

# Theoretical Foundations Of Election Campaign Research: Problems, Approaches And Methods

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## Summary

The article defines the basic concepts: "election campaign", "social capital", "conversion of social capital";

the principles and methods of research of social capital conversion in election campaigns are studied; the process of using social capital in politics is defined; ways of converting social capital into politics are considered; the possibilities of converting social capital in election campaigns are described.

Election campaigns have been found to be a successful form of social capital conversion. The ability to use social capital in the election campaign speaks of its high potential. Election campaigns are not an effective use of social capital.

### Key words:

*election campaign, seafaring safety, converting social capital, mass media, socio-communicative competencies, technologies of communicative activity.*

## 1. Introduction

21st century society is characterized as such that each person tries to make the most of their activities, even from their status and social status. Many different forms of interaction are concentrated in the public space. Some are based on material goods, or financial, others - on the basis of ties, common interests, friendships, etc. Improving interaction and increasing its efficiency is impossible without the accumulation of a certain type of capital, which can be in the form of: financial, administrative, political, cultural, social and others [1-3].

Today, for the maximum success of the case, it is necessary to be able to accumulate different forms of capital and correlate them. This applies to almost all spheres of society. The political sphere and its components, in this regard, are no exception. Political actors try to use all possible means to get what they want and achieve their goals. Therefore, social capital is increasingly used in politics. For this form of capital, it is a successful field of existence. Because, a wide range of policies cover a large number of opportunities for the successful conversion of social capital into other types, especially during election

campaigns.

During the election campaign, the factor of intensity and direction of communicative activity of public authorities and their officials - civil servants and local government officials - plays a significant role. In Ukraine, for example, this is especially significant within territorial communities. The transformation of the local media system as a result of the privatization of traditional newspapers, as well as the expansion of the sphere of influence on the electoral mood of online media, leads to changes in the decades-old system of communication between the electoral community.

In this context, during the election period, with limited influence of regional and local media, the informational and educational function of the media in the territorial community should be performed by the communicative units of local self-government bodies. With well-established communication channels, such units or individual specialists may partially undertake the task of impartial dissemination of information about political events or announce them, adhering to the principles of transparency, impartiality and full information about the actions or inaction of all election campaign participants. forces to communication channels operating in communities. To do this, officials of communication units must have a high level of socio-communicative competence, be able at a high professional level to analyze, generate, broadcast to target audiences of high quality content. Proper involvement of territorial communities in the electoral process, more effective communication between them and the authorities can increase the degree of accountability and transparency of political forces, elected deputies after the election campaign, ensure a higher level of trust in them by citizens. At the same time, as has been shown on the basis of a comparative analysis of the European experience, consultation and public involvement should not be limited to elections. Constant two-way communication between the government and the public generates better and more sustainable results in

solving socially significant problems [11].

The purpose of the article is to investigate how successful the process of converting social capital is during election campaigns.

## 2. Theoretical Consideration

The idea of social capital was started and developed by the following researchers: Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, Robert Putnam, Francis Fukuyama. P. Bourdieu, as a sociologist, defined social capital as "a set of actual or potential resources associated with the existence of strong networks, more or less institutionalized relations of mutual acquaintance and recognition." In his works, the author draws attention to the dynamics of social capital, its ability to convert into other forms of capital-symbolic, economic, cultural. In his own sociological research, J. Coleman concluded that social capital is a resource of social relations that facilitates the activities of individuals through the formation of trust, mutual responsibilities, expectations, relevant norms and rules. Francis Fukuyama, an influential American political scientist, philosopher, and economist, understands social capital as norms, informal norms, or values that make collective action possible in groups of people. W. Baker gave the concept of social capital the following definition - a resource that actors receive from various social structures, and then use it in accordance with their own interests. According to R. Putnam, an American political scientist, and Radaev, social capital contributes to the development of social structure, increasing the efficiency of the organization [2-5].

So, based on the definition of this concept by various researchers, sociologists, political scientists, economists, philosophers, I can say that social capital can be understood as a profitable resource in any business, which is based on trust and facilitates the process of interaction and gives positive results, through the process of attracting a variety of resources from other agents.

