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Kononenko Pavlo Pavlovych,

Postgraduate Student at the Department of Parliamentarism of the Educational and Scientific Institute of Public Administration and Civil Service of Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8195-8469

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS: ROLE AND PRINCIPLES OF ELECTIONS

ПОЛІТИЧНА УЧАСТЬ ГРОМАДЯН: РОЛЬ ТА ПРИНЦИПИ ВИБОРІВ

The article actualizes the need to develop effective mechanisms for conducting elections on the basis of democracy with the minimization of risks of violations and further improvement of the electoral system of Ukraine. The democratic principles of the election process were analyzed, in particular, the compliance of the elections with the principles of democracy. It is emphasized that the electoral system is an important component of the political regime, as it establishes the rules for the formation of government bodies, and also exerts a direct influence on the electoral process. It was found that elections are the main component of electoral systems. In turn, elections are a way of forming state authorities and empowering an official through the will of citizens. The main functions of elections are considered: articulation of the interests of various social groups; peaceful resolution of the conflict between political actors claiming power; legitimation of power structures; political socialization and mobilization of citizens. It was found that in most countries of the world the voter votes directly for the candidate (direct elections), and in some countries indirect elections are used. It has been found that the organizational and practical side of the election process is represented by the election procedure – measures of the state to organize and conduct elections. During the analysis, the election (pre-election) campaign was singled out, which is understood as the actions of the direct participants in the elections: nomination of candidates, development of pre-election programs, campaigning and other forms of work with the electorate. It was found that conducting modern election campaigns especially requires special research in the field of political marketing. The stages of the election process were considered. It was concluded that compliance with the general principles recognized by the world community will make it possible to give the elections a truly democratic character in our country.

Key words: democracy, election process, elections, voting, principles of democracy, political participation, stages of the election process.

У статті актуалізовано потребу у виробленні дієвих механізмів проведення виборів на засадах демократії з мінімізацією ризиків порушень та з подальшим удосконаленням виборчої системи України. Проаналізовано демократичні засади виборчого процесу, зокрема відповідність виборів принципам демократії. Наголошено на тому, що виборча система є важливою складовою політичного режиму, оскільки вона встановлює правила формування органів влади, а також здійснює безпосередній вплив на електоральний процес. Виявлено, що головним компонентом виборчих систем є вибори. В свою чергу, вибори – це спосіб формування органів державної влади і наділення повноваженнями посадової особи через волевиявлення громадян. Розглянуто головні функції виборів: артикуляція інтересів різних соціальних груп; мирне вирішення конфлікту між політичними акторами, що претендують на владу; легітимація структур влади; політична соціалізація і мобілізація громадян. Виявлено, що в більшості держав світу виборець голосує безпосередньо за кандидата (прямі вибори), а в деяких державах використовуються непрямі вибори. З'ясовано, що організаційно-практична сторона виборчого процесу представлена виборчою процедурою – заходами держави з організації і проведення виборів. В ході аналізу виокремлено виборчу (передвиборчу) кампанію, під якою розуміють дії безпосередніх учасників виборів: висування кандидатів, розробку передвиборчих програм, агітацію та інші форми роботи з електоратом. Було виявлено те, що проведення сучасних виборчих кампаній особливо вимагає проведення спеціальних досліджень у сфері політичного маркетингу. Було розглянуто стадії виборчого процесу. Зроблено висновок, що дотримання загальних принципів, що визнаються світовим співтовариством, дозволить надати виборам дійсно демократичного характеру в нашій державі.

Ключові слова: демократія, виборчий процес, вибори, голосування, принципи демократії, політична участь, стадії виборчого процесу.

Formulation of the problem. In the period of reforming all spheres of the social and political life of our country, the problem of developing optimal ways

of implementing the principles of democracy becomes particularly relevant. In particular, this applies to the election process at all stages. The relevance of the

study is determined by the need to develop effective mechanisms for conducting elections on the basis of democracy with the minimization of risks of violations and further improvement of the electoral system of Ukraine.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

Among the thorough studies on the electoral process and the principles of democracy in the electoral process, one can note the works of V.F. Baranivskiy. [1], Voronyanskyi O.V. [2], Kulishenka T.Yu. [4], Skubiya I.V. [2], Gorlacha M.I. [3], Kremenyha V.G. [3], Ilnytskyi M.S. [4], Picha V.M. [5], Khomy N.M. [5], Tupchienka L.S. [7], Shlyakhtuna P.P. [8] etc. Separate studies and clarifications regarding the election code and process are provided by Yu.B. Klyuchkovskiy. [2]

Formulation of the goals (goals) of the article.

