

HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL ASPECTS OF POLITICAL ELECTIONS IN UKRAINE

Horizontal and vertical aspects of political elections and their influence on voting process in Ukraine are analyzed in this article. The basic trends of electoral behavior of the citizens of Ukraine are revealed on the basis of empirical data of election campaigns and politicians' activity. The factors that influence on the democratic nature of the elections of 2014 and 2019, as well as the reasons for citizens' distrust of politicians are studied. These reasons include electoral volatility, which is influenced by the populism of politicians and the citizens' frustration of the elected parties' activity as well as misinformation during electoral campaign.

Keywords: political elections, electoral system, parties, transitional society, Ukraine

HORYZONTALNE I PIONOWE ASPEKTY WYBORÓW POLITYCZNYCH NA UKRAINIE

W artykule przeanalizowano horyzontalne i wertykalne aspekty wyborów politycznych i ich wpływ na proces głosowania na Ukrainie. Podstawowe trendy zachowań wyborczych obywateli Ukrainy ujawniają się na podstawie danych empirycznych kampanii wyborczych i aktywności polityków. Badane są czynniki wpływające na demokratyczny charakter wyborów w 2014 i 2019 roku, a także przyczyny nieufności obywateli do polityków. Przyczyny te obejmują zmienność wyborczą, na którą wpływ ma populizm polityków oraz frustracja obywateli wobec działalności wybranych partii, a także dezinformacja podczas kampanii wyborczej.

Słowa kluczowe: wybory polityczne, system wyborczy, partie, społeczeństwo przejściowe, Ukraina

ГОРИЗОНТАЛЬНІ ТА ВЕРТИКАЛЬНІ АСПЕКТИ ПОЛІТИЧНИХ ВИБОРІВ В УКРАЇНІ

В статті аналізуються горизонтальні та вертикальні аспекти політичних виборів та їх вплив на виборчий процес в Україні. На основі емпіричних даних виборчих кампаній та діяльності політиків виокремлені основні тенденції електоральної поведінки громадян України. Досліджуються фактори, що впливають на демократичний характер виборів 2014 та 2019 рр., а також причини недовіри громадян до політиків. Серед цих причин

зазначаються: електоральна волатильність, на яку впливають популізм політиків та розчарування в діяльності обраних партійта заангажована інформація.

Ключові слова: політичні вибори, виборча система, партії, транзитивне суспільство, Україна

Elections can be considered as important mechanism for the formation of governmental bodies and the realization of the popular sovereignty in democratic countries. It also can be understood as the most common form of civil involvement. Qualitative characteristics are substantial for the transitional societies with an uncertain system of political relations when each electoral cycle significantly affects the strategic vectors of the country development but political forces do not have a common value system and therefore have focus more on confrontation than on cooperation. The difficulties of the electoral process in Ukraine caused by not only the transformational state of the society, but also because of informational war which is being waged by the Russian Federation. One of the components of such an information war is interference in elections by financing pro-Russian publications in Ukraine, discrediting particular candidates, spreading fake news and promoting chaos and disorder. In this situation the problem of responsible attitude to political elections and their consequences as well as the development of culture of critical thinking and analytical approaches are extremely important. The implementation of these tasks requires the cooperation of the state, civil society, experts and scientists.

The elections have often been the subject of political analysis. Particular attention was paid to the specifics of the electoral process in the context of democratization of transitional society. In addition, most authors devoted their attention to the study of political, legal, procedural and technological parameters of the electoral process. At the same time, the problem of political elections such as studies on the results of voting and their impact on the formation of an ineffective government is still not examined enough.

For this reason, the purpose of the proposed article is to determine the factors that influence the conscious quality of a political choice during electoral process in modern Ukrainian society.

Political elections can be characterized as unique phenomenon because of their ability to combine both direct and representative democracy. On the one hand, citizens can directly form government decision-making bodies. On the other hand, the elected politicians obtain the right to represent the interests of a segment of society. J. Schumpeter noted that democracy is mainly a method of politics, a certain system of institutions for decision-making, in which particular citizens obtain the right to make decisions by competing for the votes of voters.¹ In contrast with democracy, in authoritarian regimes elections become the means of formally legitimizing power, restricting the citizens' political right to "tossing the ballots". In addition,

¹ Шумпетер Й., *Капіталізм, соціалізм і демократія*, Вyd. Основи, 1995.с.294-295

this situation was described by G. O'Donnell in his conception of delegative democracy, where the winner of the elections as a president obtains the right to govern the country at his direction without any restrictions excluding the existing power relations and his term.² That is why the most significant function of democratic elections is to ensure the effective representation.

