



**SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND WHY IT MATTERS FOR THE
ECONOMIC AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPE
AND ITS CITIZENS: POST-COMMUNIST CENTRAL AND
EASTERN EUROPE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

**DELIVERABLE 2
DESK RESEARCH**

UKRAINE

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Introduction

Under the Soviet regime the aims and tasks of leveling urban and rural differences as well as differences in lifestyle were of utmost importance, whereas the problems of social inequality were of no particular interest for scientific, social, political or artistic discourse.

There were actual attempts to create and declare social heterogeneity. To the end of Leonid Brezhnev's governing economic and property differences became stable and widespread. The most notable differences were in access to state benefits, privileges associated with party membership and bureaucracy affiliation, individual farm income. The ideologists treated them as differences in lifestyle rather than social inequality due to the fact that they manifested themselves in the possibility to own a big flat, a car, clothes, household appliances, variety of food stuff, etc. These differences were becoming more and more visible turning into burning problems of social inequality in many life spheres. Nevertheless, these differences could not be levelled out neither by means of salary size, nor by various social benefits.

The situation changed drastically when the Soviet Union collapsed and Ukraine became politically independent, losing its economic ties with many of the former Soviet republics. .

The government of independent Ukraine adopted a policy of dismantling the former social, political and economic system, which gave the opportunity to introduce unplanned mechanisms of economy management. Explosive appearance of market economy phenomenon in Ukrainian society as well as private property had mixed social consequences. The rebirth and development of private property brought about dramatic economic differentiation among the population, dividing it into the rich and the poor with the overwhelming dominance of poor population in Ukrainian society.

Dramatic transition to market economy and private property had the broad negative social consequences. The leading role in this process was played by rapid and outrageously unjust privatisation of national property and by the ways it was distributed.

As a result the phenomena of economic and/or property inequality, status inequality and inequality in access to various social benefits appeared in Ukrainian society.

Unequal, low-quality access to health services, education, information technologies and recreational resources indicates fundamental social inequality in initial preconditions for individual development that are seen as vital. This reduces the possibility of group and individual social mobility. Thus, unequal initial social conditions influence the whole life cycle of the coming generations of a vast number of people, irrespective of people's awareness of the phenomenon.

Political independence and transformational processes led to two phenomena. On the one hand, inequality relations have started development; on the other – scientists became aware that this phenomenon was part of scientific picture of the world.

Inequality started to be seen, firstly, as a diversification of the society which manifests itself in the stratification of Ukrainian society; secondly, as “new inequality”, i.e. a state of “artificially” created unequal access to various society resources.

There are numerous social differences among which the most widespread are:

- economic and/or property differences;
- status and professional differences;
- social and demographic differences;
- ethnologic and cultural (regional) differences;
- political and legal differences;
- gender differences.

The analysis of each particular difference may not be performed without reference to a concrete social context. It should be done within the framework of social relations both in mass and scientific conscience.

- We are going to analyse some of the aforementioned differences in the following contexts:
- the appearance of the new social structure and social inequality;
- Ukrainian statehood and political and legal aspects of social inequality;
- social inequality viewed from a civil society standpoint.

Section 1. New Social Structure and Social Inequality

It should be noted that economic and property disproportions, which appeared in Ukrainian society during the early stages of its transformation, are no doubt negative from social fairness viewpoint. Nevertheless, they had a general positive effect, namely – the appearance of “new” social and class structure with a more rich and diverse palette of strata, statuses and positions.

There are various opinions concerning this problem. Nowadays the most common view is that claims about the wiping of class differences and appearance of new homogeneous social structure have turned out to be mere declarations. Scientific discourse registers several models of social and class stratification of a modern Ukrainian society. Below are some of them (Table 1, 2, 3).

Table 1. Models of Social and Class Stratification

	MODELS			
	I	II	III	IV
	Elite	Rich	Prosperous	Underground
Social classes (strata)	Upper stratum	Well-off	Average profit	Market-oriented class
	Base stratum	Well provided	Mere average	State-oriented class
	Lower stratum	Disadvantaged	Poor	
	Bottom	Indigent	Beggars	

The models are based on both official statistics data and social monitoring data (see Table 2. 3). Comparative analysis (Tables 1, 2, 3) of the models of social and strata structure of Ukrainian society interpreted by sociologists, economists and political scientists shows that the majority of Ukrainian population belongs to poor and very poor. Their share in the country's population has decreased to 60-70% over the last 2-3 years. Second big stratum is potentially possible middle class which comprises about 25%. The rich and very rich, according to different estimations, constitute a little less than 5% all over Ukraine.

Table 2. Population Self-estimation of Their Families' Welfare, %

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Indigent	6	8	5	6	4
Poor	40	38	36	40	41
Average	52	53	57	53	54
Well-off	1	1	1	1	1
Rich	1	0	1	0	0

Source: Annual monitoring by Institute of Sociology NAS of Ukraine (year 2002-2006)

It should be noted that nearly all the researchers agree about the following characteristic traits of the new social structure:

- economic transformation has lead to the appearance of a socially polarised society in Ukraine;
- the majority of public opinion polls confirm population's understanding of status identification, which manifests itself in the majority of respondents' identification with a particular stratum and indicates quite a high level of status consciousness crystallisation;
- in modern Ukrainian society the new social and class structure is being formed, on which basis the "new" social inequalities are appearing in economy, politics and culture;
- the categories of "alienation" and "exploitation" are implemented in a transformed way.

Structural transformation of the society and the increase in stratification diversity is interpreted as the transformation of social inequality from its classical form to postmodernism. Object ownership is replaced by the possibility to control resource flows and have access to benefits (so called *controlled welfare*).

Table 3. Stratification of Ukrainian Society (year 2006)

Parameters		Lower stratum			Middle stratum			Upper stratum	Non-stratum groups	
		Indigent	Very poor	Poor	Limitedly well-off	Moderately well-off	Prosperous	Rich	Students	Pensioners
Demography, %										
Share in population (12-65 years old)		0.23	8.46	26.78	24.86	8.60	1.40	0.14	17.91	11.62
Share in economically active able-bodied population		0.32	12.0	38.0	35.28	12.21	1.99	0.20	-	-
Sex	Male	54.5	42.9	44.8	49.0	54.0	50.0	42.9	50.1	36.9
	Female	45.5	57.1	55.2	51.0	46.0	50.0	57.1	49.9	63.1
Age	12-15	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	42.5	0.0
	16-19	9.1	2.9	2.6	2.7	2.2	2.9	0.0	44.1	0.0
	20-29	27.3	22.0	25.6	24.5	24.2	29.4	57.1	13.4	0.2
	30-39	27.3	23.4	25.0	25.5	28.5	22.1	28.6	0.0	1.2
	40-54	36.4	42.2	39.0	37.3	35.3	36.8	14.3	0.0	21.5
	55-65	0.0	9.5	7.8	10.1	9.8	8.8	0.0	0.0	77.1
Education	Incomplete secondary	9.1	2.7	1.0	0.8	0.2	1.5	0.0	13.7	0.0
	Secondary	72.7	32.4	27.6	22.9	15.6	13.2	57.1	2.8	0.9
	Specialised secondary	18.2	41.0	37.8	37.4	39.1	33.8	14.3	0.5	1.2
	Incomplete higher	0.0	3.7	4.1	4.6	4.3	7.4	14.3	0.7	0.0
	Higher	0.0	20.2	29.5	34.2	40.8	44.1	14.3	0.0	0.2
Social status/Okcupation										
Businessmen		0.0	2.9	6.1	6.6	9.8	11.8	42.9	-	-
Managers		0.0	2.0	3.7	5.6	10.6	14.7	0.0	-	-
Specialists		0.0	13.4	20.7	23.8	25.2	25.0	14.3	-	-
Office workers		9.1	12.0	13.1	14.7	13.4	13.2	-	-	-
Workers		36.4	37.6	31.1	30.5	24.2	23.5	14.3	-	-
Housewives, young mothers		0.0	13.2	12.1	7.3	6.7	2.9	0.0	-	-
Unemployed		45.5	13.2	6.9	6.6	4.3	1.5	14.3	-	-
Other		9.1	5.6	5.5	3.8	3.8	4.4	14.3	-	-
Undecided		0.0	0.2	0.7	1.2	1.9	2.9	0.0	-	-

