

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

THESIS TITLE:

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION AS A MEAN OF CITIZENS' INVOLVEMENT THROUGH
INTERNET-BASED CHANNELS: THE CASE OF UK AND UKRAINIAN PARLIAMENTS

VYACHESLAV KYLYMAR
S1018329

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Background of the problem. Modern democratic society requires active communication policy of the governmental institutions. Development of new communication forms and methods of governmental bodies and the availability of feedback from the public should contribute to the support of democratic transformation in society. The following paper is aimed to investigate important, but unstructured problems of public communication as a mean for state bodies to involve citizens into their activities. The potential of two-way communication between public and government applying results of technical progress will be explored. New trends in the public communication might help to form the democratic society where public deliberation is one of the key elements in decision-making. The main task of reshaped communication is to improve the interactive capacities of state institutions, to create a fundamentally new relationship between government and public. Without the significant impact on/from citizens, the state institutions lose their capacities for development of public goods (Chadwick A., May C., 2003). The fact is that public communication is an important part of legitimacy of governmental projects, their implementation, and decision-making. That is why public communication in this case is considered to be a sensitive barometer of public attitude, expectations in regards to governmental actions, involvement of citizens in deliberation process, and trust to state institution. The present-day communication has changed crucially due to the development of technologies. No doubts that this process opens new opportunities for more thoughtful scrutiny and wider citizens` engagement, which reshapes currently existing public communication of most governmental institutions.

Parliament is a main communicational channel for the public, when examining public impact on the policy making process (Clift S., 2004). Thus the legitimacy of the whole government is mostly based on representative nature of parliament. Therefore, to the parliament-public communication has to be paid special attention. The role of parliament is best judged hardly looking into its ability to begin or frame policies and laws only, but as a discussion board in which citizens` needs, anxieties and complaints may be addressed, and the public ideas can be heard in all of its flourishing diversity (S. Coleman, 2006). For this reason the practice to apply new internet-based means of parliamentary public communication will be investigated using the experience of two institutions: UK Parliament, which has the highest level of internet application in Europe (United Nations Survey, 2010), and Ukrainian one.

Therefore, my goal is to understand which internet-based applications of British Parliament are worth to borrow for Ukrainian one, taking into account background factors in both countries.

Literature review. Since the topic of internet as a new channel of parliamentary communication remains unclear concerning the outcomes of current changes and the level of possible further application of technologies, which may happen in order to involve citizens, very little literature may be found precisely about the examined topic. Nevertheless, the thoughtful

overview of communicative activities phenomenon we can find in the research of Wood, J. (2006), who concludes with an idea that one's perception of reality is based on communication (the exchange of senses). This study put more light on the definition of "communication" term. When it comes closer to public communication of the governmental institutions, the works of Weerakkody, V. (2007, 2009) have a high value. He analyses e-Government concept and pays a lot of attention to accompanying issues in different countries and comes up with the conclusion that though every specific case has its peculiarities, most states face the same challenges. For my paper it may be useful when discussing about supportive and preventive factors for further implementation of parliamentary public communication in Ukraine and UK. Concerning the latest internet tendencies it is useful to explore researches of Blumler, J. (2001), Gurevitch M. (2010), where quite a lot of statistical data is available also regarding parliamentary communication. The authors are quite optimistic about joining together state institutions and latest technologies. Particularly fruitful they see mentioned integration for parliaments, because it opens wide feedback opportunities for public. This set of researches assist in better understanding of positive features of parliamentary communication for citizens. Studies of Leston-Bandeira C. (2007, 2009) and Setala M. (2006), who were exploring parliamentary webpages of European countries, help to determine variables used to explore websites of Ukrainian and UK Parliaments. Both of them also summarized that opportunities for public involvement online across Europe remained low.

Besides, quite a lot of literature and resources is used to go deeper into problem. In order to be closer to Ukrainian ground we should take into account the work of Bereza A. (2009), who describes idea of e-Governance concept in Ukraine. Kudrov M. (2007) and Goshovsky V. (2008) write about functions of Ukrainian MPs, which in my paper assists in modifying variables (for analyzing webpages) found in researches mentioned above. Different surveys, such as UN one (2010) or the one of this paper may also bring more clearance to the topic.

The literature review shows that only some studies are available about internet-based public communication of British Parliament, and none describes one of Ukrainian Parliament. Though quite enough works demonstrate development of technologies in Ukraine and functions of MPs, there was no study trying to join these issues. Therefore, my paper is a first plant on Ukrainian soil of internet-based parliamentary communication. It is aimed to investigate opportunities which new channels of parliamentary communication bring.

Research question. By describing the latest trends in public communication as a tool to reach an interactive communication between Parliament and citizens, and exploring theoretical background and experience of its practical application, we face the main research question:

What internet-based channels of public communication, already implemented by UK Parliament, may improve interaction between the Ukrainian Parliament and the public?

Specific research questions. The main research question entails also some specific ones. In order to investigate the appropriateness of new communication strategies we should as well answer the following questions:

Which opportunities do internet-based channels of public communication bring regarding the interaction between governmental bodies and society?

What benefits and difficulties is UK Parliament experiencing concerning the implementation of internet-based channels of public communication?

What options of online public communication are already provided by Ukrainian Parliament and what elements of British practice are worth to embed in the future?

Research design. In the beginning of the thesis we focus on its conceptual side: the definition of terms, concepts related to public communication of state institutions. An overview of trends in the field of public communication of government is given. Special attention is paid to internet as a new channel of public communication and its difference to old means of public communication of governments is shown. In order to be more concrete, parliamentary communication is examined.

Subsequently the experience in this sphere of UK and Ukrainian Parliaments is explored. In this part we investigate to what extent internet-based channels of public communication are used and what should be developed (information delivery, online services, feedback opportunities, citizens' involvement). Such activities, first of all, include examining potential of parliamentary webpages for public communication. The task is to check how it currently works.

When we have general theoretical knowledge, overview of the problem, it will be an appropriate time to compare the experiences of UK and Ukrainian Parliaments, which hopefully will lead us to concrete recommendations for Ukrainian Parliament in the field of interactive public communication activities. I will then sum up outcomes and write conclusions.

Research methods. Particular attention is paid to the literature study, which allows to investigate and to determine the role of internet-based channels of public communication in governmental activities. It helps to summarize opportunities of wider public communication brought by technical progress. Essential component of this paper is also a comparative method, which helps to assess the public communication implementation in British and Ukrainian Parliaments. This comparison is based on contrasting variables found in surveys aimed to explore development of European parliamentary websites. In the current paper I will divide variables into two groups, reflecting two dimensions of parliamentary activities: output (from-parliament-to-public) and input (from-public-to-parliament). The idea of such a division is to check the

assumption that the input dimension, and thus involvement of citizens, is less developed than the output dimension. Internet research is used in particular to explore parliamentary webpages www.parliament.uk and rada.gov.ua, online-recourses, and check options which they propose. On the basis of such investigation, it is possible to develop recommendations for improving the feedback mechanisms and in general to increase the level of interaction between Parliament and Ukrainians.

Chapter 2. Potential of internet-based channels of parliamentary communication

Introduction. In this chapter I will in the beginning give an explanation to the terms used the most often in the paper in order to avoid misunderstandings. Before analysis of practical implementation of internet channels of parliamentary communication in the following chapters we should acknowledge why and to what extent they are worth to be applied, what potential they have. Therefore, I will also show how communication between governmental institutions and public is changing, and what trends we experience at the moment. Afterwards, changes in parliamentary communication itself are explored. Potential of internet-based channels of parliamentary communication goes finally.

Definition of notions. This research requires being quite specific concerning the use of concepts. Therefore, in the very beginning their definition is given in order to avoid misunderstandings further on. Crucial for the current work is to define such notion as “communication”, since it is being used with a big variety of connotations in the scientific world. Frequently researches stress attention on its information-exchange constitute like, for instance, in the next work (Wood, 2006, p.3), where communication is defined as “a systemic process in which people interact with and through symbols to create and interpret meanings”. Communication, however, as I believe, has a little wider meaning, so I would rather agree with Preston Coleman (P. Coleman, 2008), who claims that “communication remains a purposive behavior intended to influence the emotion, cognition, and/or behavior of a sentient being by engaging the senses, either through physical contact or through the manipulation of an intervening medium”, which is more applicable when we talk about public communication since it is not reduced to interaction through symbols only. Nevertheless, both of them share the same idea of sense/meaning transferring through symbols/medium which is important for this paper. Public communication would be thus governmental-public interaction, pointing out that it is a two-way road, and avoiding propaganda/pr (one-way) interpretation.

The core idea of the following work is to pay attention to the way in which state institutions and public communicate, and to show how technological shifts compose the public communication of governmental institutions. First of all, it requires exploring the role of internet, and its potential for public deliberation, which is seen as engagement of all interested sides for making common decisions concerning various issues.

The term “communication” was employed by social sciences from technical sphere, so for quite a long time it was perceived with its technical background. That is why in the current paper we will use it with this connotation. In general, however, it does not make a huge difference since public communication at the present time requires technical mediation in most cases. Face-to-face contact is decreasing crucially.

Lastly, under “government” I understand ruling bodies of present-day state, independently of their actual structure and location, because they all experience the same problem of low citizens` engagement (Clift S., 2004). In this respect it is also important to distinguish between e-government and internet public communication when we talk about parliament. E-government is a mechanism aimed to create an easy, transparent, and cheap interaction between government(s), citizens and business. It involves all state institutions including parliament, but comparing to internet public communication of parliament which focuses on how senses/meanings circulate between parliament and public, e-governance`s core is service providing and interaction with public in order to improve it. Even e-voting (part of e-government), an option which helps to give one`s voice easily online, has all features of service. E-government is perceived as an umbrella for all ICT-based models. Hence if we see internet public communication as a service, then it becomes a part of e-government concept. This approach is used in my paper. The more specific definition of the terms will be given in the context further on.

As “...legitimacy of government decision-making emerges in the first instance from parliament – the body elected by the people in periodic, competitive elections” (Holzhacker, 2002, p.182-183), the role of parliamentary public communication is put into central focus in this paper, comparing practices of UK Parliament and Ukrainian one.

Trends of the government-public communication. Current public communication presents some worrying signals. As this communication is generally mediated, the primary concern is that media propose little deliberately useful political content. Although users receive more options to choose from, more ways and sources from which to rely on, and more chances than ever before to interact upon the most important governance issues of the day, in general quantity and quality of deep, thoughtful, and deliberative political content is decreasing in a media space that is mostly focus on celebrities, gossips, and judgments. Governmental policies are shown to the public as a cynical game (Gourevich, 2009). One more concern is seen in that traditional media, which is uni-directional, may hardly serve to public interest of deliberation. As a result we got marginalized citizens rather than active and responsible participants of political communities. Furthermore, the government and networks of deliberate communication are so disconnected that public officials forming policies and making agenda-settings are used to disregard them. Governmental representatives could also be (and quite often they are) active participants of this other planet of blogs (tweets), wikis, facebook and other kinds of virtual communities, but that does not mean their presence there as officials. As mentioned by S. Coleman (2006), such participation cannot fight with traditional mass media`s elite-set agendas. Limited access to policy-makers keeps these channels of information unbeatable, having enough resources to frame, judge, and represent public needs. In the last years media tried to involve people into media productions, using interactive means like call-ins, studio debates, reality show, while people`s role as citizens became even more disregarded since it develops solely passive answering and no active collaboration.