The purpose of this work is to analyze the democratic principles of the election process, to define the role and principles of elections as the main function of political participation of citizens.

Presentation of the main results and their justification. An important component of the political regime is the electoral system. On the one hand, it establishes the rules for the formation of government bodies, and on the other hand, it exerts a direct influence on the election process. Finally, the electoral system is one of the factors that determine the configuration of the party system in the state. The study of elections made it possible to form a special scientific direction – psefology. The term "electoral system" is used in two senses. In a broad sense, the term "electoral system" includes all social processes and rules related to elections, while in a narrow sense, the electoral system is a way of counting voters' votes and distributing seats in state authorities between candidates (groups of candidates) [2].

Elections are the main component of electoral systems. Elections are a way of forming state authorities and empowering an official with the will of citizens. In addition to elections, there are other ways of forming government bodies in society: violent seizure of power (revolution, coup), inheritance of power (with a monarchical form of government), appointment to a position by a senior official. In a democracy, elections are the main function of political participation of citizens, in which their influence on the formation of political institutions and the process of political decision-making is realized.

The main functions of elections are:

- articulation of the interests of various social groups;
- peaceful resolution of the conflict between political actors claiming power;
- legitimization of power structures;

- political socialization and mobilization of citizens [3; 5].

All modern political regimes use the election procedure to legitimize power, but not all of them allow the true will of the people to be reflected. Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes demonstrate a situation that American political scientists R. Taagepera and M. Shugart defined as "a choice without a choice."

This practice can have different manifestations: the party in power nominates only one candidate for each electoral position (this practice existed in the USSR until 1989, and it was not even required to fill out a ballot, and a blank ballot itself was considered a vote for the candidate); nomination of several candidates from the ruling party who adhere to a single ideology but compete with each other for votes [5].

A similar practice is common in one-party totalitarian and authoritarian systems. But even systems that are only formally multi-party can limit the right to choose:

- falsification of voting results;
- the ruling party allows the nomination of secondary, little-known candidates;
- a privileged position is created for individual candidates who enjoy advantages in financing and access to mass media;
- can compete for the main candidate, but creates the appearance of an alternative choice;
- the introduction of various restrictions on the nomination of candidates (restrictions on ideological orientations, racial affiliation of candidates, etc.) and election campaigning [3; 7].

Adherence to the general principles recognized by the world community makes it possible to give elections a truly democratic character.

1. Mandatory elections mean that elections are the only legitimate way of forming state power.
2. Periodicity of elections allows to guarantee the variability of elected persons based on voting results.
3. Universality of the right to vote. This principle means that all citizens who have reached the age of social and political capacity, regardless of gender, race, nationality, social position, religious and political beliefs, have the right to vote (active right to vote) and be elected (passive right to vote) in government bodies. The age of socio-political legal capacity is determined by law. In most states, citizens receive voting rights from the age of eighteen. This is a kind of limitation of the principle of the generality of the electoral right – *censu*. There are other convictions that limit the right to vote (especially passive) with additional conditions [6].

A voter or a candidate can only be a person who lives in a given locality (country) for at least the term

established by law. For example, for parliamentary elections in the USA, a limit of one month has been established, in Norway – at least ten years, in Ireland this qualification is expressed in the requirement to have a place for a son. Citizenship censorship extends passive suffrage only to citizens by origin. The age requirement for the exercise of the passive right to vote is, as a rule, over twenty years. In Ukraine, a candidate for the post of president can be a citizen not younger than thirty-five years old, and a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada – not younger than twenty-one years old. Property qualification – ownership of property or fixed income. In today's world, such a qualification is rarely found in an open form. Often, a property deposit is required from the candidate for registration.

Gender censorship, limiting women's participation in elections, persists in some Muslim countries, for example, in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan [5].

In some countries there is a literacy requirement where a certificate of education is required to be eligible to vote. In other countries, a special simplified voting system is introduced for the illiterate.

Moral qualification establishes certain moral requirements for the voter, for example, the prohibition of participation in elections for persons deprived of parental rights who are serving a sentence based on a court sentence. Additional taxes are imposed in different countries. In Great Britain, members of the House of Lords have a special qualification (they do not have the right to vote), and church ministers cannot be elected to the House of Commons.

The principle of universal suffrage was established as the processes of democratization eased qualification restrictions. Initially, voting rights were granted to adult, wealthy and educated men. So, in 1830, only 4% of adult men in England had the right to vote. In France, in 1848, for the first time in history, men received universal suffrage. In 1893 in New Zealand, in 1902 in Australia and in 1906 in Finland, women first got voting rights. In 1920, in the USA, women got the right to vote. In Switzerland, women were deprived of the right to vote until 1971, and in Liechtenstein – until 1986 [8].

