

## **Inter-party democracy as a democracy development factor in Ukraine**

The search for the causes of the hybrid political regime, the slow and limited implementation of reforms, involves the study of all possible factors. Political parties have become important actors of political life in Ukraine. Accordingly, their activities and their own characteristics are an independent factor. The level of development of democracy in society depends on the level of inter-party democracy. The state of democracy in modern parliamentary parties of Ukraine is considered.

*Keywords: political party, democracy, parliament, inter-party democracy, parliamentary party, factor*

## **СТАН ВНУТРІШНЬОПАРТІЙНОЇ ДЕМОКРАТІЇ ЯК ЧИННИК РОЗВИТКУ ДЕМОКРАТІЇ В УКРАЇНІ**

Пошук причин гібридного політичного режиму, повільного і обмеженого проведення реформ, передбачає вивчення дії всіх можливих факторів. Політичні партії стали вагомими акторами політичного життя в Україні. Відповідно їх діяльність і власні характеристики виступають самостійним чинником. Окреслено, що рівень розвитку демократії в суспільстві залежить від рівня демократії всередині політичної партії. Розглянуто стан демократії в сучасних парламентських партіях України.

*Ключові слова: політична партія, демократія, парламент, внутрішньопартійна демократія, парламентська партія, чинник.*

Evaluation of the level of inner-party democracy is not just a significant theoretical-methodological task, but also an essential element of understanding the prospects of democratic society formation. It is difficult to imagine that a political party, which according to its constitution and practice is not democratic, can establish/assert democracy development at the national or regional/other level. For analysis we selected the parliamentary parties, which passed the 5% threshold at the pre-term parliamentary elections to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine that took place on October 26, 2014. In the process of preparing materials we have examined political parties' regulations, survey reports, election results and experts' opinions (heads of regional centers and people's deputies from the abovementioned parties).

**Table 1.** Main characteristics of the parliamentary parties in Ukraine as of November 11, 2017

	Party name	Registration date	Results of the 2014 parliamentary elections		Rating of political parties as of October 2017 y % <sup>1</sup>
			% in a multi-mandate electoral district	Total number of deputies	
1	Petro Poroshenko Bloc "Solidarity"	May 5, 2000	21,82	132	13,6
2	People's Front	March 31, 2014	22,14	82	2,0
3	Party "Samopomich" Union"	December 29, 2012	10,97	33	5,9
4	Political party "Opposition Bloc"	April 23, 2010	9,43	29	8,6
5	Oleh Liashko Radical Party	September 28, 2010	7,44	22	6,5
6	All-Ukrainian Union "Batkivshchyna"	July 09, 1999	5,68	19	10,0

In the course of evaluating the level of political party democracy the most popular are indices, formulated by S. Kanonchuk and O. Yarosh: 1) decentralization of party activity, delegation: balance between managerial functions in the center and in periphery, determination and delimitation of authorities; electoral mechanisms of governing bodies formation; 2) democratic mechanisms of decision making process, inclusivity: inner-party decisions are taken on a collegial basis (by means of voting or consensus); decisions concerning general issues are made, taking into account the position of local centers, there is a possibility of "lower initiative"; decisions concerning local issues are within the competence of local centers; 3) transparency while working with resources: local centers and ordinary members have access to financial data to the extent it does not threaten party interests; 4) accountability: leadership of the party and its central bodies regularly make and present the party with reports concerning its political activity, organizational and financial matters; there are control and auditing organs<sup>2</sup>. We agree that these criteria represent key aspects of democratic activity. At the same time we assume that when it comes to the parliamentary parties a totality of indices must be modified. To our mind, the indices must comprise the following characteristics of parties:

1. construction of organizational composition: vertical, including the grounds of democratic centralization or a possibility to form horizontal bonds at the levels of every party link regardless of the party center;
2. description of the parliamentary faction place in the organizational structure of the party, its functional load and influence on the process of decision making;
3. whether governing bodies, indicated in the party regulations, function on a regular basis and within their competence; existence of formations beyond the party regulations, which influence the process of decision making;

<sup>1</sup> Attitude of the Ukrainian citizens to public institutions, electoral orientations [Electronic resource]. – 2017 – Access mode: <http://razumkov.org.ua>

<sup>2</sup> Main procedures of inner-party democracy. Analytical review / Prepared by S.H.Kononchuk, O.A.Yarosh / Ukrainian independent center of political investigations. – K., 2012. – P.13.

