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### **TOPICAL ASPECTS OF THEORETICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE “DEMOCRACY” PHENOMENON IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT: PROBLEM STATEMENT**

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*The foundational aspects of the democratic transit phenomenon are considered from a theoretical and methodological perspective. The world and major national transformation processes have been identified as basic principles of such transit.*

The phenomenon of “democracy” has been and remains one of the central and most complex issues for theoretical treatment, practical realization and societal implementation. Many philosophers, political scientists, historians, sociologists, representatives of other, primarily social, sciences still go deeply into it. S. Huntington, M. Duverger, G. O’Donnell, M. Simai, G. Sartori, G. Hermet, J. Street, J. Keane, R. Mekhiteev, C. Macpherson, D. Held and other foreign scholars are among them.

Andruschenko, O. Babkina, M. Bessonova, S. Bondaruk, V. Horbatenko, M. Holovatyj, A. Kolodiy, Y. Kulahin, L. Mytsyk, R. Pavlenko, M. Piren, P. Sytnyk and others study problems of democracy in Ukraine.

Virtually all countries are now, in the early 21st century, moving toward democracy but with their own interpretations of such democracy, their own ways, developing their own models of democratic life. Many factors impart

a specific character to such a movement, history, traditions, culture, peculiarities of the economic development level, geopolitics, relations with other countries and the world in general being decisive among them.

And yet, the phenomenon of “democracy” is far from being explored, explained, first of all theoretically, which gives reason to identify several most major problems of a methodological nature.

The first problem: substantiation of the democracy essential characteristics. As a rule, the basic types of democracy are mainly presented as follows:

- primitive clan and tribal democracy;
- “military democracy” (a transitional type of democracy from primitive society to the slave-owning system);
- antique democracy (with its regional and stadial varieties);
- communal democracy of the age of feudalism;

- liberal democracy with its varieties and stages;
- proletarian democracy;
- social democracy; and
- neoliberal democracy [5, 401, 402].

The above classification is, however, rather conditional, scientifically ill-founded; therefore, a real need arises for more concept analysis of just the historical origins and genesis of democracy.

There also is no unambiguous answer to the question where first its antecedents emerged, and it took shape and was used for life arrangement. However, most experts in this field refer inquisitive people to the ancient world age of Greece and Rome, where the first city-states came into being.

Of fundamental importance is the fact that democracy (for all of its universal traits, constituents and so on) represents a specific historical phenomenon that should be considered and explained, figuratively saying, ad hoc, through time, especially where democracy and the democratic processes in the 21st century are concerned.

Only one point should be mentioned. Well-known Russian political scientist K. Gadzhiev emphasizes quite relevantly several fundamental differences, that is, hallmarks of democracy between ancient Greek and contemporary democracy. The first difference is that each citizen in ancient democratic city-states was vested with the right to take part in making decisions that concerned both his own life and lives of others. There was no division of legislative and executive powers – both branches of power were in the hands of citizens. In other words, direct democracy had real life.

The distinction between antique democracy and contemporary democracies is that antique democracy was compatible with slavery, provided for it as deliverance from physical labor of freemen who devoted themselves to solution of public issues. As to contemporary democracies, they, as is well-known, reject differences in the political area associated with the social origin, class, race and the like. [2, 128].

The second problem of democracy lies in interpretation of equality (inequality). Equality has been perceived and explained too different-

ly. Thus, great French philosopher, writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), tremendously aware of the problems of inequality, human rights, freedom (“Encyclopedia,” “Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men,” “Of the Social Contract, Or Principles of Political Right” and others) proceeded in his views of society, the system of state and social structure from the fact that the natural (pre-state) state of society, when people were equal both among themselves and simultaneously, should be the underlying premise of social life arrangement. Therefore, J.-J. Rousseau developed the so-called theory of equality with reservation of selected private property. Rousseau saw the rule of the people as inalienable, undivided and unlimited. The sovereignty of the people, according to Rousseau, had to be exercised on the principles of general will, which cannot have any other object than the benefit of the entire people. Pursuance of equality should be the main aspiration of the general will.

