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Based on the study of the current state of party building in Ukraine and global trends in the development of political parties, the trends of Ukrainian partogenesis in the post-war period are outlined. Such trends include: 1) all-Ukrainian parties with a nationalist pro-European orientation will be successful in post-war Ukraine; 2) personified political parties will be created; 3) we assume the creation of network (internet) political parties; 4) we count on a low level of membership and a decentralized organizational structure of parties; 5) the impact of the hybrid political regime on the party system will remain unchanged; 6) the absence of clear ideological indicators of political parties; 7) Development of regional party projects.

Keywords:

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THE PARTY SYSTEM OF UKRAINE: MAIN DIRECTIONS OF TRANSFORMATION IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD

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The large-scale armed aggression by Russia against Ukraine, initiated on 24 February 2022, has precipitated profound and far-reaching changes in Ukraine and across the global landscape. These developments are poised to become a pivotal factor in shaping the future trajectory of Ukraine's societal, political, and economic spheres, as well as influencing the collective consciousness of its citizens. Among the areas expected to undergo significant transformation are the domain of party politics and the structure of Ukraine's party system. These changes will intersect with and be influenced by the prevailing trends that currently define party development within the European Union and the broader global context.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, political parties have evolved considerably, transitioning from elite clubs to mass ideological organizations, and subsequently to more inclusive and cartel-based structures. By the late twentieth century, two distinct trends emerged in the evolution of political parties, driven by the forces of globalization such as the formation of

pan-European parties and the rise of “new politics” movements and the rapid advancement of digital technologies, which gave rise to network-based or cyber parties. This evolution reflects a global shift in the nature of political parties: from mass parties characterized by clear ideological orientations and robust organizational structures to cartel, network, or cyber parties marked by ambiguous ideological positions and the absence of traditional hierarchical frameworks (Ostapets, 2021, p. 178).

The extensive electoral cycle of 2019-2020, encompassing presidential, parliamentary, and local elections, has significantly reshaped Ukraine's party system, altering both its composition and structural configuration. The 2019 parliamentary elections marked a notable shift, with four out of the five parties that secured seats in the Verkhovna Rada being new entrants: *Servant of the People*, *Opposition Platform - For Life*, *European Solidarity*, and *Voice*. Among the parties from the previous parliament, only the All-Ukrainian Union “Batkivshchyna” (*Fatherland*) retained its parliamentary representation (Razumkov Centre, 2022).

The Razumkov Centre's analytical report, *Ukraine's Party System after 2019: Features and Prospects for Development*, highlights the dramatic decline of previously dominant parties. The *Solidarity Bloc* of Petro Poroshenko, rebranded as *European Solidarity*, saw its parliamentary presence reduced from 127 to 25 seats. Meanwhile, the *People's Front*, one of the two ruling parties from 2014-2019, did not participate in the elections at all. Other parties that had been represented in the previous Verkhovna Rada, such as the *Samopomich Union Party*, Oleh Lyashko's *Radical Party*, and the *Opposition Bloc*, failed to cross the electoral threshold. However, the electoral base of the *Opposition Bloc* was largely absorbed by the newly formed *Opposition Platform - For Life*, which gained traction in eastern Ukraine (Razumkov Centre, 2022, p. 16).

Against the backdrop of declining electoral support for established parliamentary political forces, the *Servant of the People* party emerged as the most successful contender. The party secured more than 43 % of the proportional vote and won 130 out of 199 majority constituencies, resulting in a total of 254 parliamentary seats.

This overwhelming victory enabled *Servant of the People* to form a single-party majority in the Verkhovna Rada, a phenomenon that domestic scholars and experts have termed an “electoral revolution”.

The consequences of this revolution have been profound, leading to the deinstitutionalization and crisis of Ukraine's party system. A key factor contributing to these fundamental changes was the widespread public distrust in government institutions and the “old” political parties. According to research conducted by prominent Ukrainian think tanks, such as the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Razumkov Centre, the level of distrust in these institutions and traditional party brands reached as high as 80 %. This erosion of trust created fertile ground for the rise of new political forces and the reshaping of Ukraine's political landscape (Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies named after Oleksandr Razumkov).

In addition to shifts in the key actors within the party system, the organizational forms of political parties have also undergone significant transformation. Influenced by factors such as digitalization, the demonstration effect of global trends, and the unique characteristics of national political environments, political parties are increasingly evolving into network or semi-network structures. These modern party forms often lack fixed membership bases and stable regional organizational frameworks, marking a departure from traditional party models.

It is noteworthy that, prior to 2012, influential Ukrainian political parties maintained robust membership bases and extensive organizational structures. These traditional features provided them with a strong institutional foundation and regional presence. However, the current trend toward network-based structures reflects a broader global shift in party organization, driven by technological advancements and changing political dynamics.

