

Challenges of democracy in military aggression: Ukraine and the world

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Abstract

Introduction: *Modern democracy is a complex of political, economic and social rules of interaction within a society. The advantage of democracy as a type of political system is its high ability to adapt to new circumstances, constantly change and efficiently compete with other forms of political regime. The factors of the dynamic component of democratic institutions are market economy, developed civil society, the values of pluralism and tolerance. However, the development of democracy is not a linear process. New forms and methods of implementing the principles of democracy are related to the risk of its transformation into autocracy. Any crisis is a challenge for democracy, a test of its stability. In a crisis, traditional principles of democracy lose their effectiveness. Such processes have been observed in the world as a result of the implementation of measures to overcome the coronavirus pandemic. In general, Russian aggression in Ukraine is obviously a greater threat to democracy.*

The latter not only undermines the foundations of democratic world order and norms of international law, but also testifies to the inability to restrict the aggression of the autocrat applying political, economic and diplomatic levers of influence, indicates the meaninglessness of some tenets about free market, ethnic neutrality and equality of all nations in the international politics.

Aim: *to outline the main threats of democratization in the world and in Ukraine, to determine the prospects of evolution of democratic political systems, to formulate recommendations for preservation of the democratic values in the current state of affairs.*

Method: *to achieve the aim, it is expedient to apply a comparative method, in particular to compare the historical experience of preserving democratic values in the prolonged military confrontation, to use the experience of dealing with the consequences of previous global crises.*

Key Words: *Democracy, dynamics of democratic institutions, democratic political system, adaptability of democracy.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The axiom of political science is high ability of democracy to adapt to new circumstances, to constantly change and effectively compete with other forms of political regime. The integral attributes of adaptability of democracy to new circumstances are market economy, developed civil society, the values of pluralism and tolerance. However, in a crisis, traditional democracy factors lose their ability to self-development and self-reproduction for various reasons. Currently, this problem is urgent due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The questions arise whether not only a newly-established Ukrainian democracy, but also the world one can resist the pressure of autocracy, how to encourage its support and what forms will be acquired by its institutions in future. In order to answer these questions, it is advisable to pay attention to the current state of democratic institutions, to compare them with the previous stages of the crisis, to predict possible ways of evolution of democracy and to substantiate the main factors of its stability.

Definitely, Russian aggression in Ukraine is one of the most severe challenges for modern democracy. It actualizes the ability of democratic political systems to respond to socio-political threats and, equally importantly, prevent them. After all, Ukraine is an active participant in international relations, which at the normative-legal level has enshrined the principles of democracy and its European geopolitical choice. The citizens of our country have repeatedly defended their European and democratic choice during the mass actions of civil disobedience, which testifies to the mass, not just elitist dedication to democratic values. However, this has not contributed to the national security of our country, since the rules of international law and the international security systems appeared to be unable to promote the fulfillment of international treaties and obligations (Budapest Memorandum, Minsk agreements, etc.).

Therefore, there is a need to scientifically consider the prospects of evolution of democracies in Ukraine and in the world, in particular in the context of their ability to prevent exacerbation of conflicts and their peaceful resolution.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the scientific literature, the causes, manifestations and consequences of crisis stages in the development of democracy have

been profoundly investigated. Similar declines of democracy were observed during the twentieth century as a result of the economic crisis of the 1930s, spiritual crisis of the 1970s, World War I and World War II. The current stages of the dynamics of political institutions have been considered by the experts (Rezmer-Płotka, Gvozd) in the context of the world financial crisis of 2008, the refugee crisis and the coronavirus pandemic. A common feature is legal restrictions on the freedom of citizens for the purpose of their safety and preservation of public order provided by the “state of emergency” or “state of natural disaster”.

The authors of the paper are convinced that the ideological principles of society played an important role during the previous periods of threats to democracy. Preservation of the ideological principles and important values of freedom and equality has become the basis for the democracy survival, when other measures have shown their inefficiency. In this belief, we can refer to the classical concepts of consolidated democracy, which claim the fundamental role of the priority of the value of freedom over the value of security (Inglehart).