In this context, it seems to be important to analyze the democratic features of the electoral process and the problems of their implementation. The criteria for democratic political elections are paid attention to many scholars. For instance, R. Dahl proposed to use following measures such as guarantee of voting rights of all citizens regardless of gender, nationality, race, religion or other beliefs; voting is free and secret; regularity of elections in accordance with the terms which are set in the constitutions and relevant legislation; all social groups have an opportunity to nominate their candidates; conducting a sufficient pre-election period to acquaint voters with the programs of candidates as well as guaranteed equal access of candidates to the media; independent objective control over the vote counting; equal access of candidates to the election results; the winner should head the government.³

G. O'Donnell summarized that the main characteristic of democratic political elections is competition which is insured by the fact that choice is free, equal, inclusive and provides real power to the winners.⁴ In addition to this opinion, V. Bans and S. Volchik substantiated that the democratic elections are determined by the following characteristics:

1. Elections can be considered as a key factor of democratic progress;
2. Generally elections are defined as one of the most important features of democracy in non-Western countries;
3. Elections open opportunity for political protest.⁵

Ukrainian scientist Yu. Shveda in his works formulates the democratic essence of elections that means "equal and universal right of all citizens to participate in making citizens' political choice; the need to make decisions on the basis of broad public support rather than minority interests; the ability to consider complex alternatives and to choose among them those ones that are supported by relatively stable and long-lasting coalitions".⁶

Thus, the characteristics of elections include equality, competitiveness, transparency and ensuring the rights of all citizens to participate in the government formation. These aspects also can be seen in electoral legislation. For instance, legislative principles of election in Ukraine are declared in the 71 Article of the Constitution of Ukraine, where was stated that "General and local elections are free and are held on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by

² О'ДОННЕЛЛ Г., *Делегативная демократия*, [zrodlo: URL: http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_Buks/Polit/Article/donn_del.php](http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_Buks/Polit/Article/donn_del.php)

³ Dahl R. A., *Democracy and its critics*, Wyd. Yale University Press. 1989. s. 397

⁴ O'Donnell G., *Democratic theory and comparative politics*, Wyd. University of Notre Dame Kellogg Institute for International Studies. 1999. ss. 18-19

⁵ Bunce V. J., Sharon L. Wolchik. Defeating Dictators: Electoral Change and Stability in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes, *World Politics*, 2010, vol. 62, nr. 1, January 2010, pp. 4386.s. 49

⁶ Шведь Ю., *Вибори та виборчі системи. Європейські стандарти та досвід для утвердження демократії в Україні*. Wyd. Львів, 2010. s. 135

secret ballot”⁷. Mentioned principles are also declared in such laws as “On Elections of People’s Deputy of Ukraine”, “On Elections of the President of Ukraine” and “On Local Elections”. The analysis of the electoral situation in Ukraine also shows that despite the declaration of democratic principles in legislation, most of these principles are implemented with certain restrictions. According to the human right organization Freedom House, the index of electoral process in Ukraine since 2009 has remained at about the same level in the range from 4.0 to 3.5 (where the best index is 1 and the worst one is 6).⁸ The report of the PACE Delegation’s visit to Ukraine in March 2019 stated that situation in the country was favorable for democratic elections, the Central Election Commission acted professionally and the Ukrainian legislative was sufficient for democratic elections. Undoubtedly there are some shortcomings such as meaningless electoral rhetoric of many candidates; discrepancy between campaign promises and real policy; using an administrative resource and bribing the voters. As a result, mentioned factors complicate the citizens’ rational choice. At the same time, it was generally concluded that these violations were unsystematic and elections in Ukraine would take place in accordance with the requirements of national and EU legislation.⁹

