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REMARKS ON THE GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF 'SHADOW ELITES' IN A COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

This article focuses on the question of the role of informal and semi-formal power elites in the meaning of Janine Wedel's anthropological theories¹ and their impact on politics in Poland and the EU in a comparative perspective. A particularly interesting topic raised in the text is the question whether the wide availability of EU funds can be regarded as a source of easily available 'rent' for which the elites described by Wedel compete today. This article provides a theoretical contribution partly supported by empirical data. However, further, extensive research is necessary, which could reveal in the future the scope of activities of informal 'shadow elites' and the impact they exert on the political life in modern Poland, the European Union and globally².

AMERICAN LOOK AT CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Janine R. Wedel is a recognized anthropologist, currently employed at George Mason University. In her research she focuses on political issues, and especially on issues concerning the application of anthropological theories to the study of political elites. Such an approach is by no means a norm in modern anthropologists. Suffice it to say that Wedel is the first anthropologist

¹ Wedel, J. 2009. *Shadow elite*. New York: Basic Books.

² In the article I used the thesis of my own journalistic text, Kuź, M. 2014. Cała władza w ręce cieni. [The whole power to the shadows.] *Nowa Konfederacja* [Online] no. 36 (48), Available at: <http://www.nowakonfederacja.pl/cala-wladza-w-rece-cieni/> [Accessed: 21 July 2015].

in history, who received the prestigious Grawmeyer award for 'improving global order'. This award is usually granted to political scientists and politicians; Samuel Huntington and Mikhail Gorbachev were among the recipients.

Janine Wedel has been professionally occupied with Central and Eastern Europe for many years. Her book *Private Poland: An anthropologist looks at everyday life*, published in English in the eighties, is widely known³. However, her work on new modes of behaviour of today's political elites made her famous. She describes the creation of a class of gray cardinals, which is present, to her surprise, not only in the post-communist countries, but also in the US. These groups are based on structures which Wedel called 'flex nets'⁴. The structure of these networks has three characteristic features. Firstly, their members in the public space juggle various roles, they are, for example, at the same time independent experts, advisors, researchers and businessmen, and they are sometimes of course also politicians. These roles are not characterized by the usual conflicts of interest because links among them elude sharp legal definitions and social overlapping becomes more and more socially acceptable. Secondly, the members of the shadow elite exert a powerful influence on decision-makers and permeate political structures. In contrast to parties, shadow elites operate in informal social networks avoiding the transparency required of political parties. Their 'flexible' networks often go beyond party affiliations and they treat parties rather as a tool for the realisation of the interests of the group rather than as the group on behalf of which they conduct appropriate political activities.

Typical members of the shadow elite in general deal with and reap profits from activities at the interface of politics, business and science. They decide to enter official politics only after they have already exhausted the possibilities of increasing their influence in the shadow of the power of others. Former politicians often join shadow elites. It should be noted, however, that in the case of shadow elites, typical phenomenon of corruption or patron-client relations, known from the descriptions of social relations typical of authoritarian countries, happen very rarely. Corruption is in fact related to the illegal use of one's own fairly clearly defined position in the state-administrative hierarchy in order to obtain financial benefits. It is also not a typical clientelism, which also implies a clear hierarchical (patron-client) relation. Shadow elites operate rather on the principle of mutual exchange

³ Wedel, J. 1986. *Private Poland: an anthropologist looks at everyday life*. New York: Facts on File

⁴ Wedel, J. *op. cit.*, p. 58.

of services, balancing on the edge of law, but not exceeding it. They are also groups whose highly subtle way of action is rather connected with the conditions prevailing in countries with the relatively developed economy and relatively efficient administration and a certain degree of democratization⁵. Typical hierarchical corruption and clientelism would be phenomena more typical of less developed and authoritarian countries⁶. Just like the leaders of typical clientelistic structures, shadow elites are dependent on readily available sources of 'rent'⁷, e.g. from raw materials, or, what it is a novelty, from EU funds.

Of course, the silent assumption allowing the researcher to express her concerns about the adverse effects of activities of shadow elites for the citizens is their reference to Michels' iron law of oligarchy.⁸ Shadow elites are not in fact groups with a pro-state or altruist attitude. Shadow elites want rather to provide their members and people associated with them with the widest possible influence.

In her same study, Janine Wedel focuses on three specific examples: the Ordynacka Association in Poland⁹, the so-called Chubais clique in Russia and a group of neo-conservative advisers of George W. Bush¹⁰. It should be noted that in each case a thorough quality examination of shadow elites is extremely difficult and in the case of such specific groups can be only partially successful. Statistics capture similar phenomena in a rather lame way, but nevertheless when combined with a qualitative analysis indicate a high probability of the occurrence of such elites. The latest studies, and disclosed records of informal

⁵ In order to better understand the difference between shadow elites and clientelistic networks it is worth reading the article by Mousseau, M. 2003. Market civilization and its clash with terror. *International Security*, no. 27 (3) pp. 5–29. In his text Mousseau treats clientelistic networks as a sort of a remnant of the old feudalism. Beneficiaries of these networks defend them fiercely particularly in less economically developed countries, which are just going through the market transformation (e.g. part of the Middle East, Africa). Meanwhile, shadow elites are less hierarchical networks of relations of a new generation which are present in very modernized countries, although they are reminiscent of the old clientelistic networks, it is possible in their case to talk about specific neo-feudalism rather than a simple return to the past.