Step by step we experience the reshape of public communication in a way of wider involvement of citizens online in most countries (Setala M., Gronlund K., 2006). People face more spaces of mediation than ever before. While in the comparatively recent past, public communication departments had a limited line of press, television, and radio options to think about, they are now engaged in multidimensional communicational activities. This leads to an unavoidable loss of their control concerning political agenda, forcing statesmen into more and more responsive form of interaction rather than the organizational, agenda setting role everybody would prefer to have (Gurevitch, 2009). To deal with broad, proactive, and often rapidly changing media environment in which they now work, governmental actors are forced to accept complex cross-media strategies, which leave a little more than just keeping up with the constant flow of related information and hoping to handle uncomfortable media content before it brings troubles.

Government officials are under the pressure to show themselves as personalities with whom regular people would want to interact. The call for construction of communication with sincere, real personas capable to be seen as trustful and generating conversational communication entails new interactive responsibilities for governmental actors, and especially for politicians holding high governmental positions, who have to develop skills to appear as simple as average citizen and seeming to address "everyone as someone" (Scannell, 2000).

From the time when citizens face more interactions with, for instance, supermarkets, financial companies, travel agencies, and even rather small stores, they might feel frustrated when local councils, members of parliament, Cabinet are turned to be unable to involve into interactive communication. Though governments now provide a variety of services (including online) and numerous local, national, and supranational information channels, they tend to propose very small amount of interactive features for people waiting to give a feedback (Dunleavy, 2005). In the communicational era, government has not started a useful conversation with citizens yet. Governmental officials state very often that government should listen to and interact with the public, but still we have only some examples of good practice. A lot of officials do not have enough confidence to enter the space of public discussion beyond the own cabinets or political TV show.

On the other hand, citizens also experience changes. It was always a problem for people to be informed and have their ideas heard. Due to the latest trends people have gotten an exceptional opportunity to access helpful information and involve into policies activities. It is getting increasingly obvious that the current info-environment meets the complications of information overload and doubts regarding what to believe (Dutton, 2006). This process has its limitations. Whereas people may access more information and communication sources than in a past, this access is lacking equal distribution. It shows existence of social inequality, when poorer, or less educated people may not have access to or enough knowledge regarding last communicational changes (for instance, such as using internet). The increasing importance of the interactive environment may strengthen the voices of the fortunate people, leaving others with

limited resources, knowledge, or to rely upon a narrowing amount of mass-media sources giving limited political information.

In this respect, people who do enjoy access to interactive communication and especially access to the internet are incomparably winning because of many opportunities for them to begin dialogue, ask questions, discuss bothering issues, share personal experience, and explore current discourses. Nevertheless, they meet traditional inappropriate level of direct governmental communication capacities. Although the latest trends in political communication offer good chances to interact with governmental institutions, such as the UK or Ukrainian Parliament, there is an obvious fact that they try first of all to deal with policy delivery, paying quite little attention to understanding and, which is more important, engagement of their citizens, which, however, has its peculiarities in both mentioned countries. Thus this problem is to be scrutinized in the part of case study. Here we want to state only that now people are technologically connected, but politically disconnected due to their communicational disengagement. We believe that governmental officials tend to use only a part of the democratic capacities of interactive communication technologies. This is a problem of all governmental institutions in present-day countries, including revised ones.

Parliamentary public communication. As it was mentioned in the introduction, parliament is a main communication channel for public, when examining government-public communication. Thus legitimacy of the whole government is mainly based on representativeness of parliament. The weight of law-making is lower than other outcomes parliament enjoys in the political system. Perhaps, a much more important outcome in the context of public needs is a conjunction of popular deliberated inputs with government which make policies, and transmitting to policy-makers any significant changes.

Framing so, I see parliament as a communication conjunction between citizens and government. The role of elected members of parliament is to give a top-bottom link. In this context the responsibility of every representative is to maintain communication with those they represent. As mentioned by J. Thomassen (2009, p.16) parliaments have to approve communicative strategies which allow citizens to deliberate and parliaments to follow and learn from public discussions.

Very small attention has been paid by researches and statesmen to the communication between representatives and citizens. In opposite, state officials and even scientists have considered this I would say fundamental democratic relationship as either an addition to electoral campaign or a secondary duty. We should understand that government can never represent public interests better than public itself. For a long time parliamentarian representation as we know it now was the best and probably the only possible solution to rule the society, but the world is changing around us. In this sense due to technical progress and last technologies it is possible to return back into ancient Greece with its direct democracy. Then it was possible to deliberate because of relatively small number of participants. Later on this process turned to be unrealistic

because of plenty essential circumstance such as large population, huge territories, lack of connection and so on. As a result system of representation has emerged as a way to deal with a problem, and it was legitimated because of its higher effectiveness. Therefore, the question raises why should we rely so much on this unchangeable representative system in a way it exists now when thanks to latest communication development wide public may involve into deliberative process. In addition to parliament also other state institutions face lately the same problem of their diminishing trust. I do not mean of course that they are thought to be dismissed, but I claim that this time is seen appropriate for them to be reshaped in the way of wider public involvement applying the newest communication technologies.

In order to illustrate the level of public activity over the last century Norton and Wood (1993, p. 41) have gathered the limited data concerning the correspondence between British MPs and their supporters. MPs in the beginning of the 20th century visited their supporters quite rarely (sometimes only once a year). For a long time after the Second World War MPs were receiving no more than twenty letters per week. In the early 1960s approximately half of MPs did not have special office where to meet with their electorate since it was needless. This percentage has decreased to 10 per cent in some ten years. By this time MPs were receiving up to one hundred letters per week. In ten years (1980s) in average 30 letters per day were sent to MP. Approximately one of ten Englishmen contacted MP at least once a year (Norton and Wood, 1993, p.42). The correspondence, both by letters and e-mails, has significantly expanded in the past 15 years.

Critical mass of people is already there to give their input. Over the last century the hardest task of parliamentarians was to win elections and then he or she could do whatever wanted, paying little attention to precise interests of public since parliamentarian`s skills and understanding were unquestionable. Representative`s presence in the parliament was legitimated as well as legitimated was the existence of parliament as institution because average citizen was not able to take part in the deliberative process as there were no access to suitable information and simple ways to share ideas. In the latest time the role of parliamentarian is changing, however, from representation to mediation. After elections the work of parliamentarian only begins. One`s efforts is hardly enough to deal with the whole complexity of emerging and rapidly changing problems, so engagement of many people is needed to face these challenges. Perhaps it is barely realized, but institutions are going to lose even the left citizens` impact if their public communication will not be updated. Just to inform is hardly enough at present time.

Nevertheless, the way of coping with such communication was not changed considerably over the past century: parliamentarians remain dependent on voluntary support to deal with the pressures of constituent needs and we still face an assumption that communication needs should be handled individually, albeit most supporters are bothering their representatives about common policy issues rather than individual problems.

Potential of interactive communication. In the 1990s internet appeared and rapidly became a public network. A lot of witnesses assumed it to be a new opportunity for governmental officials, as individuals, and government, to set a more transparent and direct relationship with citizens. This belief has its roots in three ideas.

Firstly, internet let communication based on asynchronous presence of people. It has the capacity to dismiss some of the main barriers of distance and time which have kept citizens away from a more direct relationship with state officials (Coleman, 2004). For instance, as a replacement for them of physical visiting of the office, which for most is both problematic and unapproachable, there might be private consultations via online office. Instead for governmental departments of having to assemble in one place, with time-waste travelling, in many cases it seems more efficient to share ideas via video or immediate messaging. This experience is already used in some countries. Personal communication is of course frequently better and sometimes necessary, but virtual communication produce the impression that officials are always being available. It is a change which shifts crucially the task which people will require from governmental officials. These are calls for adjustment of state institutions to specific practices, as it has been adopted in most modern business and some public services.

Secondly, idea is that changing one-way public relation for interactive communication is possible to make existing institutions more sensitive to diversity of public needs, and thus more legitimate. All over the last twentieth century mass communication media were into the message spreading mode. Information receivers hardly had opportunities to react on this message production. It is a one-way conversation. The existence of feedback within interactive media develops a two-way conversation. It is anymore not possible for state officials to send message to their supporters expecting nothing to come. Governmental department, for instance, is forced to create a web page with information, inviting visitors to reflect on what is written. Interactive feedback offers a base for democratic accountability. Desire to keep the current situation would lead state institutions to the reject of their power.

Thirdly, which is probably hard to predict for sure, appears the idea of consistent transition from spectacle to activities (Blumler, Coleman, 2001, p.9). Media became more available for people. They may use videos, blogs, podcasts and so on to share their information and ideas. We observe a tendency regarding the democratization of public communication, with news stories coming from diverse resources. Using internet, everyone can now become a TV channel, and to some extent have influence on political life. Media organizations are more and more interested in finding options to involve real people into the political discussion, so at least a little widening the space of scrutiny beyond the government.

These ideas concerning the deliberative potential of the new communication possibilities have twisted into two lines of seeing the future of state institutions.

One of them perceives the changing communication (mainly because of internet) as an answer to the problem of representation, which helps to transmit better the needs of the citizens

to elected bodies. Even before the time when idea of interactive communication was developed, the problem of citizens' involvement into deliberative process has been already on the table. Alvin Toffler asserted that "spectacular advances in communications technology have undermined old political assumptions: the old objections to direct democracy are growing weaker at precisely the same time that the objections to representative democracy are growing stronger" (Toffler, 1981, p. 431).

Others (Chadwick A., May C., 2003) stress attention on the possibilities of communication based on digital technologies to transfer information. Everybody may be reached and everything can be explained by state institutions. In this sense, public have opportunity to understand what is going on around, since latest technologies allow for state institutions to deliver message to every interested person in the appropriate level of one's perception. I believe, however, that this second line of thinking does not use the whole flourishing capacities of public involvement into decision-making process.

The difficulty with current government-public interaction is frequently showed in terms of disconnection. Restating this idea – it is a public who became unplugged from the system of traditional power. But I believe that we see here problem of another kind. More evident that confidence in government is lost. In the public communication which is mostly mediated, a lot of scientists blame the traditional media for turning people off deliberative process (S. Coleman, 2004). Nevertheless, many hope that new, online interactive media will return them again. State officials call for public reconnection with government. Still there is a danger of understanding it as banal idea of connecting communication technology with public engagement without dealing with the surrounding problems. Hardly somebody would not agree that we are living in a time of diminishing public participation. It can be seen in decreasing voter turnout, the membership in political parties and of course in a lack of trust for governmental institutions.

System of communication is changing all around. Government communication should be updated. People need intelligent coverage and discussion, but not solely a 24-hour news thread. Society now stresses more attention on independence and individualism. It is less respectful to status and wants to have more than just opinions of professionals. Besides information and accountability, increasingly it requires influence.