4. a level of decentralization concerning organization of the party activity/who prioritize the “agenda” of regional party structures and in the process of taking political decisions;
5. a process of decision taking presupposes common discussions over various initiatives including ad hoc, or a prepared decision is brought up for approval and it is anticipated that it will be supported, correspondingly other options are excluded;
6. transparency while working with finances, when the party organizations know: the sources of party funding and arrangements, according to which this funding takes place and they are aware of a general form of financing local centers in the off-election periods and during the election campaigns.

We deliberately counted out the issue of accountability, which presupposes that the party’s leadership and its central bodies make and present the party with reports concerning its political activity, organizational and financial matters; there exist control and auditing organs. The reason is that all parties’ regulations comprise such requirements. When normative regulations concerning state funding of political parties came into force, the latter on a quarterly basis provide and publish reports on financial activities. However, such reports and accountability in general are formal (we assume that the peculiarity of first experience and in future the system of effective control). Currently, there is no practice of liability of the party leader and higher level managers for low results at elections, mistakes/inappropriate decisions and activities in the off-election periods. Change of leadership of regional/oblast party structures takes place upon a direct request of the party governing bodies or involving them/when approved publicly or silently. The exceptions exist, but they are rare.

The regulations of the abovementioned political parties define vertical construction of organizational composition. In particular, according to the Regulations of the political party All-Ukrainian Union “Batkivshchyna” (p. 4.1): “Structurally the party is organized on the territorial principle in accordance with administrative-territorial formation of Ukraine and with regard to the election legislation and is composed of local party organizations and central regulatory and control and auditing organs of the party”<sup>3</sup>. In the Regulations of the “Samopomich” Union (p. 3.1) it is stated that “The Party structure is formed by its central bodies, regional and local, initial centers of the party”<sup>4</sup>. Regional structures are subordinated to the party national governing bodies. In their turn, regional structures continue the vertical down: district, city and initial organizations. Whereas, horizontal bounds between the party organizations of one level are not described in the Regulations and actually are almost absent. In fact, in practice they actualize key bases of democratic centralism<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Regulations of the political party All-Ukrainian Union “Batkivshchyna” [Electronic resource] – 2016. – Access mode: <http://kyiv.ba.org.ua>

<sup>4</sup> Regulations of the party “Samopomich” Union [Electronic resource] – 2016. – Access mode: <http://samopomich.ua>

<sup>5</sup> The principle of democratic centralism is in the foundations of the structure and activity of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It presupposed: appointment of all party posts and bodies from bottom to top by election; accountability of higher bodies before the lower ones; party discipline, when minority is subordinated to the decisions taken by majority. Functionally this principle served as an instrument in power struggle.

Regulations of none of the parties presuppose determination of the place of its parliamentary faction within the party structure. Sitting deputies of the Verkhovna Rada predominantly function in their surrounding, they are recommended to cooperate with governing bodies of their regional structures, if before the elections they work in the region or are ascribed by supervisors to any regional organization if their regional affiliation differs or if the number of deputies from one and the same region is too big. The notion of supervisors is not clearly defined in the parties' regulations. The position of people's deputies within the party governing bodies is not determined either. Like in the "Opposition Bloc" some deputies/part of deputies form the composition of the Political Bureau/governing bodies, the rest is considered to work in their specialization fields (as a rule specialization complies with the area of the parliamentary committee)<sup>6</sup>. The exception is the "Samopomich" Union, the regulations of which presuppose that party parliamentarians must be a part of the Leadership of the Party, which carries out consulting and advisory functions and is made up of the members of the Party Political Council and heads of regional organizations. The fact that among people's deputies there are a lot of party functionaries does not withdraw a question. Parliamentary deputies have profound influence on the process of decision making, but mainly those decisions which are raised in the parliament. When it comes to the party decisions namely, if they are not party functionaries then their influence is determined/depends on a personal position/initiative of a deputy, their personal relations and connections with national and regional party leadership.