Almost no one has paid attention to the study of the concept of "conversion of social capital", it is quite a young term, which is beginning to be actively used by modern social scientists. In the absence of a clear definition of this term in scientific circulation, I will try to derive my own concept necessary for further research.

The term "conversion" came to the humanities from economics. This concept is mainly used to describe the exchange process. Also, on the site of the electronic business dictionary, the following definitions were provided: conversion - (Latin *converto* "change, convert") conversion; conversion (economy) - the transfer of the value of one national currency to another, carried out on a certain scale; conversion - the conversion of data from one format to another while preserving the basic logical and

structural content of information. Thus, this concept can be interpreted as a process of exchange, change of forms, but with the preservation of its own essence.

By capital conversion we mean the cycle, transformation, recalculation, change of own forms, exchange of this capital for another. For example, economic to social, or vice versa. The ability to convert is due to the fact that they have a common generic feature. That is, for conversion, as an exchange process, certain conditions are also required [5].

The above allows us to conclude that the conversion of social capital is a process of transforming social capital into another type, which in turn acts as a reliable source of the necessary benefits.

The conversion of social capital can take place in any sphere of society, including political. One of the most profitable ways to convert social capital into politics is through elections.

Elections, in the domestic scientific and legislative vocabulary is called the electoral process. Speaking about the incompleteness of the development of methodological and categorical-hardware base of election research, it should be noted that in the scientific literature there is still no clear distinction between such concepts as "election process" and "election campaign". These concepts are perceived and interpreted by the vast majority of researchers as identical.

Considering the election campaign as a political phenomenon, it is necessary to note its decisive role in the legitimation of power, the recognition of its authority. Elections "reflect the level of legitimacy of public authority as the people's trust. The election campaign promotes the formation of a representative body whose power is recognized by the people as legitimate, even when it is unpopular. political and constitutional rights researchers as a way of selecting political leaders, but the scale of the election campaign cannot be limited to competition and the establishment of authority over the winners.

From a sociological point of view, in my opinion, the election campaign is a kind of public opinion poll in the sense that it allows social groups to express their attitude to the political regime, organizations, actors. And from a legal point of view, the election campaign can be called "an important tool for the realization of people's sovereignty and legitimation of power in general and a representative body within its constitutional competence, in particular." The last two definitions complement the study and help to conclude.

Thus, the given characteristic gives grounds to consider the election campaign as a process of recruiting the political elite on the basis of public opinion and support, which influences the formation of government bodies and promotes their legitimation. And the conversion of social capital in election campaigns - as the transformation of

social capital into another type during the election process, which allows actors, in their interaction, to obtain the desired benefits, or to optimize the process of achieving the goal [8].

A fundamental approach as a dialectic, it helped me to build all the material in a logical sequence and on this basis to conduct election campaign research as a way to successfully convert social capital. The dialectical paradigm highlighted the interdependence of election campaigns and social capital, especially in the modern world and in democracies, and made some recommendations for future research.

The systemic approach has helped to consider the use of social capital in election campaigns as phenomena that can provoke new trends not only in the election process, but in politics in general. There may be so many of these trends that they are not even able to manifest themselves in the study, but the most important of them, of course, have been identified.

Along with the system, an information approach was used, as election campaigns and social capital are two phenomena of public life that cannot be imagined without public communication and the constant accumulation of information, with which further work is always conducted. The historical approach helped to consider the emergence of a new trend in the use of election campaigns as a way to convert capital, development and its formation [6].

The use of a culturological approach was due to the fact that election campaigns and the methods of gaining power directly used there are all indicators of political culture. And social capital, in turn, is also an indicator of the culture of communication and communication in society, a high ability to accumulate and convert, and also confirms the level of development and the ratio of structures of society in interaction. All these approaches have led to the following methods.

Method of analysis and synthesis. It was used to break down the electoral process as a successful way of converting social capital into its constituent parts, and to understand the consequences of their coexistence.

Terminological analysis helped in the very first section to determine the main concepts in the work and the specifics of their application.