Many governments in the Western Europe have launched e-government programmes, aimed to change the service delivery to the public and to enhance one-way connection – from government – to public. Although it is a step in a right direction, the public is partly unsatisfied by e-government. Level of use of governmental web pages remains low. More than 5 years ago barely somebody of European citizens have tried to access any of government services online, but this number is gaining increasingly in some last years. Low usage of different online services 5 years ago was mainly coursed by too complicated procedure of citizen-service interaction, or in other words – low usability. Where necessary surveys were done – the level of use became rather high. Another problem, however, that this one-way linkage is not enough anymore.

We have today more media channels. There is also a more diverse public: more individual, reflexive and mobile. The recognition of these shifts is essential for any thoughtful reshape of the role of public communication. Therefore, I would like to highlight some changes which are significant if we want to understand what is waiting for the public communication in the very nearest future. First of all, it is a shift from uni-direction to interaction. Then, we observe decreasing role of traditional media and development of internet-based channels. And lastly, the reshape of system of democratic representation as we know it now to more deliberative one is an expected outcome of technological development. The combination of these changes leads us to the redesign of public communication and gaining governmental effectiveness. Therefore our main focus is the way in which governmental institutions, specifically the UK and Ukrainian Parliaments, meet the present-day changes of public communication and what is to be done in this field from their side.

The public should have a greater sense of ownership (S. Coleman, 2004). In this sense, citizens' disengagement is barely the same as apathy. In opposite, many people are concerned about, worried, or have relevant opinions concerning elaborative activity of government, and particularly parliament. The biggest cause of public uninvolvedness is that citizens do not see the importance of their voices for decision-making. Government is experiencing decreasing reliance on it.

Summary of this part. The interactive internet communication could give citizens a new set of channels for keeping governments more accountable by asking questions to representatives, ministers and parties, by disapproving and talking about deliberative and administrative disappointments, by policy assessment and so on. Better policy process is possible due to consultations on policy options. New internet-based communication media step by step supplement older ones, such as unmediated communication, TV-communication, radio and press. It opens space for political involvement. On the one hand government may explain its activities and develop services online (paying taxes and fines, buying licenses and so on), which we further call from-government/parliament-to-public dimension. On the other hand, citizens may consult and interact with state official since direct channels of engagement are possible which leads to strengthening of representation and participation – from-public-to-government/parliament dimension.

There are no doubts left that advantages and opportunities of internet-based communicational channels described above would have positive impact on activity of state agencies in general, and on interaction between them and citizens in particular. This is, however, an ideal picture, which is to be analyzed when applied to practice. Therefore, if we want to understand in what way the process of theory-to-practice transformation should develop in the case of Ukrainian Parliament, it is useful to check how it works in one of the countries which is believed to be successful in this field. Case of UK Parliament is elaborated in the second chapter. Specifically supportive and preventive factors are described next, and also parliamentary webpage

and the opportunities it brings are examined. In the third part Ukrainian background concerning internet channels of communication of Parliament, including exploration of parliamentary webpage is shown and recommendations based on British experience are provided.

Chapter 3. Internet public communication of UK Parliament

Introduction. In this part the experience of UK Parliament in the implementation of the internet-based channels of public communication is scrutinized. Under UK Parliament I understand The House of Commons (lower house), which depends on the context, but usually no distinction is needed between The House of Commons and The House of Lords, because both Houses share the same webpage www.parliament.uk.

Since the purpose of this paper is to identify the key features which are important for the internet-based public communication of Ukrainian Parliament in order to rise at higher level, the practices of UK Parliament in mentioned field are analyzed. Knowledge of ideal communicational strategy would barely lead us to implementation of properly working practices. Due to plenty of challenges in specific situation it should be modified and suitable for the society which uses it.

In the previous chapter the main idea of benefits which new channels of public communication bring to citizens was developed, and this one focuses on the actual application of the strategy. The process of exploring is built in the following way. First, we give the explanations why UK Parliament practices may be a good example to go after and of course what limitations it entails concerning the structure of power and also development of countries in general. Then internet-based public communication itself is analyzed, being divided into two parts, which in particular means to explore the opportunities which parliamentary webpage gives in two dimensions. The first one tells about the output of UK Parliament website for citizens. The second one elaborates input of public.

The case of UK Parliament was chosen as a best example for Ukrainian counterpart due to some important peculiarities. The main impact for this decision had the results of the recent United Nations Survey (2010) regarding the level of development of e-government in the countries around the world. Although most people share the view that e-government is about one-way communication: from-government-to-public (institution-to-population direction), we should as well remember about reverse communication: from-public-to-government. As we can see from the UN Survey (2010, p.61) Europe is the most progressive part of the world when talking about e-government application with development index value equal to 0.6227 in average. Furthermore, United Kingdom enjoys the highest rank around European states with 0.8147 points, so in this sense I can assume that UK has valuable experience to borrow. There is no available statistical data of solely parliamentary internet public communication, but e-participation may quite precisely reflect the progress in the field.

The other reason why the case of UK was selected is socio-cultural similarities with Ukraine. First of all, both countries are located at the opposite edges of the same continent, so they share core elements of European culture. They have comparable territory and population. After Constitutional reform in Ukraine in 2004, both countries experience the structure of power when executive branch is formed by the Prime-Minister, who in his turn is proposed by parliament

(however appointed by Queen or President respectively), so to some extent both Parliaments may exercise their functions through Cabinets.

Two models of representative democracy, when we treat elected representatives either as "trustees" or as "delegates", also matters in the comparison. Initially this concept was developed by Edmund Burke more than two centuries ago (Fox J., Shotts K., 2007), but it still remains important. In the delegate model delegates try to reflect the wishes of the constituency. In the trustee model they in opposite represent interests of the whole country and to highlight wishes of one's supporters means to be biased. The model in Ukraine is purely trustee one, when MPs do not have strong ties with population of specific region and behave as defenders of greater common good. British MPs have more developed features of delegation in their work, but, nevertheless, they also continue to behave mostly as trustees, which depends, however, on constituency itself and specific elections (Fox J., Shotts K., 2007). Thus the representative model of both countries we may mark as "trustee". This conceptualization makes sense when it comes to the communication between MPs and public via internet-based means.

One more reason for choosing United Kingdom is a language. Because of English it is much easier to investigate appropriate resources and to go deep enough into details.

In order to explore UK Parliament's webpage and in the next chapter – Ukrainian one, I will use an approach of Leston-Badeira (2009), who was comparing websites of 15 European Parliaments. In her turn she applied Norton's (1998) distinguish of parliamentary functions and explored how they were embedded on parliamentary webpages. For my research I will use this approach, but slightly modifying variables due to peculiarities of analyzed countries and recent changes on their websites. Results of such comparison may be found in Appendix 1.

There are, however, some limitations, which should be pointed out. Firstly, e-government cannot fully reflect public communication development, because they deal within different scope, which was explained before, so we cannot completely rely on UN survey while talking about internet-based public communication. Secondly, though UK and Ukraine are located in Europe, they have different historical background. Thirdly, these countries have different level of economical development. Fourthly, though in both Parliaments only some parties are represented and parliamentary process is about parties' discussion, British parliamentarians are supposed to have deeper ties with their supporters, because members of House of Commons are elected on the basis of single member plurality system (called first-past-the-post in British interpretation), when candidate is aimed to win in particular geographic constituency (Dunleavy P., Margetts H., 2005), while Ukrainian supporters vote for party lists. Ukrainian MPs, however, after election are attached to districts around the country in order to keep in touch with voters.

At their research M. Setala and K. Gronlund (2006) were investigating the parliamentary websites of some European countries. They concluded that revised countries faced similar challenges and had common possibilities in the sphere of internet communication. Based on this outcome, we may assume that it is reasonable to compare UK and Ukraine (which are both

European) as well. Thus, despite all limitations, practices of UK Parliament seem suitable for Ukrainian ground.

Development of internet strategy by UK government. In practice it is hard to distinguish internet public communication of e-government, especially if we deal with legislation, since it is mostly adopted under the label of e-governance. Therefore, if we want to explore parliamentary public communication we should always take into consideration the broader concept of e-government. Quite often e-government strategies consist of service component (pure electronic government) and e-democracy. Although for this paper the second one has much higher value, it seems illogical to ignore the context. Besides that, we cannot always make a clear distinction when it comes to practice. Directly or indirectly the e-government framework has impact on internet public communication of parliament.

To achieve the e-participation vision in the UK, Parliament has entrusted the Cabinet to develop a consistent strategy with a precisely elaborated plan of action which used the achievements and resources of the private sector. Mentioned strategy is supported by a leadership role of Cabinet (Weerakkody, Jones, Olsen, 2007). It also states some features on how to measure the progress. Though Cabinet makes most of elaborative work, Parliament remains the main actor in this process of the promoting of public communication plan. There are four core principles in the strategy, which mainly aimed on e-governance development in the country, but has a huge impact on the parliamentary communication as well. Around them: to build services around the citizens' needs; to make government in general and services in particular more available; to include different groups; and to promote better use of information (Transforming government, annual report 2005). In this sense, due to current private sector internet development, population of the country is aware that initiatives like internet parliamentary public communication are a good way to help in releasing of deliberative opportunities (Transformational government strategy, 2005).

In November 2002 the National Strategy was announced, which priorities were the developments in technology and e-services. This idea found support because it was supposed to reduce the costs of governmental activities. New services were expected to be more e-business oriented and more available, updated, approachable, and cost-effective (Gairola B.K. (ed.), 2004). As a result UK introduced wide changes to its internet communication program starting in 2003-2004.

The arrangement of the e-envoy office which came after the Prime Minister's initiative to aim the government at delivering of all public services online by 2008, became the core of program. That goal of 2008 was then changed for 2005, hurrying the process of development and making it quite challenging. Nevertheless, in 2005 the Cabinet declared that the support of the program would be remained till 2008. It was not a return to 2008 target, since many institutions managed to reach the appropriate level (Weerakkody V., Dwivedi Y., 2009, p.5). The idea of the further strategy support was to deepen changes.

As British society in past years experiences a large growth in application of information technology (IT) and in development of a plenty of high-quality programs, the new vision of information and communication technologies (ICT) has been elaborated, which helped in transformation of the e-envoy into the e-government Unit (eGU) (Parliamentarians & ICTs, 2005). The role of this department was slightly changed. It was more focused on guaranteeing that IT supports the business-similar renovation of government itself. The main idea for the government was to be able to offer better, more efficient public services. The issue of receiving feedback from the public was less important. In 2007 eGU was closed down and the new system emerged – DirectGov - www.direct.gov.uk. Cabinet in this way gathered all e-services under its wing. Every governmental institution was in charge of backing its own IT plan which would not contradict to the strategy of DirectGov, which means that UK Parliament is responsible for input dimension of public communication and is supposed to develop appropriate opportunities for citizens (Coleman S., 2006). Therefore, UK Parliament is also implementing new ICT systems to fulfill the criteria of the governmental strategy. While in general this program has lifted the level of service and information given to the citizens, UK government, and particularly Parliament with its www.parliament.uk webpage development has met a plenty of difficulties which it should solve in order to provide citizens with fully efficient, useful electronic system which rely on their input. Next some of the challenges will be investigated.

