THE ROLE OF POLITICAL ELITES IN REGIME CHANGES IN BELARUS AND UKRAINE.

Olga BELOVA
Ph. D. Student,
Department of Comparative Analysis of Political Areas,
Institut d’Etudes Politiques, Paris, France

e-mail: olgagille@aol.com

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Introduction.

In order to better understand the political changes and the nature of the regimes that appeared in the Soviet Successor States during the 1990’s we suggest to study the political elites that emerged in these countries. The introduction of new democratic institutions and procedures that occurred at the beginning of the 1990’s in the majority of these countries was not sufficient to ensure the successful transition towards democracy in every cases. In fact the renewal in the composition of the national political elites, that was stimulated by the institutional changes, did not necessarily conduct to the transformation of the political elite, and in particular in the mechanisms of their recruitment and functioning. The fragility of the new institutional design was revealed in some countries when new political actors that gained power during first wave of the democratic elections used their new institutional positions in order to enlarge and consolidate their personal power. The outcome of the strategies oriented to the domination of the Presidential institution over all other bodies of the executive power as well as the reinforcement of control over the legislature and the judiciary, was the appearance of hybrid political regimes where authoritarian practices of power could be dissimulated behind the façade of the democratic institutions.

In this paper I will propose some explanations for this particular mode of political development in post-communist countries that brought out political regimes with authoritarian tendencies in some former Soviet States. My analysis join the elitist approach which presumes that the nature of political regime depends heavily on the type of political elite. I will give a particular attention to the study of change in the mechanisms of recruitment to political elite and their effects on the type of the elite. The process of the recruitment influences considerably the nature, the orientations and the agenda of the political elites. At the same time, political recruitment in itself represents an important political issue, as it determines the conditions of the access to the political institutions.

Therefore, I would like to study the changes in the process of the elite recruitment in two post-communist countries, Ukraine and Belarus, in a period going from 1994 to 1996. Before proceeding to this analysis I will give a brief description of the recruitment process that used to exist during the soviet period. It will help us to understand better the nature of changes and the influence of the former
soviet model of cooption as the mechanism of recruitment to the communist elite on the process of elite recruitment in the Soviet Successor States. Then I will show how an important amount of competencies in the recruitment for positions of responsibility in the executive was concentrated in the new Presidential Administrations as the outcome of the transfer of power from republican communist party central committees to the presidential institution.

After a detailed study of the Ukrainian and Belarusian Presidents’ increasing power in the field of recruitment I will present the typology of appointments based on the differences in the selection criteria. This typology was elaborated on the results of detailed analysis of the personal cases of appointments to the top positions in the central executive bodies, after the election of the Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma and of the Belarusian President Alexandre Lukashenko in 1994. Finally, I will discuss how the importance of personal criteria in the recruitment to political elite could influence the constitution of patronage networks in the central executives and show the tendencies of extending of this patronage networks in order to control other political institutions through the staff policy.

In conclusion I aim to reveal the effects of the reinforcement of cooption mechanisms of recruitment on the type of political elites and on the prospects for the political development in Ukraine and Belarus.

*Cooption model of recruitment to Soviet political elite and its effects.*

The functioning of the main political institutions is generally assumed by the members of political elite that occupy the key positions in these institutions and that take part in the process of decision making on the national level. In the period of regime change the role of political elite increase in an important way because its members could take part in the choice of the new political institutions and influence in the decisive way their competencies and mutual relations.

The new political institutions are rarely the products of an abstract institution building project and in many cases they reveal the continuity with the previous institutions. The post-communist regimes, that appeared in Soviet Successor States at the beginning of the 1990s, are founded on political institutions and procedures that represents the outcomes of the modification of the previous institutions and procedures. For this reason I would like to show some important elements of the Soviet political system before proceeding to the analysis of the institutional and political elite changes in Belarus and Ukraine.

The process of recruitment in the soviet elite in general, and in the communist party elite in particular, was based essentially upon cooption. All the important positions in the different fields of activity that supposed some responsibility in the decision making were enumerated in the list of the...
Nomenklatura. The selection of the candidates, the appointment and the dismissal on the positions mentioned in the Nomenklatura list were controlled by the competent communist party body. In every Party Committee there was a special Department of the party organisation and staff work which main activity consisted in the supervision of the recruitment and career mobility of the staff in subordinated party committees and soviet executive bodies. Other specialised departments were in charge for the recruitment and mobility careers of the specialised managers in their field of professional activity. The main criteria for the successful selection was in first place the communist party membership, high technical education, Russian nationality or perfect assimilation to the Russian culture (Farmer 1992:196). The cooption model of the recruitment crossed all administrative levels and was applied even on the background level. For instance, in order to become communist party member the candidate had to be recommended personally by one or two old party members.

In fact, the Nomenklatura system was a large and extremely elaborated system of cooption on positions of responsibility on different administrative levels and in different fields of activity of the Soviet state. This system ensured to the Communist party total control on the recruitment and career mobility over all soviet elite. In fact, it guaranteed the supremacy of the political elite over other social elites (economic, cultural, scientific, etc.). At the same time, the control and regulation of the staff policy was one of the best means of the party control on the elaboration and implementation of the Soviet state’s public policies that was extremely well expressed in the slogan: “Staff decide everything”.

Nevertheless, the exclusive use of the cooption model for the recruitment to the political elite as well as for the elite in general includes some potential dangers. The cooption model supposes that the candidate for elite position is selected by the members of the elite in office. Generally, it means that in order to succeed the candidates need to satisfy the requirements defined by the acting elite members. In case the number of positions associated with elite status is limited and the period of the office tenure is not limited, the members of elite in office could try to preserve their positions by limiting the access of the new members. On the other hand, in the case of political elite, necessity to satisfy the requirements for political orientation of the selectors could conduct to the impossibility to criticise the existing policies and to introduce the new ones. The logical consequence of the evolution of this type of system could be the isolation of the political elite from the society and it increasing inefficiency in the responding the needs of the society development.

