

The peculiarities of membership in political parties of Ukraine through the focus of regional party organizations of Lviv region

The level of studying the issue of party membership by Ukrainian and foreign scholars has been analyzed. Different options for presenting information on the number of party members at the national and regional levels have been considered. Expert estimates on the number of party organizations in Lviv region and indicators of the ratio of members and non-partisans among candidates for regional and city councils during the 2020 local elections in Lviv region have been considered. The main groups of party membership have been singled out. The motivation of participation and non-participation in the work of party organizations has been considered. The tendency of low level of party participation and further reduction of the number of party members in all regional party structures has been stated.

Keywords: political party, member of political party, party structure, regional party organization, intra-party democracy

Specyfikacja członkostwa w partiach politycznych Ukrainy na przykładzie regionalnych organizacji partyjnych obwodu lwowskiego

Analizowany jest poziom badania problematyki przynależności do partii przez naukowców ukraińskich i zagranicznych. Rozważane są różne możliwości przedstawiania informacji o liczbie członków partii na poziomie krajowym i regionalnym. Uwzględniono eksperckie szacunki liczby organizacji partyjnych w obwodzie lwowskim. Przeanalizowano wskaźniki stosunku członków i bezpartyjnych wśród kandydatów do rad regionalnych i miejskich podczas wyborów lokalnych w 2020 roku w obwodzie lwowskim. Wyróżniono główne grupy przynależności partyjnej. Uwzględnia się motywację uczestnictwa i nieuczestniczenia w organizacji partyjnych. Stwierdzono tendencję do niskiego poziomu partycypacji i dalszego zmniejszania się liczby członków partii we wszystkich regionalnych strukturach partyjnych.

Słowa kluczowe: partia polityczna, członek partii politycznej, struktura partii, regionalna organizacja partyjna, demokracja wewnątrzpartyjna

Особливості членства в політичних партіях України через фокус обласних партійних організацій Львівщини

Проаналізовано рівень вивчення питання членства в партіях українськими та зарубіжними науковцями. Розглянуто різні варіанти представлення інформації про кількість членів партій на національному та регіональному рівнях. Розглянуто експертні оцінки щодо чисельності партійних організацій у Львівській області та показники співвідношення членів і безпартійних серед кандидатів до обласної і міських рад під час місцевих виборів 2020 р. у Львівській області. Виділено основні групи партійного членства. Розглянуто мотивацію участі і не участі в роботі партійних організацій. Констатовано тенденцію низького рівня партійної участі і подальшого скорочення кількості членів партії в усіх обласних партійних структурах.

Ключові слова: політична партія, член політичної партії, партійна структура, обласна партійна організація, внутрішньопартійна демократія

At the beginning of February 2021, 365 political parties were registered in Ukraine. At the same time, the process of registration of new parties is permanent, only in 2020 there were registered 12 new political parties by Ministry of Justice. At the same time, there are questions among Ukrainian and foreign researchers as to the assessment of the phenomenon of Ukrainian political parties. The problems are that for most of the current parties the characteristic features are the lack of ideology and dominant populism, the universality of program provisions and ignoring the representation of sectorial / group interests, as well as the lack of intra-party democracy. These and other assessments determine the interpretation of existing political parties as incomplete, or proto-parties¹. In order to correctly assess the party phenomenon in Ukraine, we must consider the compliance of existing entities with the classical criteria / indicators of the party. One of the steps in this direction is the analysis of the state of party membership. The Law on Political Parties of Ukraine considers the requirement of formation and registration of at least fourteen regional and equivalent party organizations to be one of the conditions for registration². Accordingly, the registrar records the number of structural units, however it is difficult for the researchers of political parties to find information on the number of members of both newly formed and parties that have been operating for a long time.

The lack of information on the number of party members is typical for both the national and regional levels. The absence of information does not provide an opportunity to analyze the state and trends inherent in members of political parties.

¹ Требін М. Партія політична // Політична енциклопедія. Редкол.: Ю. Левенць (голова), Ю. Шаповал (заст. Голови) та ін. – К.: Парламентське видавництво, 2012. С. 543-545; Шай Р. Проблеми функціонування політичних партій в Україні та шляхи удосконалення їхньої діяльності // Вісник Національного університету «Львівська політехніка». Серія: Юридичні науки. 2016, № 855. С.285.

