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## The University as an Institution for Elite Formation in the Ukrainian Governorates (1865–1917): Levels, Mechanisms, and Scale of Influence

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### Abstract

This article examines the role and historical mission of the university as an institution of elite formation in the Ukrainian Governorates at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries (using the example of Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa). The article analyzes the multilevel mechanisms and actual scope of the university's influence on the formation of scientific, intellectual, legal, and civic elites. The source material of the study consists of three complementary bodies of sources: official university and imperial educational-administration records, memoir and epistolary materials, and biographical and bibliographic publications. These publications served as the basis for compiling and verifying a register of the institution's most prominent figures. The research methodology is based on a synthesis of prosopographic, historical-comparative, problem-chronological, typological, and biographical methods, as well as content analysis.

As a result of verification, a personnel corpus comprising 56 individuals was compiled whose activities at Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa took place during the imperial era. This register brought together figures who made significant contributions to science, state-building, and public administration.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the database revealed a clear dominance of the natural sciences and medicine, as well as physics and mathematics, which collectively account for 73.2 % of the total number of verified individuals. This confirms that the university served, first and foremost, as a powerful center for the formation of a scientific elite. At the same time, the significant proportion of representatives from the humanities, law, and social spheres indicates that the institution's mission of elite formation extended far beyond the strictly academic realm, encompassing the spheres of government and public life as well.

It has been demonstrated that Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa functioned as an integrated institutional system of elite formation. Its effectiveness was determined by its normative structure, the activities of the professorial body, departmental organization, the integration of teaching and research, academic mobility, and symbolic legitimation. The institution's work unfolded in three dimensions: regional (as the intellectual core of Southern Ukraine), pan-imperial (as a center for the distribution of professional resources), and international (through the formation of world-class scholars). This allows us to position Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa as one of the leading institutions for the formation of elites in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

**Keywords:** university, higher education, educational policy, elites, elite formation.

### 1. Introduction

The study of elites is one of the fundamental problems of historical scholarship, for it is precisely through the analysis of elite groups that one can trace the logic of state-building, institutional development, social transformations, and the cultural representation of society. Throughout various historical eras, it was

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the elites who served as the strategic core of political, administrative, and intellectual life. They accumulated resources of power, established normative models of public behavior, produced knowledge, and shaped the state's internal and external image (Koval, 2015: 9-37; Domin, 2015: 57-68).

The modern era (especially from the second half of the 19th century to the early 20th century) is characterized by a rapid increase in the importance of educational and scientific institutions in the processes of elite formation. The deep bureaucratization of the state apparatus, the increasing complexity of the social structure, the differentiation of professional activities, and the institutionalization of science transformed universities into key channels of social mobility. Higher education in this period did more than train personnel: it shaped closed professional corporations, ensured the reproduction of intellectual staff, and served as a space for the accumulation of symbolic capital (Koval, 2015: 38-56; Muzychko, 2015: 82-106).

## 2. Materials and methods

The source material of this study consists of three distinct groups of sources. The first group includes official records produced by the administration of Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa and documents of the imperial educational administration. This collection includes founding documents, the university-wide statutes of 1863 and 1884, minutes of University Council meetings, as well as annual reports on the institution's status and activities and reviews of academic instruction. This body of sources makes it possible to reconstruct the regulatory and legal framework of the university's operations, its administrative hierarchy, personnel policy, and the specifics of the educational process. Thanks to these materials, it has become possible to study in detail the institutional mechanisms through which the university environment formed and reproduced elite professional and intellectual groups (Obshchie ustavy..., 1901; Protokoly..., 1865–1884; Otcheti..., 1866–1916; Obozrenie prepodavaniia..., 1895).

The second group consists of personal sources and materials of a memoir and epistolary nature. These include diaries, memoirs of contemporaries about Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa, as well as private collections of professors and public figures whose lives were connected to the institution. These documents are of exceptional importance for reconstructing the internal life of the academic community, interpersonal communication, career strategies, corporate ethics, and specific forms of symbolic self-affirmation within the university (Samoilov, 1999).

