

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE REPRESENTATIVE POWER OF UKRAINE IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL CHALLENGES

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Abstract: Political leadership in the modern world is becoming increasingly relevant against the backdrop of new challenges that require a quick and effective response on the part of politicians as representatives of particular political institutions. As a matter of tradition, parliaments are collegial bodies, in contrast to the institution of the president, which possesses sole decision-making power. However, representative bodies of power have the right to adopt laws that define the principles of life in the country and society. Parliamentary leaders play a crucial role in drafting and adopting bills, which requires studying this phenomenon. The purpose of the academic paper is to analyze parliamentary leadership as a significant element of representative democracy. The research methodology is based on a combination of three key approaches that allow analyzing political leadership – the theory of traits, behavioral and situational theories. The main research methods are as follows: analysis of documents, secondary analysis of sociological data, the case study method, and general scientific methods (analysis and synthesis, deduction, generalization, and classification). Representative democracy has been undergoing a process of transformation due to the challenges of postmodernity.

Keywords: Parliament, Parliamentarism, Representative democracy, Leadership, Political leadership, Gender equality, Corruption, Anti-corruption, Power, Representative power.

1 Introduction

The issue of political leadership is becoming particularly relevant against the backdrop of global challenges faced by the world and Ukraine. Timely response to crises is just one of the functions of a political leader, who has to find the best ways to solve existing problems.

However, as a rule, political leadership in Ukraine is associated only with the presidency, and sometimes with the post of prime minister if it is held by an influential politician (V. Yanukovych, Yu. Tymoshenko, A. Yatsenyuk). Representatives of the parliamentary authorities of Ukraine are almost never considered in the context of political leadership, although they play an important role in making key political decisions that determine the country's development path.

Representative power around the world and in Ukraine is experiencing a crisis: the decline in public confidence in parliaments, the decrease in voter turnout, and the distancing of citizens from politics. The formation of political parties by financial groups for elections remains a serious challenge for Ukraine, which hinders the evolutionary development of the country's party system. This set of problems requires new approaches to the functioning of parliaments and an increase in the leadership component of their activities.

Political leadership in the Ukrainian parliament is closely linked to party leadership – the leaders of parliamentary political parties play a crucial role in ensuring the functioning of the country's main representative body. Accordingly, party leaders are trying to implement the program tasks of their parties to demonstrate their own effectiveness and efficiency, which will help ensure their re-election in the next elections.

2 Literature Review

It is expedient to divide the literature on the subject of the present research into groups related to the following thematic directions. The first group deals with the issues of the functioning of representative bodies of power in the modern world and is represented by works of Ukrainian and foreign authors. The main challenges to representative democracy

include attempts to undermine the principles of parliamentarism by illiberal democrats in favor of the executive branch, which poses significant threats to representative power (Schneiderman, 2021). One can observe particular manifestations of this threat in Ukraine in the process of strengthening the presidential branch of power and weakening the parliamentary branch.

According to the viewpoint of S. Tornei, the main challenge for parliaments is not the alienation of citizens from politics or the decline of politicians themselves but a far more serious problem related to the transition from “vertical” interaction of representation to “horizontal” modes of social interaction (Tornei, 2014).

The Ukrainian scholar V. Goshovska suggests considering these events as an objective given, a product of postmodernism with its ideas of deconstructing “institutions of political practice...that contradict the basic democratic norms of social development”. Postmodernism considers “the development of the abilities of a universally developed person capable of creating the modern political world in the relevant democratic mode” as the main criterion for development, which opens up new prospects for political leadership (Goshovska et al., 2019).

The second direction focuses on studying the political leadership in modern conditions. This issue has become the focus of scientific studies by O. Traverse, I. Pokhilo, V. Kornienko, F. Greenstein, D. Riesman, A. Nawaz, S. Burmina, M. Agbula, etc. F. Greenstein notes that political institutions function through the activities of people who have certain qualities. Therefore, “the personal qualities of political actors influence political events, often with important consequences” (Greenstein, 1992).