² Закон України «Про політичні партії» [Електронний ресурс] –URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2365-14#Text>

For analysis, we chose the political parties represented by the results of the local elections of 2020 in the Lviv regional and city councils of Lviv: “European Solidarity”, “Servant of the People”, AUU “Batkivshchyna”, Association “Samopomich”, AUU “Svoboda”, “Golos”, NRU (PMU), “Ukrainian Galician Party”, “For the Future” and “Warta”. Among the selected parties we can single out the national ones (which operate in most regions of the country): “European Solidarity”, “Servant of the People”, AUU “Batkivshchyna”, Association “Samopomich”, AUU “Svoboda”, “Voice” and de facto regional (because they are represented mainly in one or more areas): NRU (PMU), “Ukrainian Galician Party”, “For the Future” and “Warta”. We are aware that more political parties are officially registered in the region. However, many of these parties are only formally listed in the registration documents, and the registered structural units do not always carry out practical activities³. Therefore, we focused on the regional branches of the parties that received the necessary level of support and entered one of the two or both councils.

According to Article 6 of the Law of Ukraine “On Political Parties” membership in a political party is fixed. The law stipulates that the application of membership in a political party is a statement of a citizen of Ukraine, submitted to the statutory body of the political party on the desire to become a member of this party. The form of membership is determined by the statute of the political party. Irrespective of the peculiarities provided by the statutes, members of the party will be the citizens of Ukraine who have personally applied for membership in a particular political party and met the requirements set out in the charter of the party which the person plans to join. Accordingly, this means that every Ukrainian political party keeps / should keep records of party members. Unfortunately, Ukrainian law does not require mandatory public presentation of quantitative membership parameters.

Researchers in many democracies who study political parties, in addition to party members, distinguish the category of party sympathetics⁴.

This category mainly includes citizens who support the activities of a political party by voting for the party, participating in party events, receiving the party press (previously), subscriptions / visits to party sites / pages on the Internet. Mostly in Ukraine, the practice of fixing the category of sympathetics has not become widespread either in the party environment or by researchers.

Problems of membership in Ukrainian political parties were mostly studied in the context of theoretical and legal aspects of the formation and functioning of political parties and party systems⁵.

³ В аналітичному матеріалі, підготовленому Львівським відділенням ОПОРИ «Спроможність осередків політичних партій у Львівській області» (розміщений 06.07.2020 р.) звертається увага на факт, що не всі офіційно зареєстровані партійні осередки в області можуть навести інформацію, яка підтверджує факт їхньої реальної діяльності. - URL: <https://www.oporuaa.org/report/vybory/partii/20144-spromozhnist-oseredkiv-politichnikh-partii-u-lvivskii-oblasti>

⁴ Raul Gomez, Luis Ramiro, Laura Morales, Jaime Aja. Joining the party: Incentives and motivations of members and registered sympathizers in contemporary multi-speed membership parties // *Party Politics*. 2021. T. 27. Vol. 4.

⁵ Адашич А.І. Правові регулювання статусу політичних партій в Україні // *Право і суспільство*. 2012, № 2. С. 32-40; Ганжа А.М. Політичні партії України як формалізовані патронажно-клієнтарні мережі. *Вісник ХНУ імені В.Н.Каразіна. Серія «Питання політології»*. Вип. 30. 2016. С. 62-65; Розумний М., Павленко І. Партійне законодавство та розвиток політичних партій в Україні. К.: НІСД, 2015; Трансформація партійної системи: український досвід у європейському контексті / За ред. Ю.Якименка. – Київ: Центр Разумкова, 2017. 428 с.; Осауленко С.В. Членство у політичних партіях України: сучасний стан та проблеми нормативної регламентації // *Наукові праці Національного університету «Одеська юридична академія»*. Т. 21. 2018. С. 84-91.

Thus, in the publications of Ukrainian researchers we do not find an analysis of the state and evolution of the membership base at both national and regional levels, although there are a number of analytical investigations into the structure of party cells in Ukrainian political parties⁶.

