

Civil Society's Involvement in the Post-2014 Political Transition in Ukraine

Andrii Hahin ¹, Andrii Matvieiev ², Serhii Piddubnyi ³, Larysa Filipenko ⁴, Oleh Oliinyk ⁵

¹ Department of National Security, Public Management and Administration,
Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine.

² Faculty of Management, Entrepreneurship and Law, Department of Social and Humanitarian Training,
Khmelnytskyi Cooperative Trade and Economic Institute, Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine.

³ Department of Political Technologies,

Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman, Kyiv, Ukraine.

⁴ Department of Philosophy and Pedagogy of Professional Training, docent, The Faculty of Transportation Systems,
Kharkiv National Automobile and Highway University, Kharkiv, Ukraine.

⁵ Department of Public Administration, Interregional Academy of Personnel Management, Kyiv, Ukraine.

¹ Corresponding author: bleyz98@gmail.com

© Author(s)

OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development, Ontario International Development Agency, Canada.

ISSN 1923-6654 (print) ISSN 1923-6662 (online) www.oidaijsd.com

Also available at <https://www.ssm.com/index.cfm/en/oida-intl-journal-sustainable-dev/>

Abstract: Civil society plays a key role in the political transformations of Ukraine after 2014, contributing to democratic development, European integration and reform of public administration. In conditions of war, information threats and economic challenges, the relevance of research on civil society and its mechanisms of influence on political processes is significantly increasing. The purpose of the study is to analyze the impact of civil society on public administration and political changes, and the object is the activities of public organizations, volunteer movements and human rights initiatives in Ukraine. The work uses methods of comparative analysis, content analysis of official documents, statistical analysis of sociological data and expert evaluation of scientific publications. The study showed that civil society has become an important factor in the fight against corruption, ensuring transparency of government and the implementation of democratic reforms. At the same time, its effectiveness largely depends on the level of cooperation with state structures and international partners. It was found that digitalization opens up new opportunities for civic activity, but carries the threat of information manipulation. The study also showed that trust in civic initiatives remains consistently high, while trust in state institutions fluctuates depending on political circumstances. The practical significance of the study lies in identifying mechanisms for strengthening civil society through legal, financial, and digital tools. The results can be used to develop state strategies to support civil society, increase public participation, and strengthen democratic institutions in Ukraine.

Keywords: civil society, socio-political transformations, public administration, democratization, volunteer initiatives, European integration, public control, information policy, digitalization, international cooperation.

Introduction

Civil society is an integral part of a democratic state, contributing to the formation of political culture, ensuring control over power and mobilizing citizens to participate in socio-political life. In Ukraine, after 2014, civil society has acquired particular importance in the context of political transformations caused by the Revolution of Dignity, the war with Russia, anti-corruption reforms and European integration processes. It has become a key factor in democratization, reform of public administration and the struggle for the rule of law. At the same time, challenges associated with political instability, information wars and insufficient institutional support affect the further development of this sector. Research into the role of civil society in political processes is actively considered in modern scientific literature. Borshchevskiy, Chekh and Lapshyna [1] analyze its impact on public administration reform, emphasizing the need to deepen cooperation between public initiatives and authorities. Honcharuk [2] examines the challenges in the interaction of civil society with state structures, in particular political barriers and bureaucratic obstacles. Zelinska [3] examines international support for civic initiatives and its impact on internal processes in

Ukraine, while Stepanenko [4] draws attention to the threats of excessive dependence on international donors. An important area of modern research is the analysis of digital democracy [5], which opens up new opportunities for civic activism, but is also accompanied by information threats [6]. Despite the significant attention of scholars to the topic of civil society, a number of issues remain that require additional study. In particular, the mechanisms of adaptation of civil society to the conditions of military conflict, the challenges associated with digitalization, as well as the long-term prospects for cooperation with state and international structures have not been fully explored. In addition, the question of the real effectiveness of public initiatives in implementing state reforms and overcoming social divisions needs to be clarified.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of civil society on the political transformations of Ukraine after 2014, including its role in public administration, European integration processes, the fight against corruption, and ensuring public control. To achieve this goal, the following tasks were set: to investigate the mechanisms of civil society's influence on public policy, to assess the level of cooperation between public organizations and state structures, to analyze the role of international cooperation, and to identify key challenges and prospects for the development of civil society in the modern political environment of Ukraine.

Analysis of recent research and publications

Research into the role of civil society in Ukraine's political transformations after 2014 is actively covered in the scientific literature. They cover both general theoretical aspects of civil society development and specific mechanisms of its influence on public administration and democratic processes.

Considerable attention is paid to the transformation of the public administration system under the influence of civil society [1; 2; 7]. Researchers emphasize the importance of interaction between public organizations and the authorities and the need to improve cooperation mechanisms between them [8; 9]. The issues of legal regulation of the volunteer movement, which has become a significant factor in the self-organization of society after 2014, are also considered [10].

Another area of research concerns the identity of civil society and its role in the formation of national consciousness in the context of European integration processes [11; 12]. Issues of citizens' trust in state institutions and public initiatives are also analyzed [13; 6]. In addition, sociological research developed the study of a public sentiment [14], allowing to understand the dynamics of Ukrainians' stereotypes of state reforms.