To illustrate these changes, a comparative analysis of the fundamental characteristics of Ukraine's party system at different stages of its development is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Characteristics of the Party System in Ukraine at Different Stages of Its Development

Stages of development	Characteristics of the party system
The first stage: 1991-2004	<i>Configuration of the party system:</i> polarised pluralism system, two-bloc system from 2020 <i>Dominant party type:</i> ideological parties <i>Organizational structure of parties:</i> extensive regional organizational structure with numerous fixed memberships <i>The ideological dimension of party politics</i>
The second stage: 2004-2014	<i>Configuration of the party system:</i> two-block system, since 2010 with a predominant party (the Party of Regions) <i>Dominant party type:</i> electoral and professional parties <i>Organizational structure of parties:</i> along with classical organisationally formalized parties, political parties with low membership and regional branches are emerging <i>Ideological pluralism, convergence of ideologies</i>
The third stage: Since 2014	<i>Configuration of the party system:</i> two-block system, 2019 system with a predominant party (Servant of the People) <i>Dominant party type:</i> electoral-professional, network/semi-network parties <i>Organizational structure of parties:</i> dominated by parties without strong regional structures and fixed membership (semi-networked). <i>De-ideologisation of party politics, centrism</i>

Source: compiled by the authors based on Karmazina, 2018; Manailo-Prykhodko & Ostapets, 2020; Razumkov Centre, 2022.

The 2020 local elections did not bring about any substantial alterations to the structure of the party system or its key actors. However, they once again underscored the significant influence of regional and local political parties on electoral outcomes. These elections marked the conclusion of the extensive electoral cycle spanning 2019–2020. Furthermore, they coincided with the final phase of the decentralization reform, which enhanced the political agency of local elites. Additionally, they were conducted under the new regulatory framework established by the Electoral Code of Ukraine, which notably elevated the role of political parties in the electoral process (Ostapets & Kopynets, 2021, pp. 14–15).

The elections demonstrated strong electoral performance by both parliamentary and regional political parties, alongside a high degree of fragmentation within local councils. Representatives from 113 political parties were elected as deputies to councils at various levels, while members of 46 parties assumed positions as heads of city and village councils (Sotsiolo-hichna hrupa “Reitynh”, 2020). Based on our analysis, 54 regional parties secured representation in local councils, indicating a relatively balanced distribution of mandates between parliamentary and regional parties.

The configuration of Ukraine’s party system following the results of this electoral cycle can

be characterized as a system with a dominant party, namely the *Servant of the People* party. By the end of December 2021, on the eve of the Russian-Ukrainian war, a total of 375 political parties were officially registered by the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine. Historically, Ukraine’s party system has been marked by a division between parties advocating divergent geopolitical orientations: pro-Russian parties, such as the *Opposition Platform for Life*, *Nashi*, and the *Opposition Bloc*, and pro-European parties, including *European Solidarity*, *Servant of the People*, *Voice*, and others (Karmazina, 2018; Manailo-Prykhodko & Ostapets, 2020; Razumkov Centre, 2022).

Furthermore, the outcomes of this electoral cycle highlight the persistently low level of institutionalization within both the party system and individual political parties in Ukraine. This observation is supported by empirical calculations conducted by scholars from Uzhhorod, as detailed in their monograph *Peculiarities of the Process of Institutionalisation of Political Parties and the Party System of Ukraine in the Conditions of Democratic Transition* (Palinchak et al., 2021). The researchers have systematically analyzed and quantified the dynamics of key parameters influencing the development of the party system, with their findings comprehensively presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Dynamics of Changes in the Main Parameters of the Development of the Party System of Ukraine (1998-2019)

Main parameters of the party system	1998	2002	2006	2007	2012	2014	2019
Share of mandates distributed by party lists, %.	50	50	100	100	50	50	50
Electoral threshold, %.	4	4	3	3	5	5	5
Share of votes received by parties (blocs) that passed the electoral threshold, %.	65,8	75,7	77,4	86,6	94,1	77,5	78,31
Share of votes received by the "old" parties, %.	41,5	39,1	51,7	80,5	81,7	30,8	31,5
Volatility index	59	46	61	30	36	61	69
Nationalisation index	0,65	0,62	0,66	0,68	0,72	0,76	0,74
Index of the effective number of parliamentary parties	4,9	4,7	3,4	3,3	4,3	4,8	2,7
Aggregation index	3,0	4,0	5,3	7,9	6,0	3,0	10,4
Number of non-partisan MPs	-	164	94	69	125	271	303

Source: Palinchak et al., 2021, p. 195.