S. Birmina and M. Agbula systematized the basic theories of political leadership in the context of their evolution (Birmina et al., 2021). The Turkish researcher A. Nawaz and his colleagues combined the main theories of political leadership with the styles of political leadership (Khan et al., 2016).

Ukrainian scholars consider the issue of political leadership in several dimensions: in the theoretical format, focusing on the analysis of political terminology (Traverse, 2005); the general process of forming political leaders in the country (Boiko, 2009); the effectiveness of the political leadership (Kornienko and Pokhilo, 2009).

However, the issue of developing political leadership in representative bodies of power has not been reflected in the scientific works of modern times, which requires a comprehensive study of this problem.

The purpose of the research is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the political leadership as a significant component of representative democracy in Ukraine.

3 Methods

The methodological basis of the present research combines three theories: the theory of traits, the theory of behavior, and the situational theory. The theory of traits focuses on a leader's basic qualities that can be inherited or acquired through training and practice. By using these theoretical developments, it is possible to analyze the personal qualities of the leaders of the Ukrainian parliament. The theory of behavior follows the theory of traits, emphasizing that leaders are mostly made but not born. Consequently, the basic skills of leadership behavior can be acquired to ensure effective leadership (Denison et al., 1995).

The situational theory suggests that leadership depends on a particular situation that allows a person to become a leader and on the environment, which requires the leader to adapt to a particular situation (Greenleaf, 1996). The theorists of this

approach believe that the environment plays a key role in the leader's activity, which influences his behavior and style.

Special methods (analysis of documents, secondary analysis of sociological data and the case study method) and general scientific methods (analysis and synthesis, deduction, generalization, classification) were used in the course of the research.

4 Results

The major problem of modern studies on political leadership is the development of this definition. The term "leader" has several dimensions: from "the one who is ahead in a competition" to "a person who controls or influences what other people do; a person who leads a group, an organization, or a country" (The Britannica Dictionary, 2023).

J. Blondel emphasizes that "leadership is generally more than analyzing the situation and making decisions, it also includes exerting pressure on those people's minds and energies who will have to play a role in implementing actions" (Blondel, 1987). According to the viewpoint of P. Shliakhtun, a political leader is "an authoritative person who exerts a predominant influence on other people in order to integrate their activities to achieve common political and other goals" (Shliakhtun, 2002). The aspect of leadership in the process of state-building, in the opinion of O. Traverse, is primarily a form of manifestation of political life within political processes and institutions (Traverse, 2011)

The parliamentary activity of politicians is one of the forms of implementing political leadership in the framework of political institutions.

A representative form of democracy prevails in the modern world, based on the exercise of public power on behalf of the people and in the interests of the whole people through elected collegial bodies. These authorities interact with the entire system of state and local self-government bodies on the basis of democratic procedures and are responsible for their actions to the people (Zaiats, 2013).

The representative bodies in Ukraine are represented by several levels: 1) the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine; 2) the Verkhovna

Rada of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea; 3) regional and district councils; 4) village, town and city councils. The analysis of the political leadership in the Ukrainian parliament will be the main topic of the present research.

According to the standpoint of V. Goshovska, the phenomenon of parliamentarism in the system of state power is caused by: firstly, "the need for popular representation as a guarantee of democratic development of the state, country, society and nation; and secondly, the complication of the system of organization, functioning and exercise of state power" (Goshovska et al., 2019).

Obtaining a "representative mandate" in the elections requires parliamentarians to take into account the interests of society in their activities and implement them in the norms and rules of state policy. However, it is not always possible to accomplish this since the citizens' interests may contradict the state's interests. On the other hand, the members of parliament often distance themselves from their voters after the elections and this leads to disappointment in society and a decrease in trust in the representative body.