The socio-political context of civil society development in Ukraine is particularism of interest for researchers as they deal with the problem of the information policy and the digitalization of public space [5; 15]. Works separate analyze civil society's character in the situation of global change and the transformation of geopolitical situation [3; 4]. Civic initiatives in studies of the information space in Ukraine rely heavily on supporting them with digital media and online activism [16].

Global supply chains are undergoing transformations and that require the development of innovative logistics manner. In Kryshnal (2023), the importance of logistics to keep Ukraine's agriculture during warfare is highlighted, and resilient transport routes and infrastructure are required. In Zghurska et al. (2022) we talk about digitalization of agroindustrial complex, the use of technological innovation that can increase efficiency and flexibility of supply chains. At the same time, their work Kussainov et al. (2023) examines the anti-corruption management within the EU's financial sector, highlighting the role of transparency in the safe and reliable functioning of logistics. Taken in their entirety, these studies indicate that to operate in the modern era, global supply chains must be robustly logistically managed, advance digitization is important, and management has to be made transparent.

The research also highlights the conceptual features of civil society in Ukraine, its historical evolution and contemporary challenges [17]. At the same time, the interaction of state institutions and public organizations in various aspects is analyzed, in particular in the field of strategic planning of social development [18; 19]. Special attention is paid to the issues of forming personal and social identity in the context of civic activity [20]. Mitin [21] examines the conditions for the formation and functioning of civil society in Ukrainian realities. At the state level, considerable attention is paid to the legal aspects of the functioning of civil society, in particular, to state strategies for the development of this sector [22]. Meanwhile, the analysis of political discourse shows that the interaction between the state and civil society is undergoing complex stages of transformation, which requires further study [23; 24].

Despite significant achievements, a number of unresolved issues remain. In particular, there is no effective strategy for the long-term institutionalization of civic initiatives, which complicates their positive impact on politics. Further

research is also needed into mechanisms for overcoming social divisions and enhancing civic participation in democratic processes.

Research methods

The study used comparative analysis to compare changes in the functioning of civil society in Ukraine after 2014, in particular the impact of international cooperation, digitalization and political transformations. Content analysis of official documents, civil society development strategies and state programs allowed to identify the main directions of policy in supporting civic initiatives. The statistical method was used to analyze the level of trust of citizens in state institutions and public organizations based on sociological research data. In addition, the study relied on expert analysis of scientific works and reports of international organizations, which made it possible to assess the effectiveness of the implemented reforms and identify the main challenges of the civil sector.

Research results

After the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, civil society in Ukraine underwent a significant transformation, becoming an active subject of political change. Its role has significantly increased in the processes of democratization, public administration, the fight against corruption, and the formation of new political identities. Analyzing these changes, several key aspects can be identified.

1. Expanding citizens' participation in political life. After 2014, there has been an increase in the level of civic activity and awareness of the population of its role in governing the state. The volunteer movement that developed during the Maidan events and the war in eastern Ukraine has become a powerful factor in the self-organization of society. Civil society organizations and activists have become mediators between society and the state, shaping the reform agenda.

2. Impact on public administration processes. Civil society has become a driver of political and administrative reforms. Thanks to its pressure, new transparency mechanisms have been introduced, such as the electronic declaration system (e-declaration), Prozorro for public procurement, and the creation of anti-corruption bodies (NABU, NACP, VAKS). Activists have also been actively involved in the development of strategic documents related to local self-government and decentralization.

3. Control over government and the fight against corruption. A significant aspect of the transformational role of civil society has been public oversight of government activities. Anti-corruption initiatives by citizens and independent investigations by investigative journalists have forced the state to take public opinion into account and be accountable for its actions.

4. European integration and citizen diplomacy. After the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU, Ukrainian civil society has played an important role in monitoring the implementation of European reforms. Many initiatives have focused on advocating for policies in the field of human rights, the rule of law and decentralization. In addition, activists are involved in international negotiations, representing the interests of citizens in various international organizations.

5. Challenges and obstacles. Despite significant achievements, civil society faces numerous challenges, including political pressure, attempts to discredit activists, insufficient financial support for independent initiatives, and threats to the physical safety of individual civil society representatives.

6. Development prospects. In the future, the key areas of civil society development will be:

- Expanding digital technologies to engage citizens in political processes (e-petitions, public budgets, open data).
- Strengthening the regional network of activists to ensure the even development of civic activism across the country.
- Deepening cooperation with international partners to strengthen democracy and protect human rights.

Thus, civil society after 2014 became one of the key factors in Ukraine's political transformation, ensuring the stability of the democratic course and control over power.

Civil society plays an important role in shaping democratic institutions and mechanisms of public governance. Its influence is implemented through various tools, including public control, advocacy for reforms, interaction with the authorities, and mobilization of society for active participation in decision-making. After 2014, Ukraine has experienced significant political transformations in which civil society has become a key driver of change. The key

means of influence include monitoring activities of state bodies, the creation of alternative legislative initiatives, the introduction of anti-corruption mechanisms, and the involvement of citizens in the governance processes in direct communications with corresponding electronic platforms. Table 1 presents in detail these mechanisms. The key means of influence include monitoring activities of state bodies, the creation of alternative legislative initiatives, the introduction of anti-corruption mechanisms, and the involvement of citizens in the governance processes in direct communications with corresponding electronic platforms. Table 1 presents in detail these mechanisms.

