

LOCAL POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN UKRAINE: "DISPLACED" MIDDLE CLASS AND DEMOCRACY (SURVEY OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS)

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Abstract. Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) increased significantly. By 2024-2025, this figure had exceeded five million. This large social group presents both a humanitarian challenge to the country and an important factor in political transformation and consolidation. After all, IDPs form part of the middle class and civil society, and they have significant potential to drive democratisation. In order to achieve this objective, it is imperative to implement the institutionalisation of political participation (L. Diamond) and democratic consolidation (D. Rustow). The impracticability of conducting elections during the period of legal martial status constitutes a challenge for the competitive political environment and complicates the path to consolidated democracy in Ukraine. In circumstances where elections are not held, the political activity of internally displaced persons can act as a catalyst for the development of Ukrainian democracy. The capacity of IDPs to enhance democratic processes is predicated on their integration, active participation, critical thinking and the exercise of control over power. This predicament, far from being an impediment, is to be regarded as a valuable opportunity. The authors of the article conducted a study of IDPs using the method of individual interviews. Between February and March 2025, more than two hundred internally displaced persons (IDPs) who had been forced to move from the Kherson, Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Chernihiv regions, as well as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, to the Odesa, Vinnytsia and Kirovohrad regions due to the war, were interviewed. The results of the study indicate that IDPs are terribly underrepresented in local decision-making processes, have limited legal participation and access to information, and interact little with local self-government bodies. According to the survey results, only 1% of respondents indicated active participation in processes related to IDP activities at the local level. Meanwhile, more than 70% showed apathy and distrust regarding their potential involvement in local processes. It is the contention of the present study that these results indicate a crisis of political subjectivity among IDPs in Ukraine, despite their high level of education, professional experience, and social activity in other areas. In the context of the war, when the majority of men are engaged in defending the country from the invader, the survey revealed that the vast majority of women aged 36-65 with higher education, who are middle class, representatives of intellectual professions and are certainly capable of being active participants in the democratic processes in the country, participated in the survey. Nevertheless, political leadership at the community level is frequently reluctant to include IDPs as equals in democratic processes. Not only do internally displaced persons form a demand for social justice (86.6% support the fight against corruption), they also show a willingness to participate in public life (23.9% try to join local change processes). There is significant demand for state policy reforms: 78.6% of respondents indicated the need to improve support for IDPs. The low level of satisfaction with the state's policies towards this social group indicates the need for this group to be more fully integrated into decision-making processes. The 'displaced' middle class has the potential to drive democratic change, based on the consolidation of democracy and the institutionalisation of political participation.

Keywords: internally displaced persons, politics, democracy, elections, Russian-Ukrainian war, middle class, economic adaptation of IDPs, local political activity, civic participation, electoral democracy.

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1. Introduction

In the works of the political science classics who studied the processes of democratic transitions, two important components are distinguished: 1) institutionalization of political participation of citizens and 2) democratic consolidation. The Russian-Ukrainian war has resulted in the emergence of IDPs, who can be defined as a "displaced middle class". It is necessary to substantiate the role of IDPs in the institutionalisation of political participation and consolidation. The role is both pivotal and multifaceted.

One of the key social phenomena in modern Ukrainian history has been the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Over the 11 years of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which began in 2014, and particularly since the large-scale invasion in 2022, the displacement of citizens within the country has become systemic, affecting millions of people. People have been forced to leave their homes, losing stability, their usual environment, political influence and social connections. They allegedly found themselves in a social and political vacuum. Typically, the majority of IDPs are active, working citizens with an education who, until recently, participated in the social and economic life of their community. They represent the middle classes. They continue to bear responsibility for their children and parents. However, these citizens need appropriate economic, social and political conditions to overcome marginalisation. IDPs face underdeveloped mechanisms of political representation at the local level and often limited access to communication within communities. This is why apathy, a sense of alienation and the demobilisation of their civic potential become entrenched.

During a state of martial law in Ukraine, the right to hold elections, a basic democratic instrument, is suspended under the Constitution of Ukraine. At the same time, the war poses new challenges, requiring society to find ways to support, preserve and strengthen democratic processes.

