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The specifics of the legitimation of political power in modern Armenia

5.5.2. Political institutions, processes, and technologies

Abstract of the dissertation
for the degree of Candidate of Political Sciences

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Relevance of the research topic.

The problem of legitimizing power remains consistently relevant. The process of legitimizing power is based on public support, which cannot but connect a political leader with the masses. At the same time, the legitimacy of power depends on a number of circumstances that may not be related to a specific political figure, but rather represent the sum of accumulated challenges. Historical and political experience shows that even a government with significant public support may not be able to withstand political and economic crises that can lead to political transformations.

The political design of Armenia, as a former post-Soviet republic and now an independent state, is of significant research interest. Armenia's experience provides a unique example of a peaceful transition of power, geopolitical vulnerability, and the pursuit of democratic reforms in an autocratic environment. The legitimacy of political power in Armenia is currently influenced by the international situation and domestic political dynamics. Any negative changes for the ruling class could lead to a loss of accumulated legitimacy. In the long term, this could lead to serious systemic consequences, including increased public protest and the isolation of the region on the global stage. The relevance of studying the specifics of political power legitimization in modern Armenia lies in the growing interest in Armenia's political system and the challenges of legitimizing the Armenian political establishment in a context of political instability.

The degree of development of the problem.

The features of the legitimization of political power in modern Armenia have not been included in the research field of modern political science until now. The studies of Russian and foreign authors reflect the general aspects of the problems of the legitimization of power and the features of state building, as well as individual elements of the political system of Armenia: power, institutions, and processes. The problems of legitimacy and the legitimization of political power are presented in the classical theories of M. Weber, D. Easton, J.L. Chabot, T. Parsons, S. Lipset, and N. Luhmann. The issues of international legitimization and their relationship with

domestic politics are studied in the works of F. Fukuyama, K. von Soest and Yu. Grauvogel. S. Mirzoev's works are devoted to the legal connotations of legitimation. Technologies of legitimacy management using the Internet and SMM structures, issues of digital legitimation were investigated by F. Webster, M.N. Gubin, S.N. Fedorchenko and A.P. Fedorov. Changes in the institutional designs of transitional societies are discussed in the works of A. Przeworski, L. Diamond, R. Dahrendorf, M. McFaul, and S. Huntington.

The variability of the transition of political regimes to democracy or to conservative scenarios was considered in the works of G. O'Donnell, F. Schmitter, T. Karl, A. Stepan, and H. Linz, A.D. Voskresensky, K.S. Gadzhiev, A.Yu. Melville, T.S. Nemchinova, N.I. Shestov, and I.S. Yazhborovskaya. The features of the legitimation of power in the post-Soviet space are studied in the works of V. Achkasov, S. Eliseev, and S. Lantsov. S. Shkel's works analyze post-Soviet authoritarian cases in a comparative retrospective.

In studies of post-Soviet states, the author's focus often centers on the challenges of regime change. In addition to the transition of power through elections in post-Soviet polities, there is also a practice of regimes replacing each other through revolutionary changes involving forms of "street" pressure. Along with unsuccessful attempts at such coups, there are also successful practices. The problems of "color" revolutions are the focus of research by Kh.A. Barlybaev, M.A. Bochanov, S. Markedonov, S. Mirzoev, G. Sarkisyan, D. Furman, and S. Shermatova.

The historical aspects of the formation of statehood in Armenia are studied by D. M. Lang and K. M. Bernie. The period of the formation of the political and social structure of Cilician Armenia is studied by A. A. Burnutyan. Some aspects of the history of the formation and development of statehood in Armenia are reflected in the studies of H. Dale and J. Russell.

Soviet authors, particularly I. M. Dyakonov and B. B. Piotrovsky, play an important role in the historical description of Armenia. The factor of the Karabakh campaign is examined by the British historian T. de Waal. The current state of the

political system in modern Armenia and changes in its institutional structure are examined in the study by E. Roeva-Mkrtchyan. The legitimization of political power in Armenia is presented as the accumulation and actualization of symbolic capital, as discussed in the study by S. Zolyan.