Instead, these issues have long been the focus of analysis among European and American researchers⁷. In particular, the place and role of party members in the activities of political parties, including in the context of intra-party democracy, were studied by S. Scarrow⁸, K. Janda and G. Borz⁹. In a number of studies, the authors studied the nature and causes of the reduction of members of political parties, which many described as a development crisis¹⁰.

Ingrid van Beren and Thomas Poguntke investigated what factors caused the crisis of party membership and what political consequences it led to. They came to the conclusion that amateur politicians are a thing of the past, and instead modern political parties are becoming “organizational machines” for those politicians for whom politics is a profession¹¹. The state of party membership in terms of their quantitative reduction and the consequences for the party system and democracy in Germany were studied by Alexandra Nonenmacher and Tim Speer¹². The expansion of intra-party democracy, as the main direction of the parties’ exit from the crisis of membership, in particular due to the active holding of open and closed primaries, was analyzed by Julia Sandri and Fulvio Venturino¹³. A number of publications are devoted to the study of current trends in the work of parties to attract new party members and to work with sympathetics, who according to the latest research began to receive rights that were previously reserved exclusively for members of political parties¹⁴.

⁶ Опора: «Партизація» місцевих виборів та спроможність самих політичних партій. Чи співпадають політичні бажання з реальністю? [Електронний ресурс] – URL:<https://www.oporaua.org/report/vybory/partii/20153-partizatsiia-mistsevlkh-viboriv-ta-spromozhnist-samikh-partii-chi-svipadaiut-politichni-bazhannia-z-realnistiu>; Спроможність осередків політичних партій у Львівській області [Електронний ресурс] – URL:<https://www.oporaua.org/report/vybory/partii/20144-spromozhnist-oseredkiv-politichnikh-partii-u-lvivskii-oblasti>

⁷ Parties and Their Members. Organizing for Victory in Britain and Germany. Oxford University Press. 1996. 270 p.; Tan A.C. Party Change and Party Membership Decline: An Exploratory Analysis // Party Politics. 1997. Vol.3. Issue 3. P. 363-377.

⁸ Scarrow S. Political Parties and Democracy in Theoretical and Practical Perspectives: Implementing Intra-Party Democracy. Washington: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. 2005; Scarrow S., Bogdan G. Declining memberships, changing members? European political party members in a new era // Party Politics. 2010. Vol.16. Issue 6. P.823-843.

⁹ Kenneth Janda, Gabriela Borz. Contemporary trends in party organization: Revisiting intra-party democracy // Party Politics. 2010. T. 26. Issue 1. P.3-8.

¹⁰ Bernarda L., Sandri G. & Seddone A. Challenges of Political Participation and Intra-party Democracy: Bittersweet Symphony from Party Membership and Primary Elections in Italy // Acta politica. 2017. Vol. 52 (2). P.218-240; Seddone A. & Valbruzzi M. Beyond the crisis...resilience and adaptation. Italian political parties and their organizational transformations // Contemporary Italian Politics. 2020. Vol. 12. Issue 4. P.394-410.

¹¹ Ingrid van Bieren, Tomas Poguntke. The decline of membership-based politics // Party Politics. 2014. Vol.20. Issue 2. P. 205-216

¹² Nonnenmacher A., Spier T. Introduction: German Party Membership in the 21st Century // German Politics. 2019. Vol.28. Issue 2. P. 150-161.

¹³ Sandri G., Venturino F. Party organization and intra-party democracy in Italy // Contemporary Italian Politics. 2020. Vol.2020. Issue 4. P. 443-460.

¹⁴ Susan Achury, Susan E. Scarrow, Karina Kosiara-Pedersen. The consequences of membership incentives: Do greater political benefits attract different kinds of members? // Party Politics. 2020. Vol. 26. Issue 1; Raul Gomez, Luis Ramiro, Laura Morales, Jaime Aja. Joining the party: Incentives and motivations of members and registered sympathizers in contemporary multi-speed membership parties // Party Politics. 2021. T. 27. Vol. 4

The information on the number of party members at the national and regional levels cannot be found in a generalized version in either official government publications or researchers, nor is it available in party publications. One of the possible sources is resources hosted on the Internet. Each of the current political parties in Ukraine has its own website, also the articles devoted to the most of current political parties of Ukraine can be found in Wikipedia in English and other languages. However, for the most part, party websites and relevant Ukrainian-language articles do not provide information on the number of members which researchers can verify. The exception is the Ukrainian Galician Party, which in 2021 declared approximately 1,200 members¹⁵; AUU “Svoboda” estimated the number of members – more than 20,000 on its website in the history section¹⁶; Regarding the People’s Movement of Ukraine, the number of party members in the Ukrainian-language Wikipedia article is estimated at approximately 60,000 members¹⁷, although the English-language publication gives a different estimate of 35,000 ones (for 2016)¹⁸.