This disillusionment in Ukraine has become especially noticeable after the Revolution of Dignity, which gave hope for a change not only in the political elite but also in political practices. However, the representatives of civil society who entered the parliament in 2014 failed to overcome old practices and become new political leaders. As a result, the citizens' trust in the Ukrainian parliament declined in 2015-18 and it was the lowest among all government institutions – at 5-6% (Trust in social institutions and groups. KIIS Press Release, 2015; Trust in Social Institutions. KIIS press release, 2016).

Against the backdrop of V. Zelenskyy's victory in the presidential election and the victory of the presidential party "Servant of the People" in the parliamentary elections, the level of trust in the parliament grew, but it decreased a year later due to the failure of members of parliament to fulfill their obligations to voters (Trust in social institutions and parties, 2020; Trust in social institutions and politicians, electoral orientations of Ukrainian citizens, 2021).

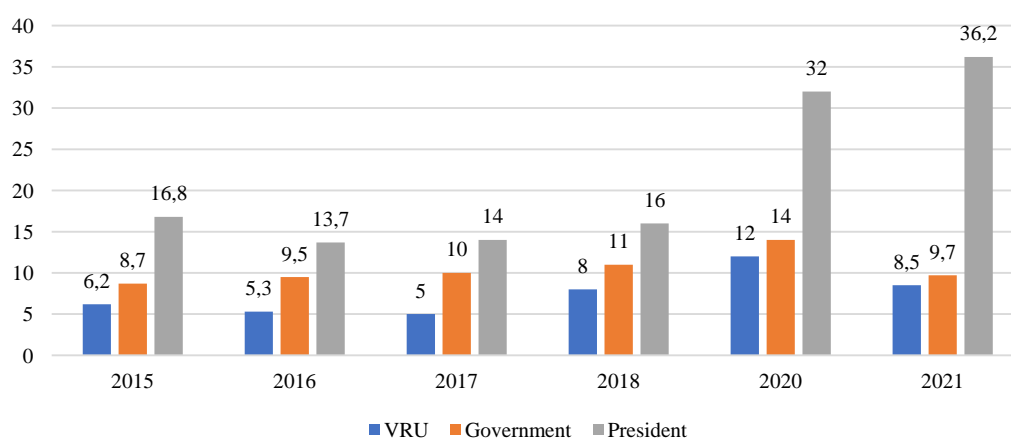


Figure 1. Citizens' trust in central authorities in 2015-2021, in %.

The situation with local councils is slightly better, with about 20% of citizens trusting the councils, which is due to the first successes of the decentralization reform and bringing local authorities closer to the people (Trust in social institutions and politicians, electoral orientations of Ukrainian citizens, 2021).

Another serious problem for representative democracy is that it gives more chances to get into the parliament not to the best representatives but to those who have financial resources. The 2019 elections were supposed to break this system: the "Servant

of the People" party, which did not have time to form a team, opened the door for everyone to enter big politics. As a result, random people were elected to the parliament, which is also a manifestation of the crisis of representative democracy in Ukraine.

One of the primary objectives of Ukrainian politicians is to restore trust in representative institutions. Responsible political leadership could play an important role in this process when

members of parliament actively cooperate with society and are ready to take responsibility for their own political actions.

It should be noted that political leadership is logically considered in a dichotomy with political management, that is, the interconnection of leadership qualities and the possibilities of influence of their power, which gives them status in the system of state and political hierarchy (Traverse, 2011). This is especially relevant for parliamentary leadership, which is often associated with leadership within a faction.

In the parliament, the governing functions are exercised by the speaker of the parliament (R. Stefanchuk) and his deputies (O. Kornienko and O. Kondratiuk). The Speaker of the Parliament, R. Stefanchuk, embodies a pure type of leader, in contrast to his predecessor, D. Razumkov, who had serious leadership ambitions and tried to use the speaker's position to shape his own political image.

The electoral system plays a crucial role in the formation of parliamentary leaders. The majority system allows candidates to demonstrate their leadership qualities, while the proportional system is more focused on programmatic theses than on personalities.