In the development of the conceptual model of the paper, the scientific works related to the dynamics of democratic institutions have played an important role (Levi). They reveal the mechanism of effective adaptation of democracy to new circumstances. Democratic institutions are constantly balancing between stability and development using different mechanisms for satisfying the interests of multifaceted social groups, a wide range of alternatives in social development, competition of ideas and programs to find the most favorable political consensus. The democratic method enables comprehensive development of public administration projects, ensures rotation of the government authorities, hiring new staff through the rivalry of various political forces. Instead, autocracy artificially preserves the established relations through the use of coercion, which eventually leads to stagnation of a political system and overall crisis. To measure the level of democratization S. Huntington (Huntington, 34–37) used the Adaptability Scale.

Similar ideas are also expressed by Ukrainian institutionalists (Romanuk, 196), pointing out that stability of political institutions has wide boundaries. They include both planned and spontaneous institutional changes due to the influence of external challenges.

Each threat can be transformed by a system into a choice of opportunities.

Summarizing the ideas expressed in our previous papers (Haponenko), we define democracy as a balance of interests, political forces and political institutions. The factors of stability of democracy include *the ability of the political system to respond to changes, to act independently and integratively*. That is, an important prerequisite for democratization is the establishment of tools for self-development and self-improvement of political institutions, the openness of the institutional system for further dynamics. In this case, the key to successful democratization is “readiness” of society for changes. First of all, it is about the priority of democratic values, previous historical traditions of democratic government, which provides rapid adaptation to new political institutions.

The outlined theoretical axioms can be applied to define the prospects of the Ukrainian and world democracy, to win and transform the existing challenges into stimuli of further development. In fact, the consequences of a full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine have not yet been thoroughly investigated, that is why the most important sources of research included analytical, publicistic articles and the results of sociological survey.

1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main task of development of our methodology is to study the multidimensionality of democracy, taking into account its prospects in various fields of public life, which are closely interconnected and altogether influence social development. It is also important to apply certain objective indicators to predict the effects of the crisis, since exhaustion and emotional perception of current events can lead to one-sided judgement.

Universal scientific methods, including analysis and comparison, are applied for this research. It should be noted that even general historical and comparative analysis shows that the previous crises of democracy ended with the transformation of democratic institutions and abrupt increase in its level. This is the starting point for outlining the research model and hypothesis.

1.1. Research Model and Hypothesis

Our conceptual model is based on the assumption that all aspects of democracy are interdependent, but the central point is still an ideological dimension.

This is due to the fact that support of democratic values by the vast majority of society stimulates changes in other components of the system, their adaptation to new circumstances, but does not lead to the decline of the regime as a whole. In this way, the mechanism of self-development is launched, and the social capital is directed to overcoming crisis phenomena.

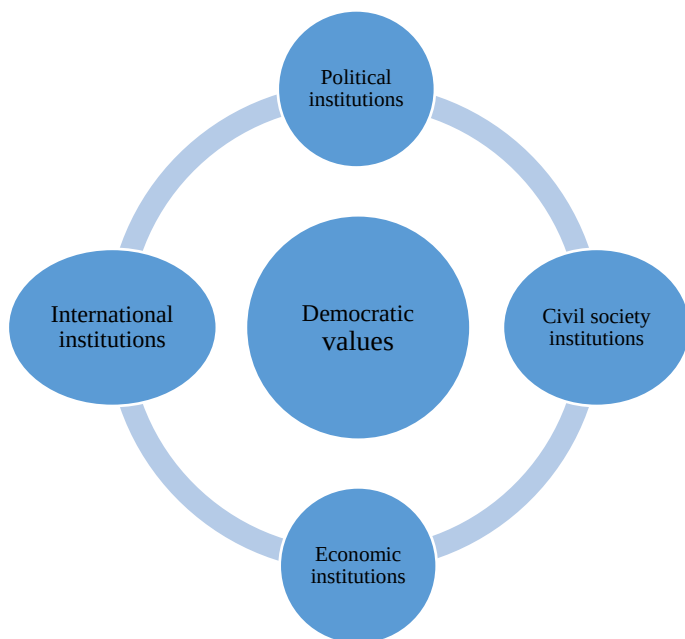


Figure 1. The model of interconnection between the institutions of democracy. Presented by the authors.