In the Soviet case, as conformity to the communist party ideology and acceptance of the existing political orientations were considered as the main selection criteria, it prevented the possibility of the open contesting of the government policies and their eventual modification and adaptation to the need of the soviet society during an important period of time. The consequences of the application of this model was also the blockage of the access to the high political positions and the domination of the soviet politics by a gerontocratic elite since the beginning of 1970s. The policy of
the ‘cadre stability’ introduced by Leonid Brezhnev by the end of 1960s guaranteed to the occupants of the high administrative positions the security of their jobs and gave the possibility to keep them for a long period and sometimes until death. At the same time soviet education system continue to produce highly qualified specialists who could not enter easily the elite. On the other hand the increasing number of elite members could not benefit from the rapid career mobility inside the elite. As a result, at the beginning of the 1980’s, the situation became critical, with entire generations of frustrated highly qualified candidates incapable to join the elite or to pursue the upward mobility inside the Soviet system.

The biological end of the ruling Soviet elite at the beginning of 1980s opened opportunities for its renewal. Nevertheless, the number of the positions in key political institutions as well as on other levels of the soviet administrative system was not sufficient in order to satisfy the ambitions of a huge number of potential candidates looking for social promotion. This structural crisis of the elite recruitment was accompanied by the ideological, economic and social crises of the Soviet system and revealed in the mid 1980 an urgent need to reform the political system as well as to redefine government policies.

The logic of transfer of power, basis of political institutions’ transformation at the beginning of 1990s.

In contrast with some countries of Eastern Europe, as for example Poland or Hungary, where the new political institutions appeared as the outcomes of round table negotiations between different political forces, in most of Soviet Successor States they were chosen by the ruling communist elites.

A brief analysis of the institutional transformations at the end of 1980s in the Soviet Unions that continued at the beginning of 1990s in the framework of new independent states, as it was the case for Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, shows the importance of the role that national political leaders played in the choice of new institutions and procedures. It also helps to explain the particular role that the introduction of Presidential institution played in the new institutional design.

The strategy of political liberalisation implemented in the Soviet Union by the end of 1980 was conceived by the General Secretary of CPSU Mikhail Gorbachev in the logic of continuity. Initially the proclaimed goal was the improvement of the existing political system in order to increase its performance rather than to replace it. One of the first important political reforms was the creation on 1 December 1988 of the new legislative body - the Congress of the USSR People’s Deputies that replaced the all-Union Supreme Soviet and the introduction of partly free elections that were held on 25 March 1989. Other crucial element in the modification of the Soviet political system was the abolishment by Central Committee of the CPSU on 4 February 1990 of the Article 6 of the Soviet
Constitution which had guaranteed the CPSU’s monopoly of power. This decision was the crucial step in the process of the creation of the multi-party system. The consequences of this act were dramatic for the CPSU. Once moved away from its control function the party could not prevent any more the appearance and the emancipation of different social elites and new political forces and lost its main interest for a large part of its members, which consisted in the guarantee of social promotion.

In this context the function of General Secretary of the CPSU, that Mikhail Gorbachev occupied since 10 March 1985, lost its importance. In the expectation of this foreseeable weakening of the Party, Gorbachev transferred a part of his power to the new function of Chairman of the Presidium of Supreme Soviet of the Congress of Peoples Deputies to which he was elected without any difficulty on 25 May 1989.

Nevertheless, the Congress was in first place a legislative body. Legislature that traditionally played a symbolic role in the definition of policies in the Soviet system monopolised by the Party could not easily be transformed into an important political institution especially in the absence of a developed and consolidated party system. The vacuum created by the loss of its central place in the political system by the Communist Party central apparatus was rapidly filled by the creation of the new Presidential institution that inherited an important part of party competencies in the matter of central policies definition. Formally, the creation of the office of President of the USSR was approved by the Congress of the USSR People’s Deputies on 15 March 1990 and Mikhail Gorbachev was elected to this post.

Theoretically this transfer of power in the new executive institution should provide new legitimacy to Mikhail Gorbachev in his role of the head of the Soviet state. In practice, this model of the power transfer was cleverly reproduced by some other republican political leaders that benefited from the decentralisation tendencies released since the weakening of the Communist Party control.

In fact, the person who probably most skilfully benefited from the application of this strategy of power transfer was Boris Yeltsin. Remote from the core of the communist elite in 1987 after a conflict with some of its conservative members and after the loss of Gorbachev support, that had earlier promoted Yeltsin to the Politburo and to the function of First Secretary of Moscow City Party Committee, Yeltsin took his revenge in 1989. He was elected as the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation on 29 May 1989. In this office he benefited from the all-union referendum of 17 March 1991 on the issue of the future state of the USSR, in order to join for Russian voters the question on the creation of the new office of President of the Russian Federation. Three month later, on 12 June 1991, he was elected to this office with 57.3% of the votes. The direct election with universal suffrage conferred him an important legitimacy that helped him to consolidate his power and to play a crucial role in the dissolution of the USSR.
The success of the Russian President was probably at the origin of the creation of the President office in Ukraine, which was established in June 1991 by the republican Supreme Soviet with elections scheduled for the 1 December 1991. The acting Chairman of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet, former Second Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Leonid Kravchuk was the first interested in the creation of this office. It was little surprise that he gained the presidential election in the first round with 61.6% of votes.

In Belarus the Presidential office was introduced later by the new Constitution adopted on 15 March 1994 with the elections scheduled on 23 July 1994 (first round). The Chairman of the Belarusian Supreme Soviet, Stanislav Shushkevich, who did not belong to the soviet communist elite, lacked of political ambitions as well as of political resources in order to influence similar institutional change in Belarus. Finally, the creation of the Presidential institutions was inspired by the acting Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich who became the main official candidate in the elections. Nevertheless, the strategy of power transfer could not be efficient any more after years of deep economic and social crisis under Kebich government and facing new actors that appeared during these same years on Belarusian political scene.