1.1. The poor

Many authors pay attention to two phenomena – the rise of a potential middle class and the appearance of the majority of poor and very poor population strata. Scientists believe that the latter are characterised by the exclusion from the society and acquired (not hereditary) marginality. Its peculiar traits are:

- complete/partial exclusion from the social production process (unemployment) and the loss of economic ground;
- loss/narrowing of social status;
- loss (break) of the former social possibilities, ties and values.

As a rule these people are “normal”, they’ve lost their way in Ukrainian society due to cardinal rapid changes.

It is this stratum which is associated with the maximum quantity of social inequality which is seen as unfairness.

Table 4

Distribution of Population According to the Expenditure Rate

	1999		2005	
	Cumulative expenditure rate reckoning by a conventional adult (UAH/month)	Specific weight	Cumulative expenditure rate reckoning by a conventional adult (UAH/month)	Specific weight
indigent	Up to 101	14.4	Up to 292	14.4
poor	101-126	13.4	292-365	12.7
average	126-270	57.1	365-537	30.8
moderately well-off	270-468	13.1	537-1018	34.0
prosperous	468 and more	2.0	1018 and more	8.0
Ukraine	----	100	----	100

Table 5

Poverty Indicators (years 1999-2005) (according to average Ukrainian limit), %

	Poverty rate according to average Ukrainian limit, %
1999	27.8
2000	26.4
2001	27.2
2002	27.2
2003	26.6
2004	27.3
2005	27.1

Table 6. **Population Distribution According to the Rate of Average Expenditures per Person. Ukraine. Years 1999-2006.**

All population with average expenditures per month, UAH	1999			2000			2001			2002			2003			2004			2005			2006		
	All households	Incl.		All households	Incl.		All households	Incl.		All households	Incl.		All households	Incl.		All households	Incl.		All households	Incl.		All households	Incl.	
		urban	rural		urban	rural		urban	rural		urban	rural		urban	rural		urban	rural		urban	rural		urban	rural
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Up to 30	5.7	1.6	13.7	2.3	1.0	5.1																		
30.1-60.0	18.6	12.6	30.7	10.2	5.9	19.3																		
60.1-90.0	23.5	23.3	23.9	16.6	13.9	22.0	20.8	13.6	36.0	15.1	8.8	27.6	10.1	4	22	5	2.2	10.5						
90.1-120.0	18.1	19.9	14.6	17.1	16.9	17.4	15.4	14.4	17.7	13.7	11.2	18.7	10.3	6.3	18	5.8	3.6	10						
120.1-150.0	12.0	14.2	7.4	15.2	16.3	13.0	14.7	14.7	14.4	13.3	13.1	13.6	11.6	9.9	14.9	7.9	5.7	12.4						
150.1-180.0	7.5	9.4	3.7	11.1	12.4	8.3	11.6	12.4	10.0	12.9	12.9	12.9	1.3	10.9	12.1	9.2	8	11.7	8.7	7.0	12.2	4.5	3.3	6.9
180.1-210.0	5.2	6.7	2.3	8.5	9.7	6.0	8.6	9.5	6.7	10.2	11.3	8	11.2	12.2	9	9.6	9.3	10.4	12.0	10.7	14.8	7.3	5.9	10.2
210.1-240.0	3.1	4.1	1.3	5.1	6.1	3.0	7.2	8.6	4.3	7.9	9	5.4	9.9	11.3	7.1	8.6	8.6	8.5						
240.1-270.0	1.8	2.3	0.8	3.9	4.9	1.9	5.6	6.6	3.4	5.8	7.1	3.4	7	8.4	4.5	8.6	9.3	7.2	13.6	12.3	16.2	10.6	8.7	14.6
270.1-300.0	1.4	1.8	0.5	2.7	3.4	1.2	4	4.9	2.1	4.8	5.8	2.7	5.7	7.1	3.1	7.5	7.7	7.1						
300.1-360.0	3.1	4.1	1.1	7.3	9.5	2.8	4.9	6	2.5	6.4	7.9	3.6	8.2	10.4	3.9	11.4	12.8	8.5	14.0	13.8	14.5	11.8	11.0	13.5
360.1-420.0							7.2	9.3	2.9	9.9	12.9	4.1	14.7	19.5	5.4	7.8	9.5	4.5	11.3	11.4	11.0	11.2	11.2	11.1
420.1-480.0																18.6	23.3	9.2	9.1	9.9	7.6	10.5	10.9	9.7
480.1-540.0																			7.1	7.6	6.2	8.1	8.1	8.2
540.1-600.0																			5.2	5.5	4.6	7.2	8.0	5.7
600.1-660.0																			4.4	4.9	3.1	5.6	5.9	4.6
660.1-720.0																			3.3	3.4	2.9	4.5	5.2	3.2
Over 720.0																			11.3	13.5	6.9	18.7	21.8	12.3
Genie index	0.34	0.32	0.36	0.33	0.32	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.34	0.33	0.31	0.33	0.32	0.30	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	0.30	0.31	0.29	0.31	0.31	0.30
Share of population with average monthly expenditures per person under living wage	-	-	-	-	-	-	89.0	86.0	95.2	88.4	85.0	95.2	83.4	78.1	93.7	73.8	67.5	86.5	60.0	55.5	69.1	53.6	48.4	64.3

This fact is reflected by a great number of households whose average monthly expenditures per person are much lower than the official poverty line. In 1999, according to statistics (Table 4), the cumulative share of population with average monthly expenditures under 25 USD per one adult comprised ~ 30%. In 2005 the same population group's average expenditures almost tripled, comprising up to 70%.

However, it is obvious that these expenditures don't even cover a food basket, let alone non-food expenditures (public services costs, transport fares, clothes, household chemicals, etc.). Low social status of this stratum is confirmed by its expenditure structure. The major share of the expenditures is allotted to food purchase whereas expenditures on recreation, education, entertainment, etc. are almost absent.

Large-scale presence of the poor has become a real fact of social inequality, confirmed by the poverty rate dynamics (Table 5) and the rate of average expenditures per person (Table 6) over the last 7 years.

1.2. The unemployed

One of the strata among the poor is comprised by the unemployed. Official statistics offers the following dynamics of unemployment in Ukraine. This cohort of the poor can be "quoted" because of two reasons. Firstly, some part of the officially unemployed are actually employed illegally. Secondly, some part of population working abroad can be found in this group.

Table 7. Unemployment Rate in Regions of Ukraine. Years 1996 and 2004, %.