Supportive and preventive factors for UK Parliament. In order to truly understand the situation with internet public communication of UK Parliament, the background of the problem is described. For this reason I divide factors in regards to public communication via new channels into two groups: supportive and preventing ones. Every factor has positive or negative influence on development of communicational channels. Therefore, after describing each factor I will show how it shapes parliamentary website and on which variables from Appendix 1 it has particular impact.

Supportive factors for further application of internet public communication.

An important idea of internet public communication is to move from the manual procedures to the e-business environment, which has emerged in some recent years and continues to involve more and more people. British society has taken a plenty of similar steps towards digital connectivity in power issues (Transformational government strategy, 2005). As a result, there is a support of digital media, which currently helps to convert many manual and routine tasks. It has impact on many variables (Appendix 1), for instance legislative archive, online video streaming of parliamentary debates (including committees) and its archive and so on.

In general these changes have a positive impact on British citizens from the technical point of view. UK provides free internet access via public terminals and kiosks, and information via digital television is also available, different e-functions were revised. Efforts are put to link up with one another as many people and groups of people as possible including Parliament, communities, business, wide public in general (Weerakkody, V., Jones, S., Olsen, E., 2007); and use other

possibilities which internet gives for social inclusion, which is extremely important when we talk about representativeness of online consultations and similar deliberative opportunities.

One more supportive factor is that internet-based public communication gives an enhanced opportunity for citizens to access information, and also to make their input, which has influence on the presence on parliamentary website of materials of legislative process like reports and recordings of committee meetings, adopted legislation, current proposals.

Application of new practices meets also some *preventing factors*.

The context of MPs and parliamentary employees does matter. Nothing strange is that from an organizational point of view, quite a lot of MPs and staff members were opposing the emergence of additional responsibilities which reshapes their roles and were demonstrating a lack of enthusiasm during discussions referring to the application of new options of public communication. Even though people obtaining high and middle level position in the UK Parliament and in supportive bodies welcome internet channels of parliamentary public communication and in general are committed to the proposals, different political factors decrease the speed of progress and level of quality regarding various initiatives (Parliamentarians & ICTs, 2005). Thus representative function is barely embedded on parliamentary webpage, which makes difficult to open new cooperative channels between citizens and MPs.

One of preventive factors is an amount of financial resources needed for recreating and turning current processes into online dimension. Even more, many MPs were disappointed with the little resources given for internet public communication projects, pointing out that in many countries (Canada, USA) this support is bigger (UN Survey, 2010). Abilities of developers of internet public communication projects were limited because of insufficient resources and also due to procedures when financial support comes in packages in the beginning of every year (Weerakkody V., Dwivedi Y.). This way of transferring is keeping strategy developers away from a long-term plan for parliamentary public communication. Specifically it means that communication department of UK Parliament is barely flexible enough to change the strategy in meantime during the year and quite often even in-between financial years. If the target of application is changed as it was referring to 2008-target transfer to 2005 (and then back), flexibility of financial delivery may be lost. Besides, the way of resources allocation by the Cabinet, the process of step by step development of the parliamentary strategy and also spending procedures prevent online public communication from rapid development. In this respect structural integrity and usability of webpage remain lower than it could have been.

From a technical point of view the process of tenders and delivery of the technology, various applications and needed software as well as hardware used for internet communication is pretty a challenging task. Especially keeping in mind that UK Parliament is not a business company and its experience in internet communication with costumers is relatively small. It has narrow knowledge in e-communication. Nevertheless, it may be turned into advantage since a lot of reputed companies are ready to help UK Parliament in the field they have already gathered a huge

experience in. This of course touches only technical side of the problem and organizational arrangements remain unclear and need elaboration in every specific case. Therefore, it may be summarized that the core preventing factor is barely a technical problem. In opposite, changes outside the Parliament only force it to go forward. Presence of parliamentary website itself legitimates existence of Parliament, because it shows that Parliament goes in line with time and good looking, usable, helpful website (to which citizens are getting used when contact private sector) persuades public to rely on it.

Talking about a social perspective we should take into account that UK has quite a high percentage of an aging population which is more confident at face-to-face communication with any employee than via internet, and in general their motivation for participation is low. Besides this, economic challenges prevent a lot of citizens from buying a personal computer. Maybe even more important is that the price of high-speed internet services remains in average high in the country and internet access keeps some social groups away from using new channels of parliamentary communication. Some local researches made in 2008-2009 (Weerakkody V., Dwivedi Y.) show that most residents considered that the phone was the easiest option to access the offices of their representatives, and most believed that there was little demand on online communication. In this perspective, the Parliament has faced the market problem, where it has to sell the idea of internet communication with actually has a small demand from the citizens as buyers. Still, which helps in this point, is that UK citizens have a free internet access at local libraries and through special internet places. Nevertheless, this problem prevents many citizens from being in touch with latest legislation and proposals, from contacting MPs in the easiest way, expressing their views at the deliberative process and so on.

It may sound strange, but language is another social reason that is keeping citizens away from using the internet possibilities proposed by the Parliament. Even in UK some of ethnic minorities hardly communicate in English and it is impossible for them to use parliamentary communication options. These groups of people choose accessible in their own languages options, which are mostly just hard copy booklets with information. Maybe, this problem will be finally solved with time when parliamentary web site will be available in different languages. Some features (like video streaming) are still available, but make little sense, because MPs talk in English anyway. Most options are not available without English.

Flaws in the UK laws in the field of cyber crime, data-protection, personal information protection, and credit card fraud remain important barriers to e-participation development, since people are less confident about revealing of their personal data on the internet. People with different ethnic and social backgrounds have different attitude towards using of technology. In this situation age matters as well. It has no impact on legislative or legitimated functions, but at the same time it endangers function where people need to share their personal information: representation and deliberation.

As we may see there are more factors which prevent UK Parliament from the implementation of new technologies in public communication and development of new channels of communication than support them. The trend remains clear though that citizens receive more possibilities to involve into the deliberative process. In the British case the importance of such mechanism of actual involvement as online consultation is growing considerably. Nevertheless, a lot of challenges still are to be overcome.

Exploring parliamentary webpage. By 1998 87% of European Parliaments started their online programs (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2000, p. 3). UK Parliament began this process in early 1990th by establishing its own website, thus from the very beginning becoming a leader in the internet public communication sphere. From that time a lot has been changed and now we hardly talk about pure online presence of parliaments, but mostly about quality of content and opportunities which parliament provides. Next the content of website of UK Parliament is analyzed. It is made in two dimensions. The first one shows how parliamentary public communication works in the direction: from-parliament-to-citizens/public (reflecting activities of Parliament), and the second one examines other way of communication: from-citizens-to-UK Parliament, thus exploring opportunities for public engagement into legislative process (reshape of agenda and influence on outcomes). Norton (1998) proposed to distinguish four main roles played by modern European parliament: legislation, legitimation, representation and deliberation. Concerning my task to analyze two different dimensions of internet public communication, it is possible to address legislation and legitimation as the first dimension: from-Parliament-to-citizens, and representation and deliberation as the second one respectively.

Internet is a cost-effective mean which may be used by state officials in order to reach a lot of different publics. Hence it can be a strong tool to improve both dimensions of public communication in any parliament. In the UK where internet is seen as an essential part of peoples' everyday life, Parliament's website becomes much more than a channel for parliamentary news and information. As stated at official website www.parliament.uk it promotes an active citizenship, and also proposes a more dynamic interaction with/between various stakeholders.

In regards to the arrangement of website I may point out that the structure of UK government and respectively the functions of Parliament have quite a big impact on the way parliamentary webpage is created and operates. UK Parliament is influenced by some factors such as electoral system or responsibilities it has. Due to its structural characteristics UK Parliament tend to play a more representative role, which, however, may be said only about British House of Commons. Therefore, a special attention should be paid to the share Parliament responsible for, when analyzing its website.

Initially, from-parliament-to-public dimension is elaborated. It is important to say that legislative information is widely presented on the website. In this sense it is barely a strange fact, because one of the first functions of the Parliament was to make laws, which entails their

initiation, correction and passing. Though at present day UK Parliament hardly plays the most important role in law elaboration, it does exercise the constitutional framework to pass laws (Leston-Bandeira C., 2007). So it actually quite rarely begins and develops laws. This function is diminishing. On the other hand, some other functions receive more time and attention of parliamentarians.

The position of from-parliament-to-public dimension on parliamentary webpage is strong in the way how it explains what it exists for and how is shown to citizens the role, which Parliament is/was playing in everyday life, in particular concerning historical heritage and present political system. If we keep in mind that in reality most of the work historically being made by Parliament now is proceed by other institutions (P. Norton, 1998) and look through parliamentary website, then we will figure out that regarding legislative part it proposes much more than indeed was elaborated by parliamentarians. Internet opens superb opportunities for accessing the information, including legislative database www.statutelaw.gov.uk/. Thus nothing strange that UK Parliament`s webpage covers quite a lot of functions which are associated with Parliament`s duties, but currently partially or completely made by other agencies. New channels of public communication allow an effective way of information delivery and UK Parliament uses this easy way to set the legislative role under its wing.

The more essential, however, for my paper the second dimension: from-public-to-Parliament. Based on the data findings at Appendix 1, and addressing representation and deliberation as our second dimension, we may see rather strange results showing that UK Parliament has output (first dimension) much prevailing over input. So now it is obvious that to each of dimensions UK Parliament pays different degree of attention.

In the beginning we assumed that online public communication opens wide opportunities for citizens` representation. In practice, however, ties between elected MPs and electorate remain weak. This may be proven by data at Appendix 1, when representation as a function of UK legislative body is valued as the less developed at parliamentary webpage. To some extent I may argue that everything which has to do with Parliament is about its representative role and it is hard to distinguish it. Nevertheless, it reflects the opportunities which are given on website in accessing MPs, any of party or parliamentary committee.

For elections to House of Commons single member plurality system is used (often called first-past-the-post), when candidate is aimed to win in particular geographic constituency, which means that he or she is believed to have strong ties with one`s electorate and region (Dunleavy P. and Margetts H., 2005). Even though, while examining the webpage, hardly some options were found that may enhance the representative role of Parliament. The availability of parliamentary output dominates over the availability of the parliamentary institution and its members.