In fact, after the wave of declarations of independence by the republics that followed the failure of the attempted coup d’etat on 18-21 August 1991 in Moscow, the Presidents or the Chairmen of the ex-republican and now national Supreme Soviets became the acting heads of their states. In these conditions the signature on 8 December 1991 of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha agreement on the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States replacing USSR was rather individual choice of the country leaders that received important powers in national decision making. The successful implementation of this decision, despite some conservative reactions in the national parliaments dominated by communists, was facilitated by the fact that it opened new possibilities of the upward mobility to a large part of the republican elite members and granted them with a status of national elites. In fact republican Supreme Soviets, elected on 4 March 1990, were automatically granted by the status of the national parliaments. The republican Cabinets of Ministers, once relieved of the all-Union and Communist party control, received enlarged competencies and became the new national governments. At the same time the necessity to ensure the development of new independent states was followed by an important increase in the number of new central executives bodies: Ministries, State Committees, Presidential Administration, Special Committees, etc., and thus by an important increase in the number of the elite positions. Therefore, these important institutional changes resulted in the creation of the Soviet Successor states with new political institutions could be partly explained as a response to the structural crisis in elite renewal of the soviet elite described earlier.
Besides the change in the political institutions there was also an important change in the mechanisms of recruitment. The adopted procedures of the recruitment in the new political institutions in principle corresponded to two models: (1) one based on the electoral competition for the MPs seats in the parliament and for the Presidential office and (2) another based on the cooption in the government and other bodies of the executive.

The effects of these institutional and procedure changes were not immediate on the composition of national political elites. Even if in Ukraine an important turnover occurred in the composition of the government at the beginning of 1990s, the most important changes in the composition of the national elite were due to the parliamentary and presidential elections held in 1994. As for Belarus, there was almost no change in the composition of its political elite until the first presidential elections in 1994 and parliamentary elections in 1995. Thus, the study of the turnover in Ukrainian and Belarusian political elites in the period between 1994 and 1996 give an excellent possibility to discover the main methods of recruitment and their effects on the types of the post-communist elites that appeared in both countries in the mid 1990s.

I would like to say here that I define national political elite as persons occupying top positions in the main political institutions of the country and capable to influence the process of the decision making on the national level. Thus, the national political elites in Belarus and Ukraine will be defined as persons who occupy the top positions in the national parliaments, governments, and presidential administrations.  

The institutionalisation of the recruitment process in Belarus and Ukraine.

The issues of political elite recruitment acquire particular importance in the period that follows the election of new President. As we saw it before, this office was conceived in the logic of the transfer of power of central Communist Party apparatus to the new Presidential institution. One of the outcomes of this transfer was the attribution to the President of an important amount of competencies in the recruitment to the top offices in the executive. Thus the successful candidate for President office after his electoral victory received a huge power of appointments not only in the Presidential Administration but also in the government and other central executive bodies.

In order to be able to assume these large appointment competencies the President need to relay on the institutional structure that will be in charge of the recruitment issues. Thus, an important part of the competencies of the appointments to the positions in the republican and local executive bodies that belonged in time to the republican Central Committee, have to be ensured in the new political system by the Presidential Administration. It is not a coincidence if the Department of Staff Policy and the Department of Organisation appeared inside the Belarusian Presidential Administration as well as the
Department of the Organisation and Staff Policy was created inside its Ukrainian equivalent. (See Table 3.4). The recruitment to the top positions in the central executive institutions as well as in the local administrations became rapidly one of the priorities of the Presidential Administrations in both countries. The comparison of the organisational structure of the Presidential Administrations shows some remarkable similarities. In fact, we can notice the same internal structure that reflects the ambition of this institutions to control the process of the decision-making as well as the process of the political recruitment at least in the executive.

The main difference with the previous Nomenklatura system of recruitment which was perfectly institutionalised, is that the new recruitment competencies of the Presidential Administrations need to be regulated and formalised. Under Soviet-type system the appointments were hierarchical ones made by superiors sitting in judgement on their administrative inferiors. Even if this judgement was often based on performance as assessed by superiors rather than by abstract rules, few people were chosen only considering factors of personal knowledge of personal bonds. The advancement to the top of the Soviet political system was more the fact of collective sponsorship of the whole Communist Party oligarchy taking into account impersonal criteria, based on the candidates’ independent political resources or appropriate professional qualifications (Miller 1989: 64, 83-84).

In the context of structural institutional changes and of the absence of clear definition of professional competencies in the new offices, the impersonal criteria of choice of the candidates could be rather difficult to define. Thus, it is not surprising that in these conditions personal relations become extremely important in the recruitment process to the political elite in post-communist states and that personal loyalty is considered as one of the most important criteria. The outcome of the lack of formalised procedures of recruitment in the context of the institutional change and of the dominance of personal criteria of selection, become the constitution of the patronage networks. They could give the guarantee of the relative stability in the highly uncertain political environment. However, the negative outcome of the dominance of such type of networks and the persistence of personal criteria in recruitment could be the artificial limitation of the elite circulation as well as the tendencies of control other institutions through extending patronage networks.

During the period going from 1994 to 1996 the procedures of political elite recruitment became one of the major political issues in the confrontation between Presidents and Parliaments in both countries. In fact, political actors realised that the possibility to influence the definition of national policies goes through the possibility to influence the composition of some executive bodies, and in first place of the government.

In Belarus, an institutional crisis opposed, during major part of the 1996, the President Lukashenko elected in July 1994 to the Supreme Soviet of 13th Appeal, elected through 1995. The
main reason of this confrontation concerned the definition of the competencies of these two institutions in the national policies decision-making.

In fact, Lukashenko was the first national President who received direct popular support thanks to the election on universal suffrage that granted him new legitimacy for the definition of national policies. After his election the legislative power vacuum appeared because of the lost of the legitimacy by the parliament - Supreme Soviet of 12th Appeal, elected on 4 March 1990 and thus before the creation of the independent state. Lukashenko managed to extend this period of legislative power vacuum until the end of 1995 by stretching the process of the new parliamentary elections. During the period from July 1994 to January 1996 the President was able to take all the decisions of national importance on his own with the help of the Presidential Administration which importance increased considerably during this period. The application of these decisions was delegated to the government and other competent executive bodies responsible towards the President. In such circumstances the formation of the Parliament which could finally start to work in January 1996 inevitably engendered the conflict situation. The natural claiming of the MPs to participate in the process of the decision making in the field of the legislature and to influence the government policies as well as the government composition, was perceived by the President as illegitimate and threatening his personal authority in national policy making. Finally, the President’s project of new Constitution was adopted by a referendum held on 24 November 1996. This Constitution was the formal expression of the real balance of powers with the domination of the executive increased during 1994 et 1995 where the parliament could only be a ‘chamber for approval’ without any possibility to influence the national policies and the composition of the executive.