The answer lies in the local political activity of internally displaced persons. After all, IDPs form a new social stratum: the middle class on which democratic processes in society are based. Today, IDPs in Ukraine closely resemble the model of an "active citizen" in a liberal democracy: they strive for stability and positive change, and they have work experience and critical thinking skills.

The findings of the present study on IDPs provide substantial evidence of the demand among these citizens for change, social reflection, and a high level of critical thinking. This standpoint is predicated on the premise that contemporary citizens' political passivity does not necessarily equate to a "sentence" indicative of future indifference. Today, IDPs do not see any possibility for their participation; they feel that they

are the victims of public policy injustice. At the same time, however, they have clearly defined priorities: providing assistance to the military and exercising control over the state's personnel and anti-corruption policies.

Based on this, the following hypothesis can be formulated: the "displaced middle class" has the potential to act as a new agent of democratisation and the legitimisation of authority, by institutionalising civic participation and consolidating its position within the new community.

The choice facing the state is as follows: 1) IDPs who are disillusioned and "forgotten" will remain a political problem for the government, undermining its legitimacy; 2) with the support of the government and civil society, they will become an important local political actor that will influence decisions at the national and local levels. It is evident that no third option exists.

2. Literature Review

Larry Diamond (2015) recognised the role of civil society in strengthening state legitimacy and defined democracy as a process of institutionalising participation and accountability. Meanwhile, Dankwart Rustow (1970) proposed that democratic transition occurs as a result of conflict and the search for consensus. He wrote about democracy in the context of societal integration and consolidation.

Baraka D., Macamo E., & Mavungu A. in the work "Informal citizenship and membership: Internally displaced persons in the Democratic Republic of Congo" indicate the formation of social subjectivity through the creation of "informal" political communities by internally displaced persons outside state instruments and how this affects local integration (Baraka, Macamo, Mavungu, 2021). Russo and Zambelli (2023) consider the perspectives of "owner-driven" local inclusion and analyse local approaches to EU support and influence on IDP independence.

It demonstrates how open local councils can engage with marginalised groups and reduce conflict (Galindo-Silva, 2019). E-International Relations considers IDPs to be "semi-citizens" with limited access to the political agenda. The political marginalisation of IDPs is examined in terms of the impact of voting rights and the low legitimacy of participation (E-International Relations, 2017). The relationship between a lack of housing and reduced political subjectivity is examined in *Frontiers in Human Dynamics*. The article explores how housing conditions can limit electoral rights through the prescriptive system in Ukraine (*Frontiers in Human Dynamics*, 2023).

According to Vershynina (2024), the role of IDP councils in facilitating IDP political inclusion is

examined. The researcher analyses the role of IDP councils in Ukraine and the characteristics of women's leadership in local political decision-making. People in Need analyses the inclusion of IDP women and their impact on political activity at the local level. Recommendations for integration are provided, and the barriers preventing IDP women from participating in public life in rural communities are studied (People in Need, 2021). Particular emphasis is placed on the potential for social, rather than political, integration. Individual & Society analyses IDP participation in public initiatives, such as volunteering and supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

In a previous study, the authors analysed how internal displacement due to war had led to a transformation of political participation models in Ukraine. IDPs are moving away from traditional party involvement and choosing civic activism, volunteering, and self-organisation as ways to influence and participate in public life (Yakovlev, Trushevykh & Diachenko, 2025).

Consequently, the significance of establishing institutional frameworks conducive to socio-economic and, most crucially, political engagement (housing, voting rights, access to public activities) of IDPs can be deliberated. These are pivotal moments in the rise of democracy and the legitimization of power in Ukraine.

3. Method

A study of internally displaced persons (IDPs) was conducted using individual face-to-face interviews (introspective and projective). Between February and March 2025, over 200 IDPs were interviewed in the Odesa, Vinnytsia and Kirovohrad regions, located in southern and central Ukraine. Of the respondents, 65% were women and 35% were men. The survey included the following age groups: 18–35 years (14.9%), 36–50 years (46.8%), 51–65 years (26.9%), and over 66 years (11.4%). 58.2% of respondents had completed higher education; 16.9% had vocational (vocational and technical) education; 10.9% had completed general secondary education; 9.5% had incomplete higher education; and 4.5% had basic higher education. The majority of respondents were women with higher education aged 36 to 50, representing an active and educated, yet vulnerable, demographic.