	1996	2004	Changes
<i>Ukraine overall</i>	7.6	8.6	+1.0
AR Crimea	8.4	6.9	-1.5
Vinnitsya region	4.0	8.0	+4.0
Volyn region	7.3	10.8	+3.5
Dnipropetrovsk region	6.0	6.3	+0.3
Donetsk region	5.0	7.3	+2.3
Zhitomyr region	7.4	11.2	+3.8
Zakarpattia region	8.1	8.2	+0.1
Zaporizhka region	10.5	8.0	-2.5
Ivano-Frankivsk region	11.0	10.2	-0.8
Kyiv region	5.9	8.3	+2.4
Kirovograd region	11.2	11.0	-0.2
Lugansk region	8.3	9.2	+0.9
Lviv region	11.1	10.0	-1.1
Mykolayiv region	6.8	10.7	+3.9
Odesa region	5.9	7.0	+1.1
Poltava region	5.9	7.4	+1.5
Rivno region	11.1	12.5	+1.4
Sumy region	5.2	10.5	+5.3
Ternopil region	4.7	12.0	+7.3
Kharkiv region	8.4	7.9	-0.5
Kherson region	9.5	10.7	+1.2
Khmelnysk region	5.9	10.1	+4.2
Cherkassy region	8.1	11.5	+3.4
Chernivtsy region	7.7	12.2	+4.5
Chernigiv region	4.6	9.5	+4.9
Kyiv	10.9	4.8	-6.1
Sevastopol	6.1	5.6	-0.5

Table 8

Main Indices of Labour Market (yearly data)

	Economically active population				Including								
	aged 15-70		of able-bodied age		working population				unemployed population (according to ILO ¹)				
	on average, thous. of people	in % to population of corresponding age group	on average, thous. of people	in % to population of corresponding age group	aged 15-70		of able-bodied age		aged 15-70			of able-bodied age	
					on average, thous. of people	population of corresponding age	on average, thous. of people	population of corresponding age	on average, thous. of people	economically active population of corresponding age	on average, thous. of people	economically active population of corresponding age	registered in state employment centres, thous. of
1999	22 562	62.2	20 944	73.7	19 948	55.0	18 378	64.7	2 614	11.6	2 566	12.3	1 100
2000	22 831	63.2	21 151	73.7	20 175	55.8	18 521	64.5	2 656	11.6	2 630	12.4	1 179
2001	22 427	62.3	20 894	72.6	19 972	55.4	18 453	64.1	2 455	10.9	2 440	11.7	1 063
2002	22 232	61.9	20 670	71.7	20 091	56.0	18 541	64.4	2 141	9.6	2 129	10.3	1 028
2003	22 171	61.8	20 618	71.4	20 163	56.2	18 624	64.5	2 008	9.1	1 994	9.7	1 024
2004	22 202	62.0	20 583	71.1	20 295	56.7	18 694	64.6	1 907	8.6	1 888	9.2	976
2005	22 281	62.2	20 482	70.9	20 680	57.7	18 887	65.4	1 601	7.2	1 595	7.8	892

¹ International Labour Organisation

It can be inferred that one should take into account a few facts that can influence State Committee of Statistics data in this or that way. A huge number of Ukrainians work in so-called informal sector. Considerable number of able-bodied Ukrainians works abroad. There are no such data available for official statistics, yet the experts are unanimous that the number of labour emigrants is about several millions.

1.3. Middle class

Another social class (stratum) – middle class – gives rise to heated discussions and contrary viewpoints. There are various, sometimes even polar, opinions concerning this phenomenon. Some scientists do not recognise this social stratum whereas others claim that it already exists in Ukrainian society in its classical form. More or less serious researches verify that there is a kind of intermediate formation ranking between richness and poverty. According to Weber's tradition of social structure analysis one should note that this stratum differs from others in the presence of property and its sizes as well as in status and lifestyle, i.e. typical of this stratum life practice (house, medicine, clothes, circle of acquaintance, rest). People belonging to this stratum often run their own business using their skills, knowledge and professional experience, which confirms their status. Many researches highlight the fact that running own business levels out social and class inequality. Thus, profession, professional experience and education define income to a greater extent than property. Moreover, it is middle class that levels out unfair economic and property differences and mounts barriers in personal and social development on its way to democracy. By the way, the growth of small enterprises is an indirect indicator of this class growth.

Quantitative parameters of the middle class in Ukraine also vary from one research to another. Population's belonging to the middle class could be identified according to the following characteristics: average income, small property (accommodation, piece of land, means of production), quite a high level of education and professional training, self-identification as a representative of the middle class with rather a high status self-appraisal.

If we identify middle class according to all of these characteristics, we will get a little quantity of population – no more that 10%. According to experts this figure can be considered to be the “core” of the middle class. If we take into account transitional period and apply “milder” criteria, we will get 25% of population who have the potential to become middle class in the nearest future.

Table 9. Main Indicators of Small Enterprise Development

	Quantity of small enterprises, units	Quantity of small enterprises per 10 thous. of present population, units	Average annual quantity of employees ¹⁾ at small enterprises, thous. of people	Average annual quantity of hired ²⁾ employees at small enterprises, thous. of people	Share of hired employees at small enterprises in total quantity of hired employees at enterprises belonging to enterprise proprietors	Share of small enterprises in total gross output, work, services (without VAT and excise) overall in economy
1991	47084	9	..	1192.4	..	..
1992	67739	13	..	1248.0	..	..
1993	84780	16	..	1231.7	..	..
1994	85799	17	..	1104.3	..	..
1995	96019	19	..	1124.9	..	..
1996	96270	19	..	1178.1	..	..
1997	136238	27	..	1395.5	..	..
1998	173404	35	1585.9	1559.9	12.9	11.3
1999	197127	40	1687.9	1677.5	14.1	11.1
2000	217930	44	1730.4	1709.8	15.1	6.9
2001	233607	48	1818.7	1807.6	17.1	7.3
2002	253791	53	1932.1	1918.5	18.9	7.3
2003	272741	57	2052.2	2034.2	20.9	7.7
2004	283398	60	1978.8	1928.0	20.2	5.3
2005	295109	63	1890.4	1834.2	19.6	5.5

¹⁾ Including staff, out-of-staff and unpaid (owners, enterprise founders and their family members) employees.

²⁾ Including staff and out-of-staff employees.

1.4. Financial, Political and Administrative Elite of the Country

Financial, political and administrative elite of Ukraine is associated with social inequality far more often than others. It is reflected in scientific discourse as well as everyday life. There is no concrete statistics, but according to experts and provisional data, which cannot be fully relied on, this stratum comprises about 1.5% and can be amended.

The given percentage is often obtained by subtracting the rest of the strata from the general structure. The pedigree of Ukrainian elite is even more difficult to analyse. Generally, elite structure includes:

- administrative top of the former state party apparatus and its new representatives;
- state enterprise and factory managers (“red” directorate);
- financial and industrial clans of oligarchs which are conventionally identified with territorial administrative division of Ukraine (those belonging to Donetsk, Kharkiv, Odesa, Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk regions, etc.).

Financial and political sources of clans’ power lie in state authorities’ corruption and protectionism.

1.5. Gender Aspects of Social Inequality

The topic of social inequality, which arises when analysing the new stratification of Ukrainian society, has quite obvious gender aspects.

Having fixed the principles of gender equality in its Constitution (art. 3, art. 21, art. 24, art. 51) and having ratified almost all international Constitutions concerning this problem, Ukraine has progressed little further than mere declarations. Women, who make up 53% of the country’s population, de facto are not represented equally in political, economic, social and everyday sphere today. During the Soviet period the share of female representatives in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR was the lowest in 1938 (24%) and the highest in 1980 and 1985 after the elections (36%).

After the first elections in Ukraine in 1990 the share of female representatives in Verkhovna Rada went down to 3%. In 1994 this share rose up to 5.7% and in 1998 up to 8.1%, whereas after the 2002 elections it went down again to 5.1%.