The leading role in Ukraine is played by personalized parties (Petro Poroshenko's Block, Oleh Liashko's Radical Party). In the last composition of the Rada, the names of the leaders do not appear in the parties' titles but everyone knows that the "European Solidarity" party is P. Poroshenko's party, and the "Batkivshchyna" party belongs to Y. Tymoshenko. The "Servant of the People" party does not need a strong leader since it positions itself as the party of the President – V. Zelenskyy. In the 2019 elections, the famous singer S. Vakarchuk was elected the leader of the "Holos" party in order to quickly get involved in the political process and overcome the electoral threshold. As a result, he resigned as a party chairman after the election.

Therefore, the very approach to the formation of political parties and, accordingly, political factions in the Ukrainian parliament is based on using political leadership. Consequently, party leaders tend to play a dominant role in the Verkhovna Rada, while leaders of parliamentary factions play a secondary role.

According to the viewpoint of V. Rhodes (Rhodes et al., 2009), such personalization in party leadership is a dangerous factor since it turns parties into a political tool in the leader's hands. Factions in the parliament are also controlled by leaders. The fact that parties serve as oligarchs' political instruments rather than as true supporters of the interests of society is a major issue with the Ukrainian party system. They come to power not because of their value-based program documents but because of criticism of their predecessors.

Political rivalry and the battle for leadership inside the party are factors in the formation of a party leader. At the same time, the struggle for power is rare in the Ukrainian party segment since parties become the personification of individual politicians (P. Poroshenko and Yu. Tymoshenko). There is no competitive struggle in these parties because it is the leader who ensures the party's existence and its entry into parliament.

The situation was slightly different in the "Holos" party after S. Vakarchuk's resignation, where there was an attempt to fight for power. However, K. Rudyk, who had come to politics from the IT sector, did not allow her competitors to participate in the elections and became the leader of the party. The analysis of Ukrainian parliamentary leaders by the classification of M. Weber shows the absence of charismatic leaders and the dominance of the rational-legal type of leadership (Weber, 1998).

According to Ye. Vyatr's typology (Vyatr, 1977), most Ukrainian party leaders are representative leaders who only express the will of those behind them, and do not formulate it as charismatic leaders. P. Poroshenko, who is the de facto owner of

the party, may be an exception to this rule. However, he can hardly be considered a leader who shapes and offers new ideas. According to H. Laswell's typology, Ukrainian parliamentary leaders are mostly "administrators": they do not create new ideas, but only implement a ready-made pattern. They try to manipulate a particular group (parliamentary faction) in order to achieve their goals (Laswell, 1977).

Following M. Herman's typology, the parliamentary leaders of Ukraine most closely correspond to the type of a salesman leader whose behavior is adjusted depending on the situation in the course of political activity (Herman, 1986). This typology coincides with the theory of J. Schumpeter, who compares leadership in politics to a market economy, where politicians sell their product (program) in the election process to win the sympathy of voters and get into parliament (Schumpeter, 1976).

The modern Ukrainian parliament, according to the viewpoint of R. Tucker, is dominated by reformist leaders who support change and gradual improvement of the political system (Tucker, 1995). However, the leader of the "Servant of the People" party, O. Shuliak, occasionally demonstrates revolutionary ideas, believing that the parliament should make decisions faster. "The mono-majority has shown the pace at which it will work. It's possible that you recall them stating that the mono-majority began by becoming printers. No other cadence has ever shown such intensity. But it seemed to me that it could have been even faster", she said in an interview (Elections during the war – an unrealistic story, 2023).

An analysis of the behavior of Ukrainian parliamentary leaders demonstrates the dominance of authoritarian traits. Even new party leaders who have recently entered politics do not demonstrate a desire to apply horizontal techniques of cooperation with subordinates, using the old vertical model of subordination.