The surveyed IDPs represent a variety of professions: accountants, teachers, economists, lawyers, engineers, doctors, salespeople, and so on. Individuals representing specific professions include hairdressers, drivers, pastry chefs, librarians, artists, musicians and journalists. Indeed, these individuals can be considered as representatives of the middle class, or more specifically, the "displaced middle class". It is quite rightly noted: "A larger middle class is both

a prerequisite for a higher standard of living and a potentially strong driver of democratic demands in the country." (Chun, Hasan, Rahman, Ulubaşoğlu, 2016)

The results of the study indicate that 74.6% of respondents received IDP status since 2022, 13.9% since 2023 to 2025, 8.5% since 2014, and 3% since 2015 to 2021. The majority of respondents had been displaced from various regions, including Kherson, Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Chernihiv, and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

4. IDP: Factors of Political Subjectivity Formation

The majority of IDPs have relocated since the commencement of the full-scale invasion in 2022 (74.6% of respondents). This figure has decreased to 13.9% during the 2023-2025 period. It is estimated that 88.5% of the population became internally displaced persons (IDPs) following the commencement of the full-scale invasion. In other words, the majority of IDPs are part of the "new wave", having lived in their new location for less than two to three years. They have not had the time or opportunity to integrate politically into their new communities. They have also not participated in local elections and therefore do not have any influence over or control of local authorities. In short, they are not integrated into local political processes. They are in a state of adaptation with an often uncertain status, temporarily waiting to return home, and perceiving their new place of residence as unstable. The political subjectivity of this group can be defined as exclusion. However, they have the potential and conditions for active involvement, despite not having formed in a new context or community.

All respondents moved from regions where war was waged between 2014 and 2022. During this time, repressive Russian regimes were in effect, alongside a humanitarian catastrophe and propaganda. These territories were also places where institutions of power, local self-government, and independent media were destroyed. The data suggests that active political participation in occupied and frontline territories is common among the respondents. The respondents moved from environments where survival models, isolation and distrust of any authority prevailed. The political subjectivity of their places of residence became a matter of both danger and impossibility. This period gave rise to a culture of political caution, distrust and self-elimination. This underscores the imperative for internally displaced persons (IDPs) to re-establish their trust in all Ukrainian institutions, including those at the local level. All these factors can lead to a politically disengaged population, but they can also lead to demands for fair and honest state policy. At the same time, internally displaced persons exhibit critical thinking and demand accountability, as well as

distrusting the populism of politicians, especially those in the old establishment.

The target audience of the study is a new type of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are temporarily depoliticised, but with high expectations and no existing channels of participation. The political apathy identified in the study results is a consequence of displacement and uncertainty during the legal martial status. In this regard, it is imperative to acknowledge that IDPs possess a comparatively limited institutional experience in comparison to the indigenous residents of the community. However, if they are provided with the necessary tools of inclusion, they have the potential to become agents of positive change. The political subjectivity of internally displaced persons is limited due to a lack of electoral rights, low involvement in local self-government, and limited access to information.

According to D. Rustow's theory of political subjectivity formation, the process of establishing democracy begins with long-term social conflict, forcing different social groups to seek political mechanisms for resolving it. For internally displaced persons, this conflict manifests as the loss of a home, social status and jobs, as well as the simultaneous need to integrate into new communities. This experience makes them more sensitive to issues of justice, government transparency and efficiency. L. Diamond emphasises that democratic culture is formed through active participation in public processes. IDPs have an opportunity to establish a new form of political identity because their mobility and the need to protect their rights can be transformed into a political asset.

5. Local Involvement Level Indicator

The profound impact of existential uncertainty on the political subjectivity of internally displaced persons (IDPs) at the local level has been revealed. Questions about future plans during a large-scale invasion are more political than social or everyday in nature. After all, these questions determine the degree to which IDPs are involved in local decision-making processes and community activities, and how much they trust the authorities.

The results of the survey indicate that 49.8% of respondents intend to return to their place of origin if the war ends, 28.4% plan to build a future in the city where they currently reside, 7% intend to go abroad if the war does not end this year, 5% plan to return to their place of origin regardless of whether the war ends, and 9.8% have not yet decided.