⁶ At the time when Wedel's book was published Russia was regarded by experts as an illiberal democracy more than typical authoritarianism e.g. in the Chinese version.

⁷ Krueger, A. 1974. The political economy of the rent-seeking society. *American Economic Review*, no. 64 (3) pp. 291–303.

⁸ Michels, R. 2001. *Political parties a study of oligarchical tendencies of modern democracies*. New York: The Free Press, p. 342.

⁹ Wedel, J. *op. cit.*, pp. 63–72.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 73–111.

discussions or results of journalistic investigations seem to confirm the role which shadow elites play in contemporary Europe, especially in Poland and new EU member states. Available data also lead to interesting conclusions regarding the role of EU resources in the creation of these elites.

LOCAL EXPLANATION AND THE ISSUE OF POST-COMMUNISM

In the case of the US a decisive factor for Wedel seemed to be a neo-liberal impulse to privatize government administration. The cause of the rise of the importance of shadow elites is, according to the researcher, the effect of going away from the traditional administrative structure in favour of a more flexible formula, according to which part of the function is entrusted to various external service providers. In the case of Poland and Russia, of crucial importance is the introduction of novelty solutions in the conditions of the general weakness of the state.

The anthropological description of the political situation and political pathology growing worldwide, as proposed by Wedel, seems to be accurate. The diagnosis concerning the causes is, however, much less developed. The appropriating coteries capturing the state are not a new phenomenon. The privatization of the administration and the post-communist legacy do not explain the today's scale of the phenomenon. Rather something else seems to be a key factor. It appears that in modern democracies the balance between types of power undergoes some waver. The organization of the administration itself cannot be the only reason for this. The administration is not a self-contained being. In every modern state, it is subordinated to some extent to the centre of executive power. The executive power itself is, in turn, controlled by the courts and operates only in the framework sets by the legislative power.

On the Polish ground Jadwiga Staniszkis proposes a slightly fuller description of the phenomenon. In her *Postkomunizm* [*Post-communism*] Staniszkis writes about 'the network state' in a spirit similar to Wedel¹¹. In reference to the multiplicity of roles of elite representatives, the Polish researcher somewhat provocatively states that 'a good model reflecting the essence of the new type of "reign" is a phenomenon of group sex in which

¹¹ Staniszkis, J. 2001. *Postkomunizm*. [*Post-communism*.] Gdańsk: Słowo Obraz Terytoria, p. 128.

roles and identities constantly change¹². As for the reasons for the new network power, Staniszkis writes about two main mechanisms: entering the world system (through globalization and regional integration within the EU) and the commercialization of public funds¹³. Both of these processes were particularly evident in the case of Poland and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe due to their peripheral position, both within the Euro-Atlantic order, and the Soviet one. The entrance to the Western structures has certainly opened new prospects for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but at the same time created new temptations for not fully mature political elites. This prompted certain processes which also occur in the West but with different dynamics.

From the point of view of the West, Central European countries were primarily economically undeveloped. In the Eastern bloc, although their economic potential was appreciated, they were politically distrusted, and therefore the centre did not treat them subjectively. Indeed, this was the attitude which was absolutely understandable from the point of view of USSR's elites. It should be emphasized that the structures of the Communist Party in Poland and in other countries in the region, unlike in Russia, China, North Korea and Vietnam, were not of local origin. They were imposed from the outside. As Benjamin Smith¹⁴ notes, the survival rate of one-party regimes is clearly correlated with whether they are a product of a domestic revolution, and ultimately depend on domestic resources and in the eyes of its demos are included in the country's history (we completely disregard here the general problem of the lack of democratic legitimacy of all one-party systems). In short, 'revolutions' controlled from the outside undermine the legitimacy of the revolutionary parties, in the same way that revolutions from within reinforce it, even if this legitimacy is not based on the electoral procedures recognized by liberal democracies. After the withdrawal of foreign support the new regime has a very little chance of survival.

Unfortunately, as it often happens in the case of post-colonial states or ones covered by a similar form of dependent development¹⁵, a fall of the regime does not result from an immediate increase in social capital in Putnam's

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 129.

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 90–91.

¹⁴ Smith, J. 2005. Political parties: a study of oligarchical tendencies of modern democracies. *World Politics*, no. 57 (3), pp. 421–425.

¹⁵ Communism imported from Moscow is regarded by some scholars as a form of colonialism. Cf. Hague, R., Harrop, M. 2010. *Comparative government and politics, an introduction*. New York: Palgrave, p. 71.

sense¹⁶ (confidence in the government and fellow citizens at the same time) because society does not trust the government, and to make matters worse it has no sense of self-efficacy going beyond one-time outbursts. Not without reason, looking at the example of Poland, Andrzej Leder notes that the main processes of socio-economic emancipation were in a way 'slept through' by Polish society. Impulses for their achievement came in fact from the outside and were often associated with violence perceived as foreign intervention, which, in turn, only further built distrust between the society and the state (and additionally in various versions of the state)¹⁷. The low level of social capital means and that in the case of post-communist countries we deal with the engraved in their structure, handicapped legitimacy of elites at the level of the nation state. Interestingly, when communism in the East collapsed, much more toughened Western nation-states also began to experience the process in some way impeding their social capital. These processes are economic globalization, regional integration¹⁸, media coverage of politics¹⁹ and general turning away from traditional ideology of the party²⁰. Poorly socially authorised eastern elites were more susceptible to new challenges created by the typically Western political dilemmas, just like the already weakened immune system usually turns out to be surprisingly vulnerable to new pathogens.