The works of A. Atanesyan, S. Grigoryan, A. Markarov, E. Minasyan, and M. Khachatryan examine certain aspects of the legitimization of political power in modern Armenia. In particular, they focus on specific political events and personalities. The collective monograph by O. Sarkisyan, N. Dumanalyan, D. Sargsyan, S. Khachatryan, I. Karamyan, and S. Oganessian explores the contours and structure of Armenian identity. The works of G. Poghosyan and R. Poghosyan are also devoted to the problem of Armenian identity.

The works of G. Danielyan, M. Azatyan, A. Bagdasaryan, L. Zakaryan, and M. Sahakyan provide insight into Armenia's foreign policy orientations and their real prospects. These foreign policy emphases undoubtedly have a significant impact on the legitimacy of the ruling class compared to current domestic policy issues.

The object of the dissertation research is political power in modern Armenia.

The subject of the dissertation research is the specifics of the legitimization of political power in modern Armenia.

The purpose of the dissertation is to study the process of legitimization of political power in modern Armenia, its main focuses, specifics, and technologies.

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. Description of existing models of legitimization in dynamics;
2. Comparison of the features of the legitimization of political power in transitional societies;
3. Analysis of the historical context of the legitimization of power in Armenia;
4. Identification of the features of the formation and development of the institutional design of modern Armenia;
5. Analysis of the factors of legitimization of political power in modern Armenia;

6. Forecast of trends in the political development of the region during the reign of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

The scientific novelty of the work lies in the comprehensive study of the legitimization of political power in relation to modern Armenia. This allowed us to identify the features of the formation and transformation of the legitimacy of power in the context of modern political changes.

As part of the dissertation work:

1. The characteristics of theoretical models of power legitimization are presented;
2. A comparative analysis of the features of power legitimization in transitional societies is performed;
3. A historical analysis of the origins of Armenian statehood is carried out;
4. The current institutional design of Armenia is studied;
5. The factors of political power legitimization in Armenia have been analyzed;
6. The specifics of power legitimization in Armenia during the N. Pashinyan's rule have been revealed.

The theoretical and practical significance of the work lies in the systematization of the accumulated knowledge about the process of legitimizing political power in modern Armenia, as well as the forms and technologies used by the Armenian political regime to maintain its own legitimacy.

The practical significance of the materials presented in the dissertation research can be used to analyze the current state of the political process in Armenia and the post-Soviet Caucasus. The author's research can serve as a basis for analyzing the capabilities of various institutions in legitimizing political power in Armenia. The materials of the dissertation research can be used in the development and reading of author's courses for bachelors and master's students studying in the fields of political science, history, and public administration.

The methodology of the expert survey on the role of political actors in Armenia can also be used in other studies, making it a valuable tool for political analysis in other political systems and processes.

Methodology and research methods.

The work uses the institutional method, which allows to see the work of certain institutions in the political design of modern Armenia, as well as to assess their effectiveness. Along with the institutional method, the neo-institutional method is also used, which involves focusing on the "shadow" aspects of political construction in modern Armenia. The use of this method allows to consider the Armenian political process as a set of formal and informal practices, agreements, and attitudes.

To solve the tasks set in the framework of the dissertation research, the historical method was used, which allows us to see the process of formation and development of the Armenian statehood in a continuous perspective and assess the existing situation as a result of accumulated political, historical and cultural experience. A comparative method was used to solve the problems within the framework of the dissertation research. He made it possible to draw parallels between the various periods of development of the Armenian statehood after 1991. Using this method, the results of election campaigns at various stages of the development of Armenian statehood after 1991 were compared, and the political portraits of Armenian leaders and the images of the opposition were compared.

The study also used a sociological method. An expert interview technique was used: an expert pool of scholars and politicians, political consultants, and public figures involved in the political process in Armenia provided characteristics of various political actors, assessing their influence on current political events and the legitimacy of Armenian political leaders.

Propositions and conclusions to be defended:

1. The process of legitimization of political power can be considered in three dimensions, each of which is applicable to modern Armenia.

The analysis of the concepts of legitimization of political power shows its possibility of existence in 3 dimensions. Each of them is actualized and on the example of modern Armenia.

1. Legitimization can be a property of the political system itself, proof of its ability to reproduce, functionality, confirmation of the desire for uninterrupted and maximally effective work. A well-tuned political system can create a political tradition, a special political culture, and political cycles that will reproduce power.

2. The legitimization initiative can come from society, which can identify an optimal candidate for political authority. Society may have a demand for a particular ideology, leadership style, etc., which is periodically legitimized.

