

[https://doi.org/10.32405/2522-9931-2021-18\(47\)-65-78](https://doi.org/10.32405/2522-9931-2021-18(47)-65-78)

UDK 159.9.07

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## PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF THEMSELVES AS VOTERS: A COGNITIVE COMPONENT

**Abstract.** The scientific expediency of our chosen research topic is determined by: Empowering civil society, which influences its projects and actions among other things on socio-political processes in the country. In Ukraine, the role of non-government organizations and non-government initiatives should be emphasized, a significant part of which (in terms of staff or number of employees involved) are young people who want change. The interest of young people in politics and the ability to some political subjectivity of individual citizens aged 18–35 years. Which is due to the general rejuvenation of the Verkhovna Rada of the ninth convocation in comparison with other convocations. The average age of a People's Deputy as a subject of politics in the largest party as of November 19, 2021 is 37.6 years [13]. Increasing the role of youth in the formation of public policy, its real participation in political processes. A clear example of the political participation of young people was the election of the President of Ukraine in 2019 (according to A. Hrushetsky, Deputy Director of the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, a more visible connection of support for a candidate in the second round can be traced depending on the age of respondents). So, we can see that under V. Zelensky voted (80%) people under the age of 30 voted in this age group, which may not have had a decisive but significant impact on the election results) [14]. The relevance of the materials presented in the article of the empirical study meets the modern demands of society for knowledge about the political self-determination of voters, among whom a significant part is young people. The complexity and multifaceted nature of the process of political self-determination leads to the assumption of the existence of different types or directions of formation and implementation of this phenomenon. And in order

to confirm or refute such hypothetical considerations, a study was conducted taking into account the theoretical scientific achievements on this topic.

**Key words:** self-determination; political self-determination; self-determination regarding participation in the election process; young; factors of youth electoral self-determination; types of youth electoral self-determination; cognitive component.

## **INTRODUCTION / ВСТУП**

**Problem statement.** Scientific research on the phenomenon of youth self-determination regarding participation in the electoral process is found in political, philosophical and other sciences. At the same time, this phenomenon is explained to a lesser extent due to psychological features, which in our opinion had little research in the context of political self-determination, namely in the context of youth participation in election campaigns. Political self-determination is presented as a specific political and psychological phenomenon that manifests itself in the thoughts, words and actions of the individual.

Such a situation requires young people to have political competence and psychological maturity, which means certainty in matters concerning the political life of Ukraine. Thus, the study of the phenomenon of political self-determination of each citizen, the psychology of the electorate during the election process is an urgent scientific task [8].

According to our theoretical model and in our understanding, the psychological features of young people's self-determination to participate in the electoral process have an intellectual-cognitive, emotional-sensory and behavioral nature. Thus, we can identify the following components that are part of the structure of psychological characteristics of youth self-determination during electoral processes: cognitive (intellectual ability to understand the political dimension and determine their position in it), affective (emotional attitude to themselves and other people or phenomena), conative (willingness to participate in political life and political behavior).

In this article we are interested in the cognitive component of the psychological characteristics of self-determination of young people to participate in the electoral process.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** At the previous stage, the results of such research were used (A. Krasnyakova, 2014; L. Kiyashko, 2014; V. Melnichenko 2001, 2013; M. Sidorkina 2013, 2014, 2017; V. Toryanyk, 2006, 2013; I. Hort, 2010 etc. Among foreign researchers should be noted H. Beran 1998; C. Wellman, 1995; K. Callahona, 1992; K. Cunningham, 2014; A. Schedler, 2012).

Scientific research and results Malysh, 2019 were also taken into account; Pozniak, 2019; Reznik, 2019; Sknar, 2019 etc.

Analysis of the scientific achievements of the above researchers gives us reason to assume that self-determination, including in political processes, has a psychological nature, along with its own characteristics for each case [11]. This in turn requires confirmation or refutation through the use of appropriate theoretical and empirical tools.

Given the difficult socio-political events in the country, which may include waxing in eastern Ukraine, and the growth of migration, and mass measures to prevent the viral epidemic, and of course spontaneous and newly determined electoral processes (presidential election in 2019, elections to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in 2019 and local elections in 2020) it is appropriate to note – all this adds difficulties to the process of self-determination, especially political self-determination, complicating the realization of the importance of one's own political choice for citizens.