Table 1. Mechanisms of civil society influence on public administration and democratic transformation

Mechanism of influence	Form of implementation	Implementation example
Public control	Monitoring the activities of state bodies, independent investigations	Investigation "Our Money", NGO "Chesno"
Advocacy for reforms	Initiating and lobbying for legislative changes	Law on Openness of Public Data
Interaction with authorities	Public consultations, participation in advisory bodies	Register of declarations of officials (NABU)
Anti-corruption initiatives	Introduction of transparency mechanisms, control over budget use	procurement system Prozorro
Digital democracy	Using electronic tools to engage citizens	Electronic petition platform, "Open City"
Citizen mobilization	Volunteer movements, protests, public campaigns	Volunteer movement after 2014, "SaveFOP " campaigns
Human rights activities	Protection of human rights, provision of legal assistance	Initiatives of the Anti-Corruption Center
International partnership	Interaction with international organizations, participation in grant programs	Monitoring reforms within the framework of the Association Agreement with the EU

Source: created by the author based on [1; 2; 5; 6; 7].

Since 2014, civil society in Ukraine has hugely grown in terms of scale and activity thus becoming an effective means of impact on the public administration and democratic processes. It promotes transparency and accountability of government using mechanisms of public control, advocacy and digital technologies in conjunction with international partnership. However, over time it is necessary to preserve the sustainability of such mechanisms and their centralizing during their entry into the public administration system, since it will be the key for the country's democratic success.

The role of civil societies organizations in the process of public administration is of special importance as they intervene as an intermediary between the society and the authorities. They keep watch over the deeds of government bodies, are for reforms; speak in favor of citizens' rights, and expand the possibilities of administration of the public in general. After 2014, there has been an intensified interaction between civil society organizations and state structures in Ukraine caused by the democratization of the political process and new mechanisms of involving citizens (civil society organizations) in the decision making. While positive changes have made such cooperation more effective, some factors are crucial, including the level of openness of the authorities, the existence of mechanisms of public participation, and organisations' capacity to encompass the political agenda. Therefore to analyze this interaction we will examine main format of cooperation and their effectiveness in Table 2.

Table 2. Forms of cooperation between civil society organizations and state structures and their effectiveness

Form of cooperation	Implementation mechanism	Efficiency level	Implementation example
Participation in advisory bodies	Public councils, expert groups	Average	Public Council under the Cabinet of Ministers
Joint development of policies and legislation	Consultations, discussion of draft laws	High	Anti-corruption strategy (NABU, Transparency International)
Monitoring and evaluation of government activities	Public audit, evaluation of program implementation	High	Anti-corruption monitoring of the NGO "Chesno"
Public reports and analytical studies	Preparation of alternative analytical materials	High	Razumkov Center Analytics
Electronic tools for public participation	Electronic petitions, public budget	Average	Open City Platform
Curriculum and civic education	Seminars, trainings for civil servants	High	UCU School of Public Administration
Public campaigns and advocacy	Press conferences, flash mobs, demonstrations	Average	Campaign "No to elections under Yanukovich's law"
Joint anti-corruption initiatives	Implementation of transparency mechanisms, fight against corruption	High	Launch of Prozorro with the participation of NGOs

Source: created by the author based on [1; 2; 5; 6; 7].

The interaction of civil society organizations with state structures in Ukraine increased significantly after 2014 and contributed to democratization of the governance processes. The best type of cooperation is in shaping the policy together, monitoring the way the government behaves, and participating in the anti-corruption programs. At the same time, a number of challenges remain, including insufficient citizen involvement, bureaucratic barriers, and the limited ability of state structures to respond to public initiatives. For the further development of this cooperation, it is necessary to improve the mechanisms of public influence, as well as strengthen digital tools for citizen participation.

The level of citizens' trust in state institutions and public initiatives is a key indicator of the stability of the political system and the effectiveness of democratic processes. After 2014, Ukraine has observed significant dynamics of changes in trust in the authorities, law enforcement agencies and civil society. These changes are due to political crises, war, anti-corruption reforms and the general transformation of public administration. Based on sociological research in recent years, a trend of increasing trust in civil society and volunteer initiatives can be identified, while trust in state bodies remains unstable. To assess this indicator, we present the summarized data in Figure 1.