Another element which constitute from-public-to-parliament dimension of internet public communication is deliberative one. Data which may be useful in this sense state that development of British Parliament webpage is equal to 59%. Its level of deliberative opportunities is comparably

low. At the same time in line with traditional deliberative process (oral and written questions to Cabinet, committee debates and so on) we can also find truly public deliberative options. For instance, it is possible to take part in Committee inquiry, to submit evidence on a Bill, or to petition Parliament online. Although these opportunities push deliberative process in a right direction, but in general they lack structural framework and representativeness. Therefore, I want to stress a special attention on rather new mechanism of e-consultations. A lot of studies find online consultation practices as a good way of the future virtual citizens' involvement (Parliamentarians & ICTs, 2004). It shows a change of focus away from studies of MPs direct engagement with the citizens and groups on a basis of personal communication to thoughtful deliberative process in a way of simulated consultations. Though these parliamentary consultations without doubts continue to highlight interaction between MPs and citizens, they are less personal in the way of expressing group believes and thoughts, debating on a specific issue. Coleman (2004) analyzed 10 online consultations held by the UK Parliament in 1998-2002. The reason was to invite people with knowledge in specific field rather than random citizens. Although there were many optimistic outputs, for instance networking within public representatives and in general a high quality of debate, it barely brought to better trust between public and MPs. The problem of trust between MPs and public when using ICT is practical one, but was not investigated in appropriate depth in empirical researches. This lack of attention happened because data availability is low due to small number of online consultations.

Even though, the difference between two dimensions of parliamentary activity is obvious. One may say that such low level may be explained by the role UK Parliament plays in deliberative process, which is quite limited. If it is right, then the same may be said about legislative constituent. But this is not true, because its degree of presence at official webpage even exceeds the part of work made by Parliament. So it may be better seen as a cultural political heritage, when output of legislative activity prevails over input from the public. This structure of parliamentary work is set in mind of most MPs and citizens, thus perceived by them as normal state. As mentioned in my theoretical part such parliamentary process barely uses positive opportunities of internet-based public communication to enhance democratic mechanisms. At the same time concerning my paper it becomes easier for Ukrainian counterpart to start programs which have been established by UK Parliament, since in Ukrainian society due to cultural political heritage output also prevails over input (Semetko H., Krasnoboka N., 2003) and parliamentarians and citizens express skeptical opinions in regards to from-public-to-parliament dimension of public communication via internet. Nevertheless, considering that this dimension is announced as currently a main priority of parliamentary developments in UK (Transformational government strategy, 2005), it was astonishing to find such low attention on the website. Parts dedicated to deliberation process are definitely present on parliamentary webpage, but the way in which these opportunities are presented is hardly a best one. It is especially clear when compared to legislative

part. The from-public-to-parliament dimension does not receive as much place as from-parliament-to-public one in the way webpage of Parliament is organized.

The analysis of opportunities, UK Parliament webpage provides with, shows that [the](#) website tends to focus on the first dimension, which in particular derives from the institutional context. Thus such function as legislation and legitimation are better embedded on parliamentary website than representation and deliberation. An important thing regarding British context noticed by Leston-Bandeira C. (2009) is that Parliament is an institution, which represents citizens, but at the same time its constituents (MPs, their assistants, staff) are the members of some party. On the one hand parliamentary process should be fair to all political parties, backed by their supporters and represented in Parliament, which means that final product of their activity is seen as a result of the work of Parliament as an institution (hardly of some of its parts alone) and which leads us to the idea of representative and neutral exercise of power. This neutrality is presented on its webpage, which in general seems logical. Thus it may also be a good explanation why parliamentary webpage pays so much attention to outputs and tries to avoid where possible accent on actors. On the other hand, by involving politics into parliamentary webpage, Parliament would have destroyed neutrality it has now, but would have enhanced political discussions, because it is a good incentive for citizens to engage into political field. Parliamentary process in UK is greatly based on party division though, which keeps input opportunities potentially strong, but practically undeveloped.

Chapter 4. Internet public communication of Ukrainian Parliament

Introduction. In the beginning we should understand to what extent internet public communication is applied by Ukrainian state institutions, and particularly by Parliament. Since there is no single program for parliamentary communication adopted, and also single strategy plan for all Ukrainian state agencies does not exist, I present the overview of legislative framework of internet communication in order to catch the level of progress. Then supportive and preventive factors are put on the table. Afterwards, features of parliamentary website are analyzed, followed by comparison to British parliamentary website. Subsequently some recommendations are given aimed to improve interaction between Ukrainian Parliament and public by mean of internet-based channels of communication.

When we talk about a country's development, there are four stages of the growth showing level of implementation of internet technologies by state authorities that can be distinguished. They are web presence, start of interaction, electronic documents, and implementation of electronic services/interactivity (UN Survey, 2008). The first phase includes the publication of information on the webpage for citizens seeking information on procedures and implementation of different services. The second stage enables electronic documentation and gives start to online communication. The third phase comprises the flow of electronic documents (for instance, the acceptance of electronic documents by state institutions). The fourth stage gives access to the integrated electronic input/output options which are provided by more than one public body. Also more opportunities are open for the development of public-private cooperation and involvement of citizens.

According to the last UN survey (2010), Ukraine is now at the second stage (start of e-interactivity) of development and keeps a high place in Eastern Europe with overall index value - 0.5181 (#54 of all states), conceding, however, the Baltic countries, including the recognized leader in this field among former Soviet countries - Estonia. More deep analysis of data collected by UN experts indicates that Ukraine has good human development indicators (literacy rate is also taken into account) - 0.3184, a lot worse situation with the web index, which shows a stage of development where the country is, only 0.1177, and index of infrastructure (including the number of internet users, computers, main telephone lines, mobile phones and the possibility of broadband internet access) - 0.0821. Though development of e-governance in general cannot directly represent development of specific internet parliamentary public communication, but many background factors (like literacy rate, web infrastructure and so on) form a basis for implementation of both concepts. This overview with concrete data concerning e-governance resources helps to focus on important factors for internet-based public communication (for which the same data is not yet available) in current chapter.

Ukrainian authors are more skeptic about the Ukraine's progress in implementing e-

government, believing that country is only at the first stage - the stage of informing (and far from good level) people about government activities (Bereza A., 2009). Only some agencies apply certain elements of the second phase - the arrangement of electronic documents in governmental bodies, including the State Tax Administration, Pension Fund, Ministry of Internal Affairs, State Statistics Committee, Licensing Chamber, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Control Standards Committee, Ministry of Education and Science, the State Customs Service.

In my opinion, foreign experts are right, because elements of the e-government, specific to the third stage of development, increasingly appear in activities of state bodies. However, further progress in this direction is not possible without solving the three major challenges: expansion of the internet access, the availability of effective legislation and changing attitude of civil servants' and public towards e-governance in general, and parliamentary public communication in particular.

Similarly to British situation, development of Ukrainian Parliament public communication is dependent on the strategies (legislation) passed by other state bodies under the umbrella of e-government. The difference between e-governance and public communication I described in the theoretical part.

Development of internet strategy by Ukrainian government. The first legislative initiatives to implement elements of e-governance date back to 1993 when Presidential Decree announced a task to develop the main directions of the National Informatization in Ukraine (Bereza A., 2009, p. 608). Results appeared in 1998 by means of cooperation between academics, MPs, representatives of public authorities in a form of National laws "On national program of informatization" and "On the Concept of National Informatization Program". In July 2000 the President of Ukraine issued a Decree, which established the development of the national Internet Information Infrastructure, ensuring wide access to the network by citizens and legal entities of all forms of property in Ukraine. Thus first steps to secure the constitutional rights of citizens for information and to build an open democratic society were done. According to the Decree main objectives were to support infrastructure development of information services via the internet and to develop and introduce modern computer information technologies in public administration system.

Among regulations on issue of e-government, is important the Decree of Cabinet of Ministers, 2002, "The procedure of publishing the information on activities of authorities on the internet". The procedure of publishing the information of authorities' activities in the internet is introduced in order to improve the effectiveness and transparency of reporting system for the authorities. What is more, application and usage of modern information technologies was going to provide citizens with the possibility to influence on processes occurring in the state. From that time legislation is available at parliamentary website. Creation of a single webportal of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine was designed to integrate web sites of some state agencies and accommodate information resources under the supervision of Cabinet to meet the needs of citizens. In order to

address issues that relate to the aspects of implementation of e-governance in Ukraine, Ukraine's Cabinet has adopted a resolution on the establishment of an electronic information system "Electronic government" (Tyshchenko M., 2008). According to the Regulation, it is intended to create appropriate legal framework. "Electronic government" is aimed to allow more rapid and accessible information services to citizens and legal entities using electronic information system. The only law that has direct influence on the Parliament at the moment is "On the basic principles of information society in Ukraine for 2007-2015".

In the end of 2009 a special unit which consisted of MPs, Cabinet representatives, other special state agencies on informational communication announces a "Draft Concept of e-government", which looks like a single strategy for all state institution, but currently is not yet adopted. Important point of the Concept is that it proposes to divide e-governance in Ukraine into services (pure e-government) and e-democracy. Thus Cabinet is supposed to deal with providing services and Parliament responsible for e-democracy (e-participation) respectively. Adoption of this strategy would be a big step forward for Parliament, because its online activities are not regulated at all, except some general documents which help to handle a problem of online framework only partially.

As we can see all legislative efforts were put to create an accessible output of state bodies (first of all - Cabinet), and very few if any were revealing the potential of new channels of communication for citizens' input. Taking into account weak legislative framework, the civil servants and officials are reluctant to accept the principle of openness in their activities and to show the results of their work, procedures in the internet. This problem remains open.

One can affirm that in comparison with post-soviet countries, Ukraine has made a progress in implementing of new communicational channels. However, further progress in this direction is impossible without clear legislation, improvement of the citizens' (including officials') computer skills, transition to openness in their activities, and change in views towards utility of internet-based communicational channels. In order to better understand background of the problem supportive and preventing factors are shown next.

Supportive and preventing factors for Ukrainian Parliament. Similarly to the description of British conditions, in this part I will explore factors which matter when we discuss internet public communication of Ukrainian Parliament. The assumption that Ukrainian authorities meet even more challenges than their UK counterparts is checked by dividing factors into supportive and preventing.

Supporting factors. Initially, internet-based communication assists in a growth of democracy mechanisms. Even if this communicational activity brings small outcome – the existence of the communicational attempts would be a positive sign. The perception of the Parliament by the public and international community would be different. It motivates the Parliament to introduce changes. The essence of e-parliament is to use new channels of communication to strengthen democratic

processes in comparison to present-day representative democracy. The purpose of e-parliament in Ukraine would be to create a portal for citizens' participation in decision making, to increase the influence on implementation of state policy, to solve the problems of geographical and social inclusion, to increase transparency and accountability of the Parliament to citizens. Electronic Parliament is a tool to protect citizen's interests and to enhance the possibilities of cooperation with state through e-parliament technologies. Ukrainian Parliament may be accessible to every person and citizen, which helps in development of better state through better policies. Legitimative function on parliamentary website is thus supported. Perception of the Parliament as an institution pursuing democratic values using modern technologies creates the positive image of the legislative body one may rely on.

There is a gap between MPs and citizens. 450 parliamentarians physically cannot fully understand and truly represent needs of 47-million-population. Therefore, they have an option to create appropriate conditions for holding deliberation process in the on-line mode, where the public could participate. In order to enable the public to supply Parliament with suggestions for improvement of their work, life conditions for all segments of the population in electronic format a lot of work is to be done. Functions of representation and deliberation benefit.