In this context it is also worth mentioning the diagnosis concerning the weakness of the Polish state by a Polish author Artur Wołek²¹. He also draws attention to the processes of globalization as factors that could potentially weaken the traditional power structures. In Wołek's terms, weakening of the state and opening it to the activities of more or less parasitic interest groups are especially strong in the case of post-communist countries because

¹⁶ Cf. Putnam, R. 1993. *Making democracy work, civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 163–181.

¹⁷ Leder, A. 2014. *Prześlona rewolucja. [Revolution slept-through.]* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, pp. 1–24.

¹⁸ Cf. Kuź, M. 2014. Can the American Constitution become a model for the Unified Europe? In: Turek, T. *Eyes on America*. Kraków: AT Wydawnictwo, pp. 125–130.

¹⁹ Cf. Secler, B. 2013. Polityka i media w obliczu demokracji medialnej. [Politics and the media in the face of media democracy.] In: Musiał-Karg, M. ed. *Demokracja w Obliczu Nowych Mediów. [Democracy in the face of new media.]* Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, pp. 160–173.

²⁰ Cf. Franklin, M. *Voter turnout and the dynamics of electoral competition in established democracies*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 161–172.

²¹ Wołek, A. 2012. *Słabe Państwo. [Weak state.]* Kraków–Warszawa: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, pp. 52–72.

of their specific political history: a kind of crossing of a certain stage and indiscriminate entry into the next stage because in the era of the transition post-communist countries almost uncritically accepted patterns flowing from the Bretton Woods institutions.

The creators of these patterns, however, were heirs of a long institutional Anglo-Saxon tradition, the importance of which they themselves seemed to underestimate. Treating their institutional continuity as something obvious, cognitively transparent, they did not understand how important for the implementation of modernization process is strong and independent political authority which enjoys social support. Samuel Huntington already noticed this pattern when he wrote about the attitude of the US towards postcolonial countries in the previous century²². As Huntington pointed out, modernization proposed by the West often turns the whole process upside down because it calls for liberalization and decentralization before the structures of the rule of law enforcement have been formed. It is easy to guess that it creates ideal conditions for the flourishing of corruption, and in further perspective for the development of hidden elites which, even after the introduction of relative order, will be able to easily manipulate the state.

GLOBAL EXPLANATION AND THE PROBLEM OF STRENGTHENING THE EXECUTIVE

Irrespective of how much specific circumstances might have facilitated the development of post-communist shadow elites, they do not explain fully the similarities between the phenomena observed in countries from different corners of the globe. Wedel convincingly investigated the profound impact of a new type of hidden elites on authorities, both in a post-communist peripheral country (i.e. Poland) and in a post-communist central country (i.e. Russia) as well as in a central country of the West (i.e. the USA). Not being able to indicate the ultimate nature of certain deeper mechanisms which connect the remarkable development of shadow elites in these countries, Wedel, despite similarities, adopted a clear assumption about the heterogeneity of the causes leading to the genesis of these groups. Such an assumption, however, remains in a conflict with her own description, mentioning many common features between various shadow elites developing in different contexts. Jadwiga

²² Huntington, S. 1968. *Political order in changing societies*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 7.

Staniszki and Arthur Wołek also clearly assume the heterogeneity of the process in a slightly milder form.

Jadwiga Staniszkis in her analysis focuses on the description at the post-communist specificity which was given to consensual management (governance) without an adequate analysis of global processes, which has shaken the balance between traditional types of power. Arthur Wołek, in turn, does not define sharply what the weakness of the state means for him. In the context of Poland, he writes, for example, about weak central authority as a result of globalization processes²³. He writes elsewhere, however, that the same processes of globalization do not necessarily and not in all cases diminish the powers of political authority. However, he does not explain the source of this difference. Moreover, he admits that 'social sciences' are not capable yet to adequately describe the difference between the transfer of competences to some supranational body and 'diffusion of power', or 'accepting the authority of another entity without the diminution of own competences of the state'²⁴. However, the recognition of the problem does not solve it.

In this article I would like to roughly outline a third possible description, that is an attempt to synthesize the phenomena about which Wedel, Wołek and Staniszkis write in a comparative context. I suggest namely to look at the process which have led to the weakening of the state in the classic sense, from the point of view of radical imbalance between the three types of power. Of course, Montesquieu's separation of powers never exists in a pure form and it was also not treated as an absolute dogma by the author himself, as well as by later philosophers of law²⁵. Some of them even radically rejected dogmatism on this issue in favour of the consensual model²⁶. The imbalance I am writing about does not, however, consist in the transition from the trifurcation to larger consensualism, but rather in the fact that specific power dominates to such an extent that it begins to manage society, not through a process of negotiation with the others, but using its own 'court', that is informal elites gathered around it, which provide it with the necessary information and other resources, and marginalizes the influence of other institutions. The strength of political power in general (or a 'box' in which the legislature, executive

²³ Wołek, A. *op. cit.*, p. 120.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

²⁵ Lutz, D. 2008. *Principles of constitutional design*. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 22.