Next page

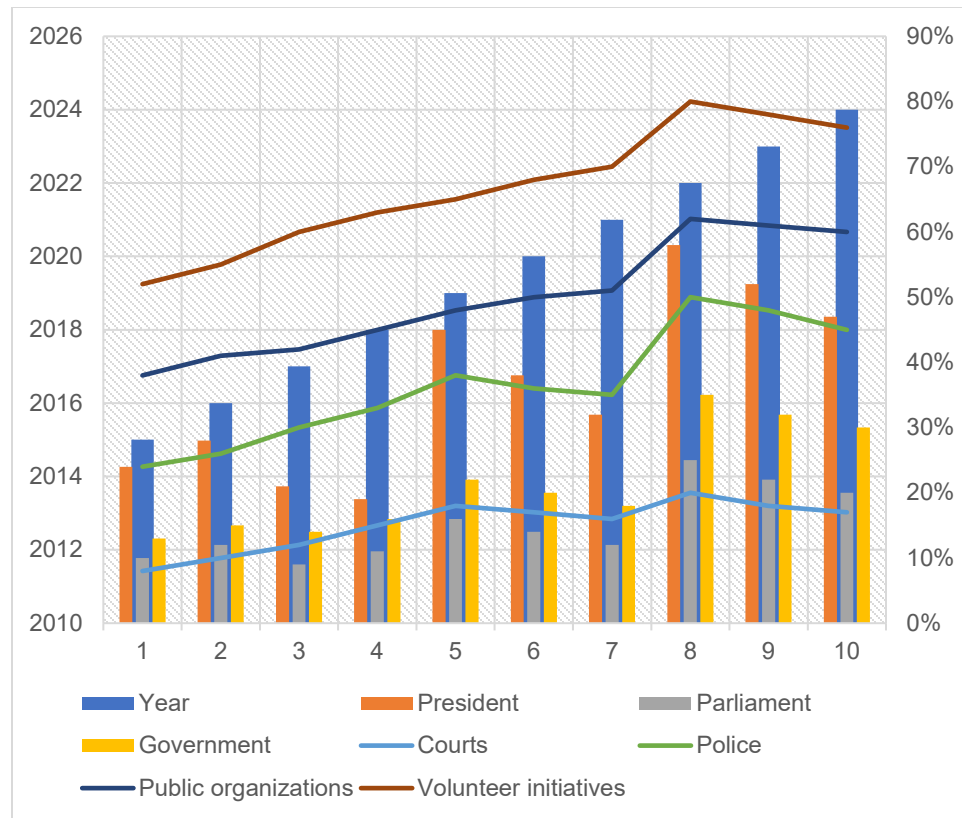


Figure 1. Dynamics of the level of citizens' trust in state institutions and public initiatives (2015–2024)

Source: created by the author based on [6; 7; 13].

An analysis of the dynamics of the level of citizens' trust in state institutions and public initiatives in the period 2015–2024 demonstrates significant changes in public sentiment, which were caused by political events, reforms, and the general development of civil society.

Dynamics of trust in state institutions. Trust in the president has fluctuated significantly. In 2015, it was 24%, but in 2019, against the background of a change of government, it increased to 45%. However, in subsequent years, trust gradually decreased, reaching 38% in 2020. The highest level of trust (58%) was recorded in 2022, which is explained by the consolidation of society in the conditions of war. After that, trust decreased slightly, but remained relatively high (according to official data, 47% in 2024). The parliament traditionally has one of the lowest levels of trust among state institutions. From 2015 to 2018, the indicator remained at the level of 9–12%, after which it increased to 16% in 2019. This increase is explained by the renewal of the composition of the Verkhovna Rada. However, trust decreased again in 2021 (12%), and the highest figure was recorded in 2022 - 25%. Martial law and joint actions with the president contributed to this growth, but in 2024 trust fell again to 20%. Trust in the government shows similar dynamics. Starting from 13% in 2015, it increased to 22% in 2019, which is explained by expectations of changes after the presidential elections. The peak of trust fell in 2022 (35%), which is also associated with the mobilization of the state apparatus during the war. However, in 2024 the figure decreased to 30%, which may indicate social fatigue from crisis conditions. Trust in the judicial system remains at a consistently low level. In 2015, it was only 8%, in subsequent years it increased to 15–18%, but even in 2024 it did not exceed 17%. This indicates citizens' dissatisfaction with the pace of judicial reform and the lack of tangible changes in justice. Trust in the police increased from 24% in 2015 to 38% in 2019, which is the result of law enforcement reforms. In 2022, this figure reached 50%, which is explained by the support of law enforcement officers during the war. However, in 2024, trust decreased slightly to 45%, which may be a consequence of both crisis phenomena and dissatisfaction with the work of the police in peaceful regions.

Dynamics of trust in public initiatives. Unlike state institutions, civil society received stable support from the population. Trust in public organizations gradually increased: from 38% in 2015 to 51% in 2021. In 2022, it reached a peak (62%), which is explained by the active participation of NGOs in volunteer, humanitarian and information

initiatives. In 2024, the level of trust decreased to 60%, but remains quite high. Volunteer initiatives traditionally have the highest level of trust among public entities. In 2015, it was 52%, and by 2019 it had increased to 65%. The peak fell in 2022 (80%), which was due to the massive support of the military, refugees and citizens in need of assistance. In 2024, this figure decreased slightly (76%), which may indicate a decrease in volunteer activity, but still remains very high.

The level of citizens' trust in state institutions fluctuates under the influence of political events, election campaigns, and crisis situations. The highest peaks of trust in the president, government, and parliament were observed in 2019 (change of power) and 2022 (full-scale war). At the same time, trust in the judicial system remains low due to the unresolved key reform problems. Civil society, in particular volunteer movements and public organizations, consistently maintains a high level of trust. This confirms that Ukrainians rely on initiatives "from below," especially in times of crisis. The relative stability of trust in NGOs indicates their effectiveness and significance in the political life of the country. Further strengthening of trust in state institutions depends on the transparency of management, the effectiveness of reforms, and the accountability of the authorities to citizens. Creating better public oversight systems involves partnership with volunteers and keeping state activities transparent.