3. The legitimization initiative can come from the politician themselves, who needs to be recognized for their political decision-making authority. The desire to maintain power encourages politicians to seek and implement manipulative technologies. Numerous examples from Armenian politics demonstrate how Armenian politicians exploit public sentiment for their own benefit.

2. The legitimization of political power during a transitional period is associated with the problems of uncertainty and crisis manifestations in the functioning of state institutions.

Different types of society create their own attitudes towards the quality of power itself, as well as towards the technologies and forms of political legitimization. Not all political systems are equally prepared to carry out a political transition without crisis consequences for themselves, and the establishment of democracy may not always be the result of a transition. Based on the extensive experience of various countries and political analysis, it has been noted that a political transition can also lead to a more rigid political reality and the formation of an even more oppressive and authoritarian political regime. In such cases, various forms of authoritarianism may emerge as an alternative to democracy. The historical experience of a country can play a crucial role in this process.

In the case of Armenia, the political transition coincided with the war in Nagorno-Karabakh. Despite the political achievements, the public's expectations were not met, and there were no significant changes in society that would legitimize the subsequent decisions of the government.

3. The process of legitimizing political power in Armenia is characterized by historical continuity, which manifests itself in the preservation and transformation of the traditional foundations of legitimacy at various stages of the development of Armenian statehood.

Armenia is one of the oldest states in the world, and the legitimization of political power in Armenia has a long history. Armenian statehood is supported by political traditions, the church, national heroes, and myths. All of these factors continue to play a significant role in the legitimization of power in the modern era.

Armenia's historical development shows how periods of relative prosperity were followed by political crises, where the state's security depended on internal power struggles. Armenia often faced challenges on its external borders, becoming vulnerable to its powerful geopolitical neighbors. This historical experience continues to shape the development of modern Armenia.

4. Armenia's political system is in the process of development, taking into account the current political, economic, and socio-cultural environment.

As in the history of many countries around the world, Armenia's history has been marked by periods of relative prosperity followed by periods of political crisis, where the security of the state depended on internal power struggles. Armenia has often faced challenges on its external borders, making it vulnerable to its geopolitical neighbors.

Today, Armenia's institutional design is the result of a consensus among key political actors. The parties prefer to negotiate rather than suppress each other, which indicates that democratic values are quite viable in the case of Armenia. Political actors use political institutions to legitimize themselves, which leads to modifications in the political system and changes in the institutions themselves.

Civil society also participates in the legitimization of power, periodically making its presence felt during critical moments in Armenian history. Democratic practices in Armenian governance have been evolving to the present day. Armenia's political institutions remain functional. It should be noted that Armenia's political system is, in a sense, a product of the ruling class, which modifies it as it sees fit and

in its own interests. The role of social movements and civil society, which periodically emerges during critical moments in Armenian history, should not be underestimated.

Armenia's democratic governance practices have room for improvement. Despite facing numerous political challenges, Armenia has maintained its established institutions, which aim to foster a stable and democratic governance system. At the current stage, Armenia is facing serious challenges to its international legitimacy. The region is searching for influential allies who can help Armenia maintain its unique position and achieve maximum sovereignty in its relations with its geopolitical neighbors.

5. Historical memory is a feature of the process of legitimizing political power in Armenia in the 1990s.

The Karabakh War was a significant factor influencing the political decision-making of both the ruling and opposition parties in Armenia in the 1990s. In modern Armenia, the Karabakh campaign is a prominent feature of historical memory. The majority of Armenia's male population went through this campaign, leaving it with a capital that has been activated in politics. The government could not ignore the demands of the front-line soldiers, who gradually integrated into the ruling elite, occupying key positions in law enforcement agencies.

Among the factors of legitimization of political power in Armenia in the 1990s, the role of intellectuals (L. Ter-Petrosyan, V. Manukyan, etc.), who acted as influential interpreters of the current political agenda and inspirers of political actions, should be highlighted. The influence of the former party nomenclature, which emerged after the resignation of Levon Ter-Petrosyan, should not be underestimated. Robert Kocharyan, Karen Demirchyan, Manuchot Kotanyan, and other political figures in Armenia actively participated in the new electoral cycle. Alliances between the government and the security forces, as well as with recent political opponents, became a characteristic feature of Armenian politics in the 1990s.

