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**DEMOCRACY AS A PUBLIC IDEAL AND POLITICAL PRACTICE**

*The multifaceted democratic processes in modern political science are considered, which are reduced to a number of theoretical concepts related to defining the essence of the concepts of «democracy», people's «freedom of speech», various concepts of democracy.*

*The basic goals and principles of democracy formation, which are very important in the modern world, are studied and defined, because the value of democracy in the 21st century is not only that it makes it possible to establish the effective rule of law. Emphasis is placed on the values of democracy in its inner essence. The importance of democracy is argued because it embodies the idea of equality and freedom, the idea of human and individual dignity, the idea of the right to choose for everyone, the possibility of exercising the right to vote for the formation of a government that would take into account the interests of voters.*

*The constituent features of democracy are analyzed, in particular the criteria which allow to define this or that state as democratic; the basic principles of democracy and its certain levels are considered; specific examples of the democracies formation, taking into account their national characteristics, as well as ways to control citizens over the political decision-making process, which can promote or hinder the achievement that will contribute to true freedom and equality of citizens in the state.*

**Keywords:** *democracy, opposition, institutions, polyarchy, sovereignty, public opinion, political values, individual autonomy.*

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## ДЕМОКРАТІЯ ЯК СУСПІЛЬНИЙ ІДЕАЛ І ПОЛІТИЧНА ПРАКТИКА

*Розглянуто питання про багатоаспектність та багатогранність демократичних процесів у сучасній політологічній науці, які зводяться до низки теоретичних концепцій, пов'язаних із визначенням сутності понять «демократія», «свобода слова» народу, різноманітні концепції демократії, також досліджено, що впливає на становлення опозиції як інституту демократії.*

*Досліджено та визначено основні цілі та принципи формування демократії, які є надзвичайно важливими у сучасному світі, адже цінність демократії в 21 столітті не тільки в тому, що вона дає можливість встановити ефективне верховенство закону. Акцентовано увагу на цінності демократії в її внутрішній сутності. Аргументовано важливість демократії через те, що вона уособлює ідею рівності і свободи, ідею гідності людини та індивіда; підкреслено ідею права вибору для кожного, можливість реалізації права голосу для формування уряду, який би враховував у своїй діяльності інтереси виборців. Проаналізовано конституюючі ознаки демократії, зокрема критерії, які дозволяють визначати ту чи іншу державу як демократичну; розглянуто базові принципи демократії та її певні рівні; наведено конкретні приклади формування демократичних держав з урахуванням їхніх національних особливостей, а також питання про способи контролю громадян над процесом ухвалення політичних рішень, які можуть сприяти або гальмувати їхнє досягнення, що буде сприяти досягненню справжньої свободи і рівності громадян в державі.*

**Ключові слова:** демократія, опозиція, інститути, полігархія, суверенність, громадська думка, політичні цінності, індивідуальна автономія.

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## ДЕМОКРАТИЯ КАК ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫЙ ИДЕАЛ И ПОЛИТИЧЕСКАЯ ПРАКТИКА

*Рассмотрен вопрос о многоаспектности и многогранности демократических процессов в современной политологической науке, которые сводятся к ряду теоретических концепций, связанных с определением сущности понятий «демократия», «свобода слова» народа, разнообразные концепции демократии, также исследовано, что влияет на становление оппозиции как института демократии.*

*Исследованы и определены основные цели и принципы формирования демократии, которые очень важны в современном мире, ведь ценность демократии в 21 веке не только в том, что она дает возможность установить эффективное верховенство закона. Акцентируется внимание на ценности демократии в ее внутренней сущности. Аргументирована важность демократии потому, что она олицетворяет идею равенства и свободы, идею достоинства человека и индивида; подчеркнута идея права выбора для*

*каждого, возможность реализации права голоса для формирования правительства, который бы учитывал в своей деятельности интересы избирателей. Проанализированы конституирующие признаки демократии, в частности критерии, которые позволяют определять то или иное государство как демократическое; рассмотрены базовые принципы демократии и ее определенные уровни; приведены конкретные примеры формирования демократических государств с учетом их национальных особенностей, а также вопрос о способах контроля граждан над процессом принятия политических решений, которые могут способствовать или тормозить их достижение, что будет способствовать достижению подлинной свободы и равенства в государстве.*

**Ключевые слова:** демократия, оппозиция, институты, полигархия, суверенность, общественное мнение, политические ценности, индивидуальная автономия.