The third group of sources consists of reference, biographical, and bibliographic publications used to compile and subsequently verify the university's personnel corpus – a register of professors and alumni who left the most significant mark on the institution's history. Additional data verification was provided by biographical and encyclopedic dictionaries, as well as systematic indexes to the "Notes of Novorossiia University". The functional purpose of this section was to clarify the chronological boundaries, positions, nature of specific individuals' connections with the institution, and their location within the overall body of university documentation (Zoloti imena..., 2016; Profesory..., 2000–2005; Vypusknyky..., 2005; Vypusknyky..., 2010; Systematychnyi pokazhchyk..., 1957).

The personal corpus (register of professors and graduates) was formed based on the criterion of a person's direct connection to Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa during the imperial period. The analysis included professors, lecturers, and graduates whose biographies intersected with the institution's activities between 1865 and 1917. This approach transformed the compiled register into a reliable tool for identifying and reconstructing typical trajectories of elite formation.

The article is based on a set of general scholarly methods. Synthesis and analysis allowed for the differentiation of the empirical base into separate blocks, combining them into a coherent model of the functioning of Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa as an institution of elite formation. Induction and deduction were used to move from individual biographical, personnel, and documentary facts to broader conceptual conclusions about the institution's mission in forming scientific, legal, civic, and cultural leaders. The method of generalization helped identify typical characteristics of members of the university community, while the descriptive method provided a coherent account of the institution's institutional evolution, its structure, and the career paths of individuals associated with it.

Among the specialized historical methods, the prosopographic method plays a leading role, through which the types of connections between figures and the university, their disciplinary affiliations, forms of public recognition, and the scope of their subsequent activities were identified. The historical-comparative method was used to compare individual groups: natural sciences and medicine, physics and mathematics, chemistry, humanities, and the political-legal and civic fields. The problem-chronological method allowed us to trace the development of Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa over time – from its founding to the end of the imperial period.

The historical-typological method was applied to classify types of elites and models of academic careers, while the biographical method was used for an in-depth analysis of representative cases that best illustrate the general patterns of elite formation. The content analysis method served as the foundation for examining reports, minutes of Council meetings, reviews of instruction, university periodicals, memoirs, and diaries. Elements of quantitative analysis were also employed, allowing for the systematization of individuals in the register by groups, nature of their connection to the institution, academic disciplines, and forms of recognition. The synthesis of these sources and methods enabled a comprehensive study of Imperial

Novorossiya University in Odesa as an institution for the formation of elites at the regional, imperial, and international levels.

### 3. Discussion

An analysis of the historiography shows that the history of Imperial Novorossiya University in Odesa has repeatedly attracted the attention of researchers; however, the dominant approaches to its study remain predominantly institutional-descriptive or disciplinary-fragmentary in nature. In most works, the university is presented as a complex administrative system, the development of which is analyzed through the prism of organizational transformations, educational traditions, international contacts, or the everyday practices of faculty and students. This perspective provides a broad framework for understanding the institution's place in the history of Southern Ukraine and the imperial educational space as a whole, but overlooks other important aspects (Grebtsova, 2005: 342-351; Riasikov, 2015: 163-171; Domin, Marenkov, 2015: 205-208; Grebtsova, Kovalska, 2021: 284-299; Kushnir, 2021: 23-32).

A separate body of literature is devoted to the development of specific faculties, departments, or academic fields. Studies examining the emergence of botanical studies at the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics, the development of physics, ethnography, history teaching, and the formation of source studies as a scientific discipline convincingly demonstrate that the university served as the primary space for the institutionalization of specialized fields of knowledge and the formation of professional communities. However, in the available publications, these processes are covered in isolation, without any attempt to integrate them into a coherent analytical model (Obshchie ustavy..., 1901; Protokoly..., 1865–1884; Otchety..., 1865–1915).

