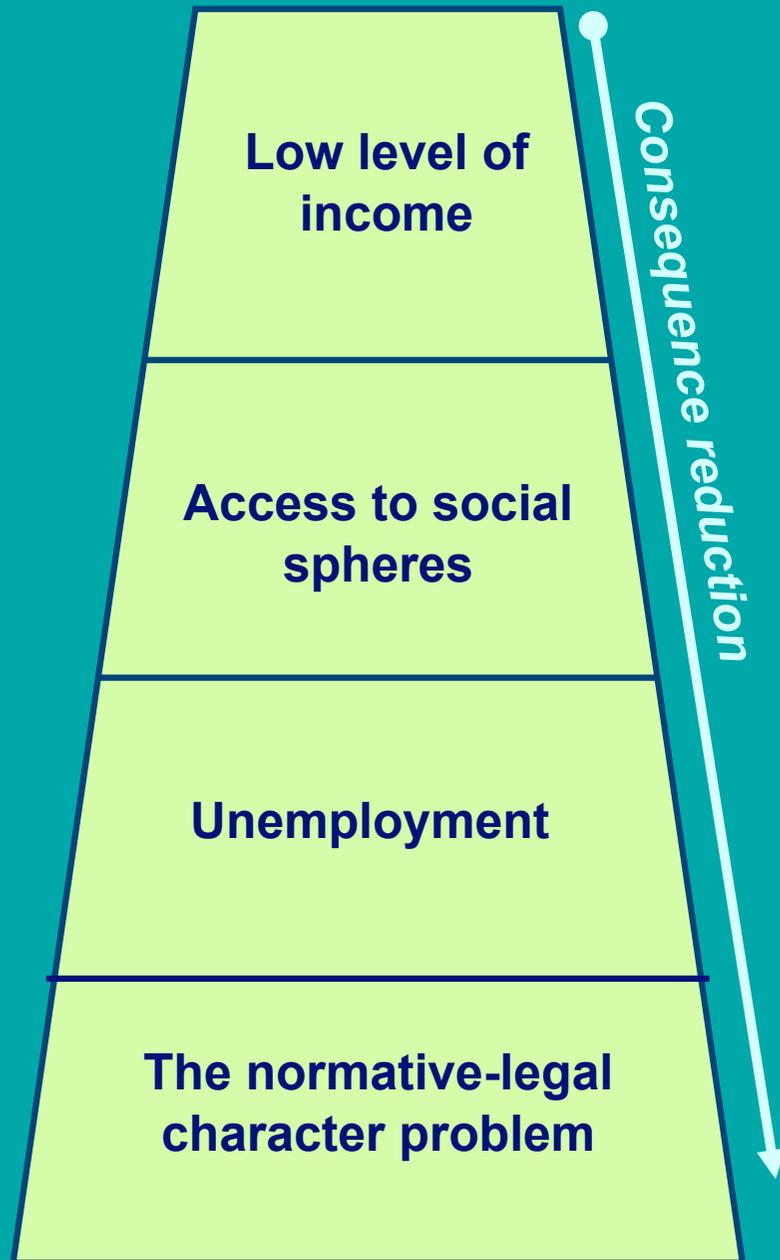


# **Causes and Manifestations of Social Inequality in Ukraine**

*Fund “Intellectual Perspective”  
Olesya Trofymenko*

# Issues of the day in Ukraine



- *The problem of access to social sphere is germane to inequality, since the matter concerns the limited capacity for getting qualitative services, that are guaranteed by the government, but nevertheless they are given selectively: medical care, education etc. The matter concerns the impossibility of getting free medical care; guaranteed social insurance.*
- *The problems of normative-legal character include: imperfection of the legislative system; procedural violations of the law, bribable judicial branch.*

# Growth and reduction of social inequality since the dissolution the USSR

**Spheres, where the degree of social inequality has increased :**

- ▮ access to the power
- ▮ education
- ▮ provision of pensions
- ▮ society stratification

The criteria are situated according to the reduction of their mentioning by the respondents:

**Spheres, where the degree of social inequality has decreased:**

- ▮ access to religion institutions

▮ The respondents consider, that social inequality appeared after the dissolution of the USSR, though some people assert that inequality existed in the Soviet Union, but it had a concealed character.