**Problem setting.** The problem democracy development needs special attention from the theorists and practitioners in post-communist countries. For such countries it is necessary not only to overcome the inertia of the previous undemocratic practice, but also to implement examples of democracy with significant shortcomings, ways to overcome which are not found even in countries with long democratic experience. As a result, the process of democratization is significantly delayed, and the absence of adequate answers to the problems that accompany it to the permanent «crises» of democracy and the inability to satisfy everyone's expectations of its perfect image.

Research and definition of the main problem of democracy and its role in socio-political life is one of the central in political sciences. Democracy as a form of political organization of society based on the recognition of people with a source of government, participation of citizens in the decision-making process, guarantee of rights and freedoms of the person, ensuring the rights of citizens to control the activities of power structures, the implementation of accountability of public rulers and principles of representing interests of all public groups. Democracy as a type and form of organization of any public association (parties, organizations), which operates on the basis of equality of its members, periodic election of governing bodies and decision making by a majority (party, trade union, industrial and other democracy). Democracy is considered as an ideal of a social system based on a certain system of values (freedoms, political equality, popular sovereignty, respect of human rights, legal security of a person, participation of citizens in the management of the state, etc.). Reconciles from the ideology in the goals of political activity, democracy acquires signs of public movement for the corresponding world-wide values (national-

democratic, social-democratic, liberal-democratic, Christian-democratic, etc.) (Пазенок 2003: 4).

Democracy is the organization and functioning of state power on the principles of people's recognition with its source and carrier, to provide justice, equality and well-being of all with the «Problems and Public Governance issues». This form of social system, based on citizens' participation in the process of decision-making due to direct demanding and delegation of its sovereignty by representative and executive authorities, which guarantees rights and freedoms of personality and minority, ensuring the right of citizens to control the activities of power structures, principles of separation ensuring power and representation of interests of all social groups. This is the form of organization and functioning of the political system in which there are equal opportunities for exercising rights and freedoms of each society member.

The analysis of current research work and publications. A. Silenko's article «Political Factors in the Formation of the Commonwealth» emphasizes that in Central and Eastern Europe economic, cultural and historical reasons may hinder the achievement of an ideal combination of democratic politics and the satisfaction of human needs (Сіленко 2001: 136-142). Therefore, the choice between democracy and human development can always exist. A. Silenko believes that today such values as freedom, equality, solidarity, social justice make democracy attractive to many people. In addition, Robert Dahl had a significant influence on political science with his empirical research on the distribution of power in the local community and theoretical concepts, especially on democracy and pluralism. He proposed the minimum procedures that democracy must meet, political control over government decisions. His idea concerning

democracy is based on the constitution that guarantees the origin of politicians' choice. The scientist emphasized on the fact that elected positions are filled in accordance with regular and fair elections, in which violence is unacceptable; all adult citizens can participate in elections; almost all adult citizens can run in elections; citizens have the right to speak on political issues without fear of being punished and to form independent associations of state organizations, including political parties and interest groups; to seek alternative sources of information that actually exist and are protected by law (Dahl 2003: 99-118).

**The purpose of this** article is to consider concepts and peculiarities of democracy. The goal will be achieved by performing **the following tasks**: to analyze what democracy is; to explore the features of democracy; and to anticipate specific goals and principles of democracy. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the development of democratic theory led to the formation of three basic concepts of democracy. The concept of participating democracy justifies the need for the participation of the general population not only in the election of its representatives or decision-making on referendums, plebiscites, but also participate in political processes in preparation, adoption and implementation of power decisions. According to this concept, citizens are able to consciously take political decisions, but irrationalism, the spontaneity of the masses can be overcome by increasing the educational level and competence of the people. Understanding the complexity and impossibility of implementing in modern conditions of direct democracy in full, supporters of the concept offer the creation of such a political system that would combine the principles of direct and representative democracy.

**Elistar democracy.** Proponents of the concept of elite democracy emphasize the need to limit the participation of the masses in the state management due to the low level of their competence in politics, inclination to irrationalism and radicalism. According to the concept of elite democracy, the real authorities must belong to a political elite, which possesses the basis of knowledge, the competence required by skills in managing society, adheres to democratic principles. People should only belong to the right of periodic, mainly electoral, control of the elite (Грозіцька 2000а: 8-10).

Speaking about polyarchy it is important to say that is considered as a political system based on open political competition of various groups in the struggle for support of voters.

