

Kononchuk O. Analysis of methodological aspects of the index “Freedom in the World”

The article deals with the methodological aspects of the index “Freedom in the World”, namely: 1. evolution of the methodological base, which partially changed over 45 years, since the Raymond Gastil index only began to be used to measure the level of freedom in the world; 2. each element of a three-tier ranking system consisting of scores (100-point scale), ratings (from 1 to 7), and status (free, partly free and not free countries/territories).

The reports of “Freedom in the World” over the past few years are analysed and a comparative analysis of the global, regional and cross-temporal levels of research is developed.

In the global comparison the dynamics of changes in the number of countries that are characterized by the corresponding status during the last five years of the study is shown, and the number of people in the world living in free, partly free and not free conditions is presented.

A regional comparison of freedom in 6 regions, based on data presented in the study of Freedom House 2017, is conducted. The author graphically compares the regions.

A cross-temporal comparison of Ukraine between 1992 and 2017 is developed, and the dynamics of growth and decline of the level of freedom in different years of Ukraine’s independence is presented.

The analysis of the “Freedom in the World” index by international scientific community is demonstrated, criticisms on the methodology of index, the selection of national experts for comparing reports in individual countries/territories, the choice of indicators and the process of evaluation as a whole are presented. It is also noted that the index despite the number of shortcomings is most adapted to modern realities. The methodology of index is used as a basis for building of new indexes of democratization. The data from “Freedom in the World” is used in researches by scientists and civic organizations around the world, and free availability of reports and ratings makes it the most accessible not only for scholars, but also for ordinary citizens interested in democratization processes in the world.

Key words: democratization, democracy index, democratic audit, comparative analysis.