The Ukrainian-language article on the “Batkivshchyna” All-Ukrainian Union also provides an approximate number of party members over 600,000¹⁹, and in the English version more than 10,000 ones²⁰. Regarding “European Solidarity”, the Ukrainian-language publication lacks information on the number of members, and the English-language version states “tens of thousands members.”²¹ As to the “For the Future” party, no resource provides even evaluative information, and for the “Servant of the People” party, the English-language version of Wikipedia estimates the number of members in the range between 500 and 1, 000²².

To determine the number of party members at the level of Lviv region, in the absence of publicly available information, we conducted a survey of leaders, in some cases representatives of party organizations. We received the following information (as of October 2021): AUU “Batkivshchyna” – 20,100; ES – 5000; NRU – 4,340; AUU “Svoboda” – 1448; Ukrainian Galician Party – 480; “Samopomich” – 183; “Golos” – 134. Regarding “Warta”, “Servant of the People” and “For the Future”, the number of party members is estimated at less than 100 people in each of them. Simultaneous survey of representatives of political parties on the indicators of membership in others (in parties to which they do not belong), as well as experts gives grounds to question the data obtained on the AUU “Batkivshchyna”,

¹⁵ УПГ: 10 фактів про Українську Галицьку партію [Електронний ресурс] - URL: <https://uhp.org.ua/about/10-faktiv-pro-ugp/>

¹⁶ Історія ВО «Свобода» [Електронний ресурс] - URL: <https://svoboda.org.ua/party/history/>

¹⁷ Вікіпедія: Народний Рух України. [Електронний ресурс] - URL: https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Народний_рух_України

¹⁸ Wikipedia: People’s Movement of Ukraine. [Електронний ресурс] - URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Movement_of_Ukraine

¹⁹ Вікіпедія: Всукраїнське об’єднання «Батьківщина». [Електронний ресурс] - URL: uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Всукраїнське_об%27єднання_«Батьківщина»

²⁰ Wikipedia: All-Ukrainian Union “Fatherland” [Електронний ресурс] – URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All-Ukrainian_Union_%22Fatherland%22

²¹ Wikipedia: European Solidarity. [Електронний ресурс] – URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Solidarity#cite_note-2

²² Wikipedia: Servant of the People. [Електронний ресурс] – URL: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Servant_of_the_People_\(political_party\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Servant_of_the_People_(political_party))

the “ES” and the NRU. Most respondents believe that these figures are inflated several times. With regard to the “Batkivshchyna” All-Ukrainian Union and the NRU, it is possible that the figures were in line with the real situation before, but not today.

The interviewed experts state that in the case of parties that have been operating in the political market for a long time: NRU, Batkivshchyna, Svoboda and Samopomich, it is noticeable the trend of the reducing the absolute number of members. All party organizations are characterized by a weak dynamics of new applications for party membership. A certain increase in the number of new members was observed only on the eve of the elections, especially for local councils. This was facilitated by the norm of the Electoral Code (Book 4, Article 192, paragraph 2) that elections of deputies of regional, district, district in the city, as well as deputies of city, village, settlement councils (territorial communities with 10,000 or more voters) are held according to the system of proportional representation according to the open electoral lists of the political parties’ local organizations²³ and the requirements of many party structures for superiority in nominating candidates for party members, or the condition for all party candidates to become party members at the time of nomination, or in the case of election.