The progress of civil society institutions in Ukraine since 2014 operates within a difficult system of societal interactions. Major political events plus warfare together with Europe's integration progress plus technology updates heavily altered how people communicate with their state organizations. Digital technology tools help organize political involvement while increasing government open doors and public authority over state activities.

Digital technologies have become one of the main factors in the modernization of civil society. Thanks to them, activists, public organizations and individual citizens can quickly mobilize, influence political decisions and form alternative information flows. However, this process is accompanied by challenges, such as manipulation in the media space, cyber threats and problems with the accessibility of digital platforms.

Socio-political context of civil society development. Ukrainian civil society is developing in conditions of constant political changes. After the Revolution of Dignity, the activity of public organizations has increased significantly, which contributed to the formation of new democratic practices. However, political instability, corruption and the influence of external factors (in particular, the military aggression of the Russian Federation) create obstacles to the further institutionalization of civic initiatives.

Key characteristics of the contemporary socio-political context include:

1. Strengthening volunteer and community initiatives – active participation in assisting military personnel, internally displaced persons, and socially vulnerable groups.
2. Decentralization of power – involving local communities in decision-making and strengthening the influence of local government.
3. European integration processes – the implementation of European standards in the field of civil control and human rights.
4. Information wars and media influence – the fight against disinformation and the influence of propaganda on public opinion.
5. Digital transformation – the transition to the use of new technologies in political communication, advocacy, and public participation.

Information policy is an important tool for civil society to influence political processes. Its main areas include:

- Expanding access to open data – initiatives related to the transparency of public administration (Prozorro, OpenDataBot).
- Countering disinformation – monitoring and refuting fake news (StopFake, VoxCheck).
- Digital journalism and independent media – creating alternative platforms for public control (Hromadske, The Ukrainians).
- Advocacy for reforms through social networks – mobilizing society to support or protest certain government decisions (electronic petitions, flash mobs, online campaigns).

One of the main challenges of information policy is to preserve the independence of the media and protect the digital rights of citizens. As the information space is increasingly susceptible to manipulation, it is necessary to create effective mechanisms for verifying information and increase the level of media literacy among the population.

Digitalization of civil society has opened up new opportunities for citizen participation in political processes. Key trends include:

- Development of e-democracy – introduction of digital tools for citizens to interact with the authorities (the "Diia" platform, electronic petitions, public budgets).
- Automation of public control – using big data and artificial intelligence for analyzing government processes.
- Expanding digital communication between authorities and citizens – online consultations, open data, the possibility of remote voting at local levels.
- Online mobilization of citizens – the creation of online communities that quickly respond to socio-political events (fundraising, organizing protests, information campaigns).

However, digitalization also has its risks. First, there is the threat of digital authoritarianism, where the state can use technology to control citizens. Second, cyber threats, including hacking attacks, can undermine trust in digital platforms. Third, uneven access to the Internet remains a problem for residents of remote regions.

The development of civil society in Ukraine takes place in a complex socio-political context, determined by internal and external factors. Information policy and digitalization have become important components of this process, contributing to increasing the transparency of government, involving citizens in political processes and expanding opportunities for civic participation. In the future, it is necessary to focus on strengthening mechanisms for protecting the information space, increasing the digital literacy of the population and ensuring the accessibility of digital platforms for all citizens. Through strong information policy and digital technology integration Ukrainian democracy will increase and civil society will advance.

The performance of civil society depends mainly on legal rules that define what public organizations and volunteers can do. Since 2014 Ukraine updated its laws and regulations to help civil society organizations establish themselves in a more favorable environment. Through legal rules and funds the state enables civil society organizations to work freely while providing supervision tools and digital governance. Our present strategies encounter difficulties mainly from bureaucratic procedures plus limited funds and possible legal restrictions. The paper shows legal concepts and state approaches to back this industry in Table 3.

Table 3. Legal aspects of civil society functioning and state support strategies

Legal aspect / strategy	Main provisions	Efficiency	Implementation example
Legislation on public organizations	Law "On Public Associations", simplification of NGO registration	High	Activities of the NGO "Chesno"
Legal status of volunteering	Law "On Volunteer Activities", social protection of volunteers	High	Legalization of military aid
Anti-corruption mechanisms	Mandatory declaration of assets of officials, Prozorro	High	NABU, NACP
Public control mechanisms	Public councils, electronic petitions	Medium	Public Council under the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine
State financial support for NGOs	Grant programs, budget financing	Low	Programs of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation
State information policy	Development of digital services, data transparency	High	"Diia" portal, open registers

International support for the civil sector	Funding from the EU, USAID, UN	High	European Union projects
Protection of public activists	Legislation to prevent the persecution of activists	Medium	The case of Kateryna Handziuk
Decentralization and local self-government	Transfer of power to communities	High	Functioning of the ATC

Source: created by the author based on [1; 6; 7; 22].

Ukraine features strong laws for the civil sector that enable public organizations to work productively. The government's legislation especially the streamlined registration process helped public activity expand by allowing NGOs to work with greater ease. Despite positive developments, there are problems, in particular, insufficient state financial support for civil society, threats of legislative restrictions for activists, as well as difficulties in implementing public control mechanisms. Further development of this sector requires deeper integration of state support strategies, preservation of the independence of public initiatives and expansion of international cooperation.