Most of above-mentioned characteristics of democratic elections relate to the value reflection of politics in the horizontal dimension but we need to consider elections not only as opportunity for discussion, free expression of opinions, etc. They are also understood as a mechanism for formation of a government which must be effective. Furthermore G. Sartori argued that the democracy of political choice in itself does not guarantee its effectiveness. The scientist emphasized the significant gap between “horizontal” (equality) and “vertical” (efficiency) dimensions of democracy. The basic ideals of democracy appeal to its direct forms but representation remains insufficiently substantiated in the terms of value but the definition of “election” is always understood differently. From the very beginning, the definitions “voting” and “elections” meant the evaluation of the candidates and their quality selection. But in modern society G. Sartori noted that meaning of “elections” is unjustifiably simplified to a simple act of voting, so candidates’ qualitative characteristics often stay in the background. This situation leads to decline effectiveness of a democratic government because the vertical democracy value system is related to the values of political choice. Thus, in democracy candidates should be selected on the basis of their professional qualities and objective achievements¹⁰.

R. Dahl proposed the similar opinion, substantiating the importance of high level of the citizens’ political competence for the viability of a democratic political model. The forming of political competence is ensured by the necessary level of knowledge providing by media

⁷ *Конституція України*. Wyd. ЦНА, 2019, стаття 71.

⁸ Freedom in the World 2018, Freedom House. *zrodlo*: URL: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/ukraine-translation>

⁹ «Загальне середовище в Україні має передбачати проведення демократичних виборів», - говорить передвиборна делегація ПАРЕ. *zrodlo*: URL: <http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View.EN.asp?newsid=7399&lang=2&cat=31>

¹⁰ Sartori G., *The Theory of Democracy Revised*, Wyd. Chatham House Publishers, Inc., Chatham House, NJ, 1987. *Part One The Contemporary Debate*. XIV, 253 s.; *Part Two. The Classical Issues*. 542 s.

which proposes open, reliable and accessible information. Competing for the votes, candidates should provide voters with information about parties' programs and goals as well as their achievements, professional and moral qualities. This information would be sufficient for voters to make an informed choice.¹¹

Basing on the analysis of the modern researches, S. Dahlberg identifies the components of the model of democratic elections which characterize both the parties' and voters' activity:

1. There should be at least two competing parties with different programs;
2. Political parties should be internally cohesive and disciplined in order to be able to pursue their policies after election;
3. Voters are expected to vote rationally. That means that the voters would cast their votes for the party's program that is closer to their preferences.
4. Voters should have political preferences and be aware of the main differences between the positions of different electoral participants. Their perception of political positions should be adequate and accurate.¹²

An important aspect that determinates qualitative characteristics of political choice is the dynamics of electoral preferences from elections to elections which is called the index of electoral volatility¹³ or the index of electoral variability or electoral instability¹⁴ (these concepts are used in some researches by Ukrainian scientists). The high level of variability of electoral preferences for certain political forces can be an indicator of the alienation between voters and candidates. This situation leads to inefficient representation and general distrust in effectiveness of a democratic government. The rapid growth of electoral uncertainty and decline of the traditional relations between political parties and voters has been noted in many studies. The increase of the role of short-term cognitive and heuristic factors in electoral behavior, in particular political sophistication which is interpreted as the accumulation of necessary knowledge in certain field of action is also determined.¹⁵

These trends are largely evident in Ukrainian society, where the level of electoral variability significantly exceeds threshold values. According to A. Romaniuk, the analysis of electoral volatility at the national level during the parliamentary elections of 2012/2014 and 2014/2019 shows that the instability of electoral preferences is connected with the disappointment of voters in the activity of political parties which were elected in recent elections and differences in the geopolitical and value orientations of voters in different regions of Ukraine. Also, the

¹¹ ДАЛЬ Р.А., *Проблемы гражданской компетентности*, *источник*: URL: <http://www.politnauka.org/library/teoria/dahl.php>

¹² Dahlberg S., *Voters' Perceptions of Party Politics - A Multilevel Approach*. Wyd. Department of Political Science University of Gothenburg, 2009, s. 168

¹³ Pedersen, M., The dynamics of European party systems: changing patterns of electoral volatility. *European Journal of Political Research* 1979, vol. 7, issue 1, ss. 1–26.