Thus, a review of the first block of literature allows us to conclude: contemporary historiography has laid a solid foundation for studying Imperial Novorossiya University in Odesa as a purely educational and scientific center, but has not yet offered a systematic vision of this institution as a powerful mechanism for the formation of the scientific, legal, civic, and cultural elite (Obozrenie..., 1895; Systematychnyi pokazhchyk..., 1957).

The collection of the university's official records of the university administration and documents of the imperial educational administration serves as the primary basis for reconstructing the institutional mechanisms of elite formation. Of particular value here is a collection of regulatory materials comprising founding documents, the statutes of 1863 and 1884, minutes of University Council meetings, and annual reports on its activities. These sources make it possible to reconstruct the institution's actual institutional configuration, its legal framework, administrative hierarchy, decision-making processes, departmental structure, faculty selection principles, and educational priorities.

Within this body of documents, the minutes of Council meetings and annual reports are the most important, as they specifically record the day-to-day operations of the university's administrative machinery. Through them, one can trace personnel appointments, faculty elections, the internal structure of departments, the geography of academic travel, changes in curricula, and the actual state of scientific research. When compared with the statutes, these documents illustrate the extent to which the university exercised autonomy and where it remained under strict state control.

No less significant are the serial materials of an educational, administrative, and scientific nature. They enable the reconstruction of the institution's disciplinary landscape, its professorial staff, and the actual architecture of knowledge within which future professionals were formed, as well as the university's modes of institutional self-representation. It is precisely in this combination that official documents reveal the university as a dynamic center for the training, selection, and legitimization of elites.

The source value of the memoir and epistolary heritage lies in the ability to reconstruct the daily life of the institution, clarify the specific features of the professorial and student subcultures, and identify the mechanisms of the subsequent glorification of individual community leaders. The personal archives of scholars and figures associated with the university significantly strengthen this line of research. They provide access to private correspondence, manuscripts, and official and private notes. Through them, one can trace individual trajectories of intellectual self-assertion, reflections on institutional changes, academic conflicts, communication networks, and career strategies. This allows us to study not merely a formal service biography, but the immediate process of entering an elite milieu as a unique personal and cultural experience (Samoilov, 1999).

The fourth block of sources, consisting of reference, biographical, and bibliographic literature, primarily serves a verification function. The register of the institution's "illustrious figures" makes it possible to identify those individuals through whom collective memory and scholarly tradition represent Imperial Novorossiya University in Odesa as a center of the highest intellectual standing (Profesory..., 2000–2005; Vypuschnyky..., 2005; Vypuschnyky..., 2010; Systematychnyi pokazhchyk..., 1957).

### 4. Results

The primary basis for compiling the personal corpus of individuals associated with Imperial Novorossiya University in Odesa was the register of professors and graduates who are recorded in historical memory as its most influential figures. Following verification, 56 individuals whose direct connection to the

institution spans the years 1865–1917 were added to the analytical database. This dataset allows for a detailed examination of the personnel composition during the imperial period. It represents not only the professorial body but also the institution's alumni, opening up the possibility of studying the university simultaneously in two dimensions: as a space for the formation of the academic elite and as a channel for training high-status specialists for other spheres of society.

An initial systematization of the personnel corpus revealed that it is more appropriate to classify the university's prominent figures not by formal positions but by sectoral and functional criteria. On this basis, the entire corpus of figures was divided into four independent blocks: 1) natural sciences and medicine; 2) physics, mathematics, and chemistry; 3) humanities; 4) political, legal, and civic.

The quantitative distribution revealed a clear dominance of the first two categories. The natural sciences and medicine block included 22 individuals, the physics, mathematics, and chemistry block – 19, the humanities block – 12, and the political-legal and civic block – 3 (Table 1). Thus, the first two blocks together account for 73.2 % of the total number of verified figures. This clearly confirms that Imperial Novorossiya University in Odesa during the imperial era positioned itself primarily as a center of scientific elite formation.