Now, after the 2006 elections on the proportional basis, the share of female representatives in Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has gone up to 8.5% again.

However, there are much more female representatives on the local level. In separate regions the number of female representatives has gone up considerably after the 2002 and 2006 elections. Local self-government bodies are the most accessible governing bodies for women from a gender fairness standpoint. It explains the fact that today the percentage of female representatives in local councils is much higher than in Verkhovna Rada. Statistical data verify the fact that the lower the level of governing bodies is the more accessible they are for women. Thus, the share of female representatives in regional councils makes up less than one-fifth, in district councils – a little less than one-third, and in village councils – more than 40%.

But this situation doesn’t influence the fact that the share of politically active women remains low. Public opinion monitorings conducted by the Institute of Sociology NAS of Ukraine show that women are slightly less interested in politics than men. It verifies the fact that a real barrier for gender equality is not the right of vote but inequality of female gender statuses which are based on patriarchal gender stereotypes. One of them is the claim “Politics is not for women”.

In economy the share of women makes up about 30%. In the majority of cases females are represented in small and middle business. The salaries working women get make about 2/3 of the ones received by men, and their positions are lower. Thus we can observe feminisation of poverty: the majority of socially insecure strata consist of women.

Unemployment is a factor which intensifies social inequality. It is also gender marked. However, according to statistics more male are employed in Ukraine. At the same time they are also constant leaders among the unemployed (see Table 10).

Table 10. Unemployment According to Sex, %

Ukraine, overall		1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
		7.6	9.8	11.3	11.9	11.6	10.9	9.6	9.1	8.6	7.2	6.8
According to sex	Female	7.2	8.4	10.8	11.5	11.6	10.8	9.5	8.7	8.3	6.8	6.6
	Male	8.0	9.5	13.5	12.2	11.6	11.0	9.8	9.4	8.9	7.5	7.0
	Difference between them	0.8	1.1	2.7	0.7	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.4

Although the rights for education are legally equal, men receive better education than women (see Table 11). The situation in educational sphere is similar to the one in politics, economy and other spheres. For a long time women have been stereotypically perceived as mothers and housewives. Education has not been seen as an indispensable characteristic of women's social status.

**Table 11. Distribution of Population Aged 10 and Older who Have Education,
According to Sex. Ukrainian Population Census Data, %**

		1959	1970	1979	1989	2001
Both sexes	Complete higher	2.1	4.0	6.5	9.5	12.9
	Basic higher	-	-	-	-	0.7
	Incomplete higher	5.5	7.9	11.9	17.9	17.7
	Complete secondary	6.4	13.8	22.5	28.5	34.9
	Basic secondary	23.3	23.6	22.2	17.2	16.0
	Primary	29.9	27.8	25.2	17.2	16.0
	Incomplete primary	32.8	22.9	13.7	6.7	3.6
	Number of years of one person's studies (years)	5.4	6.52	7.94	9.02	9.91
Female	Complete higher	1.8	3.4	5.8	9.0	12.8
	Basic higher	-	-	-	-	0.7
	Incomplete higher	5.3	7.8	12.2	19.0	20.1
	Complete secondary	6.2	12.9	20.3	24.8	31.0
	Basic secondary	20.7	21.0	19.9	16.3	15.8
	Primary	25.6	25.9	25.6	21.4	14.9
	Incomplete primary	40.4	29.0	16.2	9.5	4.7
	Number of years of one person's studies (years)	5.08	6.16	7.51	8.71	9.79
Male	Complete higher	2.5	4.7	7.4	10.2	13.1
	Basic higher	-	-	-	-	0.7
	Incomplete higher	5.8	8.1	11.5	16.4	14.8
	Complete secondary	6.8	15.1	25.3	33.1	39.5
	Basic secondary	26.8	27.0	25.0	18.2	16.3
	Primary	35.6	30.1	24.6	18.8	13.4
	Incomplete primary	22.5	15.0	6.2	3.3	2.2
	Number of years of one person's studies (years)	5.84	7.0	8.38	9.41	10.03
Difference between females and males according to the number of years of study (years)						

1.6. Settlement Differences

The periphery (especially rural dwellers) has far fewer life chances than the centre under the new circumstances. Mass migration of the youth from villages to district centres, towns and oblast centres confirms this phenomenon the most vividly. A large number of Ukrainian villages are dying out, although earlier they were considered to be cultural generators of social capital. The veto on land buying and selling has played an important role in the process of social collapse in Ukrainian villages. The veto is the main hindrance on the way of the investment flow which could be directed to the villages.

Unequal status of the village in comparison with the city can be seen while analyzing naturally developing (yet illegal) land market. The cost of 0.1 ha of land in the capital or not far from oblast centres is sometimes many times higher than the cost of peripheral land.

Section 2. Political and Legal Aspects of Social Inequality

There is one more important context of the new social stratification of Ukrainian society and the problem of social inequality. This is constitutional context. The Constitution of Ukraine declares the building of a social society, thus, it legally defies the existence of social inequality.

Legally inequality is classified as inequality in rights and inequality in the realisation of rights.

In totalitarian society total equality was guaranteed by the Constitution (art. 34 of the Constitution of the USSR). Inequality appeared as a result of extra possibilities which one could have due to occupied positions, participation in political organisations, “dedication”, etc.

The Constitution guaranteed the equality in gender rights (art. 35) and forbade discrimination according to all the criteria provided by the international standards (art. 34, art 36 of the Constitution of the USSR).

In the course of the development of Ukrainian society during the 90s of the last century preconditions for social inequality that existed earlier haven't disappear. They transformed and became more obvious. The list of such preconditions has been extended to include legal preconditions. The Constitution fixed the right to entrepreneurship (art. 42 of the Constitution of Ukraine), guaranteed the freedom and protection of private property (art. 41 of the Constitution of Ukraine), inviolability of private life (art. 29-32 of the Constitution of Ukraine). Thus, economic inequality was legally acknowledged. In its turn, it provoked social inequality.

Entrepreneurship. There were no legal preconditions for economic inequality in the USSR because socialistic property (state, collective farm and cooperative property) was the basis of economic system. The property of trade unions and other public organisations, necessary for their tasks fulfilment, was also considered to be socialist.

Article 13 of the Constitution of the USSR provided for the citizens' property. Citizens could have in their possession only objects of utilities, conveniences and personal farms, dwelling house and earned savings. The basis of the property should have been made up by income from employment. The property was not to be used with the purpose of deriving other kinds of income.

Moreover, social equality was to be guaranteed by the public property growth, whose only source could be free labour (art. 14 of the Constitution of the USSR). The state controlled the extent of labour and consumption according to the socialist principle “From each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs”. The Constitution provided only for “individual labour activity in the sphere of primitive trade, farming, domestic services for population and other kinds of activities based exceptionally on personal labour of citizens and their family members” (art. 17).

However, the equality in economic sphere in the USSR one could undoubtedly classify as the equality of the powerless because no one had the freedom of private property and entrepreneurship. The position of a person in the state hierarchy provided for the access to economic benefits. The access had no legal regulations. Economic law of the USSR was basically made up by the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of the USSR dated 25 July 1988 #888 “About the adoption of the Regulation of production and technical goods supplies, the Regulation of consumer goods supplies and main conditions of contractual relations regulations with export-import operations”.

After the USSR collapsed new grounds of economic activities were adopted in Ukraine. The main laws which stimulated incipient entrepreneurship were the Law of Ukraine “About entrepreneurship” dated 7 February 1991 #698-XII, the Law of Ukraine “About enterprises in Ukraine” dated 27 March 1991 #887-XII, etc.

