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as is the case with Premier Timoshenko.¹² Timoshenko points to a possible conditionality and connection between the IMF loan and the recall of the new elections.¹³ No appeals are made, however, to the domestic constituents. All of the players readily change positions depending on their personal interests, the balance of power, and the current political situation.¹⁴

Students become one of the major political forces, if not the major one. There are 2,709,000 students in Ukraine, of which 2,309,000 study in 749 public HEIs, and the other 400,000 in 202 private HEIs.¹⁵ HEIs include universities, academies, colleges, community colleges, and vocational schools. The number of students per 10,000 inhabitants is one of the largest in Europe and amounts to 578. The total number of faculty members is 192,157, and guaranteeing a faculty/student ratio of 1 to 14. This is especially true for Kiev, the major political

battlefield and the student city. Students not only equate to votes, but they also form active groups of support or opposition capable of taking to the streets. They can also be mobilized quickly relative to other groups of the population. This was proven during the Orange Revolution, when political parties relied heavily on students. This was reliance not as much on the students' votes as on students' street actions. Since political instability become more and more of a normal condition in Ukraine's political life, the competing forces will eventually turn to their constituents, first of all students. In order to attract students' votes and active support, the ruling regime may use different tactics, including informal means of control. The corruption of Ukraine's universities may be used by the regime in order to secure such a support.

The concept of corruption and coercion

The word corrupt comes from Latin *corruptus* and means rotten; depraved, wicked; influenced by bribery.¹⁶ The definition of corruption in education includes the abuse of authority for material gain and is broadly defined as the abuse or misuse of public office or public trust for personal or private gain.¹⁷ The terms abuse and misuse, public office and public trust, personal and private gain, are often used interchangeably. Heyneman (2004) adds to this definition by arguing the following: "But because education is an important public good, its professional standards include more than just material goods; hence the definition of education corruption includes the abuse of authority for personal as well as material gain."¹⁸ Petrov and Temple (2004) apply a narrow definition of corruption that regards corruption as such only if it implies illegality.¹⁹ Osipian (2007) defines corruption in higher education as a system of informal relations established to regulate unsanctioned access to material and nonmaterial assets through abuse of the office of public or corporate trust.²⁰

Corruption in Ukraine is at a high and is not much different from other former Soviet republics. The 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), released by Transparency International, places Ukraine 134 out of 180 countries surveyed, showing the slide down from 118 in 2007.²¹ A poll developed by the Ukrainian Institute for Social Research and conducted in 2003 showed that 78 percent of respondents believed that all or most of the government officials have accepted bribes. Moreover, a good portion of Ukrainians are inclined to accept bribery as a normal part of everyday life.²² The number of reported incidents in Ukraine rose two-and-a-half-fold between 1990 and 1998 to 2,449, and these incidents led to 1,641 convictions.²³ Numerous surveys in the Russian Federation reveal the same situation with corruption.²⁴ More than half of all Russians had to pay a bribe at least once in their lives, while 19 percent do it quite often. Most often bribes are paid for medical services (51 percent of the respondents), followed by traffic violations (31 percent of the respondents) and educational services (20 percent of the respondents).²⁵

Corruption is traditionally considered an indication of a weak state. Zhdanov (2001) presents the following view on the relation of state to corruption: “Corruption and government are eternal antagonists. Corruption, as a form of social corrosion, ‘eats away’ governmental structures, while governmental authority in turn strives to destroy corruption.”²⁶ We argue the opposite based on Darden’s (2002) definition of the state “as a compulsory rule-making organization that is sustained through the extraction of wealth from within its territorial domain.”²⁷ Darden (2001, 2002) describes the vulnerability of assets acquired by illegal means and the mechanism by which the government officials subordinate their lower-level counterparts: “Hence, the threat of exposing and enforcing his wrongdoing constitutes an enormously powerful sanction and places lower-level officials in an especially vulnerable position. The severity of this sanction allows the state leadership to practice a systematic form of blackmail,

with payment exacted not in cash but in obedience.”²⁸ Darden (2008) further develops the idea of corruption and coercion as a mechanism of state repression and domination and considers graft to be an informal state institution.²⁹ The author uses cross-country data and examples to sustain this argument and focuses on political events in Ukraine. This approach to the governance was highlighted earlier by Andreski (1966, 1968)³⁰ and Banfield (1975).³¹

Stability of the country does not necessarily mean a low level of corruption but rather a well-adjusted mechanism of functioning among all levels of authority, even if these authorities are corrupt. Shlapentokh (2003) asserts that “When life in a country is relatively stable, corruption, like some cancers, destroys a society from the inside without producing symptoms or even pain. This is the case in Putin’s Russia, where the political arena is calm in comparison to Yeltsin’s turbulent years in office.”³² He says that widespread corruption creates a parallel, semi-feudal chain of command that competes with the official hierarchy. In fact, this semi-feudal structure is not parallel to the state hierarchy, but essential for the system. It is informal, but it does not compete with the official hierarchy. This structure is developed and maintained by the system of formal state institutions. Waite and Allen (2003) support this view of the self-sustainability of corrupt regimes: “Corrupt systems are difficult, if not impossible, to challenge and change from within, especially since the power operant in such systems is self-protective and self-perpetuating.”³³ To summarize, we offer a quote from the Russian President, Vladimir Putin’s, address to the Governors at the meeting of Gossovet³⁴: “I am perfectly aware of the fact that I am guilty of everything, even if I am not guilty. This is fully applicable to all of those who are present in this auditorium today. You are also guilty, even if you do not know what I am talking about.”³⁵