In modern political science, the term was introduced into use in 1953 by Robert Dahl to refer to the set of basic institutions common to liberal democracies. The term is used to distinguish modern implementation of democracy in national states both from the ideal and from historical varieties of democracy in cities-states. The scientist considers a polyarchy as a «purified» version of existing systems and comes to the conclusion that its institutions are needed to achieve an ideal democracy. The polyarchy model is also used as a standard for measuring democracy (Dahl 2003: 99-118).

According to modern theories of democracy, the polyarchy indicates a system that includes the following seven institutes:

**Elected public posts.** Modern democracies are representative: in accordance with the basic laws, direct control over the adoption of normative acts and political decisions are elected by citizens.

**Free, honest and regularly elections** in which every citizen (as a voter and as a candidate) has the right to participate, combined with a continuous open political rivalry between citizens and their associations.

**Government's sensitivity.** The policy depends on the results of elections and preferences voters' preferences.

**Freedom of self-expression.** Citizens have the right to express their thoughts, including critics power, political system, socio-economic order and overwhelming ideology.

**Access to alternative and independent sources of information.** Citizens have the right to search and receive information from other citizens, from books, media, etc. Alternative sources of information should exist, be available and not controlled by any political group.

**Autonomy of public organizations.** Citizens have the right to establish a relatively independent community or organization, including political parties.

**General coverage of citizenship.** Everyone who constantly resides in the country and obeys its laws should have all the rights of a citizen.

**Polyarchy involves the existence of a ruling the law, in particular, the availability of constitutional restrictions on the executive power and ensuring its accountability by other authorities (parliament, courts, ombudsmen, general auditors) (Грозіцька 2000b: 372-373).**

**Opposition as an institution of democracy.** Consequently, the concept of «opposition» is a multifaceted and every definition characterizes the opposition with an emphasis on a certain

aspect. Summarizing various approaches to the interpretation of the concept of «opposition» can be given the following definition: the opposition is a form of confrontation, resistance, counteracting certain politics, political line, actions, official ruling forces. Opposition, as a prefabricated concept is thought to be as political parties, party groups, public movements of the organization, groups of people who are in minority, oppose a certain political line, opinion, government system, constitution, political system. The task of political opposition is to criticize government decisions, adjust them, to identify their weaknesses and require their cancellation; to formulate alternatives to a political course; to prevent a distortion of a country's political course in favor of someone's layer.

The purpose of the opposition is the desire for a significant adjustment of power decisions up to the legal change of ruling political team and mastering the authorities.

In democratic countries of the world, the opposition functions are: the development of alternative proposals for social decisions and government policy, criticism of the official course and government policy, expression of social dissatisfaction, observation and control of actions and decisions of ruling party, which, in turn, limits the possibility of power abuse and supports the power party in a state of military readiness, prevention of displacement of the government's course is too «left» or «right» from the political center, support for social stability, promoting horizontal rotation of power, as opposition parties alternate in power, providing representation of various socio-political forces, ensuring a high degree of consensus when making decisions, taking into account the interests of not part (albeit majority) of society, and the interests of society as a whole, expression of thoughts, positions of that part of the society, which it represents, solving specific socio-political problems, providing the country's development of the necessary dynamics.

It is important to note that the opposition has the opportunity to counteract with the government without answering the effects of government actions.

Political opposition as a socio-political phenomenon can be classified according to various criteria. Political forces belonging to the responsible opposition are fighting in accordance with the «Political Game Rules», realizing the temporality of staying both in power and opposition. Such an opposition, criticizing the actions of power, does not

undermine the political principles of the system. The functioning of the inconsistent opposition is characterized by the desire to change the government and involves the use of any means without limitation (Політична влада і опозиція в Україні 2016: 18-23).

By the nature of the organization there is distinguish between institutionalized and situational opposition. Institutionalized involves formal registration of its status. Classic example – «Opposition of Her Majesty» in the UK, which creates a «shadow cabinet». Situational opposition is inherent in the states with a fragmentary party system, when the government (government coalition), as well as the opposition, is compressed very quickly, depending on the actual internal or external political situations.

The main tasks (goals) of the parliamentary opposition are: advocacy and protection of the interests of subjects of opposition activity by ensuring participation in the implementation of parliamentary control, critical analysis of the actions of ruling a majority; identification and exposure of shortcomings in public policy; disclosure and substantiation of critical assessments of the head of state / or government, development of an alternative to the official political course, development and submission to the parliament (or its chambers) of alternative decisions on the socio-economic and political life of society, ensuring the stability of social relations due to the detection and defending interests of voters in the minority.