The comparative-typological method was used to understand the reason for the emergence and development of the use of social capital in election campaigns.

The deduction method helped to solve the problem with the scientific hypotheses of the study and to draw conclusions about the extent to which election campaigns are a successful way of converting social capital.

In the study of the election campaign as a way to convert social capital, in my opinion, it is advisable to use the method of document analysis. Thus, by analyzing dictionaries, monographs and articles on existing topics, I will be able to accumulate the necessary information and

knowledge for my work.

All the approaches and methods described above allowed me to conduct my own research on how social capital can be used in election campaigns, to give various examples, to analyze certain points, as well as to better understand the relationship between social capital and politics, social capital and elections [1-3].

This technique, of course, is not universal, but with its help I was able to reveal the essence of the problem situation, describe it, analyze it. All tasks were also successfully solved. The process of hypothesis verification was based on all the above methods, and during this process new scientific problems and trends were identified that are desirable to explore in the scientific field based on the political realities of today.

Since the key concept of social capital is the concept of resources, this feature is related to social capital with election campaigns, as the latter is a phenomenon that arises in the interaction between at least two actors, when "the political entity, acting as a stronger, predominant party, subordinates the activities of others, turning them into objects, ensures to some extent the achievement of its goal - strengthening or weakening, partial or radical change in the system of government in society. " The importance of social capital for the subject of the election campaign is determined by the fact that the social structure facilitates access to certain types of resources or replaces them. Social capital facilitates the actions of actors within the structure or allows the parties to act more effectively to achieve a common goal [3, 4, 8].

Some authors focus on social capital as a set of informal values and norms, a culture of trust and tolerance, or anticipation of action. The key concepts in this approach to social capital are trust, reliability, reputation, expectations, social norms, sacrifice. Indeed, without trust, which is the result of a positive reputation, no fruitful relationship between people is possible, especially during election campaigns. Emphasis is placed on the presence of expectations - each of the interacting parties builds its behavior and activities based on what the opposite party should do. This achieves interaction, cooperation and, finally, the cumulative effect of social capital [10].

It should be noted that trust is a key element in gaining power in democratic societies, as in most of them the system of political power is based on the principle of representation, or rather granting the right to rule over others according to a predetermined social contract and procedure. Without trust, the emergence of, first, authority - one of the three sources of power, according to the concept of M. Weber, and even the form of its implementation is impossible. Secondly, the third source of power, according to M. Weber, is law, within which it is possible to consider not only a set of formal, but also informal rules and norms that have the opportunity to become formal. Finally, thirdly, trust means certain

expectations, which within the state can act not only as rules of action, but also sanctions for violating them, which must be supported not only by authority but also by force - the first, according to M. Weber, source of power.

The relationship between social capital and the acquisition of political power is described by Fukuyama: "Social capital can be defined simply as a set of informal values shared by group members that enable collaboration within the group. If group members can count on others to behave honestly and they can be relied on, they will be able to trust each other. Trust is like oil, which makes the work of any group or organization more efficient." In the context of elections, the members of the group are the electorate, which trusts one or another policy to represent its own interests at different levels of government.

First, the successful use of social capital during elections suggests the possibility of finding "like-minded" people without much effort. Helping which without the requirement of instant return, the person helps himself, expecting the same attitude to himself.

Second, in conditions of limited, finite, and sometimes inaccessible financial, physical, and human resources, social capital serves as a surrogate, a substitute for these resources, "through which social actors create and mobilize a network of their connections within one organization or between organizations in order to gain access to the resources of other social actors, and this type of capital becomes important in the most difficult and responsible moments of political games, when financial resources run out and human resources are no longer available [5, 6, 9].

Third, according to R. Patnam and Radaev, social capital contributes to the development of social structure, improving the efficiency of the organization, which coincides with the strategy of any political entity, especially during a busy election campaign.

Fourth, Busse believes that any political decision is "based on the mobilization of those resources that a person has directly or through friends and relatives." This means that social capital is successfully converted and used in election campaigns, the process of using this type of capital may not be noticeable due to the specifics of certain connections, but it is necessarily present [7-9].