The concept of corruption and coercion is based on the idea that the state deliberately underpays its public employees, forces them to get involved in corruption in order to supplement their income, then collects evidence of wrongdoing or so-called *kompromat*,³⁶ and coerces them into compliance.³⁷ Karklins (2005) addresses the issue of the usage of *kompromat* for political blackmail and coercion and writes, “A politically damaging practice is to misuse investigative and judicial power to intimidate citizens and political rivals.”³⁸ The same mechanism of the state-based corruption and coercion in Ukraine is described by Zhdanov, who writes about the selective application of the criminal law and other repressive legal measures to government officials and politicians and characterizes them as “The use of juridical reprisals against political opponents by means of charging them with corruption (or other illegal acts) when there are no legal grounds to do so.”³⁹ Often the laws or the normative acts are composed post-ante in order to prosecute citizens for an activity that took place at the time when it was not illegal. Grey areas in the changing legislation are also used by the regime. Legal craftsmanship is one of the essential features of the government that uses its authority for the purpose of selective justice. The political rhetoric is impressive: corrupt politicians claim that they are prosecuted because they are in opposition to the corrupt regime while the regime states that it fights corrupt politicians.

It seems irrational to stay outside of the mainstream of economic transition, including corruption, in an environment where everyone demonstrates rent-seeking behavior. The government forces college faculty to seek means of survival and encourages them to accept bribes by turning a blind eye on corrupt practices in universities. Not only the state intrudes into the university life, but university communities influence the state as well. Unlike in many developed countries, where universities lobby legislative and executive branches of the

government, in Ukraine this influence takes somewhat different forms. It is done on a personal rather than an institutional level. Educators join local and central state administrations, businesses linked to the state officials, and acquire police and military ranks through teaching in these academies. The adverse reaction of educators is supported by the numerous cases of professors going into power, occupying different administrative or semi-administrative positions. They occupy offices in different state and local committees and administrations, and obtain military ranks for teaching part-time in military and police academies. This trend is well-observed in the society. The concept of corruption and coercion applied to higher education demonstrates how state interests influence unhealthy institutional environments and then use this influence to advance their political agenda.

State-university relations

In order to follow how mechanism of corruption and coercion may be applied to higher education, we will first consider the relations of universities and the state in an historical perspective. It should be said that at the time when the first institutions of higher learning emerged in Middle Ages Europe, there were no nation-states and there were no social institutions according to our contemporary understanding. Medieval universities did not play a significant role in social life and the state did not pay much attention to politicization of these institutions. Hyde (1972) warns against a false dichotomy between the worlds of learning and of politics, based on an underestimation of the social links between them saying, “This illusion is easier to sustain in considering periods when both states and institutions of learning had well-defined constitutions. By looking first at a time when both worlds were still in a state of flux, the reader

may be reminded that neither academics nor politicians work in isolation, but both are rooted in society – in this case, the cramped, violent, and competitive society of medieval Bologna.”⁴⁰

University autonomy in the Middle Ages was something natural, a part of the guild structure of society, and not a result of the institution’s struggle for self-governance and financial independence. The autonomy of the medieval university was a reflection of the organic nature of the social life in the Middle Ages. University autonomy was quite natural and not contested by the state, town community, or other forces. However, university development and its growing social influence urged leaders of the feudal states to consider universities as players on the political arena. The states started to develop relationships with the universities and universities had to establish certain nets of external relations. Universities had acquired not only charters, granted by the states, but also Papal privileges. Thelin (1982) offers a very precise description of how university external relations were built at that time: “The major structural gains for a university lie in its history of external relations – acquisition of privileges, exemptions, and a charter.”⁴¹

State leaders and the church used universities for their political purposes and exerted control over the curriculum. By granting special status to the university, the state leader received a tool for influencing the town where this university was located. It granted university students and professorate certain immunities and privileges and consequently expected loyalty in exchange. In its turn, the Catholic Church was influencing states by using universities as one of the tools of internal pressure. From this it may be concluded that universities were historically important ideological institutions and gained more weight in being politicized. The church, the city governors, and the local leaders were all interested in controlling universities and securing their loyalty in order to sustain themselves.

The vagueness of the social roles and functions of the early European universities and their loose relations with the states are certainly not characteristics of the Russian university system. The university system in the Russian Empire has been developed under a different scenario. From the very beginning the state was initiator, promoter, financier, controller, and benefactor of the university system. Moreover, the state was the only institution to perform these functions. Therefore, the university system in the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union is traditionally centralized. The Ministry of Education in Russia was created at a time when there were only two universities in the country: St. Petersburg University and Moscow University. Flynn (1988) describes the creation of the university system in the Russian Empire under the auspices of the newly established Ministry of Education: “It soon was agreed, in 1802, to found a Ministry of Education whose governing body, called the Main School Administration, would direct all education throughout the empire through six universities, which were founded between 1802 and 1804. Moscow State University, founded in 1755, was redesigned in 1804.”⁴² The ministry subcommittee worked on drafting legislation and statutes for universities.

Not everything went successfully at the start. Successful reconstruction of Moscow University was counterbalanced by the extreme difficulties in Kazan: “At the other end of the scale, as well as opposite side of the empire, the university at Kazan clearly was a failure. University autonomy, i.e. faculty self government, was not attempted, for the curator simply appointed a ‘director’ while not permitting election of a rector or the convening of a council until late in the decade.”⁴³ The result of this top-down approach in governing the established rather than emerging university was that professors did not have much freedom. There was not much professors could do about it other than leave.

In distinction from Kazan, Kharkov University in Ukraine has developed successfully thanks to the centralized power and effort of the state-appointed curator: “Kharkov was not so badly off as Kazan, in great part because its curator S. O. Potocki, energetically pursued his task in recruiting faculty, insisted on the election of rector and council according to the statutes, and even found a way to borrow students from the church’s local college, when too few students enrolled to make feasible the opening of the university in 1805.”⁴⁴ The centralized effort of the state brought forth fruits. According to Flynn (1988), “By the late 1830s, none of the universities had fewer than four hundred students while Moscow enrolled nearly nine hundred.”⁴⁵ This state involvement in the process of university building may be explained by two facts: first, the state was the only force capable of creating the university system; and second, the state was interested in creating a system where state control would be an immanent part of the existence of the universities.