For instance, deputies from the new political force "Holos" accused the party leader K. Rudyk of usurping power. The nature of the conflict is that at the party congress, the chairman of the party received the right to form the party secretariat, nominate candidates to the political council and manage party finances under the pretext of the need for quick decision-making in the fall of 2020 (on the eve of the local elections). These changes were supposed to be in effect only until the elections, but they remained after them (Goshovska et al., 2019).

In March 2021, half of the faction (10 deputies) demanded the re-election of the party leadership and the parliamentary faction (Y. Zhelezniak), accusing them of conducting backroom negotiations to form a coalition with the "Servant of the People" party. The party crisis led to a change in the faction's leadership: at the end of 2021, O. Ustinova was elected the head of the faction.

European parliamentary practices require the active involvement of women in parliamentary leadership processes. There are four parties currently represented in the parliament, three of which have women leaders: O. Shuliak ("Servant of the People"), Yu. Tymoshenko ("Batkivshchyna") and K. Rudyk ("Holos"); parliamentary factions in two parties are headed by women: Yu. Tymoshenko ("Batkivshchyna") and O. Ustinova ("Holos"). The "EU" party is headed by I. Herashchenko as a co-chair of the faction. "Servant of the People" is the only party with no women in its faction leadership.

D. Thompson (Thompson, 2003) offers a typology of leadership qualities: 1) forming a political coalition and negotiating skills; 2) defining a program of action and policy making; 3) the ability to inspire enthusiasm and optimism (leading); 4) shaping and supporting your own image; 5) selecting and training effective management personnel; 6) collecting and using information; 7) timely addressing pressing issues of society. This typology is suitable for analyzing different types of political leaders, including parliamentary ones (Table 1).

Table 1. Leadership qualities of parliamentary leaders (according to D. Thomson's typology)

Qualities	Leaders			
	O. Shuliak	Yu. Tymoshenko	P. Poroshenko	K. Rudyk
Creation of a political coalition and ability to negotiate	–	+	+	–
Determining the program of actions and policy making	–	+	+	+/-
Ability to inspire enthusiasm and optimism	–	+	+	–
Shaping and supporting your own image	+	+	+	+
Selection and training of management personnel	–	+	+	+
Collecting and using information	–	+	+	+
Timely addressing pressing issues of society	+	+	+	–

According to the results, the representatives of the old guard of Ukrainian politics – P. Poroshenko and Yu. Tymoshenko – meet the main criteria among the party leaders. The new leaders, O. Shuliak and K. Rudyk, do not correspond to their leadership status.

It should be noted that it is quite difficult for O. Shuliak to become a real party leader because of the party's constant association with the President V. Zelensky. Therefore, the head of the party, as well as the head of the parliamentary faction (D. Arakhamia), must fulfill the tasks set by the Presidential Office. However, in some cases, O. Shuliak tried to use her status as a party leader to lobby for the adoption of a controversial draft law (No. 5655) that significantly expands the rights of construction companies. During the parliamentary campaign, O. Shuliak actively lobbied for the interests of construction companies since she came to politics from this business.

After being elected the head of the party at the end of 2021, O. Shuliak focused exclusively on the process of reforming it for the upcoming elections, rather than on establishing a political vision since she believes that her main goals are to implement the President's ideas and explain his standpoint to the public.

K. Rudyk has a successful experience of implementing her own strategy in the 2020 local elections, which allowed the "Holos" party to obtain more than 300 mandates in local councils and create local factions in Kyiv, Lviv and other cities. However, the party leader has no strategic vision for the country's development. In addition, her image suffered as a result of the faction's political confrontation in 2021.

Thus, the Ukrainian parliament, as well as Ukrainian politics in general, has problems with the circulation of elites and the formation of new leaders who would meet the requirements of the times. The Ukrainian political system requires political leadership based on national and state priorities, which will create the preconditions for effective state administration. The new leaders should be politically responsible for their decisions and willing to sacrifice their own political careers in case of violation of their commitments.