As Lukashenko did not have a coherent political project on the long term he was not preoccupied by the support during elections of the candidates that could constitute an important political force in the parliament and provide a substantial support to his policies. The attempts of the delegated Presidential Representatives to create a pro presidential faction by mobilising the independent MPs and to obtain the loyalty of the most important political forces, such as communist or agrarian factions, revealed unfruitful. In fact, the necessity to negotiate in permanence with a multiple number of different political actors was considered by Lukashenko as high costing. He found an easier solution of guarantying the support for his policies by dissolving the parliament and by choosing personally the 110 MPs for the new Chamber of the Representatives among the loyal MPs of the dissolved Supreme Soviet. This extension of the President control on the recruitment in parliament in order to influence its composition marked the beginning of the domination of the cooption model in the recruitment to Belarusian political elite and reproduced some important characteristics of the previous soviet model of recruitment.
In Ukraine, the adoption of the Constitution was a long and difficult process that was finally achieved on 28 June 1996. The main difference with the Belarusian case consisted in the absence of the period of legislature vacuum as in Belarus, because the Verhovnaya Rada was elected in March 1994 before the election of the new President in June 1994. The project of new Constitution was more a result of the large public debate in the context of research of the balance between the President and the parliament. Despite the artificial nature of some compromises fixed in this Constitution, it reflected balance of powers between the executive and the legislature in a more equitable way than in Belarus.16

If we compare the power of the appointments given to the Presidents in the framework of the national Constitutions in Belarus and Ukraine (Table 1,2) we can notice the fact that the President can personally control the appointment to a huge number of the highest positions in the different executive bodies on the central level as well as on the local level. In the Ukrainian case this power of appointment was reduced by the necessity to receive the approval of the parliament for the candidates designated by the President to some of these positions. At the same time the President could not dismiss alone a certain number of high officials without the approval of the parliament. The reduction of the Presidential control over the appointments also goes through the mixed control on the composition of some executive bodies in which half of the members is designed by the President and the other half is chosen by the Verhovnaya Rada.

In the Belarusian case the situation is different because the President can personally control almost all appointments in the executive with no regards to the opinion of the Parliament. In fact, even if he needs the approval of the House of the Representatives in order to appoint the Prime Minister, this approval reveals symbolic form as the President can dissolve the House of the Representatives in case it refuses twice to confirm the President’s candidate for Prime Minister office.

One can better understand the real meaning of the procedure of approval by the Council of the Republic of the candidates for the appointment in some offices if we consider the rules of the formation of this Chamber. It is composed of 64 members: 8 of them are directly appointed by the President, and 8 MPs are elected in each of six regions (oblast) and the capital Minsk. The elections are held during the sessions of the elected local Councils, but the candidates are designated during the meetings of the Presidium of the local Councils and local Executive Committees. The important point is that the heads of the local Executive Committees are appointed and dismissed by the President (art. 119 of the Constitution), thus he is able to control indirectly the composition of the entire Council of the Republic.

If the appointments to some offices require symbolic approval of the parliament, the dismissal from the totality of the high official positions in the executive depends entirely on the President who only needs in some cases to bring the dismissal to the attention of the Council of the Republic.
Therefore the Belarusian President can directly intervene in the composition of the government without formally taking into account the opinion of the Prime Minister.

This analysis showed the extreme importance that acquired Belarusian President in the recruitment in the executive as well as generally into the national political elite by extending cooption model of recruitment on all political institutions. The competencies of the appointment in the executive of the Ukrainian President were limited by Verhovnay Rada, and he had no possibility to extend the cooption model of recruitment on the parliament. Thus an important part of the Ukrainian political elite was recruited in the framework of the competition model.

In order to understand better the reasons of the Presidents’ attempts to reduce the outcomes of the competition selection to the political elite which are difficult to control, I suggest now to see how the cooption model of recruitment was used by both Presidents in order to create patronage networks in the executive and to consolidate their personal authority as well as to increase their control on the definition and implementation of policies.

**The effects of the cooption model on the type of political elite: creation of the patronage networks.**

The election held on 10 July 1994 of Alexandre Lukashenko in Belarus and of Leonid Kuchma in Ukraine for the President offices of their respective countries was followed by an important turnover in the composition of the official political elite, especially in its executive branch. The study of the personal cases of the individuals appointed in the Presidential Administration (Head of the PA and his Deputies, Presidential Advisors, Heads of Departments) and in the government (Prime-Minister, his Deputies, Ministers) in both countries from July 1994 to April 1995 gave the basis for the creation of the following typology of appointments on the basis of the selection criteria

I. Impersonal considerations.
   a) Appropriate professional qualifications;
   b) Independent political resources.

II. Personal considerations.
   a) Reward of associates;
   b) Mobilisation of former associates;
   c) Sponsorship of qualified insiders;
   d) Sponsorship of qualified outsiders.
In the first category (I) of recruitment types the impersonal considerations are prevailing and inside this category I distinguish two cases on the basis of selection criteria. In the first case the selection criteria are mainly impersonal and the candidates are selected mainly in virtue of their appropriate professional qualifications. There are some important conditions for such type of recruitment. First of all an exhaustive and detailed definition of the competencies attributed to the office that is possible only when the office has existed for an important period of time and when the organisational structure as well as the institutional environment are rather stable. This is not the case of the post-communist countries where the nature of the offices as well as the institutions themselves are in permanent evolution, at least at the beginning of 1990s. Other important condition is the possibility to acquire the knowledge and the experience that are required for the office. It supposes the existence of particular education programs and institutional structures that could provide this type of knowledge and experience. The specificity of the post-communist states consists in the fact that since the beginning of 1990s they undergo an important transformation and the competencies needed for the elaboration and implementation of radical political, economic and social reforms, rarely existed before the beginning of the transition. The major part of political actors were socialised in the framework of the former communist system, and even if some type of former professional experience could be used for new purposes, in the majority of the cases individuals need to earn new knowledge and appropriate experience once they are in office. Thus, it is not surprising that in post-communist societies this type of recruitment that require appropriate qualifications for the office is rather rare until the end of 1990s.