Flynn (1988) describes the position of the state authorities regarding control over universities: “Tsar Nicolas I meant clearly to answer the university question by blocking the university’s ability to promote change. He wanted the universities to serve the common good by supporting the autocratic Russia he had inherited from Peter the Great and his successors. This proved difficult, perhaps impossible, even in the short run. It was difficult even to find new rectors, unless the government was willing to pass over the men obviously best qualified for the posts. Thus, the rectors appointed were the same men previously elected.”⁴⁶ A strong state facilitated the development of the university system in the Russian Empire, but at the same time significantly restricted university autonomy that would appear quite natural in a different setting. The Soviet system of higher education inherited some of the essential features of its predecessor – the university system of the Russian Empire. Weak university self-governance was

counterbalanced by strong state control. As Azrael (1965) puts it, “The Soviet Union has built up a single monolithic educational system under omnipresent party control with heavy inputs of political indoctrination at all levels.”⁴⁷

In different countries, central authorities exercise their authority over universities through a variety of ways. A plurality of forms of funding, both direct and indirect, based on competitive and non-competitive grounds, are used as a tool to exercise this authority. The forms differ depending upon their application to public and private universities. Burns (2000) presents the major forms of state influence through funding mechanisms. Another form of influence besides funding is formalized in certain codes, rules, regulations, and restrictions, imposed on universities by the central authorities. Some of these rules are obligatory for all institutions while others are complementary and supported by financial incentives. The universities that comply with the rules get access to some state and federal funds through participation in grants, programs, and projects.⁴⁸ But there are informal ways of influencing universities as well. Sometimes the ruling regime can encourage universities to ignore the rules, formally set by the regime.

In the US, universities and students are active players in political life. Students were more active in 1960s and 1970s, while universities today are more active in political lobbying.⁴⁹ Constitutional autonomy of the universities was diminished in exchange for the state and national grants, subsidies, and indirect funding in form of student aid and student loans. This trend may change in time, and public universities may regain their autonomy from the state, but the fact itself speaks to the tendency of the central authorities to control higher education institutions and their willingness to negotiate and trade the autonomy in exchange for funding or possibly some other benefits. Informal control of the state over universities compensates for the

lack of balance between the formal authority and the real power that the state has over universities. It may also be used in order to disguise methods of administrative control that might be unpopular with the public and the constituents of the system.

In Ukraine, rules and regulations, including accreditation, curriculum, degree requirements, and regimentation of the academic process, are used by the state as tools of administrative control. Often the tool becomes more important than the regulation itself. This control becomes even more important when educational space is occupied not only by the state universities, but by independent private HEIs as well. The financial independence of private institutions is disturbing and so authorities are trying to develop more tools and mechanisms of control. The introduction of vouchers for higher education and the entitlement of private colleges to participate in competition for these vouchers was one such mechanism of indirect control. Once independent private institutions are invited to compete for governmentally distributed public funds, they become interested in being qualified for participation. This qualification is based on the discretion of the central authorities. The major task is to control not only public universities that always were and remain under the authority of the related ministries, but also private colleges. In Ukraine, universities are transformed into objects of public policy.

University politicization

The vertical structure of control in higher education incorporates the principal-agent frame. A special interest of administrative control through corruption and coercion is applied to higher education. This special interest is closely linked to and often indivisible from the general interest, but it is based on the distinctive features of higher education, including its special role in the society and its organizational and cultural characteristics and norms. Universities became by

far the most important institutions for political socialization nationally and even internationally. For Almond (1960), “Political socialization is the process of induction into the political culture.”⁵⁰ The importance of the educational system in codifying people in the process of political socialization is formulated by Coleman (1965) as follows: “The concept of political socialization is now an accepted part of the vocabulary of political science. It refers to that process by which individuals acquire attitudes and feelings toward the political system and toward their role in it, including *cognition* (what one knows or believes about the system, its existence as well as its *modus operandi*), *feeling* (how one feels toward the system, including loyalty and a sense of civic obligation), and one’s *sense of political competence* (what one’s role is or can be in the system). The educational system is one of the agencies involved in this process, which begins at birth and, also its imprint is most pronounced during the impressionable formative years, continues well into adulthood.”⁵¹

Universities have substantial political power due to three major facts. First, the university professorate constitutes the most intelligent part of the society and its elite. Professors often participate in political life, occupy public offices, and work as consultants and advisors to politicians, public officials, and administrators. Second, students in many countries are one of the major political forces that are easy to politicize and mobilize for social actions. Califano (1970) describes student unrest and states that Japanese radical students appear to be, by far, the most successful in the world in disrupting the social order. He writes: “Tokyo University was paralyzed by a student strike throughout 1968. It took eight thousand policemen two days to evict radical students from the main hall of the University in January 1969 – a two-day siege, similar to the later one at Kyoto, which ended an occupation that had lasted for over six months.”⁵² For Jarausch (1974), student movements are often more successful in shaping a

critical generational identity than in achieving practical political, social, or institutional aims. He points out that the failure of the student movement to reach its reforming goals, largely due to its elitism, may lead to the incompleteness of modernization.⁵³ Third, universities are large enterprises that involve not only employees, i.e. faculty, administration, and staff, but also their immediate consumers, i.e. students. American students' active citizenry position moved universities onto a new level. Altbach (2005) points out that "The very success of the universities in moving to the center of society meant that they were taken more seriously."⁵⁴ The antiwar movement of 1960s emerged from university campuses, where it was most powerful.⁵⁵ In Ukraine, politicization is considered not as an alternative, an opposition to the state, but as an influence of the state instituted in order to gain support.