¹⁴ Балашова О., Електоральна волатильність як характеристика партійної системи України. *Науковий вісник Міжнародного гуманітарного університету. Сер.: Історія, Філософія, Політологія* 2020, № 19, ss. 84–88, s. 85

¹⁵ Fiske S. T., Lau R. R. and Smith R. A., On the Varieties and Utilities of Political Expertise, *Social Cognition* 1990, vol. 8(1), ss. 31–48.

psychological attitude to the rapid success of newly elected parties has an effect on formation new populist party projects.¹⁶

To our mind, the conditions for quality selection of the candidates are both professional competencies of politicians (that means the ability to rule the country effectively) and the competencies of citizens who try to make informed choice based on the analysis of politicians' experience and information about them. Therefore, in addition to the horizontal conditions of elections which focus on ensuring equal and fair expression of people's will, the vertical conditions, which are related to the political institutions' effectiveness, are extremely important. In short, elections must not only meet democratic norms but also contribute to the society. As T.I. Kis noted, the effective elections should promote the formation of an effective government; ensuring fair representation; respect of minority rights; to create a system of politicians' responsibility to the citizens.¹⁷

As a result, the problem is to create a system of opportunities and conditions for citizens to make the informed choices during electoral process. It is necessary to analyze the indicators which contribute to the rational assessment of candidates during the election. The citizens' trust can be considered as universal criterion for this assessment because it is based on the socio-political situation in a country. Unfortunately, this criterion is a clear failure for Ukrainian politicians. Regularly conducted sociological surveys in Ukraine show the political distrust much more often than trust. To illustrate, 38% of respondents trust the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine D. Razumkov but do not trust 48% of respondents. The President of Ukraine V. Zelensky's trust is at 31%, but distrust is at 63%. Mayor of Kyiv V. Klychko is trusted by 29% of respondents, but distrusted by 62%. The most distrusted politics are V. Medvechuk (78% of distrust while 13% of respondents trust him), V. Rabinovych (76.5% and 14% respectively), M. Saakashvili (74% and 15% respectively), P. Poroshenko (73% and 22% respectively), D. Smygal (72% and 16% respectively), A. Avakov (72% and 19% respectively), Yu. Tymoshenko (72% and 20.5% respectively), Yu. Boyko (71.5% and 21.5% respectively).¹⁸

The question is, what are the main motives for Ukrainians to make their political choices? In general, prevailing motives for Ukrainians to cast their votes for certain candidates are the personal qualities of the candidates (57% of respondents), the results of candidates' previous political activity (43%), their political programs (40%), personal appeal (36%) and the proximity of their ideas and proposals (36%).¹⁹ That means that voters are often guided by subjective motives regardless of objective indicators as achievements of candidates' previous activity. The

¹⁶ Romanyuk A., Features of electoral volatility at the regional level in Ukraine according to the results of the parliamentary elections of 2012/2014 and 2014/2019. *Studium Europaei et Orientalis* 2020. NR 13 CZERWIEC 2020. cc. 6-15. s. 15

¹⁷ Кіс Т., Вибірчі системи та їхні політичні наслідки, "Нова політика" 1996. №2-4. cc. 2233. s. 28

¹⁸ Оцінка ситуації в країні, довіра до інститутів суспільства та політиків, електоральні орієнтації громадян (березень 2021р.). Дослідження Центру імені Олександра Разумкова. [zrodlo: URL: https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/otsinka-sytuatsii-v-kraini-dovira-do-instytutiv-suspilstva-ta-politykiv-elektoralni-orientatsii-gromadian-berезen-2021r](https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/otsinka-sytuatsii-v-kraini-dovira-do-instytutiv-suspilstva-ta-politykiv-elektoralni-orientatsii-gromadian-berезen-2021r)

¹⁹ За півроку до виборів. [zrodlo: URL: https://dif.org.ua/article/za-pivroku-do-vivoriv-reytingi-kandidativ-i-partiy-motivatsii-viboruchikuvannya-gromadyan](https://dif.org.ua/article/za-pivroku-do-vivoriv-reytingi-kandidativ-i-partiy-motivatsii-viboruchikuvannya-gromadyan)

most common information sources about politicians and their programs are the media, Internet and personal contacts. According to the research, the most common sources of information are central TV channels which are in the first place (78.6% of respondents), the next ones are news websites (35%), the information from private sources such as relatives, colleagues etc. (11%), social media (9.3%), local TV channels (9%), central print media (6.2%) and radio (3.1%).²⁰