Analysis of the role of civil society in the formation of national consciousness in the context of European integration processes. Civil society plays a key role in the formation of national consciousness, especially in the context of European integration. After 2014, activists, volunteers and public organizations contributed to the spread of democratic values, strengthening of Ukrainian identity and consolidation of society. This was a response to political transformations, military challenges and the desire for European standards of living. One of the main areas of influence was education and information policy. Public initiatives actively promote the Ukrainian language, culture and history, and also contribute to increasing media literacy. At the same time, European integration processes require the adaptation of society to EU standards, in particular in the field of human rights, the rule of law and environmental responsibility. Cooperation of Ukrainian activists with European partners allows for the introduction of progressive practices in these areas. The volunteer movement after 2014 has become an important factor in the formation of national consciousness. It not only helps the army and displaced persons, but also promotes social cohesion, the spread of ideas of responsibility and active citizenship. At the same time, civil society is actively working to counter information threats, combat disinformation and create independent media content that protects society from propaganda. Initiatives aimed at integrating residents of temporarily occupied territories and documenting war crimes play a significant role. Together with international partners, civil society contributes to the legal protection of Ukrainians, involving the world community in Ukraine's problems and supporting democratic transformations. Thus, civil society not only contributes to the preservation of national identity, but also actively brings Ukraine closer to the European community. Further development of this sector is necessary for the consolidation of society and the strengthening of democratic traditions, which will become the basis for Ukraine's successful integration into the EU.

International support and global shifts help determine how civil society grows in Ukraine. Following 2014 international organizations became active supporters which boosted civic initiatives' impact on Ukraine's democratic practices. Civic organizations developed their expertise and improved their operations thanks to grant money and professional support from these organizations.

The strategies of civil society groups have undergone substantial transformation due to Russian geopolitical conflicts through military attacks and economic sanctions. Ukrainian activists make global connections to fight for Ukraine by spreading news about their struggles and appealing to global groups who provide aid. Geopolitical events lead more countries to cooperate globally on security matters and human rights as Ukraine integrates European and international systems. We will explore key regions where international working relationships and geopolitical shifts affect Ukrainian civil society using Table 4.

Next page

Table 4. The impact of international cooperation and geopolitical changes on Ukrainian civil society

Impact factor	Main manifestations	Results for civil society	Implementation example
Grant support from international organizations	Funding of NGOs by the EU, USAID, UN	Institutional development, capacity building	EU programs for NGOs
Cooperation with international human rights organizations	Documenting war crimes, human rights advocacy	Increasing international pressure on the aggressor	The work of the ZMINA Human Rights Center
Geopolitical changes (war, sanctions, economic pressure)	Formation of international coalitions in support of Ukraine	Developing global solidarity	Sanctions policy against the Russian Federation
Information diplomacy	Countering disinformation, working with international media	Raising awareness among the global community	StopFake, UkraineWorld
European integration processes	Fulfilling obligations to the EU	Adaptation of legislation, implementation of reforms	Plans for EU accession
Cooperation with international volunteer organizations	Humanitarian aid, support for displaced people	Attracting resources to solve social problems	Coordination with the Red Cross
Security partnership	Participation in international initiatives, military assistance	Strengthening defense capabilities, supporting veterans	Lend-Lease, NATO military assistance
Joint anti-corruption initiatives	Introduction of transparent control mechanisms	Increasing the accountability of government bodies	NABU's work with the support of international partners
International pressure on authoritarian regimes	Boycott, sanctions, war crimes investigations	Legitimization of Ukraine's struggle in the international arena	Lawsuits in The Hague

Source : created by the author based on [2; 3; 4; 7].

New international partnerships and global shifts have improved how civil society affects Ukraine. Ukrainian civil groups can perform better with assistance from international partners who provide money, technology, and proven methods. The Russian invasion pushed Ukrainian civil society to grow its work in defending human rights while using information diplomacy and helping others. A continued partnership between countries helps civil society groups reach stronger status. Ukraine's political environment will improve and democracy will build up when the country joins EU and NATO while enhancing sanctions against its attackers plus staying active with human rights groups worldwide.

The development of Ukraine's civil society depends on solving its existing problems. The unstable political environment brought by both war and the ongoing reform process puts Ukraine at risk of losing individual freedoms and losing democratic control to state bureaucracy. The conduct of civil society organizations gets harder because of information dangers like fabricated news and digital assaults which hurt their public standing. Sector's financial independence and smooth operations with government departments are restricted by its need for foreign donor support.

Despite its problems civil society remains able to grow and develop. Digital technology development supports better democratic process and expands people's role in decision-making power. Institutional freedom and self-funding helps organizations remain unaffected by outside control. By working with nations worldwide Ukraine can take global best practices to develop civil rights and government systems. Most democratic institutions and citizen engagement will grow stronger when activists get strong protection and proper legal support.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate a significant impact of civil society on political transformations in Ukraine after 2014. This is confirmed by the works of Borshchevskyi, Chekh and Lapshyna [1], who emphasize the active participation of civil society organizations in reforming public administration and fighting corruption. On the other hand, Honcharuk [2] emphasizes that, despite the activity of civil society, the effectiveness of its influence largely depends on the level of cooperation with state structures. In this context, we can talk about two opposing positions: one part of the researchers considers civil society as a key driver of reforms, while others draw attention to the limited possibilities of its capabilities in the political system, which continues to demonstrate bureaucratic resistance.