In Russia, universities are being criticized for politicization. A plan to establish a school of Political Sciences at Moscow State University (MGU) is being considered part of such a process.⁵⁶ MGU wants to resolve the problem with lack of managerial resources in the country by establishing a "party school."⁵⁷ Many think that the school will prepare cadres for *Edinaya Rossiya*, a political party of Putin.⁵⁸ The university administration is accused of politicizing the university. The opposition calls students to resist such a move. It seems contradictory and ironic that students are called to stay away from political life by resisting changes in a political manner.⁵⁹ The Rector of MGU insists that the university will remain politically neutral.⁶⁰ Rector Sadovnichiy dismisses the speculations that the leader of *Edinaya Rossiya*, Boris Gryzlov, will have a direct relation to the leadership of the School of Political Sciences in MGU.⁶¹ He says that there are many leading politicians teaching in MGU, including Volodin, Kokoshin, Zhirinovskiy, and Ziuganov.⁶² According to Sadovnichiy, this should not be interpreted as a sign of the politicization of MGU. Nevertheless, some educators point out that the party of power

Edinaya Rossiya has intentions to limit the authority of the rector himself and establish oversight over the university, if not absolute governmental control, then at least party oversight. The safe transfer of the presidency in Russia in 2007 from Putin to Medvedev became possible thanks, in part, to the help of *Edinaya Rossiya*, described by many as a replication of KPSS.⁶³

University corruption

Higher education in Ukraine is affected by corruption. The President of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko, has asked state universities throughout the country to curtail the corruption that is endemic to admissions processes and called upon rectors and professors to put a stop to the bribery and cronyism that hold sway during entrance exams, widespread practices he characterized as “shameful and humiliating.”⁶⁴ But education corruption is a social phenomenon that reaches much further than ethical and moral considerations. It has strong material grounds and economic rationale. Gorodnichenko and Sabirianova (2006) point out that the increasing gap between pay rates in private and public sectors of the economy urges public employees to seek other sources of income.⁶⁵ College professors, who lost the bulk of their savings to inflation in early 1990s, and are now grossly underpaid, adjust their professional ethics and behavior accordingly by accepting bribes and numerous other benefits and utilizing their privileged position and control over the access to higher education.

There is a variety of forms of corruption that may be found in the higher education sector in Ukraine. Bribes are but the most explicit manifestations of corruption in education. Other forms of corruption include embezzlement, extortion, misuse of university property, ghost instructors, fraud, nepotism, cronyism, favoritism, kickbacks, gross waste in educational management, sexual misconduct, unauthorized private tutoring, cheating, and research

misconduct. Forms of corruption are often connected in bundles. For instance, assigning a high grade to a student in exchange for a bribe implies fraud. Keeping ghost instructors on the payroll constitutes fraud as well. A bribe can be offered voluntarily by a student or extorted by a professor. In yet another instance, a bribe can be offered by the college administration to the accrediting agency or extorted by this agency. A bribe can be in the form of merchandise, service, or a monetary donation. The list of forms of corruption in the higher education sector is offered in Osipian (2008).⁶⁶

The Head of the Department of Economic Crimes Prevention of the Ministry of the Interior, General Leonid Skalozub, reported in July of 2006 that there were 210 cases of bribery registered in HEIs in that year, of which 11 were in Kiev.⁶⁷ The number of cases of bribery in higher education, reported by the Ministry, appears to be but a tip of the iceberg for the industry, plagued with corruption.⁶⁸ Admissions to publicly funded places in HEIs are notoriously corrupt, presenting a big business for faculty and administrators. The population accepts this situation as a norm. 42 percent of the parents of prospective students said that instead of wasting time on preparation of their children for college entry examinations, they would rather seek other ways and means, including informal payments and connections.⁶⁹

Osipian (2009) points out that the students in Ukraine contribute to corruption by choosing an easy but illegal way of receiving good grades.⁷⁰ According to the Minister of Education and Science, Stanislav Nikolaenko, many students either create a potential for corruption or would not miss a chance of improving their grades in exchange for bribes, especially if such offer would come from their professor. The leader of the Peoples Democratic League of Youth agrees. The survey shows that the number of such students comprises 21 percent in the Donetskaya oblast, 29 percent in Kiev, 28 percent in Lviv, 25 percent in Odessa,

and 30 percent in Kharkov. Another 15 percent of the respondents said that they would not take advantage of such an offer but would inform their friends of the existing opportunity. Only 21 to 26 percent of all students, depending on the region, would not advise such unfair tactics. Finally, only 3 to 8 percent would inform the police of corruption.⁷¹

The level of cheating and toleration of cheating--an indicator of the looseness of control and corruptness of the educational systems--may be applied to the concept of corruption and coercion. The tolerance of cheating across nations varies significantly. In Ukraine, university faculty often turn a blind eye on student cheating. They think that they will always be able to distinguish a good student from the rest. This perception is also based on the willingness to control the student body and exercise the authority of assigning grades depending on personal relations and attitudes towards particular students rather than on their academic progress. Magnus's et al. (2002) findings indicate that cheating in universities is well-tolerated in the former Soviet republics while in the US it is not, and Western European countries are in the middle.⁷² The level of cheating characterizes relations between professors and their students. According to the principal-agent perspective, professors in corrupt universities are principals and students appear to be their agents. Professors exercise coercive power over students and either punish them for cheating or turn a blind eye depending on students' compliance with professors' demands.