Thus, the data reveal a consistent increase in the number of non-party Members of Parliament (MPs): 125 in 2012, 271 in 2014, and 303 in 2019. Concurrently, there has been a decline in the percentage of votes cast for "old" political parties: 30.8 % in 2014 and 31.5 % in 2019. Additionally, the volatility index has risen significantly: from 36 % in 2012 to 61 % in 2014 and 69 in 2019. These trends collectively indicate a low level of institutionalization within Ukraine's domestic party system (Palinchak et al. 2021, pp. 195–196).

This low level of institutionalization reflects deepening systemic crises within the national party system, characterized by the proliferation of regional parties, a sharp decline in party membership, the virtualization of political activities, and the absence of clear ideological dis-

tinctions. In this context, it can be argued that Ukrainian political parties between 2014 and 2021 increasingly resembled semi-networked structures rather than traditional, well-organized political entities.

As outlined in the monograph *The Regional Dimension of the Development and Functioning of the Party System of Ukraine*, the primary types of parties that currently constitute Ukraine's party system include: parliamentary parties, "old" party brands, populist party structures, regional political parties, parties representing national minorities, militarized parties, civil initiative parties, and nominal political parties (Manailo-Prykhodko & Ostapets, 2020, pp. 283–284). The key actors within Ukraine's party system as of 31 December 2021 are systematically presented in Table 3.

Table 3 The cast of the party system in Ukraine

Types of batches	Party names
Parliamentary parties	"Servant of the People", "Voice", "European Solidarity", "Batkivshchyna"
"Old" party brands	All-Ukrainian Union "Svoboda", "Civic Position", "Strength and Honour", "Groysman's Ukrainian Strategy" and others
Regional political parties	("Ridne Zakarpattya", "Trust the deeds", "For specific cases", "Cherkasy residents", "Team of Andriy Baloha" and others)
National minority parties	"KMKS - Party of Hungarians of Ukraine, Democratic Party of Hungarians of Ukraine and others
Militaristic parties	"Party of Defenders of Ukraine, National Corps, Ukrainian Union of Patriots, Right Sector
The Party of Civic Initiatives	"Civic Control, Samopomich and others
Populist parties	Oleh Lyashko's Radical Party and others
Named political parties of various kinds	("Valentyn Nalyvaichenko's Social and Political Movement", "Mykola Tomenko's Social Movement "Serhiy Kivalov's Ukrainian Sea Party", "Groysman's Ukrainian Strategy" and others)

Source: compiled by the authors based on Manailo-Prykhodko & Ostapets, 2020; Razumkov Centre, 2022.

Having analyzed the actors and configuration of Ukraine's party system during the 2019–2020 electoral cycle, and considering both global trends in party development and the specific dynamics of contemporary Ukrainian politics, several key trends in domestic party-

building can be anticipated in the post-war period.

First, political parties advocating pro-Russian values are unlikely to garner electoral support. This is underscored by the fact that several such parties were officially banned by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on 3 May 2022,

including the *Opposition Platform – For Life*, *Shariy's Party*, *Nashi*, *Opposition Bloc*, *Left Opposition*, *Union of Left Forces*, *Derzhava*, *Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine*, *Socialist Party of Ukraine*, *Socialists*, and *Volodymyr Saldo's Bloc* (Tyshchenko, 2022). According to A. Klyachyn, the reorientation of the electorate previously aligned with these parties is expected to follow several pathways: 1) the rebranding of pro-Russian parties; 2) increased absenteeism among some of their voters; 3) a shift in support toward the President's party; 4) a fragmented dispersion of their electorate; 5) realignment with existing “non-ideological parties”; and 6) a pivot toward newly emerging party projects (Kliachyn, 2023, p. 56).

Secondly, political parties that historically reflected the division of Ukraine into two distinct regions – “East ” and “West” – in line with the concept of “two Ukraines” are expected to become a relic of the past. As O. Rozumnyi observes: “In the post-war period, we can hope to overcome the socio-cultural division. The tendency toward a weakening of its electoral influence was already evident during the 2019 election campaigns, though this can be at least partially attributed to the ‘V. Zelensky factor’ and the discrediting of the old political elites that had ‘occupied’ both traditional ideological poles. Now, however, we are witnessing the erosion of the very foundation of these poles – namely, the socio-cultural differences between the ‘West’ and the ‘East’, particularly in two key aspects: historical memory and linguistic and cultural identity” (Rozumnyi, 2022, pp. 120–122).

This shift is further supported by a survey conducted by the Razumkov Centre in September – October 2022. When presented with a choice between two models of social development – European and Russian – 70 % of respondents expressed a preference for the European model, while only 0.5 % favored the Russian model (compared to 58 % and 4 %, respectively, in 2017). According to experts at the Centre, European and Euro-Atlantic integration will remain a key factor in post-war national consolidation. This is corroborated by public opinion polls, which indicate that support for EU and NATO integration is as unifying for Ukrainians as the aspiration for a complete victory in the war (Razumkov Centre, 2022, pp. 58–60).