For the qualitative candidates' estimating voters should analyze candidates' election program, draw conclusions about the relevance of their promises and real activities. S. Dahlberg, analyzing the quality of the political representation provided as a result of election, emphasized the importance of voters' awareness of the political positions of the parties. In his opinion, without such an idea a responsible political choice would turn into a "random noise".²¹

The study of the previous election campaign in Ukraine shows the dominance of the similar subjects for the vast majority of any political parties namely: the fight against corruption and oligarchs; the support for small and medium-sized businesses; European integration of Ukraine; lifting parliamentary immunity and social promises. At the same time, citizens of Ukraine are most interested in the following problems such as peace in the Donbass and the return of the occupied territories (44% of respondents); country development program (41%); living standards growth (35%); fight against corruption (33%).²²

To O. Koshel's mind, the head of the Committee of Voters of Ukraine, "there is a huge problem in Ukrainian politics. It is the lack of quality election programs from local to national elections. Parties come to power literally empty-handed, with a set of slogans which are difficult to implement as the legislative steps".²³ According to the Committee of Voters of Ukraine, the programs of the candidate in the 2019 presidential elections were often populist and unmeaning. For instance, 50% of program promises do not relate to president's authority, 20% of them are general slogans and excerpts from candidates' biographies. Relevant to the society topics do not draw much attention to the candidates. In particular, only 19 of 44 candidates stand for the European integration of Ukraine and almost half of them avoid talking about NATO or give negative assessment of Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine.²⁴

One of the criteria for evaluating the politician's activity is his speeches, as well as underlying messages and their ratio between truth and falsehood. For instance, political speeches of those who were seeking for presidential post were analyzed by the VoxUkraine public organization. Within this project 1952 politicians' statements on most important issues were analyzed.

²⁰ Суспільно-політичні настрої населення України: січень-лютий 2019 року. . źródło: URL: <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=823&page=1>

²¹ Dahlberg S., *Voters' Perceptions of Party Politics - A Multilevel Approach*. Wyd. Department of Political Science University of Gothenburg, 2009. s. 162

²² За півроку до виборів. źródło: URL: <https://dif.org.ua/article/za-pivroku-do-vivoriv-reytingi-kandidativ-i-partiy-motivatsii-viborurochikuvannya-gromadyan>

²³ Вибори та гасла: як політики грають обіцянками та які найчастіше не виконують. źródło: URL: https://24tv.ua/vibori_i_gasla_yak_politiki_grayut_obitsyankami_i_yaki_nauchastishe_ne_vikonuyut_n1065671

²⁴ Росія кинула сотні мільйонів доларів, щоб зрвати вибори в Україні (огляд преси) / Радіо Свобода. 15 березня 2019. źródło: URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/29822036.html>

The most prominent topics were regarding economic development, strengthening the army, anti-corruption actions, reforming medical service, education, pensions, etc. According to the general conclusion, more than 50% of the studied statements turned out to be untrue or were openly manipulative. The leaders of such a kind of anti-rating of liars in 2018 were Yu. Tymoshenko, V. Rabinovych and O. Lyashko.²⁵

Unfortunately, widely used manipulations and information distortion are peculiar to many Ukrainian politicians. The following table shows a more detailed structuring of the Ukrainian politicians' statements.

Table 1. The structure of Ukrainian politicians and opinion leaders' statements²⁶

Politician	True %	False%	Manipulation%	Exaggeration%
Yu. Tymoshenko	32	33	27	8
V. Rabinovych	32	40	24	4
O. Lyashko	41	31	17	11
Yu. Boiko	45	24	19	12
P. Poroshenko	56	17	15	12
O. Tyagnibok	66	17	7	10
A. Gritsenko	68	15	8	9
W. Groyzman	69	10	13	8
A. Sadovy	73	12	2	13