Thus, it gives a reason to assume that democracy will develop similarly in the current state of affairs.

1.2. Explanation of Scales

We can state that at this stage the crisis of democracy may be observed in several dimensions: international, economic, political, ideological. These challenges can be considered as separate areas of scientific analysis. Furthermore, there are several indicators within each dimension. International challenges of democracy will be analyzed, firstly, through the prism of the results of voting in EU institutions to counteract Russian aggression in Ukraine. Secondly, the attitude of prominent political leaders to the Russian-Ukrainian war and attempts to finish it should be of significant importance.

The analysis of economic dimension may be based on the study of international relations between democracies and autocracies, trends in the dynamics of economies of the countries receiving refugees.

It is advisable to trace the political challenge of democracy through the analysis of the legal norms in the European states applied to limit personal freedoms during the coronavirus pandemic, the changes in the party-political spectrum of parliaments towards strengthening populist tendencies.

The ideological dimension should be analyzed on the basis of sociological research.

The peculiarities of these aspects of democracy will be further revealed in this paper.

1.3. Analysis of research indicators

1.3.1. Voting in EU institutions

This indicator requires detailed consideration, since publicistic articles often contain statements about the European integration processes. Formally, the EU institutions express their common attitude to the Russian full-scale invasion of the territory of Ukraine. Thus, the special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, by an overwhelming majority of votes supported the resolution which “as resolutely as possible” condemns the unfair invasion of Russia into Ukraine. A resolution approved on March 2 by 141 members of a body consisting of 193 representatives demands from Russia to immediately end the war in Ukraine and withdraw all their troops from the territory of Ukraine. Similarly, the European Parliament has approved a resolution

that recommends EU member states to work on granting Ukraine the status of a candidate for entry. The resolution was approved by 637 votes, only 13 European Parliament members opposed it, 26 abstained.

At the same time, prominent EU political leaders hold different views as to the extent of sanctions against the Russian Federation, military aid for Ukraine and membership of the latter in the EU and NATO. On the one hand, the governments of the United Kingdom, Poland and the Baltic countries are calling for unambiguous support to Ukraine in its fight against the aggressor. On the other hand, the leaders of Hungary, France, Germany and Italy express ambiguous theses. For example, a number of unacceptable anti-Ukrainian statements, in particular those rejecting new sanctions against the Russian Federation, were heard from the Hungarian government. In early May, French President Emmanuel Macron called for a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine in the European Parliament and asked the West “not to be tempted by humiliation and spirit of revenge”. Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi, speaking in the White House, announced that people in Europe want to “think about the possibility of ceasefire and resuming negotiations that deserve trust”. Joe Biden refused to provide Ukraine with missile systems “which may strike Russia”. The results of the EU members’ negotiations regarding the Russian oil embargoes are also indicative.

The reasons for such hesitation are primarily related to economic expediency, which will be revealed in more detail below.

1.3.2. Economic relations

The current state of international economic relations testifies to the meaninglessness of the thesis that global democratization is a result of economic globalization (Kozuk). It turns out that free market also encourages strengthening of the raw material autocracies, enhances their expansionist intents (see Figure 2).

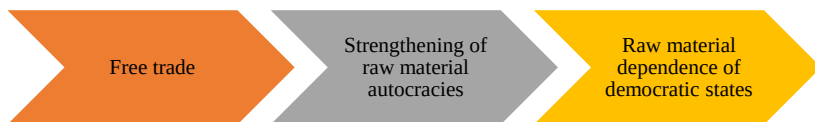


Figure 2. Dependence of democratic economies on autocracies.
Presented by the authors

To prove this, analysts indicate that autocracies account for 2/3 of global foreign exchange reserves, more than 25 % of global GDP, 30 % of world trade and 30 % of direct foreign investments (Kozuk). At the same time, about 39 % of electric power in Europe is produced from fossil fuel, and Russia is the largest supplier of oil and gas in the European market. Therefore, it is undeniable that, from an economic point of view, termination of economic relations with the Russian Federation is extremely disadvantageous. It will lead to significant economic losses, increase in prices of fuel, food and essential goods. Most of all this burden is felt by the poorest groups of population. This indicates the need to pay attention to the following factor.