Of the respondents, 44.8% do not identify with the host community because they wish to return to their own city. These people experience a state of "temporary presence", which inhibits integration processes and entails political subjectivity. They feel that they are not

equal members of the community and are not interested in local elections or the selection of professional authorities. They rarely engage in dialogue with the authorities or public organisations. This phenomenon, resulting from an uncertain status, stifles political activity.

A total of 7% of those who are ready to migrate signal disappointment with state institutions and future prospects. Meanwhile, 9.8% of the undecided express despair and psychological exhaustion, which limits both political subjectivity and general activity.

The potential core of political integration is constituted by 28.4% of respondents, who expressed their willingness to build their future in the host community. It is asserted that this group is the most promising for participation in public councils, development of local subjectivity, representation of IDP interests in local authorities and formation of new approaches through the experience of mobility. These actors are seen as agents of a nascent political culture.

The political subjectivity of IDPs at the local level is conditional, contingent on plans, a sense of the future, and a sense of affiliation to the community. L. Diamond (2015) posits that not only is formal democracy important, but also the "depth" of democratisation, which is manifested in the participation of citizens at the local level. Consequently, it is imperative to focus on the proportion of IDPs who intend to reside within the community. The creation of consultative bodies, the development of special programmes for participation in city planning, and involvement in budget formation are all possible avenues for their involvement. Furthermore, they may also offer to join the work of public councils. The integration of displaced populations into the fabric of new communities is a critical factor in fostering a culture of participation, which serves as the cornerstone of democratic transition. With regard to the theories of D. Rustow, such local involvement has the capacity to engender a "consensus basis", whereby even groups with divergent experiences identify themselves as part of a common political community.

6. Critical Perception is a Sign of Subjectivity

In response to the question "Which area would you advise the Ukrainian authorities to improve?" (multiple answers were allowed), respondents identified the following priorities: 86.6% mentioned the fight against corruption, 78.6% highlighted assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs), 69.2% emphasised the return of prisoners of war, 59.2% referred to support for military veterans, 58.2% mentioned control over the situation at the front, 47.8% pointed to domestic policy, 40.8% to personnel policy, 29.9% to foreign relations, and 1% each to housing construction and repair and to ensuring fair mobilisation.

According to the survey results, 43.8% of respondents reported being completely dissatisfied with the state policy towards internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine, while 29.4% stated they were mostly dissatisfied. A further 20.9% indicated that they were generally satisfied but believed that significant improvements are still required. Only 1.5% expressed complete satisfaction, and 4.5% found it difficult to answer. This overall dissatisfaction with state policy towards IDPs should not be interpreted merely as apathy; rather, it represents a demand for alternative approaches and improved governance in addressing the needs of this group.

The results demonstrate an understanding of the political subjectivity of IDPs at the local level, where distrust, critical thinking and a request for participation intersect. The phenomenon of political apathy is not necessarily indicative of indifference. This phenomenon can be interpreted as a reaction to the prevailing discontent with the quality of state policy and management.

According to the authors, L. Diamond's key idea is that democracy is based on the accountability of the authorities, which is only possible with an active and critical public. IDPs, having experienced distrust of the old local elites and at the same time having expectations of the new institutions, remain classic bearers of critical thinking. This phenomenon may be regarded not as "passive dissatisfaction", but rather as the latent capacity to articulate demands for enhanced policy transparency. According to Rustow's theory, this shift marks a transition from a state of conflict to a state of consensus, wherein criticism of authority does not result in the destruction of the system, but rather serves to stimulate its democratisation. The critique articulated by IDPs serves as an indicator of their political subjectivity and maturity.

Of the respondents, 86.6% showed high political awareness, critical thinking about the functioning of state institutions and a desire to influence, telling the Ukrainian authorities that it is necessary to fight corruption. IDPs are not a passive group, but rather a critical social force with the potential for political mobilisation, provided that the conditions and channels for participation are created. The self-identification of the middle class is associated with a desire for democratic change, an awareness of the need to overcome corruption, dismantle the oligarchic regime and implement market reforms. The middle class is the social group that is most interested in political and economic competition, because they are the ones who get a way out of democracy and the market economy (Yakovlev, Yakovleva, Koltsov, 2023).

Awareness of social group identity is demonstrated by 78.6% of respondents. Respondents understand that internally displaced persons (IDPs) are a political category that requires the attention and involvement

of the authorities in solving their problems. This understanding opens up the possibility of uniting IDPs as a political entity with its own agenda at the local level.