Another case of the dominance of impersonal criteria in the recruitment process is the independent political resources. In fact it presumes the membership or even leadership of an important political force, and obviously the existence of developed party system represented in the national parliament. In the case of the majority of the Soviet Successor states party system formation is a long and difficult process that bring some fruits only by the end of 1990s and not in all the states. On the other hand, in mostly of these state the composition of the government depends on the Prime Minister who is himself under the close control of the President, it means that the latter are looking for support of some parliamentary faction by appointing one of its leaders to the government. Even if theoretically this possibility is not excluded, in practice such type of appointment could appear in some states only by the end of 1990s under the condition of the consolidation of political party system.

The majority of the cases of appointments in Ukraine and Belarus between 1994 and 1996 belongs to the second category (II) of recruitment when personal criteria of choice are decisive for recruitment. As we mentioned before the structural problems of the lack of the appropriate competencies required for the top offices in the transitional period diminish the importance of the appropriate qualifications which are rare and may be difficult to define. On the other hand, the personal loyalty gain an importance in the context of unstable political environment. If the
competencies and the mutual relations of the different political institutions are in permanent evolution it could be more efficient to rely on personal relations between the high officials in order to provide support for a particular policy. In fact, personal networks could increase the efficiency of the government and play an important role in the national institution building.\(^\text{17}\)

The power of appointments delegated to the President in Belarus and Ukraine during the creation of this office are rather important and give them the possibility to control the composition not only of the executive bodies directly depending from the President such as the Administration or Special Committees, but also the composition of the government and some other executive bodies. As the newly elected Presidents discover the efficiency of the ‘staff’ policy as the best way to control the process of the national decision making by appointing the ‘right persons to the right places’, they naturally tend to extend this power of appointments to other institutions and other administrative levels, what we have seen earlier.

At the beginning the newly elected Presidents in both countries were confronted to the necessity to fill the offices in the Presidential Administration and in the government. As at the moment of their election in 1994 neither Lukashenko nor Kuchma did belong to an important political force, their strategies of recruitment were based mainly on their personal contacts and partly on the contacts of their closest collaborators. The analysis of the appointments shows the significance of the personal criteria in the majority of choices of the high officials in the main executive institutions. All the mechanisms of recruitment reveal different forms of patronage when the personal consideration is decisive in the appointment.

One of the main strategies of recruitment in this period in Ukraine as well as in Belarus consisted in the reward of the associates that actively participated in the electoral campaigns. In the Belarusian case an important number of the President’s electoral team members was appointed to the highest positions in the Administration as well as in the government. As an example one can mention Leonid Sinitsin, Chief of the Presidential Administration, Vladimir Konoplev, First Advisor of the President, Ivan Titenkov, Presidential Manager\(^\text{18}\), Viktor Sheyman, Secretary of the National Council of Security, etc.

The members of Kuchma’s electoral team were also rewarded by some offices in the Ukrainian executive bodies: Vladimir Gorbulin, Secretary of the Council of National Security; Valeriy Pustovoïtenko, Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers, Dmitriy Tabachnik, Head of the Presidential Administration; Alexandre Volkov, President’s adviser; Petr Lelik, Head of the Department of the Internal Policy of the Presidential Administration, etc.

Nonetheless, the electoral team staffs were rather limited. Therefore the newly elected Presidents turned to the mobilisation of their old associates met before along their professional career. In the case of Lukashenko who was a head of the kolkhoz ‘Gorodets’ in Shklov district of Mogilev
oblast before becoming MP in the Supreme Soviet of Belarusian republic in 1990, the circles of his ancients associates were rather poor and limited to the ex MPs and local agricultural and party managers in Mogilev oblast.

In the Ukrainian case Kuchma’s professional experience and personal contacts were much more differentiated. They were initially based on the relations with Dnipropetrovsk oblast’ industrial and administrative managers, created during the period when Kuchma ran an important industrial enterprise ‘Youzhmash’. Nevertheless, it was his arrival in the office of Ukrainian Prime Minister, that he occupied from October 1992 to September 1993, that played a decisive role in the diversification of Kuchma’s relation at a national level. This is why it was not surprising that after his election to the Presidency one third of the Ukrainian Ministers was re-appointed to their offices or even received a promotion as it was for example the case of the Vice Prime Minister Viktor Pinzenik or the Minister of Economy Roman Chpek.

In fact, an important number of individuals appointed by Kuchma had some appropriate professional experience in executive and generally they were better educated and prepared for assuming their professional competencies.

In Belarus, the people appointed to the highest positions in the government or in the Presidential Administration by Lukashenko often had neither particular qualifications nor work experience in the executive. The experience as plant manger or district party committee secretary was sufficient to satisfy criteria of professional qualification as it was defined by Lukashenko. Personal loyalty to the President and readiness to implement his policies were more important and their importance were reinforced by the fact that almost any of candidates had no objective reasons to occupy the position to which he was appointed. If, in a general way, the absence of appropriate qualifications and the presence of personal obligations do not entail necessary incompetence, some appointments were more than surprising and introduced some doubts about the capacities of appointees to perform the minimum of their professional obligations. For example, Petr Prokopovich, who became Deputy Prime Minister in 1995, was at the top of his professional career the head of the state agricultural building firm (obselstroy) in Brest oblast.\textsuperscript{19} The professional experience of Aleksandre Sosnovskiy, who was previously a supervisor of the technical secondary school, and deputy Chairman of Minsk gorispolkom, was absolutely inappropriate for the responsibilities at the head of the Ministry of Culture. This cases of pure patronage was distinguished by the unexpectedness of the appointments. In fact, the peoples that recruited to important staff positions without any appropriate knowledge or experience are much more dependent from the person that selected them. This cases illustrates well the low importance that were assigned to the educational and professional credential in recruitment to Belarusian political elite in mid 1990s.
In the mentioned cases, the relations between the President and the appointees existed before the nomination and thus the patronage network was created on the basis of the pre-existing bounds. Nevertheless, the act of the nomination in itself could constitute the creation of patron-client bond even if the candidate was not familiar to the selector before. Two following cases reveal from this category.