1.3.3. Populist trends

Populism is a kind of side-effect of democracy, according to which politicians avoid making unpopular decisions because they are afraid of losing electoral support. At the same time, populist political forces, as representatives of radical orientation, undermine the fundamental foundations of democracy, destabilizing representative institutions. According to the figures, the role of populists and application of populist management methods are increasing in a crisis period, which is especially destructive for social development. Thus, the election results in 22 European countries show that the parties with anti-elitist, nativist and nationalist rhetoric won an average of 16 % of the votes in the last parliamentary elections in each country. Ten years ago, this figure was 11 %, in 1997 — 5 % (Prochenko) (see Table 1).

It is likely that the present crisis will lead to a further increase in the popularity of populists.

Table 1. Populists' electoral success.

Year	1997	2011	2021
%	5	11	16

It also should be noted that the most inconsistent support of Ukraine is expressed by the countries in which elections have just taken place (Hungary, France). This fact once again emphasizes dependence of prominent political leaders on public opinion, their unwillingness to take responsibility for the decisions which are necessary, but difficult to implement.

1.3.4. The results of sociological research

On the background of the previous analysis of democracy dimensions, positive trends are observed only in the worldview of Ukrainian citizens and Europeans.

First of all, it is worth noting that our citizens have significantly increased their support of democracy. Thus, in 2014–2020, about 54 % of those polled were ready to give up democratic values for the sake of security guarantees (Cinnosti ...). With the high level of militarization of public sentiments, the situation has changed drastically. The victory over the external enemy is considered as confirmation of democracy, its further evolution.

Civil responsibility and social activity have also increased significantly. Thus, 80 % of those polled noted that they were ready to defend Ukraine's integrity with weapons in their hands. In 2020, this figure was only 59 % (Polls...) (see Table 2).

Table 2: Readiness of Ukrainians to participate in military actions

Year	2020	2022
%	59	80

Indeed, in recent months, the number of people armed and trained for military actions has significantly increased. The range of volunteer activity and the number of charity and self-assistance organizations are also unprecedented. That is, in the Ukrainian context, the war strengthened the foundations of civil society, which means existence of potential public control over the actions of government authorities.

It should also be noted that the reflection of a military threat is a powerful integrating factor, the basis for the formation of national idea and identity. Despite the fact that the highest level of readiness to serve the interests of the state is traditionally observed in the West and in the Center, even in the southeastern regions the desire to fight for the Motherland has significantly increased nowadays (almost 80% in the South, almost 60 % in the East). And 98 % of respondents support the activities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (Polls...).

Growing anti-democratic sentiments in European countries are associated with a potential migration crisis (Tepli ..., 2022), according

to the results of sociological research conducted in 2016. Indeed, about half of Europeans were against the flows of Syrian refugees. They even feared the growth of terrorist attacks and believed that refugees were harming the welfare of the local population and reducing social standards of life (Opytuvannja..., 2016).

In February 2022, millions of Ukrainians crossed the border to find temporary shelter. This led to a significant increase in the population of European states. However, in April 2022, most EU residents supported Ukrainian refugees (88 %), economic (80 %) and humanitarian (93 %) aid for Ukraine, anti-Russian sanctions (80 %), financing for military equipment supply to Ukraine (67 %), accession of Ukraine to the EU (66 %) (Flash Eurobarometer). The greatest support of this idea is expressed by the inhabitants of Portugal (87 %), Estonia (83 %), Lithuania (82 %) and Poland (81 %). Instead, the least willing to see Ukraine in the EU are the citizens of Hungary (48 %), Bulgaria (51 %) and Luxembourg (52 %).

We can explain this level of support by the prevalence of ideals of freedom and brotherhood over economic and social benefits.