On the basis of the parliamentary parties' regulations along with the party sessions and controlling bodies to the governing bodies belong: *the Petro Poroshenko Bloc "Solidarity"*: Central Council of the Party, Presidium of the Central Council of the Party and Head of the Central Council, besides the Regulations include the position of the Honorary Head of the Party; *the People's Front*: Political Council, Coordination Council (members of the political council and heads of regional organizations), Military Council and its Head; *the Samopomich Union*: Political Council, Executive Committee, Leadership of the Party and its Head; *the Opposition Bloc*: Political Council, Political Executive Committee and its Head; *Oleh Liashko Radical Party*: the Head, Political Council and Presidium; *the All-Ukrainian Union "Batkivshchyna"*: Political Council, Presidium and its Head. The Regulations presuppose the procedure of governing bodies concerning who and how must compile it and periodicity of sessions. Among the abovementioned parties Oleh Liashko Radical Party and All-Ukrainian Union "Batkivshchyna" are considered to be parties of a leadership type. In both cases leaders of the parties dominate over other governing bodies. The latter assemble periodically, mainly on the leaders' requirements. Besides, many current and other issues are determined by the leaders and a group formed by them (in Batkivshchyna such group

<sup>6</sup> It should be admitted that the parliamentary faction of the Opposition bloc comprises along with the party members other non-party deputies, who position themselves as an opposition to the ruling coalition.

usually comprised 6-7 people, including both party leaders and individual deputies). The Samopomich Union assumes almost the same position as all main questions belong to the competence of A. Sadovyi and the leader of the party faction O. Bereziuk. In the Petro Poroshenko Bloc "Solidarity" the Central Council and Presidium assemble/function on a periodic base and not in accordance with the procedure. All current party work is supervised by the member of the Presidium Berezenko S. I. and the member of the Presidium and the head of the Secretariat Savrasov M. V. The case of the Opposition Bloc may be treated as an individual case. It is connected with the fact that the party leadership is represented by three dominant groups of influence: R. Akhmetov's, S. Lovochkin's and V. Medvedchuk's. Their specific personal interests presuppose that all decisions are taken on a collegial basis. As the abovementioned groups are not institutionalized within the party, then the role of mediators/representatives is also determined not by the Regulations but as situations demand. Governing bodies function periodically. However, regional party organizations are oriented on one of the mentioned groups. Such system is inherent to the People's Front, providing that the number of "centers" is bigger and they are of different "weight", orientation of the heads of regional organizations on a certain influential figure in the party is very distinct.

Designation of the agenda of regional party structures is mostly peculiar of the All-Ukrainian Union "Batkivshchyna". Experts believe that central leadership determines up to 90% of tasks and directions of work for regional party structures. Coordination of work of regional structures, especially in eastern and southern regions of Ukraine is inherent to the Opposition Bloc. However, determination of the agenda is two-sided and focused on the format of opposition/contradistinction to the authorities' actions and ad hoc topicality of current events. As to the rest of the parties, their governing bodies are fully concentrated on the work of the faction and leader of the party. Regional organizations have a possibility to plan and actualize projects independently. However, under conditions of low central funding and individual search for sponsorship the number of such projects is not big. Correspondingly, activity of regional organizations largely depends on the initiative of their regional leaders. In most cases, under conditions of poor funding from the center the work of regional structures is mainly focused on party deputies in regional, city, district councils if there are any, and ad hoc concerning the events of national and regional levels. In the period of the elections it is possible to observe a tendency of tough centralization in the context of presidential and parliamentary elections, close cooperation when the center is dominating over the deputies of regional and city councils.

Decisions, taken at the party sessions by party governing bodies as a rule are prepared by leadership of the party and are handed over for formal approval by delegates or representatives at corresponding levels. The same algorithm is inherent to all other levels of party structure; at least they are striving for it. At the same time at levels of regional, city and district structures there can be some exceptions or deviations from the "standard". As the

practice shows there are situations when there is an open competition between two or more party centers. As a rule, such centers are represented by functionaries or businessmen who are party members or support work of a regional party leader/party organization. Change of management/victory of a certain center, which may resemble inner competition, is possible only when one of the parts is supported by the party leader. In this case it is referred not to the party leader but to the representatives of higher governing bodies. One of the spread ways of “democratic victory” or “procedural democracy” is a sharp increase in membership of primary or district party structures to the level, when it is possible to gain advantage with the help of new controlled members within the composition of party meeting or delegates. The example is the elections of the head of Ivano-Frankivsk regional organization of the Samopomich Union in October 2017.