Corruption of the politicized university

The emerging quasi-meritocracy in Ukraine's universities is characterized by the channeling of informal authority along the vertical axis of control in corrupt hierarchies. These were pointed out in Waite and Allen's (2003) analysis of corruption and abuse of power in

educational administration.⁷³ Heyneman (2007) describes this type of vertical pressure: “The worst occasions of ‘moral terrorism’ occur when faculty colleagues or senior administrators request that one change a grade from a particular student. From TSU for instance: The worst are my colleagues who put pressure on me. ...And the worst are colleagues who were our former teachers.... Even the dean puts pressure... It takes me feel pretty bad....The most corrupt are the most influential. It is very difficult.”⁷⁴ It may also be true that in corrupt universities the most influential faculty and administrators are most corrupt.

University corruption gives the ruling regime the opportunity to control HEIs.⁷⁵ Control over the universities means control over their curriculum, ideology, and behavior, and is a high stake for regimes that want to sustain themselves. Heyneman (2007) points to the continuing pressure on universities from the state, offering an opinion that comes from Tbilisi State University (TSU) in Georgia: “The question is whether the new governments can manage the urge to control opinions in the university that contradict their own. According to the faculty member at TSU, the new government intervened for political reasons, just like the Soviets: our first rector in the new government was asked to fire certain professors who were not liked by the government. He refused, and instead he was fired....We are still in a situation when we are under stress for our opinions, and these could be a threat to our lives.”⁷⁶ Apparently, political indoctrination of universities is advanced by the ruling regimes in the former Soviet Bloc through informal means, while academic meritocracy is no longer honored.

The state is not interested in eradicating corruption in universities. Instead, it is interested in politicizing them. This may be a long term policy, because the country faces elections after elections. Lack of power, insufficient legitimacy, and group fights complicate political situation in Ukraine. The only solution for each of these competing groups is to turn to constituents

directly. This would be similar to Yeltsin's appeal to his constituents during the standoff between the President and the Parliament in 1993. For now, there is only one mechanism: administrative pressure. This administrative pressure is exercised in two ways: so-called *kryshevanie*,⁷⁷ or patronage, and corruption and coercion. Ukraine is moving toward a condition of permanent elections, but will eventually need to reach a steady state.

While state funding of HEIs is constantly decreasing, there are other mechanisms of control being used by political regimes. Replacement of direct state funding as one of the primary mechanisms of control over the universities by the corruption and coercion mechanism is an obvious trend in Ukraine. Political bureaucracies take over university autonomy and influence students by dictating the faculty and administrators their will. Figure 1 presents the hierarchical structure that facilitates such a dictate, identified as the pyramid of administrative dictate in the higher education sector.

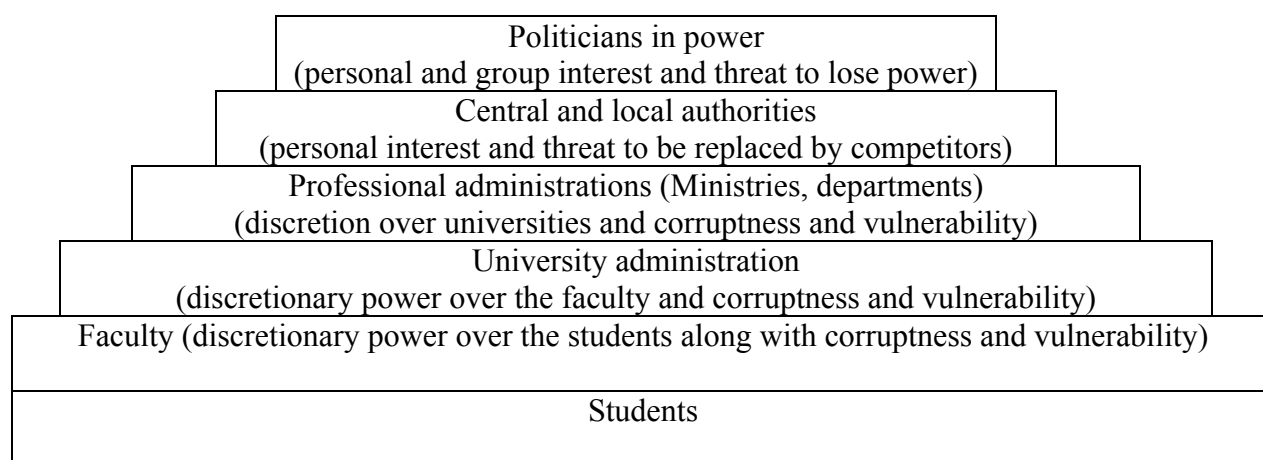


Figure 1. Pyramid of administrative dictate

The obligatory state accreditation of HEIs is used by the government to control the quality of educational programs. In addition to it, universities have to pay bribes in order to be

accredited. Silova, Johnson, and Heyneman (2007) point out that “Educational institutions are often victims themselves, as they have to pay for accreditation from state officials, and since accreditation is still based on input rather than performance criteria, state-sponsored institutions with established reputations and infrastructures are at an advantage over new or private institutions.”⁷⁸ Accreditation adds to competitive disadvantages of private colleges as compared to public ones and at the same time is used as a tool of governmental pressure on independent HEIs.

MacWilliams (2005) reports that “The government reportedly has investigated more than half of 186 complaints of abuses in the campaign last year between Mr. Yushchenko, who won in a runoff election, and Viktor F. Yanukovich, who initially was declared the victor in a vote widely regarded as rigged. Some rectors allegedly forced their staff members and students to support one or the other candidate, but almost without exception the beneficiary of their alleged actions was Mr. Yanukovich. He was backed by the president at the time, Leonid Kuchma, to whose administration many rectors owe their jobs.”⁷⁹ The Rector of Cherkassy National University, Anatoly Kuzminsky, was dismissed by the Ministry of Education and Science, after students accused him of using coercion to mobilize support for Victor Yanukovych. Students demanded the rector's resignation when Yushchenko was elected.