**Table 1.** Quantitative distribution of the personnel corpus of Imperial Novorossiya University in Odesa, 1865–1917 (Profesory..., 2000–2005; Vypusnyky..., 2005; Vypusnyky..., 2010; Zoloti imena..., 2016)

<b>Block (cluster)</b>	<b>Number of Individuals</b>	<b>Share of Corpus, %</b>
Natural Sciences and Medicine	22	39.3
Physics, Mathematics, and Chemistry	19	33.9
Humanities	12	21.4
Political, Legal, and Civic	3	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The natural sciences and medicine block accounts for the largest share of the studied corpus: 22 individuals, or 39.3 % of the total. This indicates that the university most clearly established itself as a space for the formation of the medical and biological elite (Zoloti imena..., 2016; Profesory..., 2000–2005).

This block is most vividly illustrated by the figures of Illia Mechnikov, Volodymyr Khavkin, Danylo Zabolotny, Mykola Gamaliya, Volodymyr Filatov, and Oleksandr Bogomolets. It is through the lens of their biographies that one can trace the university's capacity to form scientific leaders at the imperial and global levels. Illia Mechnikov's scientific achievements were linked to biology, embryology, microbiology, and immunology, and his research on phagocytosis earned him the Nobel Prize. This serves as compelling evidence of the university's integration into the global scientific community.

Volodymyr Khavkin demonstrates another model for realizing this unit's potential – the transition from fundamental university training to microbiological and epidemiological research on a global scale. His work on developing vaccines against cholera and the plague epitomizes a type of scientific authority where theoretical knowledge was directly converted into practical efforts to save human lives.

No less revealing are the biographies of Danylo Zabolotny and Mykola Gamaliya, which illustrate the university's role in the development of Ukrainian bacteriology and epidemiology.

As a researcher of particularly dangerous infections, Danylo Zabolotny represents the type of scientist whose career combined high academic standards with a socially significant mission. Mykola Gamaliya, one of the leading bacteriologists of his era, confirms that the university's resources could be transformed not only into academic recognition but also into tangible influence on the healthcare system and preventive medicine. Thanks to these figures, the natural sciences and medicine block emerged as an environment where science gained direct social significance.

Volodymyr Filatov and Oleksandr Bogomolets personify the fields of clinical medicine, pathophysiology, and the formation of powerful scientific schools. Volodymyr Filatov – a world-renowned ophthalmologist and one of the founders of modern ophthalmic surgery and tissue therapy – clearly demonstrated the high practical potential of the Odesa medical center. Oleksandr Bogomolets – an outstanding physiologist – exemplifies how the university served as a launching platform for achieving the highest level of scientific authority. These examples demonstrate that the natural sciences and medicine constituted a key component of the university's intellectual and professional community, while their representatives shaped the trajectory of scientific development far beyond the region itself.

Within this cluster, several types of connections with the university can be distinguished. Some scholars were members of the professional academic corps and directly shaped the intellectual environment through their teaching activities. Others were connected with the institution exclusively as graduates, whose education there laid the foundation for their future clinical or scientific careers. A separate group consisted of individuals whose biographies combined both models. Such multidimensionality indicates that the university functioned as a space for sustained and profound academic socialization.

This block brings together scholars whose subsequent activities differed in scale. While some scientists conducted their research primarily at the local level, the leaders of the field extended their influence far beyond the borders of Odesa. The aforementioned Mechnikov, Khavkin, Zabolotny, Gamaliya, Filatov, and Bogomolets embody not merely local history, but a global process of the institutionalization of science, in which the educational environment of Southern Ukraine served as a powerful generator of personnel and research practices.

The physics, mathematics, and chemistry block is the second largest component of the studied corpus: 19 individuals, or 33.9 % of the total. Together with the natural sciences and medicine block, it formed the core of the university's scientific elite (Zoloti imena, 2016; Profesory..., 2000–2005).

This block is most prominently represented by Mykola Zelinsky, Oleksandr Lyapunov, Leonid Mandelstam, and Lev Pysarzhevsky. Their work reveals the university's connection to the formation of an elite of fundamental knowledge, for whom high-level theorization, mathematical culture, laboratory experimentation, and an impeccable academic reputation were priorities.