6. The process of legitimizing political power in modern Armenia is determined by the interaction of political, economic, social, and religious institutions, as well as the influence of the Armenian diaspora.

The peculiarity of Armenian political culture lies in the frequent changes of priorities, the extravagance of new political accents, the high level of public expectations, and the low tolerance for various forms of injustice.

In Armenia's recent history, starting from 1991, there have been instances where the people's opinion has taken precedence over the ruling elite's stance. The presidencies of L. Ter-Petrosyan, R. Kocharyan, S. Sargsyan, and the period of N. Pashinyan's rule are to varying degrees dependent on the activities of various political actors, namely, oligarchic groups and business communities, political parties, the army and security forces, the party nomenclature, the church, students, intellectuals, and the urban population, as well as the diaspora. The role of Armenian media and Internet technologies is constantly increasing.

On the one hand, the diversity of the Armenian political design contributes to the legitimization of power, but on the other hand, it complicates the effective management of all participants in the political process. Any compromise between certain political actors can create problems for the government, leading to complex delegitimization challenges.

The role of an actor changes depending on the current political situation, which focuses the resources of political actors and turns them into political support for the government. However, it cannot be said that the role of any political actors was definitely absent in the early stages of the formation and development of the Armenian state, nor is it absent at the moment.

7. The legitimacy of the institution of the Prime Minister of Armenia depends on the current challenges of the regional and international agenda.

The Prime Minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, has established himself as a political leader who is historically, socially, and culturally close to a significant portion of the Armenian electorate. However, his prolonged tenure in power and the institutional risks associated with the concentration of power may influence the

transformation of his political style and the mechanisms of legitimizing his authority.

Nikol Pashinyan's leadership currently coincides with a period of external political instability. Today, Armenia has virtually no allies in the post-Soviet space, which casts doubt on the country's prospects for membership in the Collective Security Treaty Organization. The final loss of control over Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023, which became an important foundation for the legitimization of a new political class in the early 1990s, consisting primarily of representatives of the security forces and military personnel who had participated in the Nagorno-Karabakh campaign, posed a significant challenge to the country. These events had a lasting impact on Armenia's institutional rules. These challenges can have a significant impact on the processes of N. Pashinyan's legitimization both within the Armenian society and at the international level. Despite the challenges facing modern Armenia, the country has its own style and unique cultural code.

The Armenian identity is supported and protected by a large number of Armenians scattered around the world. The Armenian diaspora actively participates in the development of modern Armenia. A distinctive feature of the political process in modern Armenia is that traditions, language, religious values, cultural memory, and the historical past are the most important sources of political legitimacy.

The reliability of the research results is confirmed by the use of the works of leading Russian and foreign authors on the subject under study, as well as data from sociological research, including expert interviews conducted specifically for this dissertation.

Approbation of the research results. The dissertation was discussed at the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences at Bunin Yelets State University. The main provisions and results of the dissertation research are reflected in 6 publications with a total volume of 2.14 printed pages, including 3 articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals approved by the Higher Attestation Commission of the Russian Federation, and 1 scientific article reviewed by Scopus.

Separate provisions and conclusions of the dissertation research were presented and discussed at scientific conferences of various levels, among which we can note the international conference in Yekaterinburg (2024), international conferences at the Belarusian State University (Minsk), the Ural Federal University named after B.N. Yeltsin (Yekaterinburg), etc.

The main provisions and results of the dissertation research were reflected in the author's publications in scientific publications: Vestnik VolGU (2025), Politbook. New political stability (2023), Politbook. New Generations in Political Processes (2024), Political Science Issues (2024). In addition, the provisions and results of the research were also used by the author of the dissertation in the framework of the VIII All-Russian (with international participation) competition of scientific, methodological and creative works "Motherland: patriotism, citizenship, traditionalism", dedicated to the 78th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War, the Year of the Teacher and Mentor, May 17, 2023 in Moscow. Kirov with the theme "On personalized legitimation in Russia", as a result of which the author was awarded a diploma of the 2nd degree; also, these research materials were used by the author in readings at the XVIII International Student Scientific and Practical Conference "Sociological Readings - 2024" at Lomonosov Moscow State University on March 21, 2024 with the theme "Education, Science and innovations as global trends".

The structure of the dissertation. The work consists of an introduction, three chapters presented by seven paragraphs, a conclusion and a list of used sources and literature.