Afterwards Ukrainian entrepreneurship legislation was developed. Nowadays there are about 10,000 statutory acts of different legal effect and about 15,000 in tax sphere. Due to different reasons the first statutory acts could be characterised as the most liberal. Owing to this fact the citizens who had the access to the resources could easily evade the existing bans, which were quite few, by the way. In its turn, it led to a massive economic stratification of the society and considerably aggravated social inequality.

Speaking of the freedom of entrepreneurial activity one cannot but mention tax system of the state. This system had a marginal character in the Soviet state. Tax law was part of financial (budget) law and regulated taxes exceptionally as the means of state budget formation. It was caused by the fact that virtually all economy was state and cooperative; taxes in economy weren't fulfilling the tasks of economically free states. Thus, the first entrepreneurs ran their business under the exceptionally liberal tax system. However, at the turn of the 80-90s of the last century the state took a number of steps to create new tax legislation because of huge deficit of budget funds. Thus, the following decrees of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine appeared: “About the enterprise and organisation income tax” dated 26 December 1992 #12-92 and “About the citizens' income tax” dated 26 December 1992 #13-92, the Law of Ukraine “About the tax system” dated 25 June 1991 #1251-XII, etc. New taxes, among which value added tax, excise tax, etc., were introduced. Overall, in the 90-s of the last century tax legislation of Ukraine had fiscal nature and favoured not so much the development of economy in general as the filling of budget funds.

Later on tax legislation of Ukraine was quite liberalised, the taxes were reduced, and the system of simplified taxation of small entrepreneurs was introduced. At the moment there are 28 national and 15 local taxes and duties (compulsory payments) in Ukraine.

One should note that social inequality in the sphere of entrepreneurial activity is not legally fixed. It exists rather contrary to the existing legal rules. As a rule, social inequality is caused by the fact that people are too “close” to power, they have access to natural and financial resources, various benefits and preferences, provided by the current legislation. Corruption has led to the phenomenon that legal provision of any benefits or extra limitations is always seen as the way to personal enrichment or redistribution of the income, which has been obtained as a result of benefit usage or law violation.

Access to civil service. As far as the access to civil service is concerned, one had to be a member of CPSU² or in some other ways demonstrate the loyalty to the declared ideals to be appointed to leading civil service positions. Taking into account the fact that it was a particular position in the society that granted access to benefits, social inequality was caused by political preferences as well. Furthermore, legislation didn't fix any special limits. Moreover, civil service didn't stand out against the background of the general notion of service. “Single nomenclature of servant positions” (1967) didn't subdivide servants into civil and others.

However, with the growth of servant number and development of state administration system the necessity to reform this sphere became apparent. The Law “About public service in Ukraine” was adopted in 1990 in Ukraine. It stated the peculiarities of civil service and created the hierarchy of servants' positions, subdividing them according to the ranks and categories for the first time. It also established the demands and limitations for the employment of civil servants. At the moment this Law is, undoubtedly, out of date. Nevertheless, in its time it played a very important role in the formation of civil service as a legal institution.

There has always been inequality in access to civil service. Even now there is legal gender discrimination concerning boundary age of civil servants. Women are allowed to be civil servants up to the age of 55, whereas men are allowed to be civil servants up to the age of 60 (art. 23 of the Law of Ukraine “About civil service”, art 18 of the Law of Ukraine “About the service in the local governing bodies” and art. 42 of the Law of Ukraine “About diplomatic service”). There is also inequality based on such factors as education, health condition, etc.

Low salary, poor protection and low level of legal culture led to a number of negative consequences. Nowadays to become a civil servant one needs not only protection of those in power, party membership, etc., but also be ready to give bribes and demonstrate “loyalty” to concrete people, groups and party organisations.

On the ground of the aforementioned, one can draw a conclusion that there has always been and will be a kind of social inequality in the access to civil service.

² Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Participation in political life. The right to participate in political life of the society was widely guaranteed by the Constitution of the USSR dated 1977 (art. 9, 48) as well as it is by the Constitution of Ukraine. However, the possibilities of citizens' self-fulfilment in this sphere were limited by art. 6 of the Constitution of the USSR, which stated that there was only one leading and directing party – CPSU.

Democratisation processes in independent Ukraine led to the adoption of the Law “About the unions of the citizens” dated 16 June 1992 #2460-XII. This law regulated the activity of almost all the unions of citizens except for religious organisations and trade unions. When this Law met the needs of the changing political life no longer, another law was adopted. It was the Law “About political parties in Ukraine” dated 5 April 2001 #2365-III.

During the independence period electoral system of Ukraine was transformed from a purely majoritarian through mixed (when part of mandated in the representative bodies was elected according to the majoritarian system whereas another part was elected according to the proportional system) to a purely proportional (according to party lists). At the moment electoral process in Ukraine is regulated by the following Laws of Ukraine: “About the elections of people's deputies of Ukraine” dated 25 March 2004 #1665-IV, “About the elections of the deputies of Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, local councils and village, settlement and city chairmen” dated 6 April 2004 #1667-IV and “About the elections of the President of Ukraine” dated 5 March 1999 #474-XIV. Today Ukrainian political society lives under the conditions of immature political system and the absence of laws about the imperativeness of deputy mandate. The last Parliamentary elections demonstrated that the deputy mandate serves, in the majority of cases, as a means to access benefits. Taking into account the cost of election campaigns, such “access” is the prerogative of the rich, which, in its turn, aggravates social inequality.

Main social rights. The most important social rights can be considered the right to health services, education and social security. In the USSR this equality was in full legally established at the expense of state systems (art. 24, 42, 45 of the Constitution of the USSR). However, the citizens were trying to obtain education and health services of higher quality, that's why they were giving bribes or using their high positions. At the same one should admit that social inequality in the pension area is a really disputable issue because the pension size depended on the salary size or the positions occupied in the state machine.

For a long time the systems of pension security, health services and education remained “Soviet”-like in Ukraine. It is necessary to mention that these three kinds of the realisation of human social rights exist as a symbiosis of compulsory state (free, except for pension security) and voluntary (chargeable) systems.

Pension security in Ukraine is regulated by the Laws “About pension security” dated 5 November 1991 #1788-XII; “About compulsory state pension insurance” dated 9 July 2003 #1058-IV; “About state social assistance to persons having no right to pensions and to invalids” dated 18 May 2004 #1727-IV; “About non-governmental pension security” dated 9 July 2003 #1057-IV, etc. At the moment two systems of pension security – compulsory state and supplementary voluntary non-governmental – function simultaneously in Ukraine. One should emphasise the fact that even the system of state pension security provides for different pension sizes for different categories of citizens. For example, military servants (the Law of Ukraine “About pension security of the persons dismissed from military services and some other persons” dated 9 April 1992 #2262-XII) and those who have rendered outstanding services for Ukraine (the Law of Ukraine “About pensions for outstanding services for Ukraine” dated 1 June 2000 #1767-III) are provided with a higher pension size. It confirms a certain social inequality which is legally provided for. However, this inequality can be considered objective and reasonable.

Education. Education in the USSR was free of charge and it was state that provided it for all. In Ukraine the main basic law in this area is the Law of Ukraine “About education” dated 23 May 1991 #1060-XII. According to the current legislation in this area one can get chargeable education in private educational institutions and state higher educational institutions, where there should be no more than 50% of the chargeable places. Thus, social inequality in educational area is legally fixed and depends on financial well-being, although state free educational system compensates it to a certain extent.