²⁶ Lijphart, A. 2012. *Patterns of democracy: governments form and performance in thirty-six countries*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 274–295.

and judiciary are located) determines to what extent that elite court will be concentrated, and to what extent scattered. By means of a distant historical analogy, scattering can be seen as a reference to the feudal tradition, the concentration – to absolutist.

A general thesis on the origins of shadow elites, which can be set now, is that in many developed countries we currently deal with the unprecedented dominance of the executive, thus strengthening its role in relation to legislative and the judiciary authorities with the simultaneous neo-feudalization of elites²⁷. In this context new ‘aristocrats’ are a kind of a court, orbiting around relatively strong prime ministers, presidents and chancellors and transnational clubs managed by representatives of the local executive. However, shadow elites are not so dependent on the state in general as ordinary officials. The lack of dependence means the lack of control and the lack of control means the creation of oligarchy at the expense of the public sphere. The described process can be obviously seen as a desirable shift towards network management and administration privatization²⁸. Basically, however, it concerns the same process in slightly different normative terms.

It is possible to enumerate at least two main reasons for which the role of the executive has increased in the modern world. Firstly, the executive is the main architect of foreign policy. Today, foreign policy has an increasing impact on national policy and law binding in the given state, which will be discussed in detail below. Secondly, leading representatives of the executive can today fully cooperate with the modern media, which in the era of the increasing media coverage and personalization²⁹ of politics plays an increasing social role. The cooperation of the media with the executive is so fruitful, because legislative power holds resources desired by the media (concessions, advertising of state-owned companies, information)³⁰. What is

²⁷ In a slightly different context T. Piketty writes about it in his famous book *Capital in the twenty first century*. Harvard: Belknap Press, 2014, pp. 430–471.

²⁸ Cf. Rhodes, R. 1996. The new governance: governing without government. *Political Studies*, no. 44, pp. 652–61.

²⁹ Cf. Scheffs, Ł. 2013. Internet w wieku „fabrykowanych wizerunków”. [The Internet in the era of ‘fabricated images’.] In: Musiał-Karg, M. ed. *Demokracja w obliczu nowych mediów*. [Democracy in the face of new media.] Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, pp. 184–197.

³⁰ In some developed countries this phenomenon is more pronounced than in others. A typical example is southern Europe, hence the term ‘Italianization’ for this phenomenon. Cf. Wyka, A.W. 2008. In search of the East Central European media model – The Italianization model? A Comparative perspective on East Central European and South European media system. In: Dobek-Ostrowska, B., Głowacki, M. eds. *Com-*

more, leading representatives of executive power can easily create a coherent political narrative, direct their public image. Legislative bodies are clearly divided, they speak in different voices and as a result are less well received in the media, which today promote clear, simple and literal message. Thus, according to numerous statistics, over the last several years legislative bodies have been rapidly losing popularity on the global scale³¹.

It is advantageous for representatives of the executive who first surround themselves with courts carefully creating their image, then they can easily move from the public sector to the private one or international financial institutions, at the same time partially moving out of sight of the public and avoiding awkward questions. In their new jobs they often take consulting positions, and according to Wedel, this behaviour is 'typical' for shadow elites. The casus of former Polish Prime Minister, Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, is symptomatic here as after stepping down from the office he first advised a Polish state managed bank, then he sat on the Board of Directors of the international European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and finally, in 2008 he was employed by Goldman Sachs Incorporated as 'an international adviser for Central and Eastern Europe'³². More controversy was caused by the fact that Goldman Sachs is considered to be one of the investment banks whose risky financial engineering led to the global crisis in the same year in which Marcinkiewicz started to work there. The example of Marcinkiewicz also perfectly fits Wedel's analysis for several other reasons. Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, who now lives in London, still, in fact, appears in Polish media as an independent expert and, importantly, in 2013 founded a think-tank called the Institute of National Thought together with Michał Kamiński (an influential adviser of the current prime minister Ewa Kopacz) and Roman Giertych (a known lawyer often representing leading politicians). However, it would be a mistake to say that Marcinkiewicz's career is just an example of the connection of some Central European specificity with new possibilities which globalization opens for politicians. At one time former German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, caused much greater controversy.

paring media systems in Central Europe. Between commercialization and politicization. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, pp. 58–71.

³¹ Power, G., Shoot, R.A. 2012. *Global parliamentary report. The changing nature of parliamentary representation.* Phoenix: United Nations Publication, pp. 12–18, Available at: <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/gpr2012-full-e.pdf> [Accessed: 23 July 2015].

³² Premier u Goldmana. [Prime Minister at Goldman's.] *Interia/Newsweek* [Online] 11 July 2008. Available at: <http://biznes.interia.pl/news/premier-u-goldmana,1144605> [Accessed: 23 July 2015].

As is well known, first, Schroeder in the final weeks of his presidency signed an agreement to build the German-Russian Nord Stream gas pipeline, and shortly after his departure from politics in 2005 he became chairman of the board of the company building the Nordstrem pipeline and despite the voices of outrage³³ has been serving on the board to this day without officially breaking any provision of German law.

In this context the case of former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, extremely popular when in office, is also interesting. After leaving office Blair, according to journalists, managed to accumulate a private fortune of 100 million pounds, his wife's, Cherrie Blair, charitable foundation has also developed its activity. The former British Prime Minister derives profits mainly from advisory work, he has cooperated, for instance, with the governments of Colombia and Kazakhstan³⁴. Moreover, Blair does not despise excessive fees for occasional statements and speeches.