Since the United Nations and the Inter-parliamentary Union identified public communication as a priority for the international parliamentary community for the period of 2010-2020, it is a good time for Ukrainian side to follow the global trends. Participation in the global e-parliament movement makes sense. Primarily Parliament should mobilize resources to create updated national strategy for the development of its interactive capacities and to stimulate wide usage of ICT approaching its legislative, deliberative and representative functions. It has impact on implementing of new options on parliamentary website, and not only improving existing.

Creation of modern e-Parliament will provide informational cooperation between the Parliament of Ukraine, other state institutions, and citizens in accordance with the latest standards in the access to information and influence on the Parliament. For economically developing country a benefit of low value of this cooperation is especially important. It reduces a cost of legislative and deliberative process.

In the case of Ukraine, where political scandals and instability lead to low trust in Parliament (Kudrov M., 2007), it may increase public confidence in the Parliament and enhance citizen engagement in its work, respond more flexibly to the challenges their citizens might have. We should not forget that it could ensure the effective activities of Parliament, its transparency, openness and accountability to citizens, establish the dialogue between the parliamentarians and citizens (including improved reporting mechanisms of MPs to citizens), and also ensure full public access to information of the Parliament. Legitimacy function is thus highlighted.

Some researchers (Coleman, S., 2006) believe that the development of state internet communication concept became possible only due to the effective usage of informational technologies in business. In a case of Ukraine, business, however, had a small impact on state

bodies yet. Potentially, however, this kind of cooperation between state and private sector might have a very positive influence on the internet-based channels used by Parliament. In this way design and usability may be improved.

Implementation of new channels of e-Parliament in Ukraine requires such ICT strategy which includes interaction between the Parliament and citizens, informing citizens, creating channels for receiving and disseminating of information.

Preventing factors. It is obvious from the beginning of this chapter that parliamentary projects meet a lot of practical barriers. These challenges have different background: technical, social, organizational. My paper is stressing attention on the following as main obstacles pertaining to implementation of new channels of public communication of Ukrainian Parliament. Almost all issues are quite interconnected and hard to distinguish as separate units in particular cases though.

It appeared that Parliament and Cabinet as institutions pay comparably little attention to further development and more often try to improve existing system.

We should remember that decisions of state bodies are frequently based on the views of some officials in the institutions empowered and responsible for decision-making process. Thus it is hard to distinguish clearly preventing factors, because they are interrelated. Many MPs and officials are afraid that implementation of ICT will diminish their status and power. Therefore, some e-parliament strategies were denied, others' consideration was delayed and many interruptions happened. The explanation may be also that MPs and parliamentary officials do not want adopt changes (new channels) because they hardly acquainted with advantages of these processes. Nevertheless, it reduces potential of representation and public involvement.

The problem of financial support also emerges. It seems especially sharp at the time of world crisis which had a huge impact on Ukrainian economic sector. E-parliament program receives enough financial resources to keep the current level of communication, but far from enough for progress in this sphere (Draft of the Concept of e-Government development in Ukraine, 2009). Again low usability of parliamentary website appears as a result.

Lack of the accessible, country-wide telecommunication facilities is obstructing the launching of some e-options in Ukraine as well. Dial-up internet does not guarantee availability of existing opportunities for public. When take into account average salary in the country, the cost of internet services is comparably high for population. Considering the previous issue, it is clear enough that public communication technology will work effectively only if there is the internet access among critical percentage of the people. In September 2009, there were 12.34 million internet users in Ukraine, which is only 27% of its population (Bereza A., 2009). However, internet audience tends to demonstrate a stable growth in its number. One also has to take into account the background of preserving geographical disparities. As a rule, Internet users live in large cities (Draft of the Concept of e-Government development in Ukraine, 2009): Kyiv - 59.38% of all users, Odessa - 6.74%, Dnipropetrovsk - 5.41%, Donetsk - 5.19%, Kharkov - 4.18% 5. Fewer users registered in Lutsk (0.13%) Chernivtsy (0.25%) and Zhitomir (0.24%). The e-parliament new options

have no effect if the internet infrastructure is not developed enough to deliver these opportunities. One idea on how to solve the problem could be to begin cooperation with private sector which provides internet services mostly in urban areas and of course strengthening infrastructure of state owned telecom company in the more rural areas. The problem of hardware and software Parliament can easily be solved by engaging experience of non-state companies. Wider social inclusion would open new opportunities for representative e-consultations, e-petitioning, e-expertise and so on.

During exploration of different views I found that both MPs and the wide public expressed a resistance to changes and at the moment quite small percentage of people is ready to accept e-parliament as an alternative way of communication. This reluctance is clear when checking the already introduced e-parliament options. Citizens currently show a small interest in employing this channel of communication. Therefore, more efforts should be put to promote e-parliament potential through appropriate state programs. Parliament plays a role of seller who tries to provoke the interest in product of customer. It is customer's choice whether to buy or not, but at least he or she should understand advantages and disadvantages of the product. This attitude keeps Parliament away from introducing new options already available on British website like video streaming with video archive and attention to committee work.

In addition, implementation of current state strategy and various initiatives are divided between different bodies and agencies. Despite the fact that Parliament passes budget of the country and own one, it remains dependent on the Cabinet decisions and expertise. Important impact has also President. Because of this uncertainty of institutions' roles parliamentary webpage hardly provides important information reflecting legitimitive function like information about parties (system), constitutional framework and so on.

The computer literacy rate in Ukraine is hardly adequate for using e-parliament throughout the country. This data is particularly relevant when we talk about people in rural areas where ICT literacy is low. Partially this issue can be met through special training programs. However, it seems logical that wide public in the economically developing country is not profound enough in ICT, when even many MPs and parliamentary officials are at the same level. Age of MPs influences the process as well. Traditionally, parliamentarians are older people who experienced in many subjects, but internet. Therefore, it is hard for them to feel the potential of new channels of communication and this skepticism is passed to citizens. Deliberation thus is strongly dependant on ICT rates.

Although most options at parliamentary webpage available in three languages: Ukrainian, Russian and English, Ukraine is a country, where some comparably big minorities live (Kudrov M., 2007). Over 100 nationalities are registered officially. Some of them speak their own languages or dialects. Two the biggest groups are Romas and Crimean tatars. Availability of legislation remains low for them.

Exploring parliamentary webpage. The way of Ukrainian Parliament webpage exploration is similar to the one applied for analysis of British counterpart. Functions of Parliament are also divided into two groups: output (from-parliament-to-public) consisting of legislative and legitimate functions, and input (from-public-to-parliament) composed of representative and deliberative ones correspondingly. Variables from Appendix 1 form a basis for recognizing strong and weak points at Ukrainian parliamentary website, and help to figure out differences and similarities with British webpage.

Like in UK, Ukrainian Parliament had its website from early ninetieth (1994). In the beginning it seems that there is a huge difference in the contents of webpages. Later on, when one goes into details and compares variables they look more and more uniform. It is quite astonishing considering the difference in structure of Parliaments (unicameral in Ukraine and bicameral in UK), working methods of both parliaments, and that countries have different electoral system (majoritarian and proportional).

In this part I want to show graphical outcomes of the data from Appendix 1 in order to see a general picture. Based on these comparative data I can admit strong and weak sides of parliamentary websites.

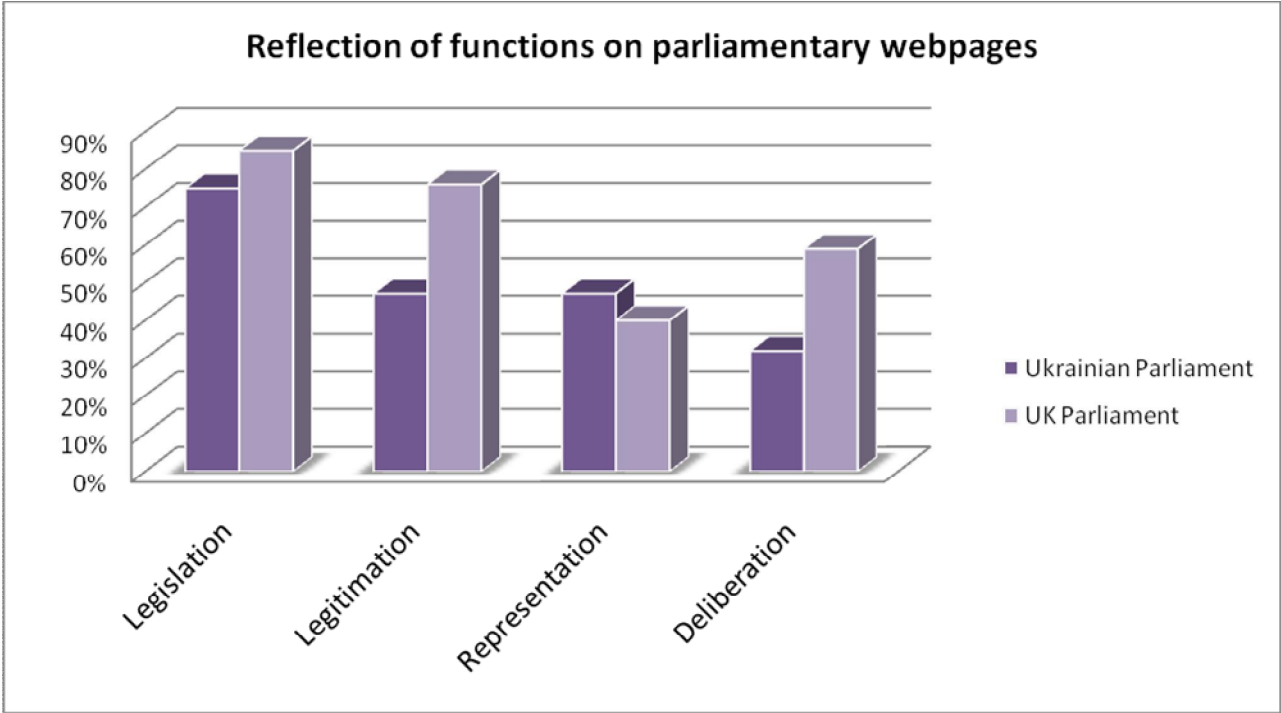


Diagram 1

Diagram 1 shows the percentage of variables presence on each webpage concerning every function. Variables represent all options found on parliamentary webpages around the globe, so for one website it is almost impossible to embed all options and get 100%. Function with the best

reflection in both countries is “Legislation” – 75% and 85% in Ukraine and UK respectively. The worst embedded are options of “Representation” in UK and “Deliberation” in Ukraine. “Representation” is the only function with wider opportunities on Ukrainian parliamentary website than on British, which may be explained by the heritage of Ukrainian majoritarian electoral system (though changed 6 years ago already). General overview makes sense, but more important for this paper is to bond variables in a specific way. Data of both Parliaments is analyzed in two different dimensions mentioned above: input and output, graphically available further.

Despite the fact that webpages in general have a lot in common, there are some remarkable differences. For this reason, I will explore Ukrainian parliamentary website comparing with British practice. In this chapter the approach of distinguishing into input and output dimension is continued. Output opportunities go first.