In 2016 the Committee of voters of Ukraine (CVU) conducted a research during which they interrogated the representatives of regional party organizations concerning the system of funding. The respondents stated that one third of party centers depended on centralized funding; another third part was funded by private sponsors<sup>7</sup>. Both ways of funding lead to further dependence of regional structure of party leadership on their donors. Correspondingly, it determines a kind of restriction for party leaders and party structures as well, what in general do not contribute to the development of inner-party democracy. Since 2017 the country introduced direct state funding for parties’ regulatory activity, which is not connected with their participation in the elections and partial refunding of parties’ expenses on pre-election campaigns during the elections<sup>8</sup>. Consequently, all parliamentary parties received their share of state funding. Experience of regional party structures testifies that at this stage there is neither an established algorithm of funding political parties which would be general for all parties nor a peculiar one for a specific party. Currently, in particular central party leadership decides where the money, given by the state, will be directed. By this, regional party organizations are dependent on the position of the party leader in questions of funding.

### **Display of inner-party democracy**

All abovementioned parties are characterized by another level of pluralism concerning work of the party faction in the Verkhovna Rada. All experts agree that deputies may have an opportunity to discuss the agenda, subject matters of the party faction concerning certain questions put on agenda in the parliament and the way of voting: obligatory or free etc. Quite often there are situations when the party and faction leadership express the desirable variant, however it does not automatically mean positive result. Faction leadership has all instruments to exert influence on a deputy’s position, but taking into account numerous voting,

<sup>7</sup> The CVU’s report: State of political parties before the beginning of state funding [Electronic resource] – Access mode: <http://cvu.org.ua>

<sup>8</sup> Law of Ukraine № 2123a “On alterations to some legislative acts of Ukraine concerning prevention and fight against political corruption” [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: [http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4\\_1?pf3511=55655](http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=55655)

support provided to one draft-law cannot be seen as a guarantee for further disciplined approach concerning other questions. As the practice shows in cases of principal voting the leadership of the party faction must work individually with a large number of deputies to understand their positions and variants of voting. Special status of the party faction, its organizational apartness from the whole party does not extend the idea of inner-party pluralism over the party. Such experience is rather an “individual case”, forced specificity. In particular, it is proved by the experience of the All-Ukrainian Union “Batkivshchyna”, which constantly, since the time of its registration, obtains its parliamentary status, however, it is difficult to find indicators of gradual democratization in the inner-party life.

Factions in regional and city councils also have distinctive parameters of inner democracy if compared with party structures. Domination of economic issues leads to contraction of pluralism in approaches/positions. At the same time, presence of non-party deputies in the compositions of local councils limits a range of enforcement tools as to all deputies.

Another variant of exception can be a period before the elections and during them. Organization of the election process, if we speak of the importance of the outcomes, extensively requires from the party leadership to draw highly-qualified political consultants/managers of election campaigns. Both, as in case of providing a post to a party member or inviting someone from outside, during the campaign the party leadership must authorize campaign managers. Besides, during this period party structures exercise additional or instrumental function. However, after the elections party bureaucracy makes up loses despite the achieved result.

The third variant can be traced during the local elections, especially over last 2 years, during the elections to the regional territorial communities. As these elections take place according to another schedule, there is a practice of providing regional and city organizations with higher independence in the process of preparing and conducting elections. Doing this the party leadership revises party active functionaries as to their qualification to carry out campaigns and simultaneously provides training. Positive results of the elections may contribute to the fact that some party functionaries will become responsible for organization and conduction of elections to the Verkhovna Rada and the post of the President of Ukraine, predominantly within the region.

### **Factors, which precondition current state of inner-party democracy**

1. By a large number of officially registered political parties in Ukraine (352 as of January 1, 2017) only a small number of them take part in political life/are represented in the parliament. Efficiency index according to the concept introduced by Laakso and Taagepera concerning the 2014 pre-term parliamentary elections in the format of electoral parties was 8.5 and as to the parliamentary parties – 7.7<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Nosenko D.K. Main tendencies of party system development in Ukraine over 1998-2014 // Hrani, 2015, № 1. – P.127.