One of the reasons why representatives of the executive have become so influential, and at the same time why even after they step down from the official office it is so easy for them to operate in the ranks of global 'shadow elites' is the way in which new legal and political frameworks are created in the era of globalization, omitting at the same time the actions of former legislative bodies because new regulations often arise from international agreements, such as ACTA or the TTIP, or arrangements in closed 'clubs' of representatives of executives and financial and business organizations (e.g. The European Council, the Eurogroup, the Troika, the G8).

Of course, the executive arranged in this way attracts those also who want to exploit it indirectly for their own ends. An increasingly important role is no longer played by the traditional parliamentary lobbyists, but by groups of experts, advisers and think-tanks associating them, which offer their services to prime ministers and presidents. Not without a reason global shadow elites are also particularly active when it comes to advising on international politics. In addition, it must be noted that even quite suspicious activity of the executive are generally better perceived by the public than that of parliaments. Paradoxically, this may stem from the fact that actions of regulatory bodies are in contemporary democracy more transparent. The public has usually full access to records of parliamentary debates, but not

³³ Gerhard Schroeder's sellout. *Washington Post* 13 December 2005. [Accessed: 23 July 2015].

³⁴ Segalov, M. 2015. £330,000 for a 20-minute speech at a world hunger event? Tony Blair is an inspiration to us all. *The Independent* [Online] 1 June 2015. [Accessed: 23 July 2015].

of all meetings of the government. Parliamentary lobbyists in Poland and many other liberal democracies are registered and monitored carefully while we learn about the circle of 'friends' of ministers and prime ministers only by chance, on the occasion of the disclosure of any confidential material, as it was the case in Poland during the so-called 'tape scandal'. As a result, according to the famous anecdote about sausage and politics, transparent and fairly chaotic parliamentary politics can seem little aesthetic, in contrast to the carefully directed image of executive actions.

THE CULT OF ABSORPTION³⁵ AND POLISH TAPES

The absorption of political and material resources offered to members of the European Union is a model case study showing how the executive uses supranational bodies to strengthen its position in comparison with national parliaments, and at the same time how this process leads to neo-feudalization of political elites orbiting around the executive. This stems partly from the fact that key decisions in the Union are collectively made by representatives of the local executive, while functions of the European Parliament are very limited compared to the traditional role of the parliament in a democratic nation-state. What is more, the spending of EU funds is poorly controlled by local parliaments. After their allocation these measures are usually the responsibility of the administration, local governments and related non-governmental organizations, which are also dominated by informal elites.

Easy access to EU funds can actually lead to a reduction in the level of transparency. Similarly to the so-called 'resource curse', they become unusually easy prey. In addition, as in the case of the resource curse, easy resources from the EU can 'push out'³⁶ pro-export activities and industrial development, it sometimes happens that they move away the prospect of

³⁵ The symbolism which accompanied the Polish approval of the EU budget for 2014–2020 looks like a complete confusion of concepts. The public could see, for example, images from the press conference at which the then Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk cut a commemorative cake composed of specially prepared edible euro banknotes. It is difficult to compare such bizarre behavior to anything else than the famous Pacific cargo cult, whose followers worship the 'deity' which sends planes and ships full of various goods. In the mentioned budget 105.8 billion euro, that is about 441 billion, was reserved for Poland, and that is much more than the annual budget of the entire state.

³⁶ Cf. Gylfason, T. 2001. Natural resources, education, and economic development. *European Economic Review* (Elsevier), no. 45 (4–6), pp. 850–59.

introducing necessary reforms. Perhaps, in part for this reason, despite the great help from the European Central Bank, Greece, mired in the crisis and corruption, notes the growing economic underperformance. Research conducted by Spasimir Domaradzki shows that, after all, this is the situation in modern Bulgaria. Domaradzki even puts the thesis that ‘in practice, membership in the European Union has led to halting the necessary political and constitutional reforms’³⁷. In his opinion, reaching the outside goal was apparently premature and control mechanisms proposed by Brussels are not working. Moreover, Domaradzki stresses that ‘the fact of membership in the European Union is also a source of ennoblement for immature political elites’³⁸, and cites reports about almost mafia connections of many Bulgarian politicians.

Indeed, in the case of post-communist elites such ennoblement could be premature. However, it is worthwhile to look at the problem comparatively again and stress that the post-communist specificity itself is an important but not decisive factor. According to the latest report commissioned by the European Parliament and prepared by the Hertie School of Governance³⁹ in the majority of new EU members the level of corruption has not changed or has deteriorated since accession (exceptions are only Estonia and Slovenia). But countries from the group of senior members from the South (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain), where the growth of corruption after the accession is already clear, rank even worse. It should be noted that the study of prof. Mungiu-Pippidi (the author of the report) does not focus only on narrowly conceived corruption (as a direct acceptance of bribes). Mungiu-Pippidi tries even to capture the action of shadow elites slightly in the spirit of Janine Wedel’s theory. To distinguish between traditionally defined corruption and the activities of informal networks teetering on the edge of the law, the researcher uses two concepts: corruption and favouritisms. The latter term means activities directing certain measures (usually governmental) to

³⁷ Domaradzki, S. 2013. Bałkański dylemat Brukseli. O europeizacji Bułgarii czy bułgaryzacji Unii Europejskiej. [Brussels’ Balkan dilemma. The Europeanization of Bulgaria and Bulgarization of the European Union.] In: Halizak, E., Pietraś, M. eds. *Poziomy stosunków międzynarodowych*. [Levels of international relations.] Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Rambler, 2013, p. 438.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, 439.