5 Discussion

The conducted analysis demonstrates the existence of a significant number of problems in the Ukrainian parliament as an institution of representative democracy that should be addressed. To begin with, Ukrainian politics keeps pace with global trends in the context of forming a certain imbalance of power due to the growing influence of executive institutions. This poses challenges to the democratic political system, which is based on the principle of separation of powers. At the same time, there is a certain "personification" of power in the face of the president, which creates a danger of growing authoritarian tendencies.

For instance, a significant number of draft laws in Ukraine come to the Verkhovna Rada from the Office of the President, and the ruling party ("Servant of the People"), with its majority, adopts them almost without discussion. That is, the parliament turns into a "printer" that "prints" laws. This neutralizes its importance as a political institution.

Secondly, the level of trust in Ukraine's parliament before the full-scale invasion was catastrophically low – less than 10%. This figure ranges from 30-40% in democratic countries (Trust in public institutions, 2023). In 2022, trust in the Verkhovna Rada increased to 58%; however, it decreased almost 3 times to 21% in 2023 (Dynamics of Perception of the Course of Affairs in Ukraine and Trust in Individual Institutions, May 2022 - October 2023). Though it is unlikely to be resolved before the upcoming parliamentary elections, this issue should be addressed.

The third problem relates directly to parliamentary leaders, who in Ukraine are represented by the heads of parties and factions. The issue of self-identification of the political party "Servant of the People" is quite serious since its leaders (initially – O. Kornienko, currently – O. Shuliak) constantly emphasize the main objective of their work – the implementation of the President's program. However, the function of an executor is more typical for managers than for party leaders (Goshovska et al., 2021).

The issue of the effectiveness of parliamentary leaders will also remain a debatable topic. Efficiency can be measured by counting the number of bills that are approved, but there are other factors to consider, such as how these laws influence constructive social improvements. Thus, the primary objective continues to be the establishment of a new political elite that satisfies efficiency standards.

6 Conclusions

Overcoming the low level of public trust in the parliament remains one of the major issues. Experts believe that it will be difficult to accomplish this because of the general negative attitude of Ukrainians toward the government. This is conditioned by being under the control of outsiders for a long time, and power is a priori perceived as something negative. Consequently, despite V. Zelenskyy's strong support in the presidential election and the "Servant of the People" party's majority in parliament, the degree of public confidence in the Verkhovna Rada has not been significantly increased. The indicators returned to the previous level over the year.

The solution to this problem requires significant changes in the parliament's activities, expanding communication with the public, involving interested parties in discussing controversial draft laws and support for their proposals by the members of parliament. Increasing the number of communication formats available to the parliament should be a major priority for both the parliamentary leadership and parliamentary leaders.

The proportional electoral system promotes the dominance of the party leadership in the Ukrainian parliament: leaders of parliamentary parties become key figures in the Verkhovna

Rada. Leaders of parliamentary factions, as a rule, play a secondary role, performing more technical (managerial) functions. Yulia Tymoshenko combines both functions – the head of the party and the faction, not willing to share power.

Party leadership has significant advantages in parliamentary activities. The party leaders who have been in politics for a long time are well aware of the rules of the game. They offer a vision of the country's development that meets the public demand; they are good speakers and possess powerful communication skills, which allows them to convey political ideas to the public. They use the party apparatus in their parliamentary work and constantly improve their own image, taking into account current trends. Such leaders in the parliament are P. Poroshenko and Yu. Tymoshenko.

The new parliamentary leaders, O. Shuliak and K. Rudyk, have not met most of the criteria for political leadership yet, which requires them to further develop their personal skills.

The issue of gender, that is, maintaining a balance of women's and men's participation in political institutions and processes is an important component of political leadership in a democratic world. The Ukrainian parliament sets a positive example in this regard: almost 70% of parliamentary leaders are women, which violates the principle of gender balance in the opposite direction.

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