In accordance with these goals, we can determine the functions of the parliamentary opposition: the development of alternatives to the policy of ruling forces in order to ensure the balance of power, control over the government and managed by its authorities, criticism of the Government Program, formation of a «shadow office» in case of replacement of government or other relevant political structures, mobilization on its side of public opinion of certain layers of the population, informing voters about its activities and the course of the political process, preparation and selection of personnel, their presentation in parliament (Піскарьова 2008: 5).

Democratic values are the personification of democracy significance, attractiveness for most people, require new supporters around the world. Consequently, there are specific universities of democracy, which characterize human existence in its entirety and diversity.

Citizenship is the core of democracy. It is connected with human beings, political and

legal relationship, but above all, the development of social consciousness and individual dignity, human capacity to realize own interests and protect with knowledge of the case and taking into account the interests of the whole society.

A citizen, his life and health, dignity and virtue are thought to be the most important for democracy. The power of society consists of educated and organized citizens who respect the power of joint existence, a joint decision and an appropriate action. Citizenship embodies the actual nature of man's social existence, efforts to be in the center of important events affect life and determines future.

Democratic citizenship reveals itself in self-organization and self-governing at all levels of the society organization – in student and student self-government, in trade union and human rights movements, in the activities of various non-governmental organizations, which are civil society, etc. In a democratic society, a person is a free creature and defines the purpose, meaning and rhythm of existence. No one can compel a free citizen to devote himself to some reason that he believes is not worth attention that has no meaning to him. But such a freedom of self-determination does not mean that a citizen can generally leave the sphere of social life. No one can replace a separate citizen in his civic activity. «Without me, the people are incomplete», – Russian writer A. Platonov noted in his time (Platonov 2013).

Democracy needs a conscious and active involvement of citizens in public life. Citizenship, developed civic states, are valuable, because they bring a person and forms an order based on freedom and responsibility.

Competence and responsibility. The competence of a citizen is first of all his political culture, his knowledge based on ways of defending rights, freedoms, protection of own interests, a value that ensures the viability and sustainability of the democratic system.

The competent citizen must be aware of all those cases that may require direct intervention. He must know how the laws, mechanisms and procedures can be influenced by certain power structures for the sake of defending his own interests, in which way one can express his commitment to a fact of social life or, conversely, to identify indignation and protest. Maintaining competence is a constant care of being informed and educated, so that nothing significant takes place beyond a citizen's attention. The competence of a citizen is also an understanding that the consumer attitude

towards the achievements and values of democracy can lead to loss.

Freedom is the highest social value. Without it, democracy is impossible. Political freedom is the first and most important condition of democracy. The space of freedom is a peculiar universe in which a person belongs to it and can accept any decisions. This is a sphere of activity in which people can choose what they want, not exposed to repression.

The minimum necessary restriction of citizen's freedom, according to the ideology of liberalism, is determined by the need to protect the freedom of another citizen. In case of violation of these limits, the law entering the restriction and restores violated freedom. Therefore, the basis of legal relations in the process of their gradual development there was the imperative of freedom. «... the system of law, - G. Hegel noted, is the kingdom of fulfilled freedom, the world of spirit, generated by himself ... Law concerns freedom, this is the most important and most sacred in man ...» (Hegel 2001: 8). For the society it is very important to find such social forms that would make freedom to all (Щедрова, Барановський, Новакова, Пашина 2005: 107-108).

For many centuries, initial democracy was an effective means of social adaptation, maintaining the integrity and viability of human communities. And most often it reached its goal by limiting freedom, the conquest of individual individuals in the interests of whole society. Freedom began to be realized as a key value without which everyone else is losing sense. Democracy is rightly considered to be such a reservoir, in which human freedom is the least contaminant and can be achieved by the easiest way. But the worth of freedom should stand for citizens.

Constitution and constitutionalism. In order to determine the limits of freedom and responsibility, avoid excessive moral claims, there must be some kind of «superhuman» instance, which would not depend on someone's personal ideas and preference, on someone else's will. This instance embodies the law and especially the constitution. Its purpose is to clearly identify the principles of social coexistence of people in a democratic society. The inviolability of constitutional principles makes it possible to make social procedure and social freedom independent of who stands by the head of the state or which party won the majority in parliament (Шаповал 2005: 73).

Freedom of speech, free media and public opinion. In order to realize for citizens as a

chief agent of a democratic society, they need to follow certain factors and conditions that also make up the main values of democracy. This is freedom of speech, the context of which is protected by the law of the media, which enables citizens to be truly knowledgeable with the state of affairs in the country. With the help of the media, a person can express his judgment with respect to a social problem, a political phenomenon, a process, an institute or a figure.