³⁹ Mungiu Pippidi, A. 2013. *The good the bad and the ugly: controlling corruption in the European Union*, Berlin: Hertie School of Governance. Available at: <http://www.againstcorruption.eu/reports/the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly-controlling-corruption-in-the-european-union/> [Accessed: 25 July 2015].

entities on the basis of informal network relations, and not on the interests of citizens, and describes the actions rather on the basis of legal or seemingly legal mutual exchange of favours and contacts rather than open reception of material benefits.

It is difficult here to clearly capture the moment in which a deliberate action on someone's disadvantage occurs and describe it well, but the effects are quite visible in macroeconomic data. Mungiu-Pippidi gives here the example of Romania, where after the accession to the EU construction companies developed remarkably well, which, firstly, was not justified by the general state of the economy. Secondly, competition in the common market should, at least in theory, have reduced their profits⁴⁰. The only explanation here is the fact of directing huge funds, mainly from the EU, to people informally associated with power and predatory absorption of resources without taking into account the actual, bottom up creation of demand for the given services. Grzegorz Gorzelak explicitly refers to the same phenomena both in the materials prepared for the Central Statistical Office⁴¹ and in his publications⁴². Gorzelak's research shows the justified fear that the massive financing from EU funds in the 2014–2020 term, instead of translating into sustained economic growth, will lead to the phenomena which he accurately describes as the 'syndrome of a municipal water park'⁴³. Therefore, the scholar calls for the application of selectivity in the financing, even at the cost of lower absorption of the funds. He notes, moreover, that previous studies indicate that EU funds are spent mostly at the local level and lead to short-term demand effects, the long-term maintenance of these investments

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

⁴¹ Gorzelak, G. 2014. *Środki unijne – pierwsze oceny*. [EU funds – first assessments.] Statistical Office in Lublin. Available at: http://lublin.stat.gov.pl/gfx/lublin/userfiles/_public/konferencje_i_seminaria/statystyka_w_procesie_monitorowa/g_gorzelak.pdf [Accessed: 25 July 2015].

⁴² Gorzelak, G. 2013. Po euforii czas na refleksję. [After the euphoria it is time for reflection.] *Wspólnota. Pismo samorządu terytorialnego*. [Online] 24 June 2013 Available at: http://www.wspolnota.org.pl/index.php?id=10&tx_archives%5bcontroller%5d=Category&tx_news_pi1%5baction%5d=detail&tx_news_pi1%5bcontroller%5d=News&tx_news_pi1%5bnews%5d=26694&cHash=cb1ed8dfc36540d178044bd8644f1fe5 [Accessed: 25 July 2015]. Cf. also Gorzelak, G. 2014. Wykorzystanie środków Unii Europejskiej dla rozwoju kraju. [The use of European Union funds for the development of the country.] In: Gorynia, M., Rudolf, S. eds. *Polska w Unii Europejskiej i globalnej gospodarce*. [Poland in the European Union and the global economy.] Warszawa: PTE, pp. 223–242.

⁴³ Gorzelak, G. 2014. *Środki unijne – pierwsze oceny*. [EU funds – first assessments.] p. 6.

as well as the entire fund surrounding business becomes a growing burden for the economy and administration.

According to Mungiu-Pippidi, the threat of a specific post-fund ‘overhang’ phenomenon is the highest in those countries which carry out a lot of large-scale government investments (mainly in infrastructure and energy) and at the same time have very few safeguards against corruption. These are those EU countries which in her report go to the D list of the most corruption and favouritism endangered states. These are: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Romania⁴⁴. Mungiu-Pippidi notes at the same time that, in accordance with her analysis, the low demand effect caused by EU funds, or in other words, the lack of their long-term impact on the real economy, indicates clearly that, they are absorbed by various interest groups involved in their use. What is more, thanks to the EU, leading representatives of these groups can significantly broaden their ‘flexible’ networks and enter quite new areas with them.

Approaching the matter from the anthropological perspective Janine Wedel states that shadow elites in Poland have taken the structure of ‘institutional nomads’⁴⁵, that is social groups which try to quickly capture a variety of positions connected with government, banks and foundations, and next they orbit from job to job ensuring that the successor comes from the same environment. Significantly, Wedel states that after accession to the EU ‘the sphere of nomadic activities has expanded so as to include also posts and positions which are within the range of officials and citizens of the EU...’

Recordings of the so-called ‘tape scandal’, recently revealed in Poland, provide a specific example of a ‘flexible’ shadow elite network operating exactly according to the theory of the American anthropologist. Particularly significant here is the information that the then head of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Radosław Sikorski, ‘allegedly sought for the office of European Commissioner for energy “to be able to directly oversee investments in Ukraine carried out by Jan Kulczyk [the richest Polish businessman]”’⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ Mungiu-Pippidi, A., *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁴⁵ Wedel, J., *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁴⁶ Nowa afera taśmowa. Nagrania rozmów Belki, Sienkiewicz, Nowaka... [New tape scandal. Recorded conversations of Belka, Sienkiewicz, Nowak...] *Polska – The Times* [Online] 24 June 2014. Available at: <http://www.polskatimes.pl/artykul/3473191,nowa-afera-tasmowa-nagrania-rozmow-belki-sienkiewicz-nowaka-tasmy-wprost,id,t.html> [Accessed: 26 July 2015].