The voting mechanisms used in Ukraine might be “voluntary-forceful,” but freedom of choice is preserved. The calculations are that students will vote for the “right” or “our” candidate. And these calculations appear to be true as the Orange Revolution shows. They were true in Kiev and they were true in Donbass. Substantial administrative reform will be needed to change this way of doing things and getting things “done.” Ukraine faces this problem in the coming presidential and parliamentary elections.

The university faculty understand that their position presents them with opportunities for generating illicit benefits in addition to their miserable salaries. The government forces the instructors to act unethically by not paying them on time or paying them below the poverty level. An indulgence, as a necessary detail in the mechanism of corruption and coercion, is presented here in the form of informal approval, most often expressed as the views of public officials and administrators and the tolerance of the general public. The Rector of MGU says that the government needs to pay higher salaries to college faculty instead of organizing demonstrative prosecutions for those who collect illicit benefits from students.⁸⁰

Introduction of standardized computer graded tests intended to replace oral entry examinations in universities may be considered in part as yet another tool of governmental pressure on HEIs.⁸¹ In Ukraine, entry examinations to colleges are highly corrupt, and admissions based on the test results threaten a substantial portion of the faculty's illicit incomes. Universities oppose the test and call to preserve entry examinations.⁸² The Minister of Science and Education recognizes that he also had concerns about the test, but states that the test is going to be successful. He says that some of the rectors refused to acknowledge the test and to run test-based admissions. Nikolaenko had to explain to these rectors that if they will not recognize the test and will not agree with the policies of test-based admissions, he will find others, who will.⁸³ What he meant by that is that those educational leaders who will refuse to comply with the new state policies, will be dismissed or removed from their offices. Administrative pressures come on the universities not only from the Ministry, but from the political parties as well. For instance, after the Orange Revolution, the President of Ukraine called for some rectors to resign.⁸⁴ Apparently, the rectors were accused in attempts to politicize and directly pressure their subordinates and students in order to extract their political support for given candidates.

There are other forms of pressure that can be accounted for when corruption comes to play in unexpected forms and expressions. One of the recent cases in Russia can be used as an example to illustrate this play. Rady Habibov was fired from his position of the Head of the Presidential Administration in Bashkiriya. He is now under investigation for the case of bribery allegedly committed in 2003. The Ministry of the Interior of Bashkortostan, an autonomous republic in the Russian Federation, accuses Habibov in accepting a bribe of \$5000 in exchange for a diploma of the Institute of Law of the Bashkir State University (BGU), sold to a “student.” At that time Habibov was the Dean of the Law School of the Institute of Law in BGU.⁸⁵ This serves as an example of how corruption in higher education is used by the government to pressure its faculty and administrators, including even former employees. By law, statute of limitation for economic crimes does not expire and therefore, perpetrators involved in bribery can be prosecuted years after committing this crime. The criminal investigation was launched in August 25, 2008, and only two days later Habibov was taken for a new job, now in Kremlin, may be because he is one of the activists of *Edinaya Rossiya*.

Gong (2002) extends the theory of collective behavior to corruption and considers collective corruption as a distinctive form of social interaction among people dominated by individual calculations and the pursuit of personal interests.⁸⁶ The university administration is interested in preserving the student body since student tuition and fees constitute a significant and stable part of the university revenues. In private universities this is the only source of revenue. Instructors often accept bribes in exchange for positive grades on term papers, midterms, homework assignments, and final and examinations. There are two major reasons for them to do so. The first reason is obvious: faculty members make their living from bribes. The second reason is that the faculty members are under the administration’s pressure. The

administration encourages the faculty to assign passing grades to the students so that they continue to enroll and pay their tuition. This is primarily an issue of the institution's financial survival and soundness and only then an issue of morality and prestige. Institutional reputation, professional ethics, and academic stance are all jeopardized by the prioritization of financial survival on institutional and individual levels. This type of short-sightedness and focus on short-term benefits prevents long term plans of restructuring and build up of institutional reputation by universities and academic departments.

The university administration turns a blind eye on faculty misconduct and bribery and often encourages faculty members to settle their issues with students and to help students out. At the same time the corruptness of faculty members gives the university administration a major tool of influence: the administration can penalize faculty members who do not comply with the administration's orders. Bribery is a quintessential element of this corrupt agreement. In this manner the administration preserves the student body and controls the faculty, faculty members make their living and maintain good relations with the university administration, and students have their access to classes and to degrees. Of course, there are always exceptions, and one of the exceptions here is that the administration often requires corrupt faculty members to be reasonable in charging bribes, otherwise students may leave. This balance of informal payments and benefits is not well-regulated and so often incidences occur. Furthermore, bribes are only part of all the corrupt activities that take place in higher education institutions. Numerous other forms of illicit behavior in academia are used for the purposes of the corruption and coercion scheme.

The informal top-down pressure was applied on a systematic basis during the 2004 presidential elections in Ukraine. There is not much direct evidence that different forms of

coercion were in fact exercised based on the corruptness of the local authorities, administrations, directorates of businesses and state enterprises, and university faculty and administrators. However, the presence of all three factors may be interpreted as grounds for the concept of corruption and coercion: 1) formal and informal vertical authoritarian pressure of central authorities on the regional and local authorities and directorates, 2) numerous instances of corruption on all the levels of public policy, public services, businesses, and perceptions of the population about the presence and tolerance of rampant corruption, and 3) numerous indications that all these administrators, directors, and public officials have demonstrated their loyalty to the ruling president and utilized different formal and informal, legal and illegal, mechanisms of fulfilling their informal obligations to the regime. Apparently, the so-called administrative resource was employed in its full capacity by the presidential candidates even though both of them strongly denied this. It is symbolic that one of the first decrees issued by the Administration of the newly-elected President Yushchenko was a reinstatement of all the university professors and students who were fired and dismissed due to their opposition to the pressure to vote for Yanukovych.⁸⁷

Student mobilization

Students are used as a moving force for political actions. For instance, in Russia, *Edinaya Rossiya*⁸⁸ and *Nashi*⁸⁹ are active and openly pro-Kremlin youth movements. Other youth movements, including ultra left and ultra right, radical nationalists, and youth wings of moderate and centrist political parties which are in opposition to the regime, such as *Drugaya Rossiya*⁹⁰ are marginalized and painted as political outcasts. Student mobilization has its roots in the Soviet system, when students were encouraged to do social service and participate in the political life

and extracurricular activities in HEIs. At that time, however, such activities were unpopular among students.