2. Current political parties, except the All-Ukrainian Union *Batkivshchyna*, are characterized by a badly-developed structure of party organizations (Table 2) and a low level of membership. As of January 1, 2014 in Ukraine there were 490 administrative districts. In accordance with the Law each new party must be represented in 2/3 of districts. Nowadays, if we reject districts in the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea and Sevastopol (14+4) and count just a half of districts in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, then there are only 454 districts. Consequently, two thirds of them equal 303 districts. According to the data in Table 2 the parliamentary parties are differently represented by their party organizations at the district level. Quite questionable are equally high measures of an average representativeness in a hypothetical district and minimal or token representativeness. According to the data provided by the sociological group “Rating” in December 2016 less than 2% of respondents stated that they were members of one of the political parties<sup>10</sup>. It should be pointed out that a low percent of party membership among citizens is additionally determined by a complex procedure of joining a party.
3. Lack of knowledge concerning the activity of political parties in democratic countries presupposed interpretation of a party as an effective instrument of power struggle. Such interpretation of an institute of a party is additionally predetermined by the fact that in the majority of political parties a crucial role in organizational construction was played by party members who gained experience while functioning in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League.
4. Specific nature of the electoral legislation of Ukraine lies in: regular changes to the electoral law just before the scheduled parliamentary elections; existence of a nationwide electoral district within the frames of a proportional component and an introduced system of expensive elections. These and other characteristics of the electoral law and practice of organization and conducting elections additionally stimulate political corruption and absolute power of the party leaders.
5. Technological character of the elections not only at the national, but also regional levels. When success depends not on the activity of party centers and party programs but on a size of funding and effectiveness of advertising campaign and organizational skills of management/political consultants. Correspondingly, it predetermines the situation when at the elections “two columns”, party and technological function in different combinations (in parallel, together, separately etc.).

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<sup>10</sup> Affective evaluation of living conditions of Ukrainians: the report on the data provided by the sociological group “Rating”, December 2016. [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <http://ratinggroup.ua>



**Table 2.** Number of party centers of the parliamentary parties in Ukraine and Lviv region (as of 2016)

Party name	According to the CVU <sup>11</sup>	According to the OPORA <sup>12</sup>	Lviv region <sup>13</sup>	Number of party organizations per one district in Ukraine/region
Petro Poroshenko Bloc "Solidarity"	1 712	1 786	50	5,7/2,5
All-Ukrainian Union "Batkivshchyna"	17 296	16 862	564	55,6/28,2
People's Front	631	633	30	2,01/1,5
Oleh Liashko Radical Party	736	738	38	2,4/1,9
Party "Samopomich" Union"	195	196	30	0,6/1,5
Political party "Opposition Bloc"	654	843	7	2,8/0,35

Therefore, we may state that party structures of all parliamentary parties are predominantly centralized with a low level of inner-party democracy. A dominant role in organization of party work is played by the party leaders, whereas the role of party members is secondary<sup>14</sup>. A kind of exception is parliamentary factions, which may have/presuppose sufficient level of democracy during discussions and less at decision making. However, such case is presupposed not only by the status of a parliamentary deputy (absence of imperative mandate), but also by dependence of the elections results on personal characteristics of deputies. Correspondingly, absence or partial character of reforms, corruption, generally low level of democracy in the country are predetermined by a low level of inner-party democracy as well.

Additional consequence is negative attitude of the majority of citizens to a political party as a public institution. According to the data provided by Razumkov Centre on October 2017, 75.1% of respondents spoke of absolute or more or less distrust in current political parties of Ukraine. Only 13.1% of respondents<sup>15</sup> reported on their full or partial confidence in Ukrainian parties.

<sup>11</sup> The CVU's report: State of political parties before the beginning of state funding [Electronic resource] – Access mode: [cvu.org.ua](http://cvu.org.ua)

<sup>12</sup> Party coverage of regions of Ukraine: who has the biggest number of representative offices? [Electronic resource]. – 2016. – Access mode: <https://www.oporaua.org/novyny/42514-partiine-pokryttia-rehioniv-ukrainy-khto-maja-najbilshche-predstavnytstv>

<sup>13</sup> Party coverage of regions of Ukraine: who has the biggest number of representative offices? [Electronic resource]. – 2016. – Access mode: <https://www.oporaua.org/novyny/42514-partiine-pokryttia-rehioniv-ukrainy-khto-maja-najbilshche-predstavnytstv>

<sup>14</sup> Additionally the reason for such conclusion is information as to the possibility to buy a party. In particular, journalists state that on the website OLV in the division "Business for sale" there were several advertisements concerning selling a political party. See: Party in Ukraine can be bought for \$20 000 - \$75 000. [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <http://arksam.livejournal.com>

<sup>15</sup> Attitude of the Ukrainian citizens to public institutions, electoral orientations [Electronic resource]. – 2017 – Access mode: <http://razumkov.org.ua>