The decentralization process launched in 2014 significantly affected the structure of party organizations at the oblast level. First, the introduction of the UTC (united territorial community) as a basic element / level, the election of the UTC chairman and councils forced some of the existing political structures to think about the expediency of preserving party structures, in accordance with the old territorial-administrative division, and the need to form party cells or representatives / supporters in each UTC. Secondly, the change in the construction of districts within oblasts (in Lviv oblast, within the framework of the reform, 7 enlarged districts were created instead of 24 districts) led to the loss of relevance of keeping district party organizations in accordance with the old scheme. As a result, some of the existing parties announced the liquidation of the old district structures and the creation of party structures on the basis of new districts. At the same time, some regional party structures declared caution or anticipation for the creation of new district structures. This is due to the fact that at the legislative level the functional obligations of new districts are not yet clearly defined. The second argument, given by representatives of political parties, is the fear that the long-standing misunderstanding of the functional purpose of the district branch may indicate the temporary nature of such a decision and that in the near future the districts will be liquidated or re-modified. Therefore, regional party organizations mostly declare the transformation of party organizations on the basis of the old district division into new district structures, but not all of them publicly record their formation.

An indirect tool for verifying membership in regional party organizations can be the fact that they nominate candidates for local councils during the 2020 elections.

²³ Виборчий кодекс України [Електронний ресурс] – URL:<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/396-20#Text>

Table 1. The ratio of party and non-party candidates among the subjects of the election process to the Lviv Regional Council in 2020²⁴

	Name of the party	Total number of candidates	Including non-partisans	% non-partisan among the candidates
1	Warta (Guard)	55	45	81,8
2	AUU "Batkivshchyna" "Motherland"	83	15	18,0
3	AUU "Svoboda" "Freedom"	62	18	29,0
4	Golos(Voice)	55	24	43,6
5	Gromadyanska posyciya(Civic position)	64	46	71,8
6	Dukhovna Ukraina(Spiritual Ukraine)	49	47	95,9
7	European solidarity	79	9	11,4
8	For the Future	82	75	91,5
9	NRU (PMU)	84	57	67,8
10	Nash Kray(Our Land)	46	42	91,3
11	AU "Samopomich" Self Reliance	63	38	60,3
12	Syla i chest' Strength and Honor	83	31	37,3
13	Servant of the people	83	83	100,0
14	UDAR(Strike)	49	41	83,7
15	Ukrainian Galician party	84	41	48,8
	The average			62,14

As we can see, out of 15 parties that were registered in the elections to the Lviv Regional Council, only six managed to nominate a full or almost full quota of candidates (84), which is 40%. Filling the full quota, in our opinion, may indicate the presence of a sufficient number of authoritative persons in the party. Accordingly, the very fact of their nomination is a kind of recognition of their work / activity in the party. This fact also testifies to the party's potential, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in particular, the party's readiness to win elections and form the agenda of the regional council and the whole region. Instead, the inability to fill all the seats indicates a lack of enough potential candidates in the party and devalues the statements of regional party leaders about the claim to leadership in the region. The data of Table 1 shows that more than 62 percent of candidates registered by political parties are non-partisan. Only 40% of the parties that took part in the elections managed to fill more than 50% of the list of candidates with party members. The Ukrainian Galician Party should be formally included in this group, as almost half of it consists of party and non-party candidates. At the same time, four political parties "closed" more than 90% of candidates at the expense of non-partisans. Among them is the "Servant of the People" party, which has completely formed a 100% list of non-party candidates. The reasons for this phenomenon will always be individual for each party; in the case of "Servants of the People" we can talk about the launch of the party project only in 2018-2019, and the party "Warta", as a matter of fact, started only in the summer of 2020. At the same time, we can specify common parameters: 1) absence of party members /

²⁴ ЛІБК: Місцеві вибори [Електронний ресурс] – URL: cvk.gov.ua/pls/vm2020/pvm035pt001f01=695pt00_t001f01=695pid112=12pid100=46rcj=0.html

sufficient number of party members in organizations, or absence of authoritative personalities among existing members; 2) the desire to get a higher result by attracting to the party lists the authoritative individuals in the region, which, respectively, indirectly indicates a lack, or insufficient number of party members of recognizable individuals with a positive balance of trust; 3) spreading the practice of a kind of fundraising, when non-party candidates are involved, financially or via other resources, in the financing / conducting of the election campaign. For some regional party organizations, such a method of forming the election budget was a condition for their participation in the election, but in some cases (mostly parties that had high ratings and chances of passing) also served as a way of earning money. In our opinion, all these factors acted simultaneously but with different proportions for each particular party. We also assume that for some political parties, which are mostly absent from the political life of the region and the country, the very fact of participation by nominating their own candidates was a self-sufficient one regardless of the result (as a rule, these parties did not actively promote their candidates). Thus, they reminded that the party exists.