Despite displacement, the feeling of inclusion in national processes persists because the majority highlight the problems of returning prisoners of war, providing assistance to veterans, and controlling the situation at the front. This could lay the groundwork for further political engagement during elections. In a pluralistic society, a highly developed middle class can mitigate conflicts by supporting moderate and democratic elections, and contribute to the transition to democracy (Özbud, 2005).

According to IDPs, there is a pervasive sense of distrust in the current state decisions, a pronounced demand for social justice, and a high degree of sensitivity to macro-politics. The creation of advisory councils and participatory budgets is imperative, as is the development of mechanisms for IDP participation in the development of housing policies, their integration and employment. Such rhetoric from politicians has the capacity to influence the level of trust and motivation to participate in public initiatives, particularly if politicians address the topic of displacement, self-protection, and hope (Trushevych, 2021). It is submitted that public organisations have the capacity to function as advocacy platforms for IDPs.

It can be argued that IDPs have a conscious political position, but do not always have the tools to implement it. They also remain loyal to the state, but need to transform this loyalty into inclusion in decision-making processes.

7. Barriers and Potential of Involvement of IDP in the Local Processes

Individuals forcibly displaced within the territories of Central and Southern Ukraine are currently experiencing social inclusion, albeit political marginalisation. This is not solely due to external barriers, but also due to the low level of involvement in the processes of interaction with local authorities, as well as the loss of hope for the influence of this participation.

In response to the question "Do you participate in the processes of implementing changes and supporting internally displaced persons (IDPs) initiated by the local authorities in the area where you currently reside?", the respondents provided the following answers: 28.4% reported that they do not have the right to vote or access to information; 25.4% stated that participation would not make any difference; 23.9% noted that they try to participate but do not observe any tangible changes; 21.4% indicated that they lack both the desire and the opportunity to engage; and only 1% reported taking an active part and feeling that the authorities listen to them.

Overall, 76.2% of respondents do not participate in these processes and consider such engagement ineffective, while only 1% perceive interaction with local authorities in their communities as effective.

The present study seeks to explore the reasons for the existence of such definitive results in the responses to this question. Furthermore, 28.4% of respondents who do not possess the right to vote and have limited access to information identify themselves as temporary residents, despite having resided in a new community for more than three years. This is influenced by the absence of the right to vote in local elections, the paucity of accessible and comprehensible channels of communication with local authorities, and, consequently, the dearth of information regarding programs and mechanisms for involvement. Furthermore, 25.4% of respondents exhibited signs of demobilization and distrust of the system. The notion that no responsibility rests upon the individual is indicative of a substandard level of political efficacy. In such instances, there is a possibility of beliefs that local authorities are not responsive to initiatives and that decisions are reached with high authorities in advance. However, it is important to note that 21.4% of respondents are in survival mode, not political subjectivity. The absence of stable income, adequate housing, exhaustion and psychological trauma has been identified as a contributing factor to the observed reluctance to participate. In addition, 23.9% of respondents have made a limited but existing attempt to participate. If communication is established correctly, they could become a core group of new participants. These people are ready to take responsibility and get involved in processes, but they are not seeing any steps from the authorities. They are the kind of people who can participate in round tables and events and write appeals to the authorities, but they never receive feedback. Only 1% actively participate and see results. These are IDPs who have integrated into the local community and are involved in improving life in their place of displacement. Their experience could be used as a model for starting local involvement programmes.

Although many people who have relocated since March 2022 have been residing in their new communities for an extended period, internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain largely uninvolved in local political processes. The reasons for this situation lie not only in psychological factors, but also in limited access to communication channels, information, mechanisms for participation, and the ability to influence decision-making. Nevertheless, the most promising group for fostering local initiatives consists of the partially involved respondents (23.9%). It should also be emphasised that the regions hosting IDPs need to implement targeted programmes aimed at enhancing participation. These may include removing legal restrictions on participation in local self-

government; providing access to information adapted to the needs of IDPs; encouraging their inclusion in public organisations, advisory and youth councils under executive bodies; and establishing dedicated IDP councils under local authorities.