Mykola Zelinsky is one of the key figures illustrating the evolution from a university student to a chemist of international renown. His research in organic chemistry, as well as his applied inventions, took his work far beyond the confines of purely academic science.

The figure of Oleksandr Lyapunov is also illustrative, as he embodies a high culture of mathematical research. His works in the fields of mathematics and mechanics confirm Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa's commitment to the development of fundamental theory. This block demonstrates a specific model of elite formation, in which academic resources were converted into intellectual capital that shaped scientific progress beyond the borders of Odesa. The university's role here lay not merely in education, but in immersing individuals in an environment of high standards, where abstract thinking, methodological rigor, and the continuity of scientific traditions were honed.

Leonid Mandelstam, one of the most brilliant physicists of his time, attests that the university served as a launching platform for scholars who later worked within the sphere of global science. His example demonstrates the ability of the Odesa academic community to train top-tier researchers in both theoretical and experimental fields.

Lev Pysarzhevsky, a representative of the chemical field, exemplifies a model in which the university educated not merely classical professors and lecturers, but innovators capable of developing original approaches and founding their own scientific schools. It is precisely thanks to such leaders that the physics, mathematics, and chemistry block emerged as an environment for generating fundamental science, which defined the character of the academic landscape of that time.

This block represented a different type of elite formation than the medical and biological one. While in the medical environment, the social applicability of knowledge, clinical practice, and the fight against epidemics played a significant role, for the physics-mathematics and chemistry fields, the defining factors were the depth of theoretical training, the level of abstraction, methodological culture, and the ability to create new scientific schools.

Thus, the first two blocks constituted the main intellectual potential of Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa. Their analysis demonstrates the institution's ability to foster a high-status scientific environment, ensure disciplinary continuity, and integrate graduates into broad scientific networks at the regional, imperial, and international levels.

The third block, the humanities, is quantitatively smaller than the previous two, yet it is by no means secondary. Its significance makes it possible to view Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa as an important center for the formation of the humanities and cultural elite of the imperial era. In particular, the role of this educational institution in the development of art history, Byzantine studies, archaeology, philosophy, and psychology is most vividly reflected in the scholarly works of Nikodym Kondakov, Fedir Uspenskii, and Mykola Lange.

Nikodym Kondakov's scholarly legacy is inseparably connected with art history and archaeology, and his authority was recognized far beyond Odesa. His example demonstrates that the Faculty of Humanities trained not merely teachers or narrowly specialized experts, but scholars who shaped the development of the humanities within an international context.

No less significant was Fedir Uspenskii – one of the most authoritative Byzantinists, whose career serves as evidence of the high level of the university's historical and philological school. In his case, the humanities emerge as a sphere for preparing researchers capable of integrating the university into global academic networks and establishing their own scholarly schools.

Mykola Lange personifies the philosophical and psychological dimension of this intellectual sphere, closely connected with the development of intellectual culture. Taken together, these figures demonstrate that the university's humanities division served as a powerful source for the formation of cultural elites of the highest caliber.

The humanities constituted a distinct model of elite formation. Humanitarian disciplines provided a special form of prestige – intellectual authority, the ability to shape cultural codes, historical narratives, scholarly methodologies, and academic standards of interpretation.

This confirms that Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa was not only a center for natural sciences but also an important hub of humanities knowledge that influenced the formation of the intellectual climate in both the Ukrainian lands and the empire as a whole.

The political-legal and civic block is the smallest within the structure of the personnel corpus, accounting for 5.4 % of the total. However, its presence is of fundamental importance, as it allows us to go beyond purely academic history and demonstrate how the university's resources were converted into practices of public administration, jurisprudence, public opinion formation, and civic life (Zoloti imena..., 2016; Vypusknyky..., 2005; Vypusknyky..., 2010). This group captures a distinct type of elite formation, where higher education served as a space for training individuals capable of influencing political decisions, legal doctrine, and the vectors of social development (Zoloti imena..., 2016; Profesory..., 2000–2005).