One should note that school and higher education system as socialisation institutions are part of stratification process. They begin to reproduce social inequality in its inherent forms. The introduction of chargeable education in Ukraine led to the limitation of the poorest strata of population’s access to education. Illegal cash contributions in preschool children institutions and schools, bribery to get children free education and good marks at higher educational institutions have seriously discredited professional ethics norms. It has devaluated educational process as well as diplomas of many higher educational institutions and specializations. The system of education transferred into a new stratification system in the capital of Ukraine as well as in almost all oblast centres. Among educational institutions one informally distinguishes the ones for elite, average and poor people.

Professionals in engineering, technical and humanitarian areas have left their teaching positions for commercial ones because they had low salaries which regularly weren’t paid at all. It has led to a sharp fall in the quality of education, especially on the poorest level.

Territorial administrative inequality in educational infrastructure (old premises, absence of text books, equipment, PCs, etc.) gives rise to unequal possibilities of secondary and high

education. Educational infrastructure often significantly differs in such directions as centre-periphery, urban-rural.

Health care system in Ukraine has undergone much less reforms than pension or educational system. Art. 42 of the Constitution of the USSR guaranteed the citizens of the “...USSR the right to health care, which is provided by free qualified medical help”. Art. 49 of the Constitution of Ukraine guarantee every citizen “the right to health care, medical help and medical insurance. Medical help is provided by state budget financing of the corresponding social and economic, medical and sanitary, health-improving and preventive programmes. The state creates conditions for effective and accessible for all its citizens’ medical care. In state and municipal health care institutions medical care is provided free of charge; the existing network of these institutions cannot be reduced”. These regulations of the Constitution of Ukraine are developed in “The foundations of the legislation of Ukraine about health care” dated 19 November 1992 #2801-XII and other statutory acts. Chargeable health care functions in Ukraine alongside with ‘free-for-all’ state health care. However, insurance medicine system is absent in Ukraine. Specialists argue that it considerably hinders the development of this sector and the rise of its services quality. The quality of services in the free health care institutions is low. Budget financing on leftover principle is not enough to cover all expenditures. That is the reason why in state health care institutions the patients have to cover the expenditures from their own money to get the necessary services. Thus, social equality is declared legally, but gives no guarantees to fall back on. It is fictitious and doesn’t correspond to the conditions which have changed.

Table 12.

Dynamics of Relative Health Rate (% of Those who were Relatively Healthy from the Whole Population). Years 1990-2004

1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
62.6	53.7	51.9	50.0	48.0	46.6	44.5	42.1	39.6	34.2	30.6

Comparative analysis of the current legislation (namely, the Constitution of Ukraine and the legislation of the USSR dated 1977) allows to infer some conclusions concerning the main human rights and their influence on social inequality rate. The Constitution of the USSR was aimed above all at preserving and protection of the current social relations, which were based on communist totalitarian ideology. It didn’t guarantee many of the rights. The social equality, which it declared, wasn’t complete because there were legal and in the majority of cases illegal ways of benefit distribution.

On the one hand, the Constitution of Ukraine is more democratic compares to that of the USSR, because it ratifies almost all human rights acknowledged by the UNO (Universal human

rights declaration, International civil and political rights pact and International economic, social and culture rights pact).

On the other hand, The Constitution of Ukraine has provided Ukrainian citizens with new, much wider possibilities for self-realisation. But at the same it has created the basis for increase in social inequality. There are new factors, mainly economic, which promote social inequality. They are based on private property and freedom of entrepreneurial activity.

The mechanisms of social dialog, whose task is to work out a platform for social consensus, are not fully functional. All the participants of social dialog (state, employers' unions, employees represented by trade unions) are still being permanently reorganised. Collective agreement at the majority of enterprises is either absent altogether or functions formally. One should state that over the years of independence the whole area of social labour relations hasn't become an active force to overcome current social disproportions and differences.

Ironically enough, it should be admitted that in order to establish the values of liberal societies, such as freedom and individualism, no less important values, such as solidarity, tolerance, ability to understand each other, social responsibility, were sacrificed.

Speaking about state in the context of social inequality, one should mention that the state has its own mechanisms which allow it to smooth out social disproportions. Let's touch upon two of them in brief: tax and social policy.

At the moment social tax (due) structure is like this:

Table 16.

Current Rates of Social Dues

	Payer	
	<i>Employee, % from salary</i>	<i>Employer, % to remuneration of labour fund</i>
Pension insurance	1.0-2.0* (up to 5.0 – for civil servants)	33.2
Unemployment insurance	0.5	1.3
Insurance connected with temporary loss of ability to work, birth and burial expenses	0.5-1.0*	1.5
Insurance connected with professional accident and professional illness entailing disability	-	0.86-13.8 (average time rate – 1.73)
Total	2.0-3.5 (up to 6.5 – for civil servants)	36.9-49.8 (on average – 37.7)

* The size depends of the size of salary.

** The size depends of professional risk class of production (according to the 1-st class insurance tariff makes 0.86%, according to the 67-th, the last, - 13.8%).

Social dues structure is quite cumbersome that's why it has been criticised for a long time for a number of reasons. Since the middle 90-s these taxes have been insignificantly reformed (10%

due to Chernobyl fund was abolished, social insurance was limited to 4.5%). From 2004 to 2006 Ukrainian Parliament considered eight laws in draft concerning the introduction of a single social tax (SCT) neither of which was adopted. From 2004 flat income tax rate (13%) was introduced instead of the existing progressive one (from 10% to 40%).

It's easy to see that reforming models have both positive and negative effects and are directly connected with the problem of social inequality. Thus, the replacement of progressive income tax rate by the flat one simplifies tax administration, but at the same time creates more favourable conditions for the rich because it lessens their tax load. Joining of all social dues into a single one and reduction of its rate simplifies administration, reduces tax load on the remuneration of labour fund and, theoretically, should favour legal payment of salaries. The latter should widen social and financial taxation base and finally lead to reinforcement of social security system and weakening of social demographic source of social inequality.

However, reforms like this don't give rise to optimism in practice (judging by Russia's experience). Contrary to expectations the deficit of pension and other funds has risen significantly and the salaries are still being paid in "black" money.

Experts believe that this kind of reform can become topical for Ukraine no sooner than in 2008.

It is connected with a number of reasons:

- Sharp rise of the pension size in 2004 led to huge deficit of Pension Fund, which comprised 20 milliard UAH (~4 milliard USD) at the beginning of 2006. Reforms under such conditions may cause the collapse of the existing social security system.
- Rise or reduction of fiscal pressure by itself doesn't change economic behaviour of population definitely and fast. The survey conducted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) didn't reveal relation between the tax size and labour motivation. As a result, fiscal policy by itself cannot serve as a direct means of the state to realise socially fair policy and level out economic chances for all population strata.
- Tax policy as it is (tax size, validity of the tax, tax quantity) may be perceived as fair or unfair. As it has already been mentioned, according to its Constitution Ukraine is a social state. Geographically and culturally it is situated in European area, that's why it has to take into account the experience of its neighbours concerning the construction of such institutions. Ukraine, as well as the majority of European countries, has traditional division of fiscal load between income tax and dues from employees and employers.
- There are disproportions in social tax system in Ukraine today. This factor hinders both economic development and humanisation of the whole social economic area.

Huge tax on remuneration of labour fund doesn't stimulate the employer to raise the salary. The share of the latter is ~20% in GDP of Ukraine. According to experts, the most appropriate action in reforming of this system would be the introduction of SST³, its reduction to 30%, salary rise and employee salary tax rise.

One more essential component of the reform, according to experts, would be the prolongation of pension reform, introduction of the second level of pension security (savings system of obligatory national pension insurance) and the third one (establishment of non-governmental pension funds (NGPF)).