Table 2. The ratio of party and non-party candidates among the subjects of the election process to the Lviv City Council in 2020²⁵

Name of the party	Total number of candidates	Including non-partisan	% non-partisan among the candidates
Warta (Guard)	64	48	75,0
AUU "Svoboda" ("Freedom")	64	0	0,0
AUU "Batkivshchyna" ("Motherland")	64	3	4,6
Golos (Voice)	55	11	20,0
Gromadyanska posyciya (Civic position)	43	35	81,4
Dukhovna Ukraina (Spiritual Ukraine)	52	48	92,3
European solidarity	64	5	7,8
For the Future	63	58	92,0
Idea of Nation	39	29	74,3
Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists	33	5	15,1
PMU	64	47	73,4
Nash Kray (Our Land)	31	31	100,0
Samopomich (Self Reliance)	50	31	62,0
Опозиційна платформа – "За життя" (Opposition platform – "For Life")	31	23	74,2
Syla i Chest' (Strength and Honor)	64	8	12,5
Servant of People	64	64	100,0
UDAR (Strike)	32	21	65,6
Ukrainian Galician party	61	16	26,2
Ukrainian Republican party	31	21	67,7
Average			54,95

²⁵ ЦІВК: Місцеві вибори. Львівська міська рада [Електронний ресурс] –URL: https://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vm2020/pvm056pid10_2=3670pf7691=64097pr001f01=695rcj=0pr00_t001f01=695.html

Comparing the results in Tables 1 and 2, we can state that the assessments of the situation with the regional candidates from the parties and with the candidates for the Lviv City Council will be similar. That is, we can state that there are not enough party members in most oblast structures (and city ones where they existed) to independently fill the full quotas of candidates for oblast and city (oblast center) councils. We observe an even larger share of non-party candidates in relation to other city, district and OTG councils. All these things together indicate a small number of members in regional party organizations. The situation is slightly better for national parties that have been operating on the political scene for a long time, and it is worse for newly formed party structures. Accordingly, with regard to oblast cells, for which there were doubts about the correctness of their self-assessments of party membership, they should most likely be guided by minimum rather than maximum indicators.

Based on interviews with representatives of political parties and experts, we can identify a number of groups among party members who have certain common characteristics. We provide the list not on the basis of ranking from the largest share to the smallest, but by the very fact of presence among party members. These are the following groups: youth, unemployed, retirees. Paradoxically enough, all party structures declare the existence of youth circles within the party. These circles can be institutionalized in various ways, such as the party's youth units or youth groups. The motivation for the presence of young people in political parties is mainly the hope of "making a career", or the interpretation of being part of the party as an opportunity for social growth within a political party. In addition, being in the party provides new opportunities for cooperation both within the party itself vertically and horizontally, and with various state and public structures, as well as joining numerous training programs organized by the party with foreign foundations and party partners.

All the experts we interviewed note the presence of a significant share of the unemployed among party members. This category of party members has in common the availability of spare time and readiness to participate in various events and programs. During the elections, this category is actively interested in performing the functions for which there is provided, primarily financial, compensations. The main motives for joining this category of citizens to party structures are a number of factors, in particular: the loss of work leads to a decrease in the assessment of the person by others and the citizen himself, accordingly, for some, joining and belonging to a political party is a kind of compensation for the lost status, because a person does socially important work, or he (she) belongs to the party, regardless of whether he is in power or in opposition. Important for this category of people is the opportunity to communicate, express their opinion and the formal fact of equality of all party members, regardless of the status of "employed" and "not working". In addition, this category of people sees participation in the party as an opportunity to gain access to people in leadership positions in government, business and other areas, and via which they can get a job in the structures where these people work, or in other ones. The party, especially during elections, involves also a different number

of people to perform temporary paid work. Mostly, these activities do not require special education and training, but they provide a certain level of trust or conviction in party devotion. The motivation of retirees is also close, as they also have a lot of spare time and the need to communicate. Some party representatives noted a kind of fatigue of the party apparatus from this category of party members, explaining this by the fact that retired party members often initiate the formulation and consideration of various issues or initiatives, which “distract” party structures from the tasks to which organizations are directed from the party center. The consideration of these initiatives requires time and resources of the party staff. Therefore, party representatives speak of certain caution in communicating with potential party members who have a retirement age.