This block is most vividly represented by Mykola Vasylenko, Serhii Witte, and Mykhailo Slabchenko. It is through their lives that the university's ability to educate not only scholars but also statesmen and public leaders becomes evident. Mykola Vasylenko embodies the legal and statecraft dimensions of this approach. As a legal historian, a researcher of state institutions, and at the same time an active politician, he demonstrates that university education served as the foundation for combining theoretical knowledge with state activity.

Serhii Witte embodies the large-scale administrative and political dimension of university elite formation. He held the highest positions in the imperial system of power – Minister of Finance, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, and Chairman of the Council of Ministers. His figure is a classic example of the transformation of university education into a large-scale political and modernizing influence on the state system.

Mykhailo Slabchenko represents the civic-intellectual component of this block. His life story traces the connection between Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa and the cultivation of public intellectuals, whose activities closely intertwined scientific research with active citizenship and participation in social processes.

The conducted analysis makes it possible to assert that the elite-forming mission of the Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa was not limited merely to the presence within its walls of individual outstanding professors or talented graduates.

The decisive factor was that the university functioned as a cohesive institutional mechanism. Within its framework, the legal structure, the professorial body, the faculty structure, the educational process, scientific research, academic communications, and symbolic forms of recognition formed a unified system.

The first fundamental element in the formation of elites was the institutional organization of the institution, enshrined in regulatory acts. The founding documents, the statutes of 1863 and 1884, as well as reporting documentation, indicate that Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa was integrated into the empire-wide system of higher education as a fully-fledged structure designed to ensure the training of highly qualified personnel, the development of science, and the self-renewal of the professoriate (Obshchie ustavy..., 1901; Otchety..., 1866–1916).

The second key lever was the professorial corporation itself. It was this body that ensured the continuity of academic tradition, set the standard for scientific quality, developed curricula, conducted faculty selection, and shaped the environment for the initial intellectual socialization of young researchers. Sources indicate that within the university structure, the professor served as the primary bearer of scientific authority, a representative of his or her school, and a unifying link between the local institution and the global scientific community (Protokoly..., 1865–1884; Obozrenie prepodavaniia..., 1895; Otchety..., 1866–1916).

The third mechanism for the formation of elites was the faculty-department structure, which defined the university's disciplinary character and effectively shaped the profile of future elites. This explains the clear dominance of representatives from the natural sciences, medical sciences, and the exact sciences within the verified cohort. The issue is not merely one of individuals, but rather that the very conditions under which departments and laboratories operated fostered the concentration of resources in fields where research was systematic and long-term in nature.

An integral condition for the formation of the elite was the unity of the educational process and scientific work. The university environment was structured so that the acquisition of knowledge, experimentation, and early involvement in research mutually reinforced one another. This is fundamental to understanding the nature of the university. Here, the elite emerges not as a random external outcome of education, but as a natural product of an environment where an individual progressed from a lecture attendee to an equal participant in scientific discourse, from a student to a faculty member and a member of the scientific community.

A significant proportion of the individuals included in the compiled corpus continued their careers at other universities, academies, major laboratories, and administrative institutions. It was this academic mobility that transformed Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa from a regional institution into a significant element of the pan-imperial and international intellectual sphere.

Another effective tool for elite formation was symbolic legitimation and the specific culture of academic prestige. The university conferred a particularly high status associated with the title of professor, departmental affiliation, and recognition among peers. Taken together, these factors transformed the Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa into one of the most important centers for the formation of the scientific, intellectual, legal, and civic elite of its era.

An analysis of the structure of its academic and professional community makes it possible to examine the influence of this educational institution across three interconnected dimensions: regional, imperial, and international. Such a three-level perspective provides an objective assessment of its historical significance. The university was not an isolated local institution; rather, its function was to simultaneously satisfy the intellectual and professional needs of the southern Ukrainian governorates, integrate into the imperial circulation of knowledge, and educate leaders whose activities extended onto the international stage.