After all, such a choice will affect in the future both the psychology of the subject of choice regarding public policy and its own participation in this process, and the implementation of the declared policy of the chosen object of political choice with further representation of the object of political choice about its voter [4].

Guided by this logic, it becomes clear why the author of this article conducted an empirical study in 2020–2021, which provides an opportunity to look at the self-determination of young people to participate in the electoral process from a psychological, such a relevant side of this phenomenon today.

## **AIM AND TASKS / МЕТА ТА ЗАВДАННЯ**

**The purpose** of the article is to highlight the multifaceted phenomenon of youth self-determination in terms of participation in the electoral process with the subsequent organization of this psychological and political phenomenon by types as a results of method Cluster analysis with description of the obtained empirical results.

In this regard, the **main objectives** of the study are as follows:

- 1) determine the structure and configuration of factors that are leading in the processes of political self-determination in the electoral process;
- 2) assess the degree of expression of factors and their features;
- 3) identify the most rational factors, as a kind of vectors of conscious and responsible self-determination of young people to participate in the electoral process.

## **THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUNDS / ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ ОСНОВИ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ**

Theoretical analysis of studies devoted to the study of certain aspects of the development of psychological characteristics in political processes, in particular those related to youth self-determination to participate in the electoral process, allowed us to conclude that this age (according to the Law "On Youth Policy" from 14 to 35 years, based on the right to vote, which is acquired under the Constitution of Ukraine after reaching 18 years, the sample consisted of participants 18–35 years) is sensitive to this psychological and political process. Its results are manifested in cognitive awareness.

Self-determination on objectively and subjectively significant aspects reality, the individual realizes his life perspective, freedom choice both in everyday life and in the electoral process.

In Western psychology, personal self-determination in the early youth is considered in the context of the formation of psychosocial identity (E. Erickson, J. Marsha, etc.). Identification involves acceptance of certain socio-cultural values, identification with them. Complementing identification is individualization, which involves critical understanding of social values and construction on this basis own system of value orientations [15].

Such orientations will serve the young person in political processes as well as some vectors of action in the political space.

It is established that self-determination has a value-semantic nature, it is genetically original and determines all other types of self-determination (T. Buyakas, M. Ginzburg, Z. Karpenko, R. Pasichnyak, A. Bubbles, V. Safin and others). And if we talk about the values and meanings that shape it, then we are talking about the cognitive component of self-determination, which is manifested in the level of development of self-awareness, the formation of their position in the world.

Based on the above theoretical material, the importance of the cognitive component of self-determination, which can be manifested in young people's perceptions of themselves as voters, understanding their place in political processes, it was proposed to investigate empirically the phenomenon of political self-determination of youth, namely its cognitive component.

## **RESEARCH METHODS / МЕТОДИ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ**

The research was conducted in two stages, and in both cases was organized on the Google-Forms platform. On the one hand, it is a convenient method of data collection and conversion, and on the other hand, it is due to the situation of distance learning / youth work. The first stage: data collection lasted

from September to October 2020. The sample consisted of 44 young people aged 18 to 35, including 27 men and 17 women. The sample consisted of citizens and rural residents.

As part of the first pilot phase, among other things, an online questionnaire was offered with open-ended questions about the election process, its significance and its place in it for each of the respondents. For data analysis, among others, content analysis was used.

The second stage: data collection lasted from December 2020 to March 2021. The sample consisted of 329 young people, aged 18 to 35, respectively – 147 men and 182 – women, most of them citizens.

With in the framework of the second stage, which became the main empirical research on the topic of psychological features of youth self-determination regarding participation in the electoral process, a battery of methods was formed, which were included in the general questionnaire. One part of the questionnaire reflected the measure of defining oneself as a voter, based on the semantic differential with oppositional semantic poles, which were set on the basis of the materials of the previous stage and their content analysis.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS / РЕЗУЛЬТАТИ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ**

The results of empirical research showed that along with such constructs of self-determination during the election process as "interested", "analyzing", "responsible" and others. There are many elections close to the opposite pole, such as "indifferent", "acting spontaneously", "unreliable" and others.

The nature of the sample 's attitudes towards electoral self – determination was assessed. Significant expression of factors and clusters which highlights some types of self-determination of young people.