Another aspect of the discussion is the issue of international cooperation and its impact on the development of civil society. With international aid and organization backing the civil sector of Ukraine develops its human rights work and anti-corruption capabilities according to Zelinska [3]. At the same time, Stepanenko [4] points out the risks of excessive dependence of Ukrainian civil society organizations on foreign funding, which may affect their independence and priorities of activity. Thus, a dilemma arises between the need for international support and the need to form a self-sufficient civil society that does not depend on external factors.

Another key issue is the impact of digitalization on civil society. Digital platforms according to Goroshko and Boiko [5] developed unique ways for people to join public dialogues and grow electronic democracy. However, Reznik [6] points to threats related to cybersecurity, manipulation of the media space and the risks of losing trust in public initiatives due to information attacks.

The success of civil society growth through digitalization depends on shielding Internet space from manipulation and stopping information fabrications.

The lack of trust between citizens and public organizations needs thorough examination. People maintain strong faith in volunteer movements and civic groups yet their level of trust in state organizations depends on political circumstances according to Ilko research from Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation [13]. His research supports the conclusion that public administration remains essential for democratic processes although civil society helps solve limited public administration weaknesses.

Our research shows that civil society plays an important part in Ukraine's political change but its impact strength depends on multiple conditions especially its ties with authorities external independence protection from digital threats and digital progress level. The community continues to discuss these issues so scientists must study how to help civil organizations succeed in our changing political world. The success of civil society growth through digitalization depends on shielding Internet space from manipulation and stopping information fabrications.

The lack of trust between citizens and public organizations needs thorough examination. People maintain strong faith in volunteer movements and civic groups yet their level of trust in state organizations depends on political circumstances according to the research from Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation [13]. The research supports the conclusion that public administration remains essential for democratic processes although civil society helps solve limited public administration weaknesses.

Our research shows that civil society plays an important part in Ukraine's political change but its impact strength depends on multiple conditions especially its ties with authorities external independence protection from digital threats and digital progress level. The community continues to discuss these issues so scientists must study how to help civil organizations succeed in our changing political world.

Conclusions

Ukrainian civil society guides political changes yet works most effectively through interactions with state authorities, resource availability and world events. Social groups in Ukraine gained strong capabilities thanks to worldwide backing and digital tools yet also face increased external control and false information. Our research demonstrates that civil society organizations perform more than state oversight responsibilities as they complete missing services in human rights defense and social programs. The organization needs more national resources and real influence to produce better outcomes in the future. People should trust their government more so social participation can improve. Social institutions need strengthening to effectively handle volunteer and human rights movements that develop because of political turmoil and military conflicts. Online technology helps people take part in civic life yet needs security measures to block electronic attacks and false information. Our findings show international assistance serves two purposes: it builds professional standards for civil organizations and puts their independence at risk. Research

results show how civil society can persist as an organization by supporting activists legally and finding local funding options while establishing good digital citizen involvement methods.

Researchers should study ways to protect information security while balancing public administration efforts with active citizenship and learn how to develop public organizations after wars and during post-war country reconstruction. For the long-term development of civil society, it is necessary to create stable internal mechanisms for supporting and integrating its initiatives into the public administration system, which will ensure the effective democratic evolution of Ukraine.