1.3.5. Regression Analysis Results

Analysis of publicistic articles testifies to the increase in crisis phenomena of democratization. However, the dynamics of respect for democratic values and civic activity in Ukraine and in European countries are positive. Using these results in the research model, we can conclude that there is proper potential for the evolution of democracy, the possibility for the ideology factor to stimulate the development of civil society, and the institutions of the latter will exert pressure on government authorities. Therefore, we believe that the survival of different aspects of democracy depends on the attitude of different social groups.

4. CONCLUSION

Thus, as a consequence of Russian aggression in Ukraine, international, political and economic institutions of democracy have been threatened. The crisis of international relations consists in the inability to influence the aggressor, disregard for the international law norms, high priority of national interests over the principles of humanity and democracy. Currently, the efficiency of European Union institutions and their ability to make consolidated decisions are doubtful. These facts will decrease the intensity of integration processes and weaken the EU as a

geopolitical player. The governments of EU members are not unanimously reacting to the military invasion of Russian Federation into Ukraine. Some international players seek to strengthen their influence in the region. The reaction to the request for the accelerated accession of Ukraine to the EU, provision of financial and military aid to our country and the need to deal with migration flows of temporarily displaced persons have become serious challenges. Primarily, it is about a free movement zone, lack of cooperation between EU members in this area, the prospects for reconsidering the open door policy. The attitude to national security is radically changing, the evidence is rejection of neutrality by the European countries, expansion of NATO.

The economic foundations of democracy have been threatened. Sanctions against the Russian Federation have significantly harmed economies, especially those of relatively weak players. The prospects of food and fuel crisis, increasing prices, exacerbation of social problems have become evident. Thus, an extremely large inflow of refugees from Ukraine may lead to a decrease in social standards in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including unemployment, cheaper labor, gender discrimination.

Finally, political democracy is also undergoing significant changes and weakening of democratic institutions. In particular, destabilization of parliaments is likely due to the growth of radical populist political forces. Therefore, the problem of finding the mechanisms to create new political and legal guarantees of democracy, its transformation with the view on the current political realities is urgent.

The outlined challenges are also quite relevant for Ukraine, which has already faced the same problems, but on a much larger scale. In addition, the legal features of martial law objectively limit the democratic principles of management, requiring discipline and monocentric decision-making. The complicated living conditions and priority of physical safety over all other values definitely bring civil freedoms to the background. The ideology of militarism poses a significant threat to democracy.

However, according to the analysis, both in the world as a whole and in Ukraine in particular, the ideological factor of democratization is increasing. This aspect of democracy may be crucial in the prospects of political governance. After all, the willingness to defend the values of democracy contributes to the mobilization of all resources to overcome the crisis. Nowadays, citizens of different states have already demonstrated the

ability to effectively eliminate urgent social problems through self-organization. Many goals were achieved on the initiative of public activists, volunteers, and public organizations with the minimum state participation. In this way, social capital is formed and strengthened, which is the social base, the driving force in the development of democracy.

The above-mentioned facts give a reason to formulate recommendations for maintaining the efficiency of democratic institutions in the current state of affairs. First of all, the central principle of normative regulation should be based on the respect of the basic values of democracy — freedom and equality of opportunities. It can be implemented by giving priority importance to business, involving investments and volunteers to fill the state budget, restoration of economy and reintegration processes.

There is also an urgent need to develop and implement the information policy aimed at ensuring information security, patriotic education, prevention of panic caused by information shortages. The educational potential of information messages should be aimed at forming a tolerant attitude to any manifestations of dissent.

Therefore, despite a number of threats to the modern democratic system in the world and particularly in Ukraine, the evolution of democratic management methods is quite possible, when the introduction of security measures is accompanied by provision of legal guarantees against abuse, strengthening civil society institutions, involvement of citizens into political participation, mainly on the local government level. Definitely, state regulation of various social branches occupies an important place in the confirmation of a neomilitary type of democracy. Thus, a system of legal norms for registration of non-profit organizations, a simplified taxation system for key areas of life in the country must be enshrined. The state's information policy aimed at disseminating prompt and adequate information should be effective and well-balanced to avoid the spread of rumors and panic. Its important component is the availability and transparency of information providing a set of measures for patriotic education.

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