Diagram 2 presents an output dimension (from-parliament-to-public) of parliamentary communication. It is built on a basis of data from Appendix 1 and consists of variables reflecting

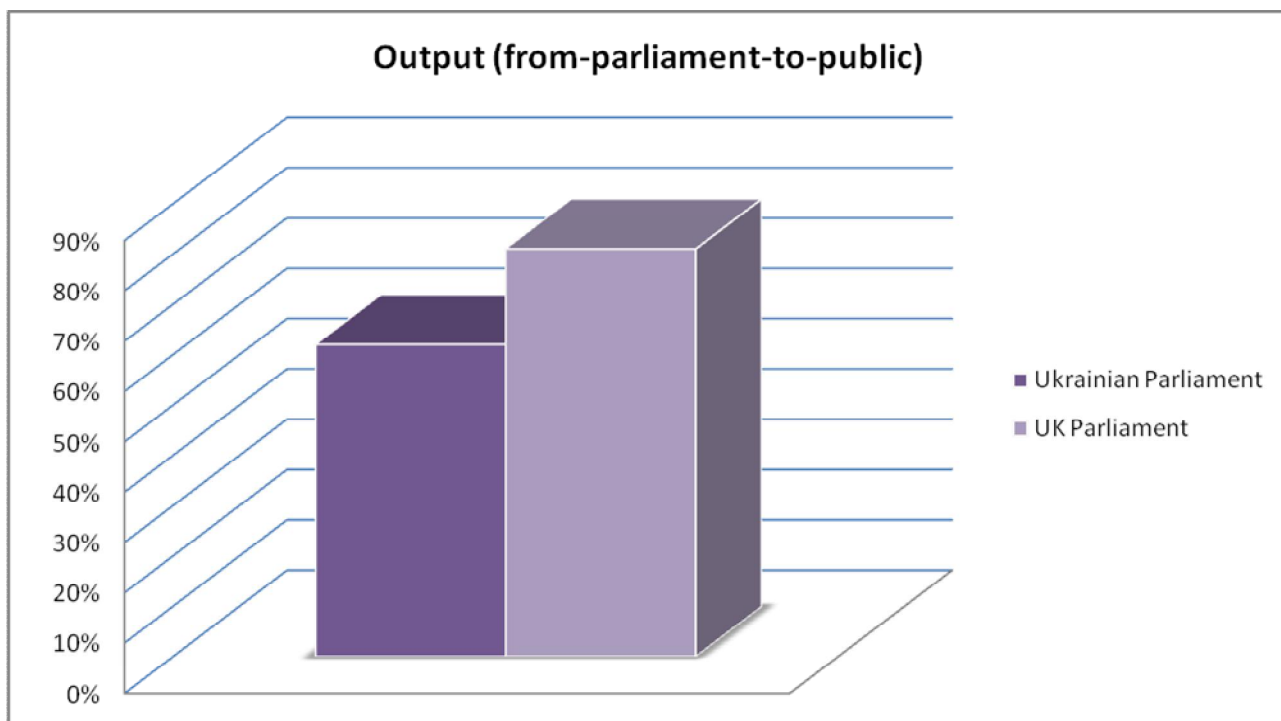


Diagram 2

Legislative and Legitimation functions of Parliaments. Diagram 2 shows that the output dimension is quite developed on both parliamentary webpages: 62% of options in Ukraine and 81% in UK. Next I will stress attention on some peculiarities.

Legislative function with 75% is the most presented on parliamentary website. On the one hand content which reflects legislative activity, as well as agenda, decisions and lists of pending

proposals of parliamentary sessions is available. On the other hand, activity of committees, where most of preparations and discussion on raw material is held, is not present.

Besides the records of parliamentary sessions, the availability of adopted legislation, individual MP's proposals and requests and their voting records give the opportunities to follow representative's activity. Adopted legislation could be found fully and almost all individual MPs' proposals are present at webpage. Some time ago to find MP's voting records was possible only at plenary protocols (Goshovsky V., 2008, p. 107), which was quite inconvenient. But at present day they are being collected and shown on the webpage of every representative (open votings only of course). In general availability of the MPs' voting records depends on the way of voting used in legislative process. Even though complete secret voting is comparably uncommon in Ukrainian Parliament, different forms of nameless (semi-secret) voting mechanisms (e.g. party voting records) are often used. Giving voices electronically via system "Rada" makes possible easy and quick recording of MPs' votes. From the point of view of party system MPs' voting records are essential in parliaments with weak party discipline (Leston-Bandeira C., 2009). In this respect party discipline is assumed to be worse in Ukraine than in UK, which is reflected in Ukrainian parliamentary webpage by better voting records.

Talking about legitimacy function, Ukrainian parliamentary webpage offers important information to the citizens. It provides public with required data about Parliament as institution, MPs, but does not show procedure of activities (though available as separate document, which can be found and downloaded only if one knows where to search) or overview of the political system. Although necessary information on party groups in Parliament is specified, the procedure of their decision-making is not present on webpage. To some extent it may be explained by the fact that till 2004 Ukraine was exercising firstly majoritarian and then half-majoritarian electoral system, when officially citizens were voting for individuals, not to parties. Besides, fractions (party groups in Parliament) tend to work unpublicly. Publicity appears when it comes to political scandals. The other question raises the issue whether information and documents available at webpage truly reflect the real patterns of decision-making. In this point we meet a lot of doubts.

One more important feature is live audiovisual streaming of parliamentary discussions. It differs from TV broadcasting because online streaming opens opportunities for citizens to engage and express their views, give feedbacks. Online parliamentary plenary sessions are seen as platforms in which MPs justify their policy preferences in public. Live streaming is not present at webpage, though Parliament has its own TV channel. In opposite, on the webpage of British lower house live streaming of plenary debates is highly visible. This fact probably shows the high level of public interest towards work of Parliament, which is rooted in British culture. Without doubts, the form and style of plenary sessions in Ukraine and UK differ, but it is not right to assume that absence of online streaming reflects the low level of public concerns of parliamentary discussions. In some past years public interest in Ukraine has grown significantly and shows further growth. Nevertheless, it remains uncertain whether the information available on parliamentary webpage of

Ukrainian Parliament may have considerable effects in practice. Due to current political situation when MPs appeal to certain groups of people it may indeed make the quality of parliamentary discussion lower. Also it is hard for wide public to truly understand and evaluate proposals of their representatives in every specific moment, because these initiatives have their background, underwater stones. So it requires from citizens to follow debates in order to have all necessary information. In the other extreme public faces filtering effects of critical observers (reporters, activists and others), who permanently monitor MPs (Coleman, 2008). They are able to assess the validity and continuity of the representatives' arguments and activities, but their story is only a reflection of the reality they see.

Diagram 3 compares input dimension of parliamentary communication. It shows that input dimension (38%) is much weaker in Ukraine than output. UK also has quite average index of 51%.

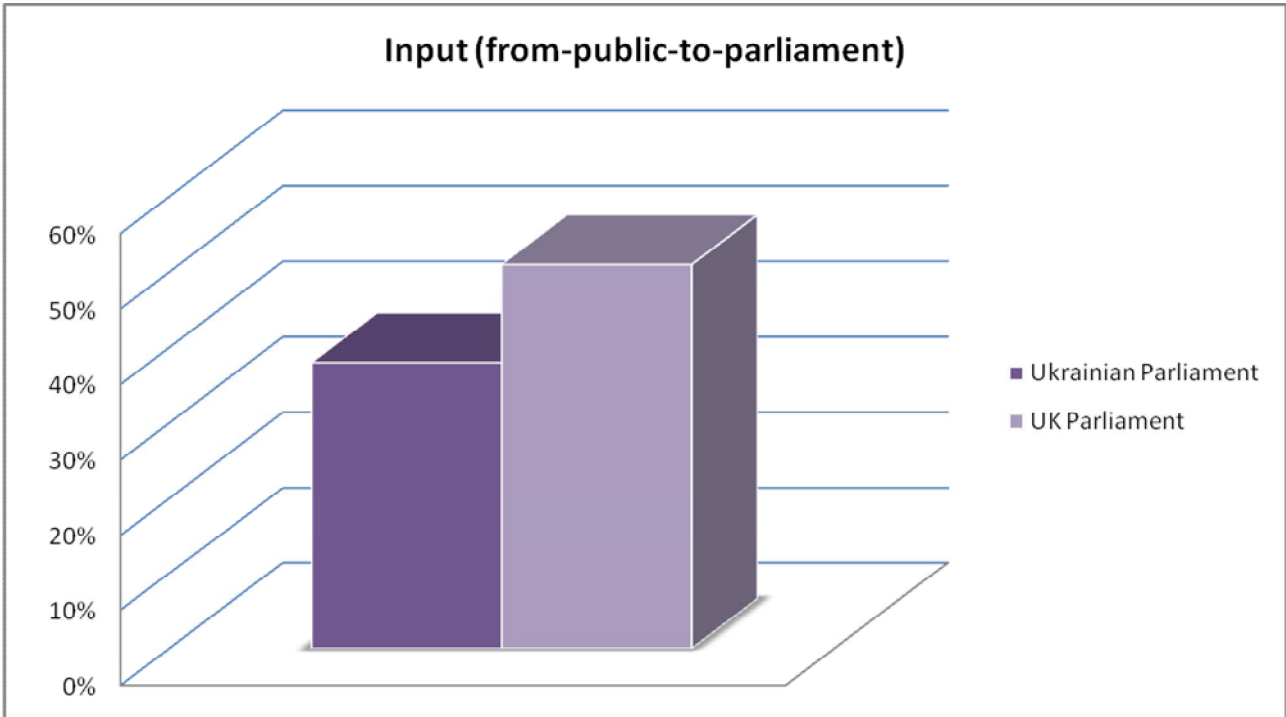


Diagram 3

This comparison illustrates that input dimension should be improved in both countries. Ukrainian Parliament has an example in a face of British counterpart to borrow from.

Representation. Looking through variables in Appendix 1 some observations have emerged. Ukrainian parliamentary website seems to give contact data of every parliamentarian. In all cases e-mail boxes are provided. The contact of every MP is essential because there could be only one parliamentarian responsible for the specific topic or geographical region. It also assists in direct communication between public and representatives by allowing an information exchange and promoting social inclusion. In Ukraine, however, the other difficulty raises. As it was described

before, unproportional internet accessibility among population creates a problem of inequality of public representation. From a practical point of view due to the quantity and the quality of sent messages it is hard for MP (even with her or his assistants) to understand and to sort out all information (Goshovsky V., 2008). At least it takes a lot of their time.

Though Ukrainian MPs are elected through party lists and the main attention should be paid to party representation, we hardly may say that it has a place. Proposals of parliamentarians, records of their voting and other data which one can reach online create the perception that MPs are the main representative units.

Deliberation. The amount of data presented on committee work is strikingly low. As we know the publicity of committee work opens more opportunities to better understand the motives backing the policies. From the other side committees help to integrate various views and hence locked meetings can be useful in specific situations. Webpage includes the conclusions of committee sessions, but they available only in the section of legislation (with a link at committee section though). There is a report of committee work, but without detailed coding scheme like full records of discussions or general summary of the session (mentioning people who participated in meeting). Here historical background matters because in soviet times there was no need to make this process open. In UK it differs, since committee discussions are open to public.