The mechanism of corruption and coercion becomes more complex, because it is no longer one regime that coerces, but competing forces that use the state to gain students' votes. Yushchenko with his administrative resources, Timoshenko with her popularity, and Yanukovytsch more and more in opposition will eventually have no choice but to seek student support. Polls become important indicators in the struggle for power and places in the Cabinet of Ministers. HEIs use to be local monopolies that provided instruction in certain fields, but this is no longer the case. One can study economics, management, computer sciences in just about every HEI in every city. Most of the population in Ukraine, around 70 percent, lives in urban areas. Thus, competition for influence over students becomes sharper. Political groups try to influence HEIs within their respective territorial domains. HEIs become more independent, harder to influence from the outside. Because of the real political competition, votes are now counted and fought over for real.

The retired are a growing group due to demographics, but they may be less active now than they were in early 1990. Students may play more significant role. Thus, the fight for students' votes becomes fierce. Political indoctrination of the academia occurs through targeting faculty and administrators. It is cheaper for a political group to gain the support of students through the indoctrination of the HEI, than to gain it directly from each student. Thus, there is no reason for the state to dismantle the corruption and coercion mechanism.

Students are young and healthy, and so can spend hours and days in winter cold to demonstrate support for their leaders and press on the authorities. Students are independent; some live in students' dormitories and so are free from their parents' supervision, and most have

no family responsibilities. They easily accept others' dominant points of view and are easily manipulated and influenced ideologically. Students have small life experience, they are idealistic, enthusiastic, energetic, easy-going, and easily communicate among themselves and pass ideas and information from person to person. They are intelligent, inventive, attracted to social events, like to socialize, are easy to mobilize, and often cheap to buy. Students are concentrated in higher education institutions; they come to colleges every day and at the same time can easily skip a class or a day, or even a week, especially with an indulgence from their faculty and administrators. They have plenty of free time and like changes. And, finally, they symbolize future and are future. Times when retired people were used as a major political resource are gone. Students are quite a representative group of the population with the high level of concentration in large cities. It is also true that since the Soviet times, they traditionally remain politically passive, indifferent, and alienated.

The key question for those in power is how to make them politically active and channel their activity in the right direction. The answer is in different approaches to the different groups of students. Traditionally, students in Eastern Ukraine, even though they might not be well-disciplined, but just as their parents on the big industrial enterprises, they tend to follow orders from their immediate supervisors – university administration and faculty members. Facts show that students were taken from the classrooms to attend meetings and demonstrations in support of Yanukovich and to vote at the voting stations.⁹¹

People's perceptions about the youth's role in the 2004 Presidential elections are quite different depending upon location – Eastern Ukraine, including its stronghold Donbass, or Western parts of Ukraine and Kiev. One opinion commonly expressed in Donbass regarding student involvement in demonstrations in Kiev is as follows: “Of course, there are a lot of fooled

youth, but they will decide nothing. The decision depends on us – people of the east of the country.” As the leader of the *Slavyanskaya Partiya*⁹² characterized it: “These are the youth, which in early 1990s have not been attending school yet, and now these youth has been brought up in the spirit of hate to ‘easterns’ and ‘moskalei’⁹³.”⁹⁴ Here are two opinions about Yushchenko from Donbass: “Because his policy is one of a gangster. (He) is recruiting youth for his gangster-type settlings”, and “I do not like his policy, his methods of work, when he organizes all those meetings, demonstrations, and provokes people.”⁹⁵ The position of the student-supporters of Yushchenko may be best expressed by their slogan “Kiev won’t accept the inmate,” emphasizing the criminal past of Yanukovich, a candidate of the East.

Mechanisms of the top-down influence on student involvement are a bit more sophisticated in Western parts of Ukraine and especially Kiev – the final battlefield. Here agitation and propaganda by faculty members and university leaders was conducted in formal and informal ways on ideological as well as administrative levels. Calls for democracy and improvements of material conditions were used in order to raise students’ aspirations for a better future. Those needy students, who are now a minority, especially in Kiev, are unsatisfied, politically aggressive, and have hope for a better future. It is for them this characteristic was formulated by the mass media in Donbass: “The majority of those who were marching in the columns under the Orange flags are people who not only have failed to adapt to the surrounding reality, but also aggressively condemn the larger part of Ukrainian citizens who have finally learned to survive in this environment. It is exactly their faces grimaced with anger, that we will be able to see at all levels of the vertical axis of power in case of a victory for Yushchenko. Today they are pawns to the King. Tomorrow can bring them power and money. To be more precise: power over us and our money.”⁹⁶ These are the methods that the pro-Yanukovich

propaganda machine utilized to influence public opinion. The government does little to prevent breeding corruption in universities and then employs students for political actions with the help of corrupted faculty and administrators.