The analysis of achievements and miscalculations, truth and false in the activity and statements of political leaders seems to be interesting for voters to make an informed political choice. Thus, analyzing V. Zelensky's activity during his first two years as President of Ukraine, experts identified his victories as shutting down three pro-Russian TV channels, imposing sanctions on deputies V. Medvedchuk and T. Kozak for financing terrorism, and accusing them of high treason. The establishment of the Disinformation Centers for the systematic fight against disinformation, which was launched by the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine and the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, can also be considered as a real achievement. The reduction of Ukraine's interaction with the IMF and the conflict of the President with the judges of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine are thought to be one of the biggest failures of newly elected government.²⁷ Monitoring of V. Zelensky's statements during his presidency can show that he has told the truth in 37.2% of recorded factual quotations, 15.1% of verified statements have

²⁵ Антологія брехні. VoxUkraine. źródło: URL: <https://voxukraine.org/uk/voxukraine-zapustila-onlajn-bazu-nepravda-org-de-vikladeni-1952-perevireni-tverdzhennya-politikiv/>

²⁶ The table was created by the authors according to VoxUkraine and the fact-checking project VoxCheck. URL: <https://voxukraine.org/uk/voxukraine-zapustila-onlajn-bazu-nepravda-org-de-vikladeni-1952-perevireni-tverdzhennya-politikiv/>

²⁷ Політичний квартал: перша чверть 2021 року. Експертне опитування Фонду «Демократичні ініціативи» імені Ілька Кучеріва квітень-травень 2021 року. źródło: URL: <https://dif.org.ua/article/politichnyy-kvartal-persha-chvert-2021-roku>

been exaggerations, and 17.4% of his statements have been manipulations, and in 18.6% of cases they have been false.²⁸

Such projects as the fact-checking project VoxCheck can be considered as an effective means of analyzing and remembering the promises of politicians, and, accordingly, having control over their activities. The possession of substantiated information complicates manipulation and creates favorable conditions for rational assessment of the candidates during elections.

An analytical approach to study pre-election politicians' statements allows to reveal contradictory and voluntaristic positions in them. For example, the statements of O. Lyashko in the presidential election of 2014: "I will return Crimea to Ukraine!" or Yu. Tymoshenko's statement about her intention to adopt the New Constitution of Ukraine after winning the parliament elections in 2019: "... in parliament, if we win, there will be 20 people in total, 20 deputies. That is why our task is not to shuffle of the parliament at once, our task is to immediately adopt the new Constitution through by initiating the all-Ukrainian referendum".²⁹ It seems to be desired to think about the possibility to trust the country to the person who concerns the Constitution of the state as a simple tool to strengthen own power resources and appoint necessary personnel to a post.

One of the evidences of the way in which politicians deal with their professional responsibilities and programs can be their voting during Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine sitting. It is required to turn to the results of a study by previously mentioned Vox Ukraine, which has been monitoring the work of the members of the Ukrainian parliament since 2017 using the Reform Support Index. This index demonstrates parliamentarians' contribution to the adoption the reform laws. The general conclusion is that the most effective work was shown by "young" deputies who have recently joined the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

The analyze of the effectiveness of 16 members of Ukrainian parliament with presidential ambitions displays that during 9 sessions they were present at 2/3 of the sittings and took part in only 29% of the voting (in contrast, average deputies during this period of time were present at 84% of sittings and their voting was at 50%). The highest discrepancy between attendance in the session hall and direct voting was found in Yu. Boyko's activity. He attended 95% of the parliament sittings and used the opportunity to vote only by 4%. That means that the legislative activity of the president post seekers in parliament is much lower than the average.³⁰

The quality of voting during the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine sessions can also help citizens to evaluate the level of politician's responsibility for their election promises. For example, according to the monitoring of the activity of deputies of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the

²⁸ Сліпченко С., Степанюк В., Дука Е. Другий рік Зеленського. Аналіз брехні, обіцянок і риторики президента від VoxCheck. URL: https://voxukraine.org/drugyj-rik-zelenskogo-analiz-brejni-obitsyanok-i-tytoryky-prezydenta-vid-voxcheck/#_finref2

²⁹ Баркар Д. Вчинки кандидатів у президенти: Порошенко, Тимошенко, Зеленський та інші / Радіо Свобода. 9 березня 2019. URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/vybory-kandydaty-ohliad-tyzhnia/29811275.html>

³⁰ Хто з кандидатів у президенти найкраще голосував за реформи протягом дев'ятої сесії Верховної Ради? URL: <https://voxukraine.org/uk/hto-z-kandidativ-u-prezidenti-najkrashhe-golosuvav-za-reformi-protyagom-dev-yatoi-sesij-verhovnoyi-radi/>