At the same time, party representatives noted the presence of a group of activists among party members, who make up small shares in the total membership. This category is characterized by similar logistics of movement to the party. It is that the relatively high level of development of civic structures and volunteerism in the region and in Ukraine as a whole is facilitated or characterized by the presence of public activists in the local communities. In the vast majority of cases, these individuals raise issues relevant to local communities; criticize the position or activities / inaction of the authorities of different levels. This leads to confrontation between these individuals and state or municipal authorities. To implement change and strengthen their position, and sometimes to protect themselves from pressure, civil society activists need institutional assistance or affiliation. Some activists create or join NGOs, but there are also some who cooperate with political parties. Political parties are able to provide them with a wide range of support: legal, media, support by deputies of different levels. Collectively, the entry of local civic activists into local party organizations is logical and important. Both parts are interested in it, as local activists have a certain authority, which must be transferred to the party organization, which such an activist joins. At the same time, especially on the eve of the election, we are witnessing a kind of “hunting” of party cells for public activists, volunteers and popular bloggers in order to attract them to the party, or to accept / approval of various forms of association with the party.

Based on the interviews, we also found out the main factors / motives for citizens to join political parties outside the above-mentioned categories of party members. They are:

1. The desire to become in the future a candidate from the party in elections to councils of various levels;
2. The desire to gain access to state, or within self-governing structures, positions with the assistance of a political party that has a chance to come to power;
3. The expectation to be able to communicate and lobby their own interests via deputies and the executive branch of the government, in case of predicting, that a political party will participate in the formation of power. These are mainly property, land and budget orders;

4. Some citizens, mostly those who have a certain level of income seek to acquire the status of “respectable person” what in the imagination of this category of people is associated and including for MP. This motive also provides opportunities for lobbying their own business interests;
5. Ideological closeness to assessments of the current situation in the country and abroad is growing in a dichotomous and contrasting struggle between the opposition and the government. Relationships are mainly in the format of “game with 0 (zero) options”, when there are only two colors: black and white. Accordingly, other colors and halftones are excluded in the estimates. Under such circumstances, movers and shakers come to the parties ready and “eager” to fight;
6. Traditional affiliation to a certain political party, even rather to a certain direction in the case when a particular party acts as a symbol / identifier of this ideological or ideological direction (Communist party, NRU (PMU), AUU Svoboda);
7. Personal contact with the heads of enterprises / state or municipal institutions / business structures, representatives of a certain political party may be the basis of certain obligations of a citizen to such a representative and the basis for joining a person to the number of party members providing personal request. This group should also include the category of party members who trust their own leader, comrade, acquaintance. The authority of such a person is the basis for joining and staying in the ranks of a particular party structure.

As we can see, the mercantile interests of party members make up the largest part of the motivation system. Interestingly, in the imagination of the average citizen, this assessment is the dominant explanation for the reasons for citizens to join political parties and the reasons for the native’s personal non-partisanship. Such a perception does not contradict, but on the contrary is the basis for the negative perception of the majority of Ukrainian citizens of the political parties’ institution. According to a survey conducted in June 2021 by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 74.2% of respondents in Ukraine did not trust the institution of political parties (in the western part of Ukraine – 73.9%)²⁶.

In our opinion, the inability of political parties to satisfy such mercantile interests and perform a kind of patrimonial function forces some members of the party, who hoped for various dividends from membership, to leave its membership. The grounds for termination of membership by citizens are also: the lack of intra-party democracy and a high level of centralization, when a party member is treated by the leadership as the executor; the gap between the public declaration of the goals and principles of the party and the party leadership and non-compliance with the voiced maxim in practice; close connection of party organizations

²⁶ Політичні партії очима виборців: як створити передумови ефективного представництва. URL: <https://dif.org.ua/article/politichni-partii-ochima-vibortsiv-yak-stvoriti-peredumovi-efektivnogo-predstavnistva>

and especially party leadership with oligarchs and business, respectively, the concentration of party structures on the implementation of profitable business projects, often to the detriment of the community, and so on.