Current state of pension system in Ukraine doesn't secure decent life for the elderly citizens. For quite a long time the current pension security system is one the most serious factors of tension in the society. Everyone is dissatisfied with it: pensioners as well as employers as well as employees. Employers have good reasons to consider their payments to Pension Fund too high. It prevents them from raising the salaries for their employees and reducing shadow economy. Employees, in their turn, are dissatisfied with the low salary because of high pension payments and with the fact that when they become pensioners they will be getting low pensions. Pensioners are dissatisfied with low pension and the fact that pension size doesn't depend on neither work record, nor pension payments they have been making throughout their whole lives. Thus, the majority of people see an obvious necessity to change pension security system drastically because it fails to satisfy basic criteria of effective pension security system.

³ Single Social Tax

Table 18

Average Size of Monthly Pension and the Quantity of Pensioners (the Beginning of the Year)

Unit of measurement	Years	Average size of the assigned monthly pension to the pensioners registered in social security bodies				The quantity of pensioners (mln.)
		total	including:			
			for age	for disability	for survivors	
Roubles	1991	103.6	109.7	...	58.0	13.1
	1992	539.6	554.8	...	423.6	13.6
	1993	9735	10204	10469	6304	14.2
Thous. of roubles	1994	292.1	306.9	317.4	185.5	14.5
	1995	1156	1174	1368	809	14.5
UAH	1996 ¹	38.7	38.8	45.6	33.2	14.5
	1997 ²	51.9	50.8	67.3	43.6	14.5
	1998 ²	52.2	50.9	68.6	43.5	14.5
	1999 ³	60.7	60.1	75.9	47.8	14.5
	2000 ¹	68.9	69.3	82.3	52.0	14.5
	2001 ³	83.7	85.2	94.5	61.0	14.4
	2002 ³	122.5	127.1	129.7	85.5	14.4
	2003 ³	136.6	141.8	142.4	95.9	14.4
	2004 ⁴	182.2	194.2	170.9	120.2	14.3
2005 ⁴	316.2	323.8	305.2	262.9	14.1	

¹ Incl. compensational payments

² Incl. target financial help

³ Incl. target financial help and indexation

⁴ Incl. target financial help, indexation, state address help to pension (subsidies), and bonuses for outstanding services for Ukraine

Furthermore, there are other factors contributing to the reproduction of social inequality, among which are the following:

- Salary contribution rates are the same for all payers whereas certain categories of population get much higher pensions. Thus, either all payers contributing the same sum should be getting the same pension or those getting higher pensions should pay higher contributions.
- Students, unemployed, mothers receiving child benefits and other categories of people with no registered income eventually have the right to be given work record. This automatically entails the right to be getting a pension of a certain size in the future.
- In the majority of countries pensions for disability are assigned only to those citizens whose health is really poor, i.e. the injuries are constant and they indicate that the invalid's income will significantly decrease. At the same time solitary pension system in Ukraine provides the payments to invalids, whose disabilities cannot be classified as serious.
- Many invalid pensioners are able to work on. Thus, more than 25% of all the invalids of the 3-rd group continue working. In addition, the criteria used to assign this kind of pension are often not of medical character. It creates wide possibilities for corrupted actions.
- Women retire 5 years earlier than men although life expectancy after retirement of the former is 22.5 years whereas it makes 14.2 years with the latter.

Certain categories of pensioners (civil servants, scholars, mass media workers, MPs, etc.) are getting up to 90% of their former salary. This is possible due to the fact that pension security in Ukraine is regulated by more than 20 legislative acts today. As a result, average pension allotted according to the Law "About pension security" makes less than 10% of the average pension allotted according to the Law "About people's deputy status".

Section 3. Civil Society and Social Inequality in Modern Ukraine

Civil society is an important source of social state formation and quite an effective mechanism of overcoming of social inequality.

However, monitoring data are conspicuous enough to realise that the given constituent is in its first formation stages in Ukraine.

Table 19

The Member of which Non-Governmental or Political Organisation are You?

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1. Hobby club	2.5	3.0	1.2	1.2	1.7	1.8	1.7
2. Political party	0.8	1.7	2.2	2.0	1.9	2.5	4.6
3. Social political movement	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.8
4. Ecological movement	1.1	0.9	2.0	1.5	1.3	1.1	0.9
5. NGO, fund, association	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.9
6. Non-traditional trade union	1.5	1.7	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.2
7. Art union	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.5
8. Sports club, society	2.8	3.3	2.0	1.6	2.1	1.9	1.8
9. Professional union	2.9	1.9	2.8	3.4	2.9	3.3	1.9
10. Student society, youth organisation	2.0	1.4	1.8	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3
11. Religious organisation, church society	5.2	4.3	4.0	4.2	4.2	3.8	2.6
12. Farmer union	0.7	0.2	0.9	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.3
13. Another organisation, union, movement	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.8
14. I don't belong to any non-governmental or political organisations or movements	82.9	83.6	83.9	83.2	83.8	83.7	83.6
No answer	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1

Local self-government bodies take an important place among the system of representation of social and political interests of population. The law about local self-government was adopted in 1997. Nevertheless, these bodies had no actual levers of political and financial power. Consequently, they had no real authorities. Regretfully, the situation in this area today is nearly the same. Monitoring data analysis reveals the fact that the system of representative power isn't effective and doesn't grant equal security for all the citizens. It leaves much to be desired.

Table 20

Is it Possible to Say that an MP Elected from your District is Able to Represent Your Interests in the Parliament?

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1. Yes	7.1	7.8	8.5	7.7	9.2	12.3	12.8
2. Not sure	37.9	36.1	37.6	35.3	34.1	36.6	42.9
3. No	32.1	34.4	36.4	41.1	39.9	32.7	25.6
4. I don't know who has been elected	22.0	20.7	16.9	15.8	16.6	18.4	18.7
5. An MP has not been elected from our district	0.7	0.9	-	-	-		
No answer	0.3	0.1	0.7	0.1	0.2	0.1	

Table 21

If Local Council Upheld a Similar Decision, Could you do anything against such a Decision?

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1. No, I wouldn't be able to do anything	60.1	56.3	55.8	56.4	54.9	46.2	50.3
2. Difficult to say	32.5	34.2	32.9	31.1	31.7	36.6	32.9
3. Yes, I could do something	7.3	9.5	11.2	12.3	13.3	17.2	16.7
4. No answer	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1

3.1. Party System and Social Inequality

The phenomenon of political diversity in Ukraine is a positive one. For dozens of years there has been no political life for the citizens of Ukraine. Nowadays there are choice and equal possibilities to express one's preferences and likings. To a certain extent political competition levels out each party's chances and raises the price of each individual elector voice irrespective of the party's wish. Thus, any elector is acknowledged as politically (and consequently socially) significant regardless of their social, demographic, ethnic or property characteristics. It is an actual step on the way to social diversity and differences without inequality and discrimination.

There are a lot of various political parties in Ukraine (~100 parties). At the same time the number of actually influential parties is surprisingly low. The new Law about elections, which was adopted by the Parliament, has given a new impulse to party system development in Ukraine. However, no significant changes could happen during such a short period of time.

Political parties of today's Ukraine are not similar to their western democratic contemporaries. In fact, they represent ideological legislative power of upper Ukrainian bourgeoisie. Their creation and functioning is based on oligarch clans' money. In other cases they parasitize (to a certain extent) on the administrative resource.

Such parties don't have wide social basis and serve as an umbrella for political and business elite's interests. Very often the elite propagate illegitimate behaviour models. The parties, in fact, serve as a factor which reproduces and modifies social inequality in political and legal area. Leading party programme analysis confirms in the majority of cases that their declarations differ from social and economic reality.