This information has not been officially confirmed, some time after its disclosure Radosław Sikorski completely withdrew from active political life.

The whole recording disclosed in the Polish tape scandal documents also a number of other activities typical of Wedel's shadow elites. The transcripts show a clear picture of informal social groups which associate people from different political, financial and institutional affiliations. However, during many social gatherings not private matters are considered, but fundamental political issues, such as co-financing of the budget deficit with the support of the President of the Polish National Bank⁴⁷.

What is also characteristic is a picture of a misty point of contact of business, analysis and expertise activity and politics. But what is significant is the fact that hundreds of hours of recordings in accordance with current knowledge do not document a single unequivocal act of open corruption (transfer of goods). The entire activity of the relation network is based on 'soft' conciliation of positions on key issues and exchange of information and seemingly small favours. As in the case Chubais's shadow clan described by Wedel, the recordings show also an outline of connections between leading politicians, economists, government officials, board members of state-owned companies and lobbyists with at least one extremely influential businessman. The person of Piotr Wawrzynowicz appears in recordings disclosed so far. He is a former co-worker of a ruling party politician, a lobbyist, a member of several supervisory boards, an advisor on public relations, and at the time of recording also a person working on behalf of the country's richest citizen⁴⁸. The recordings indicate⁴⁹ that he was a keystone of the informal network, a model representative Wedel's shadow elite.

⁴⁷ Jałoszewski, M. 2014. Rozmowa Belka–Sienkiewicz. Ziobro doniósł, Tuska przeświecają. [Belka-Sienkiewicz conversation. Ziobro reported, Tusk vetted.] *Wyborcza.pl* [Online] 12 August 2014. Available at: http://wyborcza.pl/politykaekstra/1,140199,16469055,Rozmowa_Belka___Sienkiewicz___Ziobro_doniosl___Tuska.html [Accessed: 26 July 2015].

⁴⁸ Rafako company, Piotr Wawrzynowicz: Życiorys. [Piotr Wawrzynowicz: Curriculum Vita.] Available at: http://www.rafako.com.pl/pub/File/Zyciorysy/Piotr_Wawrzynowicz_zyciorys.pdf [Accessed: 26 July 2015].

⁴⁹ Nowe taśmy Wprost. [New tapes of Wprost.] *Wyborcza.pl* [Online] 23 June 2014. Available at: http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,114871,16200009,Nowe_tasmy___Wprost___Oto_najmocniejsze_i_najciekawsze.html [Accessed: 26 July 2015].

FINAL REMARKS

Informal power elites anthropologically described by Janine R. Wedel are deprived of parliamentary control on political grounds and usually orbit around the executive and transnational networks of relationships. Most probably the growing importance of executive power and the transnational bodies have contributed to the emergence of these elites. Shadow elites can become a threat to democracy and total governability of many countries. This raises, of course, the question of how to prevent similar phenomena. In theory, citizens' control over power should be rendered mainly by their parliamentary representatives, and they, apart from lawmaking, are responsible for examining certain systemic pathologies escaping normal legal procedures.

It seems, therefore, that in the context of Europe there are two possible solutions: deeper federalisation and increasing the role of the European Parliament or increasing the control of local parliaments over the implementation of EU law, foreign policy and expenditure of the budget and EU funds.

The first solution seems to be difficult to implement currently, and it is due to the fact that so far nothing in shape of a European nation has been formed, and legislative bodies in their present form can gain legitimacy only from a clearly defined political community. Otherwise, misunderstandings and conflicting interests burst them from the outside. As numerous classics, from Aristotle to Rousseau, notice, multicultural societies are most often governed mainly by strong leaders who in general do without legislative bodies.

The other solution, that is strengthening the role of local parliaments can easily end in the disintegration of the entire European project. Moreover, giving large competencies to traditionally organized parliaments can slow down decision-making processes. Politics in the age of digitization, globalization and increasing media coverage requires making decisions on increasingly complex issues in an increasingly shorter time. A good example of this dilemma was the dispute between the US Congress and President Obama which occurred in 2013, when the American legislature blocked the increase in the administration debt, and thus sharply cut off part of its functions without any specific plan for further action and caused considerable panic in world politics and economy.

It was, moreover, to some extent a repetition of a similar crisis of 2011 when several rating agencies lowered the credit rating the US⁵⁰.

The conclusion is that even though parliaments might effectively control the increasingly independent and globalized executive and shadow elites orbiting around them, as yet there are no tools to do it effectively. The issues of the creation of such tools, however, are extremely complex and go beyond the scope of this analysis.

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⁵⁰ Levit, M.R., Brass, C.T., Nicola T.J., Nuschler, D. 2013. *Reaching the debt limit: Background and potential effects on government operations.* Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, pp. 1–12. Available at: <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/214922.pdf> [Accessed: 26 July 2015].