Public opinion is primarily a consequence of freedom of speech. After all, the joint judgment becomes possible only when people can freely without fear of punishment, to identify its true attitude to one or another events, institutions, processes, etc. In terms of freedom of expression, the presence of the opposition is a so-called public sphere, or the scope of openness, which the German philosopher and sociologist J. Habermas identified as the sphere of «united public individuals». At a certain stage in the development of liberal democracy, they begin to realize themselves as enemies, a counterparty of state power and make it legitimize public opinion, eventually – even to bring it to the rank of the institution (Habermas 2012: 635).

The origin of the space of open public communication first (before the XVIII century) occurred in England, where at that time it came to the strength of parliamentarism as an element of representative democracy, there was a legal opposition that was uncontrolled by the press, capable of supporting and forming opposition sentiments. Over time, in all liberal-democratic states, rationally-critical debates of citizens about social problems, as well as arguments born in these debates, began to form an authoritative basis for the adoption of political decisions, and the public and its opinion turned into an important policy factor.

In our time, according to J. Keane, a public sphere is a «special type of spatial relationship between many people, usually combined by certain means of communication (television, radio, telephone, fax, satellite communication, e-mail, etc.). Between them there are certain controversies and conflicts associated with authority relations and political activities. In these disputes, all participants in communication are drawn. As a result, there is a descacement of power relations and there is an opportunity to conduct a discussion, to expose fraud (Keane 1995: 1).

Consequently, freedom of speech, free media is one of the greatest values of democracy. However, as any other freedom, it can not exist without restrictions. The media

should be able to say everything, but not all impunity. And so courts should be not only independent, but also democratic and responsible (Берроуз 2011: 158-159).

Human dignity. Dignity is an awareness of a citizen of personal significance, his own mission, uniqueness, identity and inexhaustibility as a share of its democratic outlook, which generates a certain civil duty. Dignity is the component of the authority of a citizen, his self-esteem and respect for others, the generation and condition of his freedom. Dignity forces a person to act, to become a violation of the principles and basics of a democratic system, counteracting any freedom oppression.

Totalitarian regimes are not tolerated by this human feature. Those who are stable and courageous, people who allow them to crush their human dignity become not only victims, but also enemies of such regimes (Арендт 2013: 43-44).

Social rules are a universal value of any society. Most people want to live in conditions of orderliness, stability, security. The specificity of social order in the conditions of democracy is that it is achieved not by eliminating disagreement and diversity inherent in any social organism. Democracy is a permanent, but arranged (laws, procedures, civic weighed, awareness and experience) conflict. It is constantly giving a conflict, sometimes (in particular during elections) acquiring a significant scale. But from this society only benefits, since problems are at least not impacted inside and do not acquire a malignant nature. The culture of conflict is an important achievement of democracy.

According to all mentioned information democracy this is the most successful political idea in the world. Democracy allows ordinary people decisively to govern a country. It is based on a system of government typically exercised through elected representatives.

The concept of democracy is broad and diverse. Every country has a unique democratic system, and countries will therefore be 'differently democratic'. Democracy has many features: What then are the key features of democracy?

Although there are other aspects to democracy, we look at six key features. When these six main features are present it indicates a strong democracy.

They are respect for basic human rights, a multi-party political system paired with political tolerance, a democratic voting system, respect

for the rule of law, democratic governance, and citizen participation (Кабанець 2016: 21-22).

Speaking about the legal, democratic state and democracy, based on institutions and in the interests of citizens – we are talking not only about the generation of those who live, elected and chooses – now. Of course, life is alive. And not without considering those who lived earlier, fought for the state, freedom, human rights, – those, ensure that the state existed to us, and for those who are transferred to the current generations.

Awareness of the state and a democratic process that exists only in the interests of one generation of people – puts the insignion of democracy to a shaking foundation.

If this generation was poorly used by a democratic process and received the unsatisfactory power and its efficiency – it does not give grounds for curtailing a democratic system, because it deprives the rights and freedoms of the following generations.

**Conclusions.** Thus, it is possible to define democracy as a representative form of government, which ensures election and accountability of government to citizens, guarantees citizens' participation in political life to implement their political interests, has a system of checks and balances against abuse and usurpation of power, and which is intended to protect freedom and dignity of citizens, to defend their rights, guaranteeing the rule of law and fluidity and preservation of a democratic state.

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