Consequently, in post-war Ukraine, nationwide political parties with a nationalist and pro-European orientation are likely to achieve electoral success.

Thirdly, the nature of personalized parties associated with prominent figures will transform. While pre-war parties of this type were linked to well-known public figures such as famous musicians (e.g. S. Vakarchuk's *Golos party*) or successful mayors (e.g. A. Sadovyi's *Samopomich party*), post-war personalist parties are likely to emerge around renowned military leaders, mayors who played key roles in the defense of their cities, and prominent volunteers. This trend is not unprecedented; a similar strategy was employed in the 2014 parliamentary elections, when battalion commanders who had fought in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions against Russian occupation forces were included on party lists.

However, it is important to note that the personalization of politics and the formation of personality-driven or name-based parties often have adverse effects on the stability of the party system and political development more broadly. This phenomenon is exemplified by several political parties in the European Union, such as *Marjan Šarec's List* in Slovenia and *There Are Such People* led by S. Trifonov in Bulgaria.

Fourthly, regional party projects, particularly those designed for local elections (including parties representing national minorities) will constitute a distinct category. Several factors are likely to incentivize their formation: the separation of parliamentary and local elections (in effect since 2010), the impact of decentralization reforms, and the reluctance of regional elites to participate in local elections under the banners of nationally ranked political parties (both parliamentary and non-parliamentary). Furthermore, the lack of internal party democracy within major political organizations contributes to the rise of these regional party projects. It is also worth noting that, due to the weakness of regional branches and the scarcity of qualified personnel, most influential parties will operate as electoral “franchises” during elections, allowing individual representatives of local elites to run under their party lists (Manailo-Prykhodko & Ostapets, 2020, pp. 128–129).

Fifth, the format and configuration of Ukraine's party system are expected to remain unchanged – a multi-party system with a dominant party, which will most likely be Servant of the People. The polarization of the party system, once characterized by the divide between “parties of the East” and “parties of the West”, will become a thing of the past. Instead, the dominant party will face opposition from a range of other political forces, including both “old” and “new” parties, with European Solidarity being a primary example.

Sixthly, the emergence of network or cyber parties, which rely heavily on modern digital technologies, is anticipated to play a significant role. According to Y. Ostapets: “The rise of such parties is driven by the ongoing transformation of political parties’ organizational structures in response to the global digitalization process. As a result, they appear to ‘hide’ within social networks” (Ostapets, 2021, pp. 177–178), materializing primarily during election campaigns and specific political actions. These parties are characterized by several key features: the absence of formal membership and organizational structures, a minimal number of members and party apparatus, and direct interaction with voters. Examples of such parties include Jobbik in Hungary, the Five Star Movement in Italy, the Freedom Party in the Netherlands, and Servant of the People in Ukraine. The organizational principles of these network parties are likely to be adopted by other actors within Ukraine’s national party system.

Seventhly, the influence of Ukraine’s hybrid political regime on the functioning of political parties and the party system as a whole will remain significant. This regime alters the essence of political institutions, including political parties (Zelenko, 2022; Matsiievskyi, 2016). As noted: “Parties in Ukrainian politics increasingly fail to perform their inherent functions

in a democratic society. In some cases, they become hollow structures dominated by informal practices such as patron-client relationships, while in others, they transform into institutional hybrids that serve the interests of individuals or financial-oligarchic groups” (Matsiievskyi, 2016, p. 179).

The party system of Ukraine in the post-war period is expected to undergo a comprehensive reset. This transformation will be driven by the overwhelmingly negative attitude of Ukrainians toward political parties, as evidenced by survey data indicating trust levels as low as 1–2 %. Additionally, the reset will be influenced by the aforementioned characteristics of the post-war political environment, including updates to the legal framework governing party activities – such as financing, formation, and termination procedures. As a result, Ukraine is likely to transition to a “third” party system, following the “first” (1991–2014) and “second” (2014–2022, until the beginning of Russia’s full-scale invasion) systems.

Post-war political parties are expected to exhibit several defining features: a decentralized organizational structure, low membership levels (Romaniuk, 2020), a dominance of “networked” modes of operation, and a lack of clear ideological markers. These characteristics reflect broader trends in the evolution of political organizations in response to societal changes and technological advancements.

Further research should explore the implications of these developments for democratic governance, party accountability, and voter engagement in Ukraine. Additionally, comparative studies with other post-conflict societies could provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with rebuilding political systems in the aftermath of war.

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