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DEMOKRATINĖJE VALSTYBĖJE**

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Abstracts

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# THE ROLE OF COUNTERVAILING INSTITUTIONS IN STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

**Nataliia Stepanenko**

Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, Ukraine

E-mail: [stepanekonataliia2@gmail.com](mailto:stepanekonataliia2@gmail.com)

The state of global democracy in 2023 can be characterized as complex, changing and unequal. Democracy continues to decrease in every region of the world. 2022 marked the sixth year in a row that more countries experienced a net decrease in democratic processes than a net improvement, when measured in terms of areas of improvement and decrease in each country. So, democracy is still struggling, at best stagnant, and in many places decreasing.

Thus, democracy plays a vital role in the history of civilization. It has helped transform the real world from power structures of monarchy, empire, and submission to popular rules, independence, and peaceful coexistence.

Democracy is a type of government where people have all the right to resolve what is in the country, and the government does not have opportunity to influence much on the people.

Generally, there are some benefits of democracy:

respect of peoples' dignity and integrity;

there is a possibility to resolve controversial issues and conflicts peacefully;

equal rights before the law;

transparent, responsible and accountable to the people government;

safe and secure society;

peoples' freedom to act, speak, think and declare your point of view freely.

Variety of formal and informal institutions and public movements (called as countervailing institutions) act to protect democracy and make it strengthen in spite of all difficulties. Countervailing institutions can play a vital role in strengthening democracy, ensuring the rule of law, enforcement of rights and ensuring accountable institutions and all people participation.

The understanding of countervailing institutions comes from traditional meaning of "Checks and balances system". Its aim to encompass

those institutions, organizations and movements that are struggling against the concentration of power, ensuring that policymakers regularly integrate citizens' priorities into policies. So, countervailing institutions are the group of governmental and non-governmental institutions that distribute power between governmental structures and ensure that important priorities on a regular basis and invariable function in decision making.

The role of countervailing institutions is vital nowadays. They include a variety of entities, like human rights organizations, civil society networks, election management bodies, downstream movements, experienced journalists and other political institutions. They collectively help shape the level of democracy in society, focusing more on balancing the power between people and the government than on power sharing only within government.

Furthermore, countervailing institutions are crucial in the area of public participation. What is more, enthusiasm of people for public engagement is prosperous, in spite of seriously complicated contexts. The task of civil society to involve people, manifest public concerns in awareness campaigns and through public interest action and efforts of public propaganda reveal a crucial requirement for democracy.

In nowadays world context, characterized by war, global warming, economic inequality and many other threats, it would be easy to overlook these and many other important achievements. It is worth stopping and considering these examples of how the public has reformed and revitalized governing institutions. They give hope for the future of democracy.

Keywords: *democracy, government, countervailing institutions, governmental structures.*