Revising deliberative constituent further, I can conclude that it is the less developed part of Ukrainian Parliament. There were no online discussion forums present at the webpage and I did not manage to find any remarks in official reports about their launching. E-consultations are also not used. In case of Ukraine the main value of e-consultations and discussion forums is in increasing interest of citizens in deliberation on political issues. Public concerns about political life in the country, so this new channels would definitely attract a lot of people using internet. They have a real potential to enhance the interest of citizens and highlight deliberative process. From the other side, again Ukrainian society does experience an evident fact of low technical development which may cause quite biased public opinion.

Recommendations for Ukrainian Parliament. Based on the implementation background of the internet-based channels of parliamentary communication in UK and Ukraine, and also bearing in mind the research results of the functionality of their official webpages, now I can make some recommendations for Ukrainian Parliament. This part sums up my paper, so it is built in a way to reflect the findings: firstly, proposals on how to overcome main preventing factors are specified, and secondly, recommendations regarding structure and opportunities on website are given.

Background recommendations. Internet public communication sphere experiences lack of coordination and joint activities. Creation of single national strategy with a part devoted to parliamentary internet communication seems necessary and urgent. Some efforts have already been put by the inter-institutional commission, which has proposed a draft version of development project. In order to be sufficient enough, it needs, however, to be modified in a way of better

specification, application of more profound knowledge in recent technical achievements, and take into account experience of countries worldwide (not only of neighbors). UK government in some past years has adopted several strategies, where almost every state institution was involved. As experience showed none of them was completely perfect, but in every next plan of action some improvements were embedded. Therefore, it is better to have bad strategy and correct mistakes than to have none.

In UK more than 1% of GDP is spent on implementation of strategies mentioned above. British government understands what for it spends this sum of money. Therefore, arrangement of legal and strategic framework in Ukraine will assist in solving financial problems. State treasury with a help of international organizations and funds can find resources to support further development of internet parliamentary public communication, but they need a concrete plan of action. Because of a corruption as a disease of Ukrainian society, maximal level of transparency is needed in financial matters. So there should be introduced a firm division of responsibilities and strict control.

Other practical challenges are low ICT literacy rate and computer availability. UK was trying to overcome these problems by introducing special free of charge training courses in libraries, educational centers and so on, where one can also use internet access. The problem of internet access in Ukraine now is not as crucial as it was in UK some years ago, because cellular communication companies use capacities of their networks to provide the public with rather cheap internet access of good quality, but British approach of ICT education in public places should be borrowed. One more point is that for many people in Ukraine internet is the only way to get in touch with their representatives, so to these groups should be paid a special attention, which assist in their social inclusion.

Website recommendations. As we can see from the Diagram 1, both UK and Ukraine have different attitude towards output and input possibilities of their parliamentary webpages. Output options are widely present on their websites, and though situation in UK is better, the difference in development is not crucial. On the other hand input part is barely there in both cases. Even though this element is improving very slowly in revised countries, the gap between parliamentary webpages remains vast. UK turned to be a good example for Ukraine in showing what difficulties may be met on the way to practical implementation. Ukrainian parliamentary webpage first of all needs developing of the input part (from-citizens-to-parliament). Namely, these are options from Appendix 1, which are present at UK website and not yet at Ukrainian one. Around them I would stress attention on better mechanisms of contacting MPs, petitioning Parliament, online live video streaming and archive of plenary and committee meetings, also some other deliberative possibilities like e-consultation and so on.

The second remark is a low usability of Ukrainian parliamentary website in comparison to British counterpart. It has two directions. To start with it does not function as one complete resource, where different parts are connected with each other using links or references. There are

a lot of options at Ukrainian webpage which are hardly reachable, because they are located in places very difficult to find if one does not know where to search for. Connecting components into one network, when options may be reached from different parts of webpage (British case), can solve this problem. Other direction of low usability is that webpage at glance built like an informational portal with only news about parliamentary chiefs at the front page. Nobody, except these chiefs, needs this information. In contrast UK website starts with parliamentary initiatives. Furthermore, the structure of Ukrainian parliamentary website is far from being perfect. In the beginning of exploration of its possibilities the author of this paper was sure that Parliament was lacking some important options on the official website, but step by step they were found in rather inappropriate places (where one would not expect them to find). Therefore, in order to improve its usability more testing surveys should be held with citizens.

Moreover functionality has to be improved. Although technical innovation is widely used in private sector, Ukrainian Parliament is not in a hurry to use it on its website. Functions needed for further development are being implemented very slowly. Nevertheless, this process is faster in UK than in Ukraine. Here also some other elements like design matter, which is one of the strongest features of British website when compare to Ukrainian one. A lot of work is to be done in direction of functionality and design, applying initially experience of private sector.

Lastly security also one of the coming challenges of parliamentary webpage. Like other state web resources, it faces a problem of appropriate level of personal data protection. There should a special unit/person responsible for these issues.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

This paper was aimed to investigate the opportunities of better interaction between Ukrainian Parliament and public. Internet-based channels of public communication were assumed to be a helpful mechanism for improving the process of communication.

The conclusion is built in a way to answer the research questions we have stated in the introduction. For this reason the core outcomes are structured correspondently.

Internet-based public communication brings a lot of fresh opportunities in regards to relations between citizens and state bodies. In the beginning I have proved the assumption that the communication between governmental institutions and public tend to change in a way of wider interaction. These trends derive from a private sector, where business-consumer relations have changed crucially in some past years. To Parliaments new channels of public communication such as internet bring a plenty of advantages in comparison to old ones (radio, television, newspapers). The problem of time and location is left in the past, because internet-based communication allows to overcome it, which highlights social inclusion and public representativeness. Parliament may expect also for a feedback from the citizens. Public receives a real mechanism to get involved into parliamentary work.

Talking about benefits and difficulties towards implementation of internet-based channels of public communication we have explored a practical case. Therefore, a core point of the research - a case of UK parliamentary webpage became a good example to compare Ukrainian one with and to understand more precisely what should be changed or introduced.

Firstly, we have focused on the background factors, which have impact on the internet-based public communication, dividing them into two groups: preventive and supportive. From one side, both Parliaments face similar factors which keep them away from implementing new communicational channels such as a low ICT literacy among population, the skeptical attitude of population towards any changes, and internet availability only to some social groups. From the other side, rapid technical progress in the private sector and high level of young people inclusion compose supportive factors for enhancement of internet-based communication.

When it came to parliamentary websites` structure, exploration of all available options was splitted into two dimensions: output (from-parliament-to-public) reflecting legislative and legitimative parliamentary functions, and input (from-public-to-parliament) illustrating representative and deliberative functions. Both dimensions were more developed on British parliamentary webpage. In regards to output dimension it would be encouraging for Ukrainian parliamentary webpage to launch live video streaming of plenary and committees meetings and to create an archive of such records, reflect more broader committee work. It needs also overview with further updates of constitutional and party system in Ukraine. It seems very important that output on websites much prevails over input. Therefore, development of input direction is a question of first necessity. For Ukrainian Parliament

experience of UK counterpart is thus especially valuable. It would benefit from making publicly open relations (questions, requests, proposals) with other institutions and within Parliament itself. Positive impact should have also borrowing and implementation of such online opportunities as e-consultations, e-petitioning, and taking part in committees' inquiries. Overall notice is a low usability of Ukrainian parliamentary webpage, when its different parts are frequently disconnected and located in inappropriate places, poor design, and presence of useless sections and information.

Despite all preventing factors internet-based channels of parliamentary communication in Ukraine have enough space to grow. Therefore, I expect recommendations of this paper to be included into Draft version of e-Parliament programme and furthermore to be implemented in practice very soon.

Appendix 1

Variables	Ukrainian Parliament	UK Parliament
Output (from-parliament-to-public dimension)	62% (23/37)	81% (30/37)
<i>Legislation</i>	75% (15/20)	85% (17/20)
Is legislation output available? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
If yes, where? (First page link-3; Second page link-2; More than second-1)	3	3
Info given on legislation		
Original proposal (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Author(s) (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Link to author's biography (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Amendments (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Debate (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Committee debate (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Link to relevant committee	0	1
Plenary debate (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Committee reports (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
End result bill (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Link to other relevant organisations associated with bill? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Are these stages integrated? (Totally-3; Partly-2; Not at all-1)	2	3
If committee's main role is legislation:		
Do committees have a separate section? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Is access given to committee reports? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
<i>Legitimation</i>	47% (8/17)	76% (13/17)
Is there historical information about the parliament? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Is there historical information about the political system and politics? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	1
Is information given to the Constitutional context? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Is access given to the key regulatory documents? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Is there a layman explanation about the constitutional system? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	1
Is there a layman explanation about parliament's role? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Is there a section for young people? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	0
If yes, is this a separate web domain? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Is there access to the verbatim record of parliamentary debates (plenary)? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Is there access to the verbatim record of parliamentary debates (committees)? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Is there a search engine integrated in these accesses? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Is there live coverage of plenary debates? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	1

Is there live coverage of committee debates? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	1
If yes, is there an archive of plenary/committee debates? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	1
Is there a News item? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Is there an identification of the main actors to contact in parliament? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Is membership of committees given? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Input (from-public-to-parliament)	38% (14/37)	51% (19/37)
<i>Representation</i>	47% (7/15)	40% (6/15)
Is there information about MPs? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Is there a list of MPs? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Are individual profiles for MPs available? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Is the email contact of each MP given? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Is parliamentary activity listed for each MP? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Are there links to the outputs of parliamentary activities of the MPs? (ex: debates, legislation, scrutiny activity)	1	1
Are there personal websites of MPs within parliament's site? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Are links given to MPs' personal websites hosted outside parliament? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Are there personal blogs of MPs within parliament's site? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Are links given to MPs' blogs hosted outside parliament? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Are links given to MPs' facebook or myspace sites hosted outside parliament? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Do parties have a section within the parliament domain? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Are links given to parties' websites? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Do parliamentary groups have a section within the parliament domain? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	0
Are links given to parliamentary groups' websites? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
<i>Deliberation</i>	32% (7/22)	59% (13/22)
Is deliberative output available? (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
If yes, where? (First page link-3; Second page link-2; More than second-1)	2	2
Info given on written questions		
Text of the question (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Author(s) (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Reply (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Integration between the above (Yes-1; No-0)	1	1
Info given on oral questions		
Text of the question (Yes-1; No-0)	0	1
Author(s) (Yes-1; No-0)	0	1
Reply (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Integration between the above (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Info given on committees of enquiry		

Separate page for com. of enquiry? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Text of original enquiry (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Author(s) (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Proceedings in separate page? (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Link to debate (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Integration between the above (Yes-1; No-0)	0	0
Public involvement		
E-polls (Yes-1; No-0)	0	1
Lobbying (Yes-1; No-0)	0	1
Petitioning (Yes-1; No-0)	0	1
Taking part in a committee inquiry (Yes-1; No-0)	0	1

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