The sponsorship of insiders is a particular case of recruitment where the selector chose the candidate between the members of the previous political elite. The specificity of this case consist in the fact that the candidates occupied previously the equivalent positions and thus often have some of the required competencies. This is why personal criteria of selection are less important in this case. Nevertheless, even the candidate with appropriate qualifications has to manifest his personal loyalty in order to be selected this why this case is also reveal from patronage.

As the personal networks of Lukashenko and his closest entourage were not sufficient to fill all the main offices of the Belarusian state, he was led to search for candidates in the former ruling elite, and even in the former electoral enemy camp. This reconversion of former elite members helped him to gain the loyalty of larger levels of government bureaucracy. Therefore, some of the main governmental positions at the beginning of Lukashenko’s Presidency were occupied by former members of V. Kebich’s team, such as the Head of the Presidential Administration since 1995, Mikhail Myasnikovich (former Kebich’s First Deputy Prime Minister), or Sergei Ling, Prime Minister from 1997 to 2000 (Kebich’s former Deputy Prime Minister) and Vladimir Zametalin, First Deputy Chief of the Presidential Administration (1994-1997) and Deputy Prime Minister since 1997 (Kebich’s former press-secretary).

The situation was different in the Ukrainian case because the personal network of Kuchma’s relations in the Ukrainian central political elite was more extended and he did not need to recruit between his predecessor close collaborators. At the same time he knew personally a major part of the persons that kept their positions in the government or received the promotion.

The last case, the sponsorship of outsiders is more personal choice because the candidate has often some appropriate knowledge but without an appropriate experience required for the office. The fact that he was preferred in front of other candidates, probably with more experience creates an more important ‘patron – client’ bond. Nevertheless, the appointed outsider keeps the possibility to acquire some experience and expertise in his functions and take greater independence from the ‘patron’.

The cases of outsider’s sponsorship to political top positions are rare in the recruitment mechanisms used by Lukashenko as well as Kuchma in the period following their respective elections. In fact this strategy of recruitment is more efficient in the replacement of the members in established
patronage network that in period of its creation when the selector needs to relay on personal confidence.

In fact, the first two types of recruitment based on pre-existing bounds often constitute the core of the patronage network. In these cases political careers of clients could be closely related to this of their patron, thus they are naturally interested in the support of the ‘patron’ and reinforcement of his power that could be followed by the promotions for the clients. On the other hand, departure of the ‘patron’ could mean for the closest clients the end of their political careers. The clients recruited by sponsorship are generally less dependent from the ‘patron’ and if they could benefit from their time in office in order to form a particular expertise they could easily switch for another ‘patron’ or even create their own independent political resources.

The Belarusian political elite in the executive was recruited mainly on the basis of pre-existing bonds with a relatively important number of cases of pure patronage. This elite is integrated on the basis of political loyalty to the person of the President Lukashenko. The absence of structural conditions, such as economic reforms or administrative decentralisation, creating the possibilities for the political actors to accumulate their own independent political resources, reinforce the basis of its integration. In this extremely centralised political system dominated by the executive any politician that manifests some disapproval of official policies risks to be ejected out of political elite and his chances to pursue political career outside official institutions are rather limited.

Despite the fact that in Ukraine the recruitment in executive was equally dominated by the pre-existing personal relations of the President, the integration of this elite is less related to the personality of the Ukrainian President. In fact, the official dismissed from their posts in the government could continue their political careers in the parliament by joining one of the political parties or by creating some political movement.20

Nevertheless, the main problem that the current political leaders in both countries lack of the prospects vision of the political system development as well as their own political future. They are more interested in the reinforcement of their personal power in short term that by the investment in long lasting strategies of political evolution. In this context their resort to the patronage network creation and its extending on the hole range of the executive bodies seems logical in order to respond to the immediate social needs and to preserve their personal power. It explains well their appeals to the direct democracy by the bias of popular referendums in order to introduce institutional changes by avoiding the high costs of the negotiation with other political forces. Nevertheless, this strategies prevented the appearance of the efficient institutional design as well as the normal development of
countries political elites. The result is the absence of the diversified and competent political elite, as well as the absence of the efficient mechanisms of recruitment guarantying its renewal.

**Conclusion.**

The introduction of the electoral competition as the procedure of the selection to the parliament and to the presidential office was one of the most important reforms of political system in the post-communist states. The free electoral competition is generally considered as one of the main elements of the democracy. For instance, Joseph Schumpeter, resumed the essence of democracy as ‘free competition for free vote’ and considered the specificity of the ‘democratic method’ in the creation of such institutional arrangement that aloud to confer the power of taking political decisions to individuals selected in the competitive struggle for the people’s vote. (Schumpeter 1954 : 269.)

Free electoral competition leads political actors to traduce the needs of different social groups into political programs in order to ensure their victory during elections. Every election gives not only the possibility of introducing personal changes in the institutions but also open the possibility to put new social issues on the political agenda. This mechanism of the elite renewal by the mean of the electoral competition help to keep the tie of the society with political elite, insure its regular renewal and increase its efficiency in the realisation of its main function that consists in the government of the society.

The Belarusian and Ukrainian cases show that even though the appearance of new national political institutions and free elections give the opportunity for circulation in the political elite, it does not necessarily provide the conditions for the arrival of basically new political actors ready to implement new policies. Democratic procedures and institutions can not function if there are no political actors able to use them properly. They can be modified by the new political actors for their own purposes, thus creating hybrid regimes with a minimum of democratic institutions and procedures and practices of power that approaches authoritarianism.

Despite this risk, the perspectives of the future political development of these countries heavily depends on their capacities to reinforce the mechanisms insuring regular circulation inside the political elite. Nevertheless, regular tenure of the parliamentary and presidential elections have to go with the modification of the principles of cooption model of recruitment in the executive. Unless the task of the introduction of the less arbitrary mechanisms of recruitment in the executive remains unresolved, the major part of political elite will be highly integrated in patronage networks on the basis of their personal loyalty towards the President. The personal change of the President, who is normally elected every five years, will provoke an important instability inside the political elite whose members occupy their positions not in the virtue of their professional competencies but thanks to their
personal dependence to the President. Until the mechanisms of the elite renewal does not function and the cooption methods of recruitment are used in order to extend the influence of patronage networks, the authoritarian practices of power will persist and reduce the chances of moving towards democracy.