▮ Almost all respondents assert that since the dissolution of the Union, inequality in Ukraine has redoubled, it concerns nearly all spheres except religion.

▮ Most of the respondents believe that social inequality will only increase.

# The Reasons for social inequality

## Reasons for the existence of social inequality

- ▮ Level of income
- ▮ Reasons, concerned with the imperfection of the legislative system and political elite
- ▮ Personal qualities
- ▮ Personal contacts
- ▮ Destiny, fate

The criteria are situated according to the reduction of the frequency of their mentioning by the respondents:

## Reasons for the appearance of social inequality

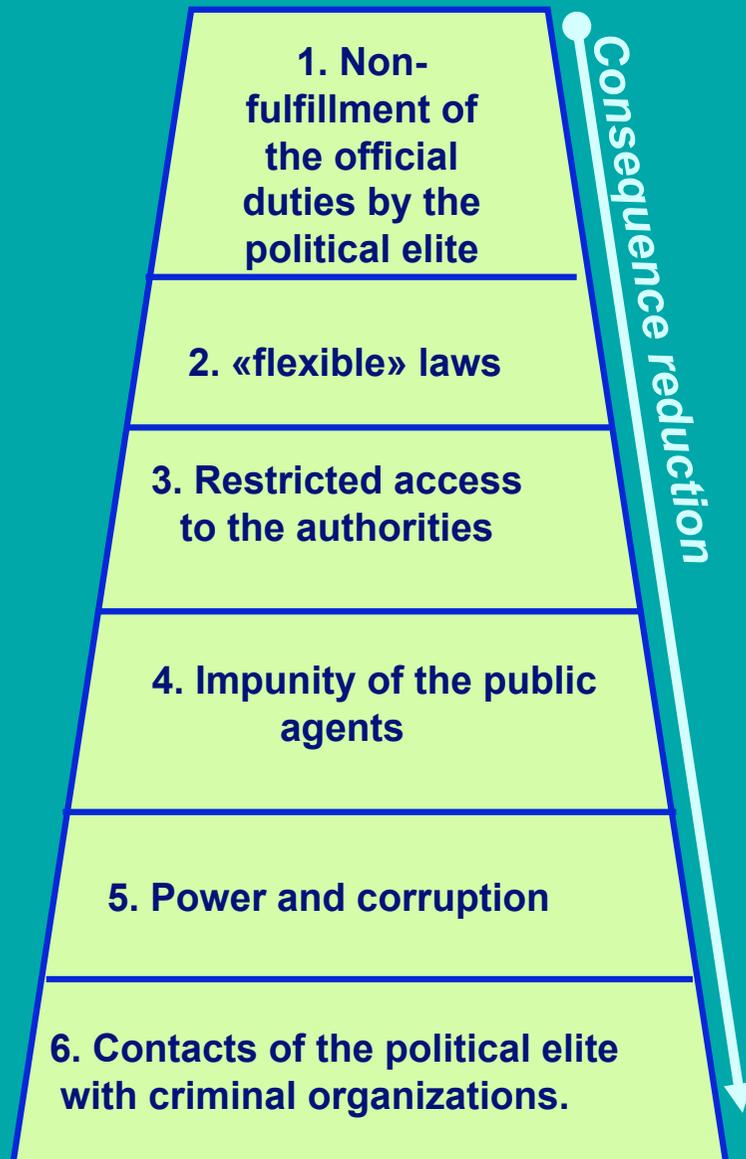
- ▮ Genetic (natural) factor
- ▮ Historical factor

**Social inequality, in the judgment of the respondents, appeared because of two factors: historical and genetic factors.**

▮ ***Genetic factor*** includes: predisposition to certain kind of activity, physical factors that determine a person's place in the society and her social status.

▮ ***Historical factor***. There is an idea that the reason for social inequality lies in the history of Ukraine. Ukraine was under other countries for a long time. This factor influenced on Ukrainian culture and its mentality.