While the presidential elections of 2004 and the Orange Revolution are over, the confrontation continues, and the hottest political debates are all ahead. The politicization of universities and corruption are still issues and will be a problem in the foreseeable future. The system of higher education and net of the state-university relations are in need of a mechanism that would prevent top-down politicization of universities and protect students and faculty members from the administrative dictate. The fundamental force with which students can resist and oppose university corruption and political dictates is their collective action. The experiences of medieval universities run by the students or so-called student universities are of special value.

The experience of medieval universities run by students is very interesting in terms of their control over the townsmen—suppliers of their housing, food, clothing, and other products--and professors. Collective action that was used by the students as a weapon in struggling for their rights presents certain interest in many countries, including the process of unionization of graduate students in the US, student unions in Europe, and spontaneous group actions of protest by students in Ukraine. According to Haskins (1957), student universities represent an organized form of protection of students and their interests by themselves. This priority of student-consumer is described by Haskins in the following way: “The students of Bologna organized such a university first as a means of protection against townspeople, for the price of rooms and necessaries rose rapidly with the crowd of new tenants and consumers, and the individual student was helpless against such profiteering. United, the students could bring the town to terms by the threat of departure as a body, secession, for the university, having no buildings, was free to

move, and there are many historic examples of such migrations. Better rent one's rooms for less than not rent them at all, and so the student organizations secured the power to fix the prices of lodgings and books through their representatives.”⁹⁷

As we have mentioned before, students in Ukraine try to put professors under control in order to receive high quality lecture time, seminars, and updated teaching materials. Similar processes took place in medieval universities. Student actions were focused on protection of their interests. Haskins describes student demands to their professors in Italian universities: “Victorious over the townsmen, the students turned on ‘their other enemies, the professors.’ Here the threat was a collective boycott, and as the masters lived at first wholly from the fees of their pupils, this threat was equally effective. The professor was put under bond to live up to a minute set of regulations which guaranteed his students the worth of the money paid by each.”⁹⁸

Students in Ukraine are less organized compared to the corrupted faculty and administrators. However, in many HEIs, both public and private, students become organized to oppose bribery and administrative and political pressure. Groups of students go to the dean's office to complain about the professor's extortion of bribes. Students may also complain about political agitation and propaganda that comes from their professors and members of the university administration during class time. Such complaints become quite common but do not necessarily lead to an adequate reaction from the dean's office, especially if the office itself is corrupt. Nevertheless, students execute their power. Those in for-tuition programs pay their money and are major contributors to the university revenue. Students in private universities are especially powerful in this sense.

Student self-governance in Ukraine may be in process of its development, but this development is top-down.⁹⁹ Minister Nikolaenko comments on the limitations and the advisory

role of student self-governance body by saying that “the horse will never be put before the cart.” In his view, student self-governance has to deal with extracurricular activities, cultural events, accommodations in student dormitories, social benefits, and even selection of students to internships abroad. Academic progress, retention, and attrition are to remain within the domain of university faculty and administrators. To the minister’s regret, the President vetoed the law about student self-governance. The relations between students and universities are clearly not without tension. Nikolaenko says that there is a war between students, faculty, and administrators and that university rectors are interested in delegating some of the authority to student councils. He also says that the proposed law anticipates participation of students in the school and university boards that make decisions. So far students are helping the Minister to remove private firms from student dormitories, of which there are 300 in Kiev alone.¹⁰⁰

Despite the Minister’s assurances and visible interest in advancing student self-governance, the tensions between the Ministry and the students are all ahead. One of the recent events is the student demonstrations in Lviv, where students picketed local authorities. The reason was the intent of the Ministry of Education to introduce entry examination to masters programs for those, who graduated from baccalaureate programs in the same university. This novelty would threaten students’ right to transfer naturally to their fifth and sixth years of studies without any payments and examinations.

Conclusion

The positive role of the state in developing and sustaining corruption is often underestimated. According to the concept presented in this paper, strengthening of the state through a vertical administrative hierarchy is exactly what is necessary to advance the policy of

corruption and coercion. This policy, in turn, leads to further strengthening of the state machine. Students in many countries are one of the major political forces and are easy to politicize and mobilize for social actions. The regime attempts to control students by controlling universities. Control over universities means control over their curriculum, ideology, and behavior, and is a highest stake for the regimes that want to sustain themselves. While state funding for universities is constantly decreasing, there are other mechanisms of control taking place. The replacement of direct state funding as one of the primary mechanisms of control over the universities by the corruption and coercion mechanism is an obvious trend in Ukraine.

Both of the candidates have used administrative resources to influence voters. Yanukovych allegedly used his position of Prime Minister for political purposes. University administrations as well as faculty were heavily involved in promotion of “their candidate” on both sides. It is quite possible that some of them indeed supported their respective candidates, but they used their administrative, coercive, and professional power to involve students in all types of political activities, i.e. turned universities into politicized institutions guided by a certain political agenda rather than freedom of choice. Many of those who supported or opposed the Orange Revolution truly believed in what they were doing, others did not really understand the situation, some simply followed the crowd, and many were forced to do so.

Students were pushed into politics the same way they were forced to participate in the May Day demonstrations in soviet times, by way of coercion, based on administrative orders then and mechanisms of corruption and coercion, and indirect pressure now. The presidential elections are over, but the battle for students’ minds and votes continues. The fundamental force with which students can resist and oppose university corruption and political dictate is their

collective action. Students' involvement in the political life of the country should be based on free choice and not the coercion that comes from corrupt governments and administrations.

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⁶² Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is the leader of of the Liberal-Democratic party of Russia. He is a Vice-Speaker of the Duma and holds Doctor Sciences degree in Philosophy; Gennady Zuzanov is the leader of the Communist Party of the Russian federation (KPRF). He is a Vice-Speaker of the

Duma and holds Doctor Sciences degree in Philosophy; Vyacheslav Volodin is a Vice-Speaker of the Duma and holds Doctor Sciences degree in Jurisprudence.

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