1 A comparative approach for the study of some of these authoritarian reactions on democratic changes were proposed in Dawisha and Parrot, 1997.
2 The elite oriented approach, that emerged during the study of the transition in the countries of Latin America, gained more importance in the context of the studies of communist breakdowns and post-communist regimes which have emerged in Eastern Europe. We can mention some of the studies made in the framework of this approach: Higley, Lengyel 1999; Higley, Dogan 1998; Higley, Pakulsi, Weslowski 1998; Higley, Burton 1997; Higley, Pakulski 1995. The essence of the elite oriented approach was perfectly summed up by John Higley, Jan Pakulsi and Wolodzimirz Weslowski in the following sentence: “the configuration of elites is the most immediate and significant determinant of the political regime” (Higley, Pakulski, Weslowski 1998: 3). In many cases political actors decisions and strategies were more important for the construction of the political systems (democratic as well as authoritarian) than the economic and socio-cultural conditions. In fact, strategies and choices of particular political actors define the particular trajectory of a given country within the available range influenced by structural factors.
3 We can distinguish two models of recruitment into political elite: cooption (by appointment) and competition (by elections). In the first case the candidates are chosen by their superiors, in the second case they chosen by voters. Even if the elections to the local and republican Soviets were held during the Soviet period the candidates for the elections were selected and approved by the local or republican Party Committees. In the constituencies the voters had only two choices: to approve or not the appointed candidate. There is no doubt that such type of elections could not be considered as free electoral competition. This is why, we can assert that the recruitment in the Soviet political elite was based on cooption model.
4 Party Committees existed on the central level (Central Committee of the CPSU), on the republican level (Central Committees in 15 federal republics), on the regional and city level (obkom, kraïkom, gorkom), and on the district level (raïkom). There were also Party cells in every public organisation: factory, plant, research institute, university, etc.
5 For instance the Agricultural Department of the raïkom was in charge for the appointment and dismissal of the kolkhoz and sovkhoz head in the raïon (district), or Industrial Department of the obkom supervised the recruitment of the plant and factory managers in the oblast (region).
6 The cooption as a mechanism of elite recruitment is rather current in different fields of human activity and it can be efficient if the candidates need to acquire particular knowledge and competencies in order to fulfil the functions related to the defined position. In this case the experienced members evaluate the level of candidates in order to define their conformity to the criteria and select them. For instance, the model of cooption often used in institutionalised professions: medicines, engineers, lawyer, etc.
7 Brezhnev was the General Secretary of the CPSU from 1964 to 1982.
8 Researcher in nuclear physics who became popular because of his critics of governmental policies in the management of the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe consequences, Stanislav Shushkevich was elected as the Chairman of the Belarusian Supreme Soviet on 19 September 1991 after the dismissal of Nikolay Dementey (who was at the same time First Secretary of the Communist Party of Belarus). During his office he did not benefited from the support of the conservative communist majority that dominated Belarusian Supreme Soviet and progressively lost the support of the nationalist opposition. Finally, he was dismissed from the office on 26 January 1994.
9 Vyacheslav Kebich was Belarusian Prime Minister from 1990 till 1994.
10 The independence was proclaimed on 24 August 1991 in Ukraine by the republican Supreme Soviet and approved by the popular referendum on 1 December 1991 with 90.3% of votes. In Belarus the independence was proclaimed by the republican Supreme Soviet on 25 August 1991.
11 This agreement was signed by the President of Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin, President of Ukraine Leonid Kravchuk and Chairman of Belarusian Supreme Soviet Stanislav Shushkevich. On 21 December 1991 in Alma-Aty the leaders of 11 former republics (except Baltic countries and Georgia) signed the protocol of the CIS foundation. In the case of Belarus and even Ukraine there was no an important popular pressure for the independence and in all-Union referendum held earlier on 17 March 1991 71% of Ukrainians and 83% of Belarusians approved the concept of the “renewed federation” proposed by Mikhail Gorbachev.
It is important to notice here that defined in this manner the concept of the national political elite is a part of the wider concept of national political class that includes all political actors which are potentially able to take part in the competition for important political offices. In fact, when I use this concept of the national political elite it includes all the people that occupy at the given moment the top offices in the main political institutions. Thus, political elite is in some way a governing part of the political class. This remark is particular important in the Belarusian case, because the leaders of the political parties in opposition are completely excluded from the main political institutions of the country since November 1996 and thus they make part of the Belarusian political class without being the members of the official Belarusian political elite.

This strategy succeeded because after two rounds of voting, on 14 and 28 May 1995, only 119 MP’s out of 260 were elected. Therefore, the parliament could not start its activities: the quorum required the presence of 174 deputies. It was only seven months later, after two supplementary rounds of voting fixed on 29 November and 10 December 1995, that the parliament started to work with 198 deputies. Nevertheless, the organisation of the parliament’s work was complicated by the difficulties in creating an effective majority due to the low number of MP’s with party affiliation and the huge number of the independent MPs (95 MPs).

The main changes introduced in this project consisted in the extension of President’s power and in the creation of bicameral National Assembly in order to replace Supreme Soviet. An important number of procedure violations noticed during the referendum influenced the decision of international and European institutions (OSCE, Council of Europe, European Union) not to recognise the results of the referendum and thus, to consider Belarusian political regime as illegitimate.

In the case of Russia, the institutional crisis between the President Boris Yeltsin and the Supreme Soviet refusing to support his policies, was resolved by the dissolution of the parliament and the adoption of the new Constitution by the referendum on the 1 December 1993. Nevertheless, this Constitution was designated as a long term project that favoured the formation of the party system through the creation of the bi-cameral parliament (State Duma and Council of the Federation) and the adoption of the mixed suffrage for the election in the Duma. It was the investment on long term because during two terms from 1993 to 1995 and from 1995 to 1999, the parliamentary majority was formed by the communist and liberal-democrat opposed to the government politics. It was only in 1999 that the political parties supporting politics of reforms gained the majority in the moment when Eltsin was leaving the political scene. By accepting in short term the difficulties to introduce his politics in the context of the confrontation with the conservative parliamentary majority, he introduced the important change in the ‘rules of the game’ by creating more civilised way for searching support in the parliament through the formation of the political parties. Obviously, this strategy require more time in order to bring some results.