After analyzing theoretical models and scientific sources on the topic of political self-determination of youth. Having got acquainted with the results of sociological research related to the topic of electoral self-determination, we can recall a recent poll in the local elections in Ukraine in 2020 conducted by the sociological group "Rating". Where young people were the least active in local elections. Only 11% of those who came to the polls were people aged 18–29. In the general structure of voters – 18%. Consequently, most young people, in accordance with the age range defined by the Law of Ukraine "On Promoting the Social Formation and Development of Youth in Ukraine", simply did not come to the polls. Among the reasons why voters did not show up at the polling station, the sociologists of the "Rating" group single out the following: older people did not go to the polls due to their health condition, and young people were busy on election day. So, given all the above, our study, which aims to determine the psychological

component of the phenomenon of electoral self-determination of young people, is becoming increasingly important. After all, our study examines those aspects that may explain such electoral activity and behavior of young people.

An important stage of work is the selection of adequate tools for empirical research [2]. Based on the goals and objectives of our empirical study and based on the theoretical structure of youth self-determination to participate in the electoral process, an appropriate set of methods for empirical research of political and psychological phenomenon of interest to us was constructed.

*Sample.* In an empirical study conducted to study psychological characteristics 329 young people took part in the self-determination of young people to participate in the election process.

The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 35 years, which corresponds to the Law "On the basic principles of youth policy". Among them, according to Article 147, are men and 182 are women. In particular, 30 rural residents area and 299 citizens. According to the age criterion, the sample was divided into 4 age groups: 1) 18–22 years (135 participants); 2) 22–26 years (83 participants); 3) 26–32 years (36 participants); 4) 32–35 years (75 participants).

As you can see, the youngest participants were the most active in filling out the online questionnaire and passing the survey. Such a division by age corresponded to the living conditions and spheres of youth activity (students-education, employment and the first professional experience, further professional and personal development). All subjects are residents of cities and villages of Ukraine. Most are citizens.

#### *Presentation of methods, descriptions and results of the study*

Establishing the peculiarities of the development of the cognitive component of the electoral self-determination of young people using the method built on the basis of the semantic differential. The author of the method is Charles Osgood, used in this dissertation research based on a preliminary content analysis of words (conducted in the second stage of the study, 2019–2020), which participants wrote as an association to the voter's own position in the election process.

Associative technique reflects both the cognitive structures behind the linguistic meanings and the individual characteristics of the subjects, their personal meanings.

The words-reactions (associations) obtained during the associative test at the second stage of the research on the criterion of semantic closeness – distance were grouped into 15 categories of words of opposite meaning.

Methods of mathematical statistics were used to process the results: Pearson's correlation coefficient, because respondents rated themselves as a

voter, factor analysis (to minimize the number of variables and concentration of information on key variables involved in youth self-determination during the election process in the form of a small array of data) by the method of principal components (PCA) and rotation of Varimax with normalization of Kaiser Normalization [1].

The obtained empirical results were processed using computer programs for statistical data processing (R-project, SPSS Statistics 23,0).

As a result of factor analysis of young people's perceptions of their self-determination regarding participation in the electoral process with a value from 1 to 7 on the semantic differential, the main method identified 4 factors (F), which explain about 60% of the variance.

We named these factors as: 1-«Reactive-inertial», 2-«Apathetic (amorphous)», 3-«Emotional», 4-«Rational (effective)». These factors include constructs (words by which respondents identified themselves as a voter), which meaningfully, so to speak, reflect the position of young people in the electoral process.

The next step in our study of the cognitive component in the self-determination of young people of their place and position, role in the electoral process was the use of a relevant and indispensable method Cluster analysis of K-means. In the data analyzed by us according to the results of the previous procedure of factor analysis using cluster analysis, some new structure (artifact) was revealed, which at the previous stage, according to factor analysis, was unnoticed.

As a result, we obtained four clusters, the name of which corresponded to the name of the factors, and 1 cluster (we received 5 clusters in total) was named "*Idealistic*" (21,3% of the total sample) on the basis of the dominant choice for respondents and which is inverse to the meaning of tolerance. Consequently, this new cluster describes voters as revolutionary, idealistic and, to some extent, even romantic. Such voters are counting on positive change, perhaps even exaggerating with hopes for a politically impeccable future that will come after the election.