On a regional scale, Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa served as the main hub of intellectual activity in Southern Ukraine. It influenced the region by training qualified specialists and shaping an urban environment where education and science became important markers of social prestige. This influence was particularly noticeable in fields related to the region's practical needs. For instance, the geological surveys conducted by Mykola Andrusov and Mykola Golovkynsky were of strategic importance for the scientific exploration of the Black Sea region, while Oleksandr Brauner's zoological studies focused on the fauna of the South. The climatic and meteorological studies of Oleksandr Klosovsky, oriented toward regional needs, are also indicative in this regard, as are the botanical-geographical works of Gavrylo Tanfiliev devoted to the characteristics of the steppe zone.

The pan-imperial vector of influence is no less clearly discernible. The compiled corpus of individuals demonstrates that most individuals associated with the university extended beyond the local sphere and integrated into the empire's academic, legal, and state systems. In this context, the university emerges as a vital hub for the formation and redistribution of intellectual resources, capable of training specialists who successfully competed and gained recognition at the national level.

The institution's international scope of influence was most clearly evident through representatives of the natural sciences and medicine block, as well as the physics, mathematics, and chemistry block. It is there that figures are concentrated whose scientific activity transcended the empire's borders and became an integral part of the European and global context. This means that the university was involved not only in the reproduction of national elites but also in the training of scholars whose authority had global resonance.

Thus, the research findings indicate that Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa operated simultaneously on three scales. At the regional level, it served as the intellectual core of Southern Ukraine and a center for the formation of high-status professional groups. At the imperial level, it served as a key hub for the training and deployment of scientific, administrative, and legal personnel. Internationally, it facilitated the entry of locally trained scholars onto the global academic stage. Collectively, this allows us to position it as an institution of elite formation operating across several levels.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study allows us to view Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa as one of the key institutions for the formation of elites in Southern Ukraine in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. An analysis of the institution's verified personnel indicates that its historical influence was manifested simultaneously in several dimensions. It was most clearly evident in the sphere of scientific elite formation, primarily in the natural sciences, medicine, and physics and mathematics. It is these fields that constitute the quantitatively dominant part of the studied corpus. They most convincingly attest to the university's high institutional capacity for training scientific and research personnel on an imperial and international scale.

At the same time, the results of the analysis demonstrate that the role of Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa was not limited exclusively to the history of the natural sciences and medicine. The development of the institution's humanities field confirms its significance as a vital environment for shaping an intellectual and cultural elite associated with history, philology, philosophy, archaeology, and art history. The political-legal and civic block, despite its limited size, revealed yet another significant vector of the university's influence, directly linked to the sphere of public administration, the development of public opinion, and civic life. This provides grounds for asserting that Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa ensured the reproduction of several types of elites, among which the academic elite held a prominent place.

The study also established that the university's elite-forming mission was supported by a complex of interrelated institutional mechanisms. These include the institution's formally established structure, the activities of the professorial corporation, the faculty-departmental organization, the systematic integration of teaching with research, academic mobility, a developed knowledge infrastructure, and an effective system of symbolic legitimation. The university simultaneously served as a space for selection, academic socialization, professional development, and social recognition of the individual.

An important conclusion of the study is that the university's activity unfolded simultaneously across three dimensions. At the regional level, it served as a center of intellectual concentration for Southern Ukraine and a hub for training high-status professional groups. At the pan-imperial level, the university served as one of the leading centers for the formation and redistribution of scientific, administrative, and intellectual personnel. At the international level, the institution contributed to the formation of figures whose scientific authority and achievements extended far beyond the boundaries of the imperial scientific and academic sphere.

Thus, during its existence (1865–1917), Imperial Novorossiia University in Odesa emerged as a powerful center for the formation of the scientific, intellectual, legal, and civic elite. Its historical role was defined by its

ability to construct and maintain a stable academic environment within which knowledge, status, institutional structure, and symbolic capital combined into an effective mechanism for long-term elite formation.

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