Nowadays, philosophical, political thought contains a rather widely spread point of view that democracy is by no means a tool for supporting life of the majority life but, on the contrary, a mechanism for across-the-board protection of the minority, rights and freedoms of even each several individual. This opinion has enjoyed great popularity.

The third problem of democracy is associated with the previous one and consists in democracy and a just political regime. Such representatives of Ukrainian political thought as M. Drahomanov, M. Hrushevskyj, V. Lypynskyj and especially I. Franko and B. Kistiakivskyj also addressed it in their works. Thus, B. Kistiakivskyj is responsible for development of an integrated concept of law-bound democratic state, where law rules, social protection of the person is ensured, popular representation bodies carry out vigorous activities, and appropriate judicial supervision over public administration bodies is exercised.

B. Kistiakivskyj believed that there should be such a political regime, where the individual and state have each their own area of independent activities and where the state does not encroach upon such human rights as freedom of conscience, thought, belief and so on.

Eminent Ukrainian philosopher, author, essay writer I. Franko was a prominent and interesting researcher of political regimes. Putting civil, human rights and freedoms before everything, I. Franko held that the state may place restrictions on activities of the individual in all spheres only to that limit where the individual's interest begins to conflict with the interests of other individuals. I. Franko regarded constitutionalism, which is a significant step toward democracy, as the spectacular display of deliverance of societies from absolutism in the 18th century. At the same time, he by no means idealized constitutionalism, democracy constantly recalling that people are naturally unequal. Legal equality, therefore, should serve as a real basis for equal rights of people as to their self-fulfillment opportunities.

The fourth problem of democracy is linked to fundamental changes in the interpretation of and exercise in democracy in social life in the late 20th century. As far back as in the mid-70s of the 20th century, a process of revolutionary struggle for dismantling of many dictatorial regimes actively spread in a number of continents. The USSR and the bloc of socialist countries, primarily in Europe, disintegrated toward the end of the 20th century. An accelerated transition from authoritarianism, totalitarianism to democracy began. Anti-popular political regimes and governments ceased to exist; multi-party elections were held in many countries; democratically elected governments came to power. A number of experts, essay writers took the liberty of claiming the definitive victory of western liberal democracy in the world (F. Fukuyama).

More specifically, the dialogue of civilizations has now become way too active and fierce in the world; it has in its center massive problems of mutual relations and contradictions associated with market relations, liberalism, democracy and, of course, democratic systems of government. Thus, it is common knowledge that market relations do not automatically cause development of democracy, democratic processes, just as it is impossible to artificially bring together democracy and liberalism. It is

most likely that liberalism should be regarded as an important foundation for social development of man, which simultaneously actually promotes democratization of social life. It must be admitted, however, that democratization of societies is way more determined by the level of the people's consciousness than by its economic development and status. "Democracy, – K. Gadzhiev writes, – can be established and institutionalized on a specific national ground only if the generally accepted democratic values and standards become behavioral attitudes of the popular majority."

At the same time, processes took place that dramatically demonstrated certain vulnerability and weakness of fledgling democracy in the new post-totalitarian, post-authoritarian countries, its high insecurity and sometimes simply helplessness along with the spread and strengthening of democracy. Those processes are somewhat present in the 21st century as well, therefore, a greater need arose to realize and explain what such an attractive and longed for phenomenon as "democracy" is, whether it is actually the best method for people's life arrangement, protection of their rights, or, in reality, as great Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) put it, democracy is "a government of the people, by the people, and for the people." It is significant that a lot of researchers, analyzing the real processes of formation and development of democracy in the countries of the post-soviet (former USSR) and post-socialist (primarily Europe) areas, currently distinguish also democracies with adjectives like "coercive democracy," "populist democracy," "imitative democracy," "authoritarian democracy," "illiberal democracy" and the like. This alone is a dramatic confirmation of the fact that "ideal" democracy does not exist at all [3, 5].

The fifth and by far not the last problem associated with the phenomenon "democracy" is that, which concerns exactly current concepts of democracy.

There are quite a number of contemporary democracy concepts but the basic ones are as follows: collectivist, pluralist, individualist, elitist, participatory, and market.