We have 19,8% of respondents out of 329 respondents prefer the "*reactive-inertial type*", which is characterized by spontaneous effectiveness, due more to feelings than reflection and analysis, such voters are somewhat embarrassed by information election campaigns and move, probably quite chaotically when immersed in the political life of the country. Another 17,3% identified themselves as a "*situationally-detached type*" who is ready to act situationally rather than systematically, who will run in elections rather than necessary or out of self-interest. Such people are at some distance from the political sphere, for some time, although they are not indifferent to the political

processes in the country. Further, 18,2% of 329 people identify themselves as tolerant, patient voters with knowledge of the procedure and rules when participating in the election process, which corresponds to the "rational type" or "effective" in our study. Such people are ready to exercise their right to vote and at the same time understand the realities of politics in Ukraine and the objective reality both in politics and in related areas of the economy, the judiciary may not meet their expectations after the election. "Apathetic (amorphous) type" – 23.4% of 329 respondents. This type is evidence that potential voters among young people in Ukraine are prone to passive political behavior, they do not see their electoral activity as a way to positive change.

Regarding *gender differences and the results of the classed analysis*, we have the following distribution: 23,6% of respondents, which is the largest number of women, fell into the "reactive-inertial" type of voters, while the largest percentage of men surveyed, namely 28.6%, according to the survey entered the "amorphous (apathetic)" type of voter. It should be noted that in our opinion, the effective, "rational" type includes 19% of 100% of men surveyed and 17,6% of 100% of women surveyed (*Table 1*).

*Table 1*

***The types of young electoral self-determination***

Types of electoral self-determination	N respondents by types	% by types of total N	Valid Percent
Reactive-inertial type	65	19,8	19,8
Idealistic type	70	21,3	21,3
Situationally-detached type	57	17,3	17,3
Rational type	60	18,2	18,2
Apathetic (amorphous) type	77	23,4	23,4
The total number of	329	100,0	100,0

This picture makes it possible to make preliminary circumstances about the peculiarities of understanding the electoral self-determination of youth as a cognitive component of psychological features, which along with the affective and conative component will influence the formation of political positions during voting depending on how to say the type of voter: inertial, idealistic, situationally detached, rational, apathetic (amorphous).

**CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH /  
 ВИСНОВКИ ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ПОДАЛЬШИХ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ**

The generalization of the research results gives grounds to assert that there is a certain configuration of landmarks (factors) that regulate the process of political self-



determination of young people. Understanding oneself as a voter is manifested in those semantic units that were presented in the study, their content.

According to the results of the cluster analysis, we obtained, so to speak, several types of voters among young people aged 18-35. Self-perception and understanding of one's position as a voter, which characterizes the cognitive component of the psychological characteristics of the voter. Of which, in our opinion, only 1 is effective.

The results of the study showed that there is a certain structure with its non-trivial content, so to speak, the types of voters who are guided by different vectors in the electoral self-determination. In our study, we see that young people are more ineffective because, as a bearer of civil rights and responsibilities that allow a direct tool to influence the balance of power in the political field, most young people are skeptical (apathetic, amorphous, etc.).

This state of affairs suggests that the inherent unplannedness of Ukrainian politics, some uncertainty, disordered change of political forces and ideologies or their absence have created a very unique system of political culture. In the latter, there are obviously many gaps and triggers for young people, which evoke in the minds of young people an ambiguous idea of themselves as voters.

The practical significance of the research consist in the possibility of using the results to develop recommendations and programs for working with young people.

**Prospects for further research** are to use the results in the development of participatory, educational, legal and psychological material (from elective programs to training programs, seminars, lectures, projects, etc.), which would contribute to greater activation of the cognitive component of youth in political processes.