4. An alternative choice involves the presence of two or more contenders for power and competition between them. It makes no sense to hold elections with one candidate, however, even with visible alternative elections, this condition may not be fulfilled. For example, one candidate actually claims power, while others are invited by him to create a democratic environment. Truly free and fair elections require that all candidates have real opportunities to present their programs. This means:

equal number of votes for all voters. Most often, this requirement is expressed in the formula "One person – one vote". In some countries, each voter may have several votes.

The principle of equality of voters is not always observed. For example, ways of violating this principle: uneven division of electoral districts by number. When using a majoritarian electoral system, this situation means that the "weight" of voters is not the same. The level of voter representation in smaller constituencies will be higher than in more densely populated constituencies. To avoid such legislation, most states set limits on the number of voters in districts. In the USA, inequality in the division of districts was eliminated in the 1960s of the 20th century. It is considered acceptable if the difference in the number of district residents is 2% in congressional elections, and the districts themselves are redistributed every ten years depending on demographic dynamics and the results of the census; manipulations with the definition of geographical boundaries of districts. This practice allows any political forces, with the help of controlled election commissions, to collect the votes of their opponents in some constituencies and ensure the superiority of "their" candidates in others; giving certain groups of citizens additional votes (a similar practice can be observed in the early stages of the democratization process of one-party totalitarian or authoritarian regimes, when the ruling elite tries to maintain control over the legislative body) [1; 4].

5. Equality of rights of candidates allows to exercise the passive right of a citizen to vote. All candidates must have the same opportunities for nomination, campaigning, and access to the media. Based on this, the legislation of many countries provides for the limitation of election expenses and the size of private donations to the candidate fund, partial state financing of the election campaign of registered participants.

The use of this practice also pursues another goal – limiting lobbying of political parties (candidates) that have won, on the part of subsidy groups. The state undertakes to finance either all registered candidates or those who have a certain level of public support.

6. Observance of legality at all stages during elections.

7. Free expression of will of voters and guarantees of secrecy of voting. Voting secrecy is necessary in order to avoid possible persecution of voters by state bodies and public associations based on political motives. In addition, a citizen has the right not to go to the elections (principle of voluntary voting). In this way, he expresses his attitude to political processes, which

is defined by the word absenteeism. Absenteeism has become quite a frequent phenomenon. However, this has a negative impact on political life, as elections attended by a minority of voters do not reflect the real political picture. It is not the party whose program is supported by the majority of society that can win, but the one that, due to party discipline, managed to ensure the turnout of its few supporters. Absenteeism has one more negative point – in the case of low voter turnout, the elections may be recognized as having not taken place. In this case, new elections are called, which significantly increases the costs of organizing elections. To combat absenteeism, some countries (Australia, Belgium, Italy, Greece) have introduced the institution of compulsory participation in elections, fines and suspension of driving licenses for a certain period are applied [3].

8. Transparency of elections allows to ensure the openness of elections and trust in them. This principle is realized in giving the public the right to observe the election process through the institution of observers (including international ones) and mass media, as well as the right to know from whom and where candidates and parties receive money and how much was spent on the election campaign.

Elections are a complex set of social relations that can be imagined as time-varying stages of a single process. Political struggle during this period is strictly regulated to prevent abuses by those seeking power.

The organizational and practical side of the election process is represented by the election procedure – these are measures of the state regarding the organization and conduct of elections. Election (pre-election) campaigning should be distinguished from the election procedure, which refers to the actions of direct election participants: nomination of candidates, development of pre-election programs, campaigning and other forms of work with voters [6].

There are several stages of the election process:

1. Determination of the election date. The date of the election is set by an authorized body (for example, the president, the prime minister) in accordance with the country's legislation. In some countries, the date of the election is explicitly stated in the Constitution or in the law.

2. Voter registration. In modern practice, several forms of registration are used: mandatory (Ukraine), which consists in the fact that the state itself compiles lists of voters based on their residence in a certain territory; voluntary (US), which requires voters to register at a polling station. Political scientists believe that this practice has a negative impact on election activity. For example, not all Americans register, and

not all registered voters subsequently participate in the election.

3. Formation of electoral districts and polling stations.

4. Creation of electoral bodies. As a rule, a central election body, territorial (district) election bodies, and precinct commissions are created for the organizational management of the election process.

5. Nomination of candidates, formation of party lists. At this stage, the circle of persons from whom the president, senators, and deputies will be elected is determined.

6. Registration of candidates and lists of parties.

7. Pre-election campaigning of registered candidates. It includes the work of candidates (parties) and groups to convince voters of the need to vote for a given candidate or actively support their party list [3; 6; 7].