Thus, the use of election campaigns as a field in which to successfully convert accumulated social capital suggests that structural and systemic links are becoming increasingly important because they become essential levers and tools for access to other resources of different individuals, groups, and organizations. This type of capital becomes important in the most difficult and responsible moments of political games, when financial resources run out and physical access is no longer available. The real problem of the possibility of conversion, or rather the use of social capital in elections, becomes in those cases when certain carriers of social capital begin to be granted

privileges, which ultimately leads to the discrediting of the system of democratic representation of power. Because its bearers are not always specialists in public administration, they generally pursue another goal, such as their own enrichment. Therefore, in the future, when researching this problem, it is necessary to focus more on the opportunities of social capital and the consequences of its use in election campaigns. Also, it is necessary to identify all the negative trends of this process and the possibility of eliminating them.

## Conclusions

In the course of writing the article, all the tasks and the problem situation were solved. The main and additional hypotheses that election campaigns are a successful form of converting social capital with high potential have been confirmed. The alternative hypothesis, in turn, was refuted.

This topic, today, is becoming more interesting and popular for researchers, especially Western ones. It relates to and intertwines closely with the economic, social and political spheres of society. Social capital is the property not only of a particular person, but in general, of society as a whole. Because outside of it, its existence is not possible.

The political sphere of society also did not pass the participation of social capital. It has thoroughly penetrated into this area and has its own specificity of existence and application. This is not surprising, because modern world development trends often lead to something like this, to the course of various processes and phenomena from one area to another.

Features of the conversion of social capital in the political space are due to the specifics of the latter. All political actors have social capital, just like anyone with social ties, so they can use it successfully to achieve their own goals, including political ones. Politics and its attractions, in some cases, may not be the ultimate goal, but an intermediate step to achieve other benefits.

Connections, trust, resources are the main concepts of social capital, which cannot be avoided in any interpretation of the importance and scope of this category. In election campaigns, they also have their own, specific meaning, forms of manifestation, functions and role. Therefore, it immediately becomes clear that it is impossible to avoid talking about the possibility of using and converting social capital in any political process, including in the process of election campaigns.

Election campaigns as a phenomenon are familiar and understandable to each of us, their purpose is also clear to all. But, all the same, it is impossible to say that this is a process of exclusively political nature, here almost all political actors, elites, leaders use and mobilize their efforts and possible types of resources. The course of

this process affects and generates various processes and phenomena in the social organism. Therefore, it is not difficult to see a direct connection with social capital. It, in turn, provides access to resources of various kinds. Based on the trusting relationships that have developed between two or more actors, new positive phenomena or processes can emerge that manifest in as many different ways as possible. For example, it may be a decision to create your own party. Because Agent A has a solid economic base, Agent B has human resources, and Agent C has the necessary knowledge and skills. Combining them on the basis of trust and a common goal - indicates the high potential of social capital and its accumulative nature.

Election campaigns are a good way to convert social capital, because it is a plane on which a wide range of agents are concentrated, which will provide you with available resources, in exchange for help in achieving your goal, you also get the desired, necessary benefit just for you. It can be money, new connections, acquaintances, or even the opportunity to get a certain position that will serve as access to an administrative resource. That is, the conversion of social capital here has a wide range and list of possibilities. Behind which are hidden trends of different nature, because it is impossible to avoid any consequences for their own activities or inaction, all events have a systemic nature and consequences.

Elections as a way of converting social capital can influence the course of other political events and processes. Negativism in which is inevitable. Therefore, I came to the conclusion that the possibility of converting, or rather the use of social capital in elections, becomes problematic in cases where certain carriers of social capital, who are not always specialists in public administration, but mainly pursue another goal, for example - their own enrichment, begin to provide certain privileges, which leads to a violation of the basic principles of government formation, and desecrates political institutions as a way of presenting and realizing public interests. This discredits political and state power, as well as the very idea of politics. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the systemic nature of the process under study and to consider further prospects for the use of elections as a way to convert social capital.

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