The weakness of the institutional design fixed in the Constitution consisted in the fact that the Constitution was adopted only by the Verhovnaya Rada. Thus, it was rather easy for the President Kouchma to use the appeal for direct popular approval in order to modify considerably the structure of the Parliament and reduce its competencies. As his Belarusian colleague did it few years earlier, Kuchma imposed his project of institutional change through the referendum of 16 April 2000.

Gerald Easter has shown the importance of personal networks in the postrevolutionary state building in the Soviet Russia in 1920-30s by demonstrating how personal relations of revolutionaries provided the basis for new institutional forms of the Soviet state. (Easter 1996).

This is direct translation of the Russian title of his post “upravlyayushchiy delami presidenta”.

More surprisingly, he was appointed in 1998 as head of the National Bank without any, even primary, knowledge of economy and finance.

We can mention for instance the former Foreign Affairs Minister Gennadiy Udovenko who became the head of the Popular Rukh of Ukraine faction in Verhovnaya Rada elected in March 1999, or Evgen Marchuk, former Prime Minister who after joining Social-Demarcate Party of Ukraine (united), became since February 1999 the head of the political movement ‘Popular solidarity’.
REFERENCES:


APPENDIX.

Table 1. The constitutional power for appointment of the Ukrainian President (in accordance with the Constitution adopted on 28 June 1996).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions to/from which the President can appoint/dismiss directly</th>
<th>Positions to/from which the President can appoint/dismiss with the agreement of the Verhovnaya Rada</th>
<th>Positions to/from which Verhovnaya Rada can appoint/dismiss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members of the Cabinet of Ministers (art. 106)</td>
<td>Prime Minister* (art. 85)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of other central executive bodies (art. 106)</td>
<td>Chairman of the Antimonopoly Committee (art. 85)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of the local administrations (art. 106)</td>
<td>Chairman of the State Property Found (art. 85)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half of the members of the Council of the National Bank (art. 106)</td>
<td>Chairman of the National Bank (art. 85)</td>
<td>Half of the members of the Council of the National Bank (art. 85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half of the members of the National Broadcast Council** (art. 106)</td>
<td>Chairman of the State Committee of the TV and radio broadcast (art. 85)</td>
<td>Half of the members of the National Broadcast Council** (art. 85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One third of the members of the Constitutional Court ** (art. 106)</td>
<td>General Prosecutor*** (art. 85)</td>
<td>One third of the members of the Constitutional Court ** (art. 85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Staff (art. 106)</td>
<td>Members of the Central Electoral Commissions (art. 85)</td>
<td>Chairman and members of the Chamber of Account (art. 85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambassadors et representatives in the international organisations (art. 106)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* the President does not need the agreement of the parliament in order to dismiss the Prime Minister (art. 106)
** the President and the parliament can only appoint and not dismiss the Chairmen and members of the Constitutional Court and National Broadcast Council
*** the parliament can vote ‘non-confidence’ to the Prosecutor General that means his dismissal (art. 85); the President on his own can also dismiss the Prosecutor General (art. 106)
Table 2. The constitutional power for appointment of Belarusian President (in accordance with the Constitution adopted on 24 November 1996).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions to which the President can appoint directly</th>
<th>Positions to which the President can appoint with the agreement of the Parliament</th>
<th>Positions from which the President can dismiss after bringing it to the attention of the Council of the Republic</th>
<th>Positions from which the President can dismiss directly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vice Prime Ministers (art. 84)</td>
<td>Prime Minister (confirmation by the House of Representatives)* (art. 84)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prime Minister, Vice Prime Ministers (art. 106)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers et heads of the other executive bodies** (art. 84)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ministers et heads of the other executive bodies (art. 106)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 members of the Council of Republic (art. 91)</td>
<td>Chairman of the Constitutional Court (confirmation of the Council of Republic) (art. 84)</td>
<td>Chairmen and judges of the Constitutional Court (art. 84)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 judges of the Constitutional Court (art. 84)</td>
<td>Chairman and judges of the Supreme Court (confirmation of the Council of Republic) (art. 84)</td>
<td>Chairmen and judges of the Supreme Court (art. 84)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chairman and judges of the Government Accounting Office (confirmation of the Council of Republic) (art. 84)</td>
<td>Chairmen and judges of the Government Accounting Office (art. 84)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 members of the Central Electoral Commission (art. 84)</td>
<td>Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission (art. 84)</td>
<td>Chairman and members of the Central Electoral Commission (art. 84)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chairman and members of the Council of the National Bank (art. 84)</td>
<td>Chairman and members of the Council of the National Bank (art. 84)</td>
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<td>Chairman of the Committee of the State Control (art. 84)</td>
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<td>Chairman of the Committee of the State Control (art. 84)</td>
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<td>Ambassadors and representatives in the international organisations (art. 84)</td>
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<td>Ambassadors and representatives in the international organisations (art. 84)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heads of the state administration bodies (art. 84)</td>
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<td>Heads of the state administration bodies (art. 84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President’s Representatives in the parliament (art. 84)</td>
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<td>President’s Representatives in the parliament (art. 84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of the Security Council (art. 84)</td>
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<td>Secretary of the Security Council (art. 84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Staff (art. 84)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Military Staff (art. 84)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other high civil servants (art. 84)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other high civil servants (art. 84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of the local executive (art. 119)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Heads of the local executive (art. 119)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* the House of the Representatives could be dissolved if it refuse twice to confirm the candidature of the Prime Minister designed by the President (art. 97).
** the heads of the state committees.
Table 3. The structure of the Presidential Administration in Belarus (in accordance with President Decree of 23 January 1997).
Table 4. The structure of the Presidential Administration in Ukraine (in accordance with President Decree of 19 February 1997).