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REMARKS ON THE GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF 'SHADOW ELITES' IN A COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

Summary

The article provides a comparative analysis of the anthropological concept of the 'shadow elites', which has been introduced by a renowned anthropologist, Janine R. Wedel in her book published in 2009. The 'shadow elites' are informal, flexible networks that are formed on the intersection of business, government, media and science. Moreover, the development of shadow elites is characteristic of societies in relatively developed states and cannot be described simply as corruption or clientelism. In her book Wedel focuses on three examples: the Chubais clan in Russia, the Ordynacka Association in Poland and the Richard Perle neoconservative network in Washington. The author of this article accepts Wedel's definition but argues that we still lack a comprehensive theory concerning the genesis of those elites. The author strives to propose such a theory and recommends further research. The author's concept examines the global processes that disturb the balance between the three branches of powers in modern states. It is the author's contention that the contemporary global political environment favors strong executives with little checks from other branches. The informal networks circling around the modern executives are, in turn, what constitutes the shadow elites. The process is observed world-wide, however, the pathologies typically found in post-communist states facilitate it. The author focuses especially on the cases related to the UE and Poland. The article among other examples describes the connections of the former Polish prime-minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz and the networks of some of the persons involved in the 2014 Polish wiretapping scandal.

UWAGI O GENEZIE I ROZWOJU „ELIT CIENIA”
W KONTEKŚCIE PORÓWNAWCZYM

Streszczenie

Autor poddaje analizie antropologiczną kategorię „elit cienia”, którą wprowadziła w wydanej w 2009 książce uznana amerykańska badaczka Janine R. Wedel. Badaczka użyła tego terminu do opisu nieformalnych elit działających na styku władzy, biznesu, mediów i nauki. Ich działania nie dają się przy tym do końca uchwycić przy pomocy takich terminów jak klientelizm czy też korupcja, i są charakterystyczne raczej dla krajów rozwiniętych. W swojej książce Wedel opisuje jako przykłady klan Anatolija Czubajsa w Rosji, środowisko amerykańskich neokonserwatystów skupione wokół Richarda Perle’a oraz Stowarzyszenie Ordynacka w Polsce. Autor artykułu przyjmuje definicję Wedel, podkreśla jednak, że brak na razie teorii dotyczącej genezy nowego typu elit. Próbuąc wytworzyć taką teorię autor odrzuca koncepcję heterogenicznej genezy wywołanej innymi czynnikami w USA, a innymi w krajach postkomunistycznych. Zamiast tego autor proponuje ogólną teorię globalnych procesów zaburzających równowagę pomiędzy trzema typami władzy występującymi w nowoczesnych państwach i zaleca dalsze badania. Procesy te wzmacniają nieproporcjonalnie władzę wykonawczą, ta zaś dobiera sobie swoiste nieformalne i słabo kontrolowane sieci, czyli elity cienia. Proces ten, zdaniem autora, ma charakter globalny, w krajach postkomunistycznych odziedziczone po poprzednim systemie patologie stają się jednak dobrym katalizatorem procesu wyłaniania elit cienia. W porównawczym opisie przypadków autor skupia się przede wszystkim na Unii Europejskiej oraz Polsce. W przypadku tej ostatniej autor stosuje teorię Janine R. Wedel między innymi do opisu sieci powiązań biznesowo-towarzyskich byłego premiera Kazimierza Marcinkiewicza oraz niektórych uczestników afery podsłuchowej z 2014 roku.

ЗАМЕЧАНИЯ О ГЕНЕЗИСЕ РАЗВИТИЯ «ТЕНЕВЫХ ЭЛИТ» В КОНТЕКСТЕ СРАВНЕНИЯ

Резюме

Автор подвергает сомнению анализ антропологической категории «теневых элит», которую ввела в изданной в 2009-м году книге известная американская исследовательница Джанин Р. Ведель. Исследовательница использовала этот термин для описания неформальных элит, действующих на границе власти, бизнеса, средств массовой информации и науки. Их деятельность

не до конца определяется при помощи таких терминов, как клиентелизм или коррупция, и характерна в первую очередь для развитых стран. В своей книге Ведель описывает в качестве примеров клан Анатолия Чубайса в России, общество американских неоконсерваторов, сконцентрированное вокруг Ричарда Перла, а также Объединение Ординацка в Польше. Автор статьи поддерживает дефиницию Ведель, однако подчёркивает, что пока отсутствует теория, касающаяся генезиса нового типа элит. Пытаясь разработать такую теорию, автор отвергает концепцию гетерогенного генезиса, вызванного при помощи одних факторов в США, а других – в посткоммунистических государствах. Вместо этого автор предлагает общую теорию глобальных процессов, нарушающих равновесие между тремя типами власти, существующими в современных государствах, и призывает к дальнейшим исследованиям. Данные процессы непропорционально укрепляют исполнительную власть, последняя же подбирает для себя своеобразные неформальные и слабо контролируемые сети, другими словами, теневые элиты. Описанная тенденция, по мнению автора, имеет глобальный характер; в посткоммунистических же государствах патологические явления, унаследованные от предыдущей системы, становятся, несмотря ни на что, хорошим катализатором процесса возникновения теневых элит. В сравнительном описании примеров автор останавливает своё более пристальное внимание прежде всего на Европейском Союзе и Польше. В случае Польши автор применяет теорию Джанин Р. Ведель, в частности, для описания сети деловых и общественных связей бывшего премьера Казимежа Марцинкевича и некоторых участников аферы с подслушиванием 2014 года.