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## ПСИХОЛОГІЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ВИЗНАЧЕННЯ СЕБЕ, ЯК ВИБОРЦІВ МОЛОДДЮ: КОГНІТИВНИЙ КОМПОНЕНТ

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**Анотація.** Наукова доцільність обраної нами теми дослідження обумовлюється: Розширенням можливостей громадянського суспільства, яке впливає своїми проектами та діями з поміж іншого й на соціально-політичні процеси в країні. В Україні варто підкреслити роль громадських організацій та громадських ініціатив, значну частину з яких (щодо штату або чисельності залучених співробітників) складають молоді люди, які прагнуть до змін. Інтересом молоді до політики і здатності до деякої політичної суб'єктності окремих громадян віком від 18–35 років. Що обумовлюється загальним помолодшенням Верховної Ради IX скликання у порівнянні із іншими скликаннями. Середній вік народного депутата, як суб'єкта політики в найбільшій партії станом на 19.11.2021 рік становить 37,6 років [13]. Підвищенням ролі молоді у формуванні державної політики, реальною її участю в політичних процесах. Яскравим прикладом політичної участі молодих людей стали вибори Президента України у 2019 році (за словами А. Грушецького, заступника директора Київського міжнародного інституту соціології, більш помітний зв'язок підтримки того чи іншого кандидата у 2-му турі простежується залежно від віку респондентів, так за В. Зеленського найбільше (80%) проголосували люди віком до 30 років з цієї вікової категорії, що можливо не вирішаюче але відчутно вплинуло на результати виборів) [14]. Актуальність матеріалів, викладених у статті емпіричного дослідження, відповідає сучасним запитам суспільства на знання про політичне самовизначення виборців, серед яких значну частину становить молодь. Складність і багатогранність процесу політичного самовизначення призводить до припущення про існування різних типів або напрямів формування та реалізації цього явища. І щоб підтвердити чи спростувати такі гіпотетичні міркування, було проведено дослідження з урахуванням теоретичних наукових досягнень з даної теми. Отже, перехід від теоретичної моделі до емпіричної з конкретними значеннями, отриманими в процесі дослідження, може слугувати описом реальних молодіжних тенденцій у процесі самовизначення молодими людьми себе як виборців і громадян.

**Ключові слова:** самовизначення; політичне самовизначення; самовизначення щодо участі у виборчому процесі; молодь; фактори електорального самовизначення молоді; типи виборчого самовизначення молоді; когнітивний компонент.

## ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ОПРЕДЕЛЕНИЯ СЕБЯ, КАК ИЗБИРАТЕЛЯ МОЛОДЕЖЬЮ: КОГНИТИВНЫЙ КОМПОНЕНТ

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**Аннотация.** Научная целесообразность выбранной нами темы исследования определяется следующим: Расширением возможностей гражданского общества, влияющего своими проектами и действиями между прочим и на социально-политические процессы в стране. В Украине следует подчеркнуть роль общественных организаций и общественных инициатив, значительную часть из которых (относительно штата или численности привлеченных сотрудников) составляют молодые люди, стремящиеся к переменам. Интересом молодежи к политике, способности к некоторой политической субъектности отдельных граждан в возрасте от 18–35 лет. Что подтверждается общим омоложением Верховной Рады IX созыва по сравнению с другими созывами. Средний возраст народного депутата как субъекта политики в крупнейшей партии представленной в парламенте по состоянию на 19.11.2021 составляет 37,6 лет [13]. Повышением роли молодежи в формировании государственной политики, реальным ее участием в политических процессах. Ярким примером политического участия молодых людей стали выборы Президента Украины в 2019 году (по словам А. Грушецкого, заместителя директора Киевского международного института социологии, более заметная связь поддержки того или иного кандидата во 2-м туре прослеживается в зависимости от возраста респондентов. Так, за В. Зеленского (80%) проголосовали люди в возрасте до 30 лет из этой возрастной категории, что возможно не решающе, но ощутимо повлияло на результаты выборов) [14]. Актуальность материалов, изложенных в статье эмпирического исследования, отвечает современным запросам общества на знание о политическом самоопределении избирателей, среди которых значительную часть составляет молодежь. Сложность и многогранность процесса политического

самоопределения приводит к предположению о существовании разных типов или направлений формирования и реализации этого явления. И чтобы подтвердить или опровергнуть такие гипотетические соображения, были проведены исследования на основе теоретических научных достижений по данной теме.

**Ключевые слова:** самоопределение; политическое самоопределение; самоопределение в отношении участия в избирательном процессе; молодёжь; факторы электорального самоопределения молодежи; типы избирательного самоопределения молодежи; когнитивный компонент.

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*Стаття надійшла до редакції  
15 листопада 2021 року*