8th convocation, deputies elected by the majority system are particularly irresponsible for the implementation of their programs. They mostly use their promises to “enter” parliament and do not focus their efforts on fulfilling them. Regarding to political party factions, the Popular Front and The Bloc of Petro Poroshenko have become more responsible for the implementation their programs. The Popular Front faction fully or partially fulfilled 9 out of 13 its election promises, and the Bloc of Petro Poroshenko faction implemented four of the seven promises of its election program. The most populist programs were found in the programs of such political parties as the Oleg Lyashko`s Radical Party and the Opposition Bloc, whose promises do not often relate to deputy`s authority.³¹

The imbalance between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of political elections as well as ignoring the qualitative factors of the candidates` selection for government occupations lead to the growth of populism and the destruction of the democratic system. Using unfounded, irresponsible promises as a form of electoral mobilization and means of gaining power, populists tend to form a general frustration in democracy, its effectiveness for the development of the society and the solution of pressing issues. These trends reinforce the authoritarian nostalgia for the “strong hand” and the people`s paternalistic expectations. Furthermore, populists often destroy the political and legal foundations of the democratic electoral process, trying to adapt the laws to their own tasks and using them as electoral technology and means of ensuring victory. The Atlantic magazine found that 50% of populists rewrote or changed their country`s constitution when they came to power, in order to lift presidential restrictions and reduce the checks and balances of the executive branch. It has also been found that populist rule reduces freedom of speech by an average of 7%, civil liberties by 8%, and political rights by 13%.³²

G. Zelenko stated about the quality of the selection of Ukrainian political elites as usage “a specific mechanism of co-optation new members into power, when the criterion of effectiveness is personal devotion, willingness to play by rules which are imposed by clan-oligarchic system”.³³ In consequence it leads to “significant restrictions of the instrumental possibilities of democracy and the establishment of political absenteeism”.³⁴

It can be seen that this situation objectively reduces the possibilities for making a quality rational choice and forms a so-called protest vote, when a person votes not “for” but “against”, accurately imagining who the voter does not want to see as a winner. As a result, a positive alternative is often chosen spontaneously and unconsciously. In consequence, for the real electoral capital the voter receives an unknown political “product”, whose professional competences would be clarified only later.

³¹ «Хвороба популізму»: активісти перевірили, як депутати виконують обіцянки. URL: <http://surl.li/vgmb>

³² What Populists Do to Democracies? The Atlantic. DEC. 26. 2018. URL: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/12/hard-data-populism-bolsonaro-trump/578878/>

³³ Зеленько Г., Довіра до суспільно-політичних інститутів в Україні і наслідки їх дефіциту для країни, “*Studia Politologica Ucraino-Polona*” 2018, Випуск 8. ss. 108-118. s. 111

³⁴ Ibid. s. 111

All things considered, this study allows us to draw the following conclusions:

1. Equality and competitiveness of political elections should not only demonstrate the country's democratic affiliation, but also serve to create an effective system of government which is capable of ensuring the performance of functions that are adequate to the requirements of modern socio-political development. To do this, it is important to make responsible rational choices based on the analysis of the objective qualities and achievements of candidates, which is not reduced to a formal act of voting. For this reason, it is important to make responsible rational choice based on the analysis of the objective qualities and achievements of candidates and do not reduce it to a formal act of voting.
2. Ensuring the quality of political choice depends on the activity and consciousness of civil society, which does not only form the representatives of the new political elite. It also acts as an active organizer of information and educational environment, which helps citizens receive special information on the politicians' practical activities and their responsibilities for their election promises. The positive role is demonstrated by information projects of public organizations, which become a real tool in the fight against manipulation and populism.
3. Ensuring a balance between the horizontal and vertical aspects of elections also depends on the responsibility of the media for information flows in the pre-election period as well as the reduction of the level of misinformation and supporting specific politicians.
4. Ignoring the qualitative components of political choice objectively leads to a decrease in the capacity of the elected government and the development of populism, which, mobilizing the population through unfounded promises, destroys the democratic foundations of public life, forms despair, apathy and paternalism.

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