D. Rustow drew attention to the fact that democracy can only develop when those involved in a conflict are willing to agree on the rules. This is why internally displaced persons (IDPs) face barriers such as distrust from local communities, bureaucratic obstacles, and weak representation in local government. However, IDPs also have enormous potential: their solidarity networks, new professional and cultural practices, and experiences of adaptation can strengthen local democracy.

8. Conclusions

Accordingly, the findings of the present study demonstrate that the local political activity of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine is a transformational, dissimilar and dynamic phenomenon, which is formed under the influence of structural and situational factors. While an initial observation may suggest a limited engagement of IDPs in local political processes, a more thorough examination reveals a considerable latent capacity for mobilisation among this demographic. This capacity encompasses the establishment of a novel form of civic engagement and the exertion of influence on local processes and local self-government.

In the absence of nationwide democratic mechanisms in a state of war, local political activity has the potential to serve as the foundation for the preservation, transformation and development of democracy in Ukraine. It is evident that internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the middle class possess social capital and the motivation to exert influence over local authorities. It is evident that IDPs are not inclined to authoritarian decisions, as they require a secure and prosperous future in the immediate present.

The predominant strategy of waiting for return, as indicated by 54.8% of respondents, has a significant impact on the degree of integration into the host communities. For the majority of IDPs, subjectivity remains conditional or "suspended". After all, they do not consider themselves to be full members of the new community. They do not initiate dialogue with the authorities, participate in electoral processes or form stable political preferences. However, these factors cannot be described as political apathy. Rather, it is a reaction to the lack of long-term integration guarantees and life uncertainty.

A considerable proportion of the respondents (28.4%) have expressed their intention to remain in the host community and establish a future in a new location. This paradigm could serve as the foundation for

a novel local political culture, one that is characterised by adaptability, flexibility, and a pronounced sensitivity to social injustice. This group's unique perspective on politics is shaped by the experience of displacement (and, for some respondents, multiple experiences of displacement). This perspective is based not only on the expectation that the state should provide improvements, but also on the desire to be heard and to influence decision-making by creating bodies that support issues at the state level.

The analysis of the assessment of state policy demonstrates a high level of distrust in the authorities, with more than 73% of respondents expressing complete or partial dissatisfaction with the policy towards internally displaced persons. This course of action has the effect of undermining political loyalty, whilst simultaneously creating a window of opportunity for the establishment of alternative horizontal models of political subjectivity. IDPs are a socially and politically conscious group that can influence the public agenda. They demonstrate this through their strong demand for anti-corruption measures (86.6%) and their consistent support for IDPs (78.6%).

At the same time, the level of participation in local processes remains low (below 25%), which can be attributed to a lack of institutional opportunities, limited information channels, and a prevailing sense of marginalisation. Responses such as "I have no right to vote", "it will not change anything", and "there is no access to information" reflect a broader feeling of alienation. This alienation should therefore be understood as a response to imperfect mechanisms of representation rather than as a sign of diminished public responsibility.

It is erroneous to consider IDPs to be an apolitical group. These actors are pivotal in facilitating critical

reflection on state policy, which, if supported by institutional mechanisms, has the potential to act as a catalyst for democratic change at the local level. The political activity and subjectivity of IDPs today is at a critical juncture, characterised by a tension between expectation and activation, individual experience and collective action, and adaptation and alienation. The role of local political activity among internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine is a matter of particular significance in the context of war, with the potential to become a key factor in the preservation and development of democracy.

It is evident that IDPs constitute a group that is not only socially vulnerable, but also one which harbours the potential for democratisation. The level of integration of society is indicated by their local participation, their criticality is a sign of the maturity of their civic position, and the overcoming of barriers has the potential to transform IDPs into a driving force for the development of democratic institutions.

A key task for the state is to integrate internally displaced persons (IDPs) into local self-government processes and expand opportunities for them to participate in local politics. Supporting their activity through information and communication is important. This is why the "displaced middle class" is not only a group that requires the attention of the authorities, but also a new player in Ukrainian democracy. It is evident that IDPs have the capacity to not only preserve democracy but also to renew it. It is submitted that the activity of these bodies at the local level has the potential to act as a catalyst for the sustainable democratic development of the country, through the institutionalisation of political participation. Furthermore, it is argued that these bodies play a significant role in the consolidation of society.

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