All the programmes and manifestos of all Parliament parties in today's Ukraine have no regulations concerning the system of progressive taxation of physical bodies' income, which was abolished earlier in Ukraine and was to favour the reduction of income differentiation of the richest and the poorest population strata. The income of all physical bodies in Ukraine has been taxed according to a single tax scale, although the differentiation rate is several times higher than the indices of developed European countries.

There are no regulations concerning the necessity of introduction of progressive tax system of real estate objects in the programmes and manifestos of all Parliament parties. However, it would favour the reduction of differentiation between palaces' and castles' owners and the poorest strata of population. At the same time, one should admit that the Programme of the Party of Regions provides for the regulation about "the introduction of a special tax on luxury. The money obtained in this way should be allotted to meet the needs of the most unprotected population strata only. It should not be allotted to meet the needs of the Government and its officials".

That is, neither the Programme of the Party of Regions, nor the Programmes of coalition communist and socialist parties, nor the Programmes of opposition Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc and "Our Ukraine" party provide for clear regulations concerning legislative limitations of the income of the richest strata of Ukrainian population.

Moreover, during the first year of coalition Government of the Party of Regions, SPU⁴ and CPU⁵ the overwhelming majority of measures concerning the reduction of poverty level in Ukraine has not been planned.

The Programmes of left-wing (CPU and SPU) pro-government and opposition parties contain the regulations concerning "yearly increase of actual salaries by 10%", increase over 2007-2009 of "the income of people who work by two times" (CPU), increase of the "average" salary by 2.5 times over 2 years ("Our Ukraine" bloc). However, no programme states that it is necessary to speed up the increase of minimum salary in comparison with the average one and to reduce the gap in salaries in comparison with average European standards. That is the reason why social differentiation is unlikely to be reduced even with actual increase of average salaries and income.

The Programmes of the majority of political parties represented in Verkhovna Rada have clear regulations concerning the limitation of public utility services tariffs. However, government coalition has in fact been keeping itself aloof from the control over public utility services tariffs that have risen many times. None of the parties' Programme regulations quoted above is being observed. Tariff rise leads to the further impoverishment of the poorest population strata and decreases the income of averagely well-off population significantly. Actually, only opposition (Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc) speaks out in Verkhovna Rada and separate local Councils against tariff rise.

Thereby, the Programmes of all Parliament parties (government as well as opposition, both left-wing and liberal) don't state a clear strategy aimed at the necessity to decrease social differentiation and favour social inequality in Ukraine. Separate, concrete measures mentioned in government coalition party Programmes are not carried out at all in overwhelming majority of cases.

⁴ Socialist Party of Ukraine

⁵ Communist Party of Ukraine

Thus, it can be inferred that modern party system in Ukraine despite all its positive features cannot, and often doesn't want to, influence the problems of social inequality significantly.

3.2. Social Inequality Reflected by Mass Media

Mass media are one of the most effective mechanisms that define symbolic and semantic space of social inequality within the framework of civil society. Mass media have long been taking one of the first places among social institutes enjoying population's greatest trust. Mass media can successfully reproduce some knowledge about social inequality. Moreover, according to public opinion polls mass media form one of the most effective channels of communication which people consider to be trustworthy.

The abovementioned calls for the analysis of the vast information array reproduced by mass media.

The aim of the analysis is to do a research into the most widespread stereotypes and social inequality ideas functioning in the information field.

We have conducted mass media content analysis* as a pilot project. It enables us to draw some preliminary conclusions.

- The subject of inequality is legitimate in domestic mass media today. The most popular issues are the following inequalities: *gender, ethnic, economic, political inequalities of the disabled*.
- Social notion of inequality is quite simple and trivial in the majority of cases. To make problem situations concrete journalists mainly pay their attention to social and demographic characteristics of the subjects in crisis situations, they examine their needs, resources and possibilities, which are quite limited in most cases. The kinds of social inequality are chiefly differentiated according to social life activities. The problems of the modern Ukrainian society, which are connected with social inequality, are reproduced mainly on the level of individuals, groups and institutions, i.e. they are localized on micro- and meso-levels.
- One common drawback of the discourses devoted to social inequality issues is their non-constructiveness, absence of conclusions, concrete mechanisms to level out inequality. There is no complex and system determination analysis. Too much attention is given to collaboration rules and procedures, mutual obligation agreement, competence zone division.

* The analysis was based on mass media articles for the last 6 months of 2006 and January 2007 (the articles were selected from "UNIAN" information agency database; 1,260,000 articles were found by the key word "inequality" search, whereas "social inequality" phrase was mentioned considerably less frequently – only 118,000 articles were found. 320 articles from 61 sources were selected for the further analysis).

- Stories about *gender and economic inequality as well as inequality of the disabled* are more traditional and stereotyped. *Political inequality* is also interpreted quite superficially. *Ethnic, gender and stratification inequality* is represented one-sidedly. Publishers' excessive anxiety dominates in the descriptions of *psycho physiologic and biologic defects of physically challenged people*. *Economic and ethnic inequality issues* are often described in such a way so as to produce dramatic effect.

The main issues raised by publishers concerning *economic inequality* are “antagonisms between hired workers and production means owners”, “risk liability”, “vulnerability”, “uncertainty” and “dissatisfaction” of labour subjects. *Ethnic inequality* is seen as opposition and rejection of different ethnic group representatives, which arise due to language and culture differences existing among them. *Political inequality* is seen in the context of the attempts to justify status quo, to present unequally divided resources and the variants of their mobilization and redistribution.

Thus, domestic mass media have passed the phase of the formation of thematic discourse concerning social inequality. This fact is confirmed by the vocabulary unification, identity of information and target text structures, problem differentiation, stability of role positions of case-study participants, peculiarities of dialog organisation, etc.

Conclusions

Summarising the above-mentioned, one should note that modern Ukrainian scientific and political public thought is characterized by the Renaissance rather than Weber's interpretation of social stratification and social inequality system based upon this stratification. The given positions (statuses) are usually not associated with classic Marxist antagonistic characteristics in mass conscience. The majority of people verify them as apparent consequences of the former social and political system collapse.

The given phenomenon passes the stages of everyday, politic, ideological and scientific discourses and acquires different forms of realisation. At the same time it becomes legalised and legitimised in public conscience. “Inequality becomes no longer a notion marked by negative value; people start realising it as dissimilarity, pluralism of lifestyles” (L. Ionin).

As far as quantitative characteristics of social inequality are concerned, one should mention that official statistics and social research data confirm the fact that this phenomenon is present in Ukrainian society.

The regulations concerning the creation of equal and humane life conditions for every citizen declared in the Constitution (social state construction) are in fact mainly ideological

declarations. Budget, fiscal, regulatory and social policy of the state confirms stable and elective preferences to certain social strata (upper bourgeoisie, political elite, bureaucracy).

Modern party system in Ukraine as well as the state itself unfortunately reproduces existing social inequality system in the majority of cases. Although there seems to be ideological differences between the parties, in fact they preserve the system of economic and political preferences to different big capital groups.

Middle class is a real social force that has objective interest to create equal life chances for the majority of the citizens. It is ideologically oriented to meritocracy standards of equality and social fairness. At the moment due to a number of social, cultural, political and economic reasons middle class is in its formation phase.

It is necessary to search for and develop the system of criteria to define the phenomena and processes of social inequality; to focus on the search for the chances and models to soften (and sometimes to eliminate) social inequality manifestations in concrete perspective time limits.

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