Conducting modern election campaigns especially requires conducting special research in the field of political marketing, which allows you to determine candidate programs aimed at different groups of voters, as well as to build certain image strategies. To convince voters of the merits of the candidates and the advantages of their programs, various means are used: advertising in the mass media, the main attention is paid to television (political scientists believe that 70% of the image is created with the help of TV); a "door-to-door" campaign campaign, which involves direct work of the candidate's activists with voters at their place of residence; meetings of candidates with voters; propaganda of leaflets and posters, graffiti; conducting various events (meetings, shows, distribution of party symbols, etc.). Other methods of advertising politicians and parties are also used. For example, Republicans often use live elephants as their symbol [7].

Conducting an election campaign requires significant funds, which come from voluntary donations allocated by parties and partly by the state.

Carrying out the voting procedure. The very term "voting" came from ancient Sparta, where the highest authority was formed during the general meeting by general shouts, and the Spartan who was shouted at the loudest was considered elected. This decision-making practice has another name – "acclamation". For example, decisions were made in Byzantium in the 7th century, in the medieval republics of Novgorod and Pskov. The ballot box came from ancient Athens. Black and white stones were thrown into the urn (a kind of ballot), voting "for" or "against" the decision (in a similar way, the citizens of the Athenian polis sentenced Socrates).

Modern voting takes place in various ways: by a show of hands (in small settlements during local self-government elections); the most common way is on paper ballots, when a certain sign is placed opposite the name of the candidate who is elected; with the help of electronic machines by pressing buttons or levers (the latter method is used in the USA).

In most countries, the voter votes directly for the candidate (direct election). In some countries, indirect elections are used.

The first stage is the nomination of candidates for the post of president and vice president. The system of nominating candidates is quite complex, as it is not prescribed in the Constitution, but is determined by the legislation of each state. After World War II, the practice of primary elections (primaries) became established, by which supporters of a party (Democratic or Republican) identify themselves with the party's candidates in the general election or vote for delegates whom they authorize to vote for a particular candidate in the general election. national congress of the party. The primaries themselves can be of two types: "closed" – only registered members of this party participate in their work; "open" – supporters of one party can participate only in the primaries of another party. "Open" primaries make it possible to take into account such specifics of the electoral behavior of Americans as the frequency of voting by the same voter for Democrats and Republicans. In addition to the primaries, there is another way to determine delegates to the All-Ukrainian Party Congress – holding multi-level party conferences [5].

The second stage is the holding of national congresses of parties, at which each party determines its candidate for the position of president and vice president. Congresses carry a heavy propaganda load and resemble a theatrical rally that kicks off a presidential campaign.

The decisive stage is the national elections, which make it possible to determine the winners – the president and vice president. They are held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each leap year. A voter, voting for a candidate from a certain party for the post of president, actually votes for the elected officials nominated by that party in a given state. A presidential candidate who receives more votes in that state than his or her opponent

receives the votes of all of that state's electors (on a winner-takes-all basis). Therefore, even a minimal advantage of the votes cast for the voters of the state is of fundamental importance.

The next stage is voting by the electoral college (December). Candidates for president and vice president must receive more than half of the voters' votes (at least 270 out of 538 votes). Lists of voting results are sent to the chairman of the senate (according to the Constitution, he is the vice president) [8].

The final stage is a joint meeting of both houses of Congress (January of the year following the election), at which the lists of electoral colleges are announced. The Constitution provides that if no candidate receives a majority of the electoral votes, the president will be determined by a vote of the House of Representatives.

Conclusions and recommendations. The electoral system is an important component of the political regime. Elections are the main component of electoral systems. Elections are a way of forming state authorities and empowering an official through the will of citizens. All modern political regimes use the election procedure to legitimize power, but not all of them allow reflecting the true will of the people. Adherence to the general principles recognized by the world community makes it possible to give elections a truly democratic character: mandatory elections, periodicity of elections, universality of the right to vote, alternative choices, equal rights of candidates, compliance with the law during the conduct of elections at all stages, free expression of the will of voters and guarantees of secrecy voting, election transparency. In most countries, the voter votes directly for the candidate (direct election). In some countries, indirect elections are used. Therefore, it is useful for Ukraine that at each stage of the election process, the considered general principles of democratic political choice and citizen participation should be observed. The organizational and practical side of the election process is represented by the election procedure – these are measures of the state to organize and conduct elections. The election (pre-election) campaign should be distinguished from the election procedure, which is understood as the actions of the direct participants in the elections: nomination of candidates, development of pre-election programs, campaigning and other forms of work with the electorate.

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