Collectivist concepts of democracy are based on understanding and explanation of the integrity of a people (class, nation), people's having a common will. That is to say, this is about homogeneity of the society fabric, where competitiveness of values and interests is allegedly excluded. In other words, in particular, socialist democracy was presented and characterized as such, where, in addition, oppositionness and opposition were excluded in principle. The irony of it is, however, that collectivist democracy, let's say, in the form of soviets in the former USSR is often a mere cover for authoritarian, totalitarian regimes.

Pluralist concepts of democracy use as a basis the fullest possible representation of any and all political forces, social groups within the political power system in order to obtain a political and social equilibrium. The advocates of the democracy pluralist concepts believe that it is a group, rather than an individual or people, is the true mainstay of society. Therefore when political power is distributed among different system wielders of power, certain diffusion sets in among them, and this, in its turn, is an expression of pluralism of group interests. Pluralism acts in this particular case as a clear-cut exponent of freedom, as well as of freedom to express and protect their own interests by all social groups.

Representatives of the theory of pluralist democracy pay special attention primarily to uneven mediation and representation of citizens' interests etc.

The individualist concepts of democracy (competitive) take as a basis the priority of the person, individual over society. Hence the assertion that the individual is primary forming the mainstay of civil society.

The elitist concept of democracy argues that political decisions are positive and effective when a narrow group of people makes them. That is, democracy, in that case, is not at all a privilege of the people, which enables to also term this concept a concept of representative democracy.

Participatory theory of democracy (all types of citizens' participation in political life) serves as an opposite of elitist theory of democ-

racy. It provides for maximum democratization of society through active participation of most citizens in political processes. Although according to many experts in the area of democracy just the latter makes the possibility of formation of totalitarian political regimes quite real.

"Market theory" of democracy has recently been and currently remains one of the most popular ones, since it is based on the assumption that all political forces have powers of authority and are in the context of constant competition and vying for power. J. Schumpeter formulated this theory the most clearly and distinctly in his work "Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy," where he explains the political process, as well as in the economic sphere, as a process of competition among various groups. Politics, as per his understanding, represents a market of people and ideas that are in constant competition among themselves.

Just as between freedom and unfreedom, people constantly choose between dictatorship and democracy, prominent political scientist Karl Popper noted. At the same time, man, in his opinion, does not make a choice in view of the advantages democracy has but just considering the shortcomings of dictatorship. This goes to show once again that the notion of "democracy" is rather incorrect, diffuse, and fuzzy. Therefore, the attempts to formulate the notion of "vertical democracy" (G. Sartori), "integral technodemocracy" (M. Bunge), "information democracy" (M. Rocard) and others come to be understood.

To sum up, it may be said that we adduced, out of a wide range of theoretical aspects and explanations of democracy as a social, societal phenomenon, as a problem statement and subject for discussion, just those, which, in our judgment, invite the most subject and advanced study and examination.



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*Since the phenomenon “democracy” has been and remains a fairly dynamic and inconstant social process, the primary focus in the course of its methodological analysis was on substantiation of the essential characteristics of democracy; specifics of the notion “equality – inequality” in the democratic process; substantiation of democracy as a just political regime; justification of the fundamental changes in the democratic transition in the 20th–21st centuries and the essence of the contemporary concepts of democracy.*

*Оскільки феномен “демократія” був і залишається досить динамічним і мінливим суспільним процесом, основний акцент у процесі його методологічного аналізу зроблений на обґрунтуванні сутнісних характеристик демократії; особливості поняття “рівність – нерівність” у демократичному процесі; обґрунтуванні демократії як справедливого політичного режиму; обґрунтуванні принципових змін у демократичному транзиті у ХХ–ХХІ ст. та сутності сучасних концепцій демократії.*

*Поскольку феномен “демократия” был и остается достаточно динамичным и меняющимся общественным процессом, основной акцент в процессе его методологического анализа сделан на обосновании сущностных характеристик демократии; особенности понятия “равенство – неравенство” в демократическом процессе; обосновании демократии как справедливого политического режима; обосновании принципиальных изменений в демократическом транзите в ХХ–ХХІ веках и сути современных концепций демократии.*

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