# Reasons, concerned with the imperfection of legislative system and political elite



1. The political elite do not fulfill their functions for two main reasons: the authorities are not interested in governmental problem-solving, since they pursue their own interests; the gap between people and government is so large that the representatives of the latter can't become aware of public needs.
2. It is considered, that laws in Ukraine are promulgated not for guaranteeing equality or improving the economic and social situation, but for "segregating" the authorities from people.
3. The political elite is a closed group; since the dissolution of the USSR it has been almost impossible to become its member.
4. The lack of control over governmental activities leads to permissiveness and legal irregularity.
5. Respondents consider corruption of the authorities to be a cause of inequality, since the political elite possess discretionary powers, and allocate governmental resources at their own discretion, not for the benefit of society, but for the benefit of certain persons.
6. In the respondents' opinion, the authorities and crime are often two sides of the same coin.

# Income as a reason of social inequality

Income

Access to  
different goods

Unjust difference  
of income

Access to  
educational sphere

Access to  
medical sphere

- getting higher education;
- inequality in school.

The basic condition for getting the higher education is money resources, not personal qualities and capabilities.

You won't have a high-quality medical service without a bribe. Low level of profit is the main reason of social inequality, not a corruption in the medical system.

The disproportion between the political elite's income and the profit of "mere" people may reach dozens of one times.

The lowest profit has representatives of:

- the system of medical service;
- system of education;
- industry etc.

# Protectionism, fate and personal merits as the reason for social inequality

## Protectionism

This reason of social inequality is emphasized in employment, salary level, in the sphere of medical care, in educational sphere etc.

## Destiny, fate

Fate and luck are one of the main conditions which determine social and material status of a person.

You don't have to be educated, skilled or have personal contacts if you are lucky.

## Personal merits

Respondents point to the following factors that contribute to raising of material and social status:

- diligence,
- quick wits,
- pleasant appearance,
- kindness,
- responsibility,
- good breeding,
- economy,
- enterprise,
- talents,
- faculties,
- goal-orientation.

# Manifestations of the inequality in social spheres

## The main manifestations of the inequality:

- ❖ Personal contacts (protectionism) in political sphere.
- ❖ Regional and settled inequalities (city – village).
- ❖ Inequality in the sphere of education and medical care (quality and accessibility).

Consequence reduction

## Additional manifestation of the inequality:

- ❖ Language discrimination.(Eastern Ukraine – Russian language, Western – Ukrainian)
- ❖ Lifestyle of rich and poor.
- ❖ Manifestation of the inequality in the access to receiving the lodging.
- ❖ Manifestation of the inequality in the intergeneration relations (income, as the main factor of the relationship forming).

- 1. Personal contacts:** The problem of social inequality and personal contacts is emphasized in political sphere.
- 2. Regional and settled inequalities:** Undeveloped infrastructure of countryside gives no opportunity to country inhabitants feel equal with citizens in following spheres: access to education, medicine; quality of roads etc.
- 3. Inequality in the sphere of education and medicine:** The high level of income guarantees an access to high education and qualified medical service.

# **What can be done for overcoming social inequality: the role and functions of the government and other political institutions**

## **What can the government/authorities do:**

- 1) Governmental actions, aimed at the reduction of social inequality in the system of education and medical care;**
- 2) Activities from the direction of the government, aimed at the infrastructure development of a village;**
- 3) Role of the authorities in lowering the level of unemployment;**
- 4) Activities from the direction of the government aimed at the improvement of the legislative system;**
- 5) Governmental support for small and medium business;**

# What can be done for overcoming social inequality: the role and functions of the social institutions

## What can social institutions do:

**Mass media** are not able to solve the problem of social inequality, but they can clue up the population on the problem existence, hold some independent research aimed at the corruption expose.

**Charitable organizations** help to low selections of the population in providing sustenance, clothes, and medical care, but these organizations are not able to such a complicated problem.

**European Union** – most respondents consider that EU won't help Ukraine in solving the problem of social inequality without any self-interest. The respondents are sceptical about EU and its help. Ukraine is a international scene of political battle between Russia and Western countries.

**What can be done for overcoming social inequality:  
The role of the individual/ person/personal energies in changing the social status**

**Activities aimed at the change of the political situation in the country:**

- 1. To replace the present government.**
- 2. More serious approach to the election process. Careful study of the candidate being elected and the program of the political party.**
- 3. The formation of the civil society, that will control the actions of the political elite, demand from the representative government the reports on the programs that were held.**

**Activities aimed at the rise of the financial and social status:**

- 1. To find an extra source of income.**
- 2. To find the more high-paid job.**
- 3. To leave for another country in search of a job.**

**Thank you!**