Reference

- [1] Borshchevskyi, VV, Chekh, MM, & Lapshyna, IA (2021). Development of civil society in the context of public administration system transformation in Ukraine. *Public Administration: Improvement and Development*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.32702/2307-2156-2021.10.4>
- [2] Honcharuk, V. (2022). Implementation of mechanisms of interaction between government bodies and civil society institutions: Challenges and prospects. *Aspects of Public Administration*, 10(5), 35–46. <https://doi.org/10.15421/152233>
- [3] Zelinska, O. (2025). Ukraine — Power and protest interplay amidst geopolitics. In C. Crăciun & HP Rammelt (Eds.), *Power and protest in Central and Eastern Europe. Palgrave studies in European political sociology* (pp. 301–326). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-77888-9_12
- [4] Stepanenko, V.P. (2015). *Civil society: Discourses and practices*. Kyiv : Institute of Sociology, NAS of Ukraine. <https://isnasu.org.ua/assets/files/books/2015/stepanenko.pdf>
- [5] Goroshko, O., & Boiko, N. (2023). Uanet through socio-political perspectives. In S. Davydov (Ed.), *Internet in the post-Soviet area. Societies and political orders in transition* (pp. 135–160). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-32507-6_7
- [6] Reznik, O. (Ed.). (2019). *Sociological dimensions of civil society in Ukraine*. Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Science of Ukraine. <https://i-soc.com.ua/assets/files/book/reznik.os/sociological-dimensions-of-civil-society-in-ukraine.pdf>
- [7] National Institute for Strategic Studies. (2021). *The state of civil society development in Ukraine : A 30-year path and key aspects of 2021 (Analytical reports)*. NISS. https://niss.gov.ua/sites/default/files/2021-12/block_grom_susp.pdf
- [8] Melnyk, L.A. (2019). European experience of effective interaction between the state and civil society institutions. *Investments: Practice and Experience*, 4. http://www.investplan.com.ua/pdf/4_2019/20.pdf
- [9] Prostir (2021). *National survey on civic engagement*. <https://www.prostir.ua/?focus=hromadyanske-suspilstvo-ukrajiny-u-tsyfrah-i-faktah-ohlyad-doslidzen/>
- [10] Vorona, P., & Bobrytsky, L. (2022). Legal phenomenon of the volunteer movement in Ukraine as a reaction of self-defense of civil society in 2014. *Bulletin of Kyiv National University named after Taras Shevchenko, Public Administration Series*, 15 (1), 5–10. http://www.library.univ.kiev.ua/ukr/host/10.23.10.100/db/ftp/visnyk/derzh_uprav_15_2022.pdf
- [11] Hordiichuk, O. (2021). The mentality aspects of Ukraine's European integration. *Socio World*, 6, 102–109. [https://doi.org/10.36962/swd0604\(02\)2021-102](https://doi.org/10.36962/swd0604(02)2021-102)
- [12] Shyrokykh, K., Busol, K., & Koval, D. (2025). European integration, and democracy and human rights reforms in Ukraine in the wartime. In: M. Rabinovych & A. Pintsch (Eds.), *Ukraine's thorny path this the EU. Palgrave studies in European Union politics* (pp. 153–176). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-69154-6_7
- [13] Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation. (2022, August 12). *Trust in the state: How this maintain national unity for victory (Survey results)*. <https://dif.org.ua/article/dovira-do-derzhavi-yak-zberegti-natsionalnu-ednist-zaradi-peremogi>
- [14] Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation. (2019, November 21). *The sixth anniversary of Maidan : Expert assessment of events, consequences, and lessons for the future*. <https://dif.org.ua/uploads/doc/9552910555dd7a703d7d7f6.36773673.doc>
- [15] Fedinec, C., & Csernicskó, I. (2017). Language policy and national feeling in context: Ukraine's Euromaidan, 2014–2016. *Central European Papers*, 5(1), 81–100. <https://doi.org/10.25142/cep.2017.005>
- [16] Gorokhovskiy, DI, Madriga, TB, & Zenkin, MV (2024). The role of civil society in political processes of Ukraine. *Bulletin of the National University "Ostroh" Academy". Series " Political Science*, 7 (25), 1291–1302. [https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-6165-2024-7\(25\)-1291-1302](https://doi.org/10.52058/2786-6165-2024-7(25)-1291-1302)

- [17] Fedoronchuk, AV (2020). The essence and features of civil society in Ukraine. Retrieved from <https://dspace.onua.edu.ua/bitstreams/331cbbb4-b358-41b3-a8bd-14728eb9fb5b/download>
- [18] Melnyk, LA (2019). Interchange sovereign this institute Croatian society : basic poniatia, problems this strategic direct [Interaction of the state and civil society institutions: Basic concepts, problems, and strategic directions]. *Public Administration: Improvement and Development*, 2. http://www.dy.nayka.com.ua/pdf/2_2019/30.pdf
- [19] Melnyk, L.A. (2021). Interaction between the state and civil society institutions : Basic concepts, problems, and strategic directions. *Investments: Practice and Experience*, 17, 89–93. http://www.investplan.com.ua/pdf/17_2021/15.pdf
- [20] Shaigorodskiy, Yu. (2018). The role of subjective and social reflection in the process of personality identity formation. *Institute of Political and Ethnonational Studies named after IF Kuras*. https://ipiend.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/shaigorodskiy_rol.pdf
- [21] Mitin, VS (2024). Formation and functioning of civil society in Ukrainian conditions. *Public Administration and Governance in Ukraine*, 39, 28–39. <https://doi.org/10.32782/pma2663-5240-2024.39.4>
- [22] President of Ukraine. (2016). *National strategy for promoting the development of civil society in Ukraine for 2016–2020 (Presidential Decree, February 26, 2016)*. <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/682016-19805>
- [23] Miloserda, I.M. (2012). The role of civil society in the implementation of political governance : The Ukrainian experience. *Current Issues of Politics*, 46. http://app.nuoua.od.ua/archive/46_2012/31.pdf
- [24] Arabadzhiev, D. (2018). The influence of public organizations on the modern Ukrainian political field. *Scientific Notes*, 6, 68. https://ipiend.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/arabadzhyev_vplyv.pdf
- [25] Kryshchal, H. O. (2023). The role of logistics in the development of agriculture of Ukraine in the war conditions. *Science and Innovation*, 19(2), 73–82. <https://doi.org/10.15407/scine19.02.073>
- [26] Zghurska, O., Korchynska, O., Rubel, K., Kubiv, S., Tarasiuk, A., & Holovchenko, O. (2022). Digitalization of the national agro-industrial complex: New challenges, realities and prospects. *Financial and Credit Activity: Problems of Theory and Practice*, 6(47), 388–399. <https://doi.org/10.55643/fcaptp.6.47.2022.3929>
- [27] Kussainov, K., Goncharuk, N., Prokopenko, L., Pershko, L., Vyshnivska, B., & Akimov, O. (2023). Anti-corruption management mechanisms and the construction of a security landscape in the financial sector of the EU economic system against the background of challenges to European integration: Implications for artificial intelligence technologies. *Economic Affairs*, 68(1), 509–521. <https://doi.org/10.46852/0424-2513.1.2023.20>