In view of the above, the logical question is – wherefore, for what purpose the party attracts party members, or what functions they perform. First of all, we can name the formally legitimizing party leadership and party program and all party documents. These documents are always presented as a collective product of the party. Lack of membership gives grounds to talk about all the documents and the position of the party as a reflection of the interests of a narrow group – the party leader and his entourage. Second: the need and tradition of some parties to disseminate party messages via party members. As well as the use of members of party structures as representatives of the “people” during various demonstrations of support or non-support / protest about events, statements, etc. In the case of newly created parties, this function is mainly performed via the Internet, party bots. Third: as a formalized sign of the reality of a political party. In fact, we can explain the message on social networks about the sale of the party, when separately representing the officially registered one with the required number of structural units in the required number of the country’s administrative units and about the parties with membership. Fourth, in some parties we can say that party members pay contributions, which are one of the forms of party financing (UGP, NRU, AUU “Svoboda”, Golos, etc.). Accordingly, they have the opportunity to use certain tools to influence the policies of party organizations.

The subject of membership involves outlining their place in the structure of party organizations. The practice of monitoring party organizations and interviewing their representatives allows us to present this structure in the form of concentrated circles.

In our opinion, the core of the party is the party leader and those closest to him. The next group consists of party functionaries, i.e. those who work professionally in party organizations and get payment for it. Formally, they can be assistants to deputies, or be counted in specialized funds, but functionally they are engaged in the affairs of the party. An interesting feature of this group of officials is that not always and not all employees are members of the party. A separate group consists of deputies of the different levels councils. The status of a deputy on a part of a party often involves taking a formal or informal position in the party structure: the head of the party unit, or the curator of a particular region and city (which is not provided by party statutes, but it is used). The next circle is so far made up of party members. A separate group should also include a category of citizens who can be qualified as sympathizers in the Western sense. Their formation has become more apparent thanks to new communication tools, in particular via social networks. A number of recent election campaigns in Ukraine have been characterized by the widespread use of social media opportunities to cover the activity of party organizations, party candidates, and campaigning. Today, all these party organizations have their own Face book pages, have created and administer various groups. The analysis of visitors of these resources testifies to presence among them persons who come to them with certain

periodicity, like certain information or photos, can leave comments (in this case it is not a question of party bots, those who for a reward show party loyalty in various forms). Estimates of party representatives regarding the number of such visitors are, for obvious reasons, subjective, so they are hard to rely on. However, a number of political parties point to the existence of such a phenomenon. Its presence in the practice of party work seems quite logical due to the proliferation of the Internet and the growing number of users.

Thus, our interview of leaders and representatives of regional party organizations of Lviv region allows us to state the presence of a small number of party members in the regional party structures and the tendency to reduce them. Also, with regard to information about party members, we traditionally encounter two tendencies: first: most political parties hide data on the number of party members and their qualitative characteristics; second: quite often political parties exaggerate the number of their own members. In our opinion, this position is due to the widespread belief that information about the presence of a significant number of party members should indicate the high authority and strength of the party in the form of readiness to vote for it and its candidates. Accordingly, data on a small number of party members will be perceived by society as an indicator of the party's weakness and portend its defeat in elections. Among the party members, prominent groups are young people, the unemployed and retirees. In general, some members of the party have mercantile motives, which cause a fairly noticeable phenomenon at the regional level of constant flow of certain people from one party to another, when the choice is based on party affiliation, political majority or high chances of passing to a representative body. At the same time, the presence of a group of public activists who have authority in the community and are able to direct their activities and involve party members and local party organizations is recorded in party organizations. The presence of the latter group among party members gives grounds for cautious optimism about the further development of political parties. In general, the conducted analysis allows us to state that the indicator of party membership at the level of regional organizations in Lviv region is theoretical for many ones. The small number of members is likely to be a symbolic attribute, a tribute to the indicators of political parties accepted in society. Accordingly, it raises the question of verification of all generic indicators of a political party and assessment of the existing in Ukraine phenomenon. And it also raises the question of whether a political party can exist in the absence of membership or their symbolic presence.

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