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POLITICAL STUDIES,
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THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA AND THE FRENCH REPUBLIC IN THE DEFENCE SPHERE

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Abstract

Diplomatic relations between the Republic of Armenia and the French Republic were established on 24 February 1992. Since the beginning of the 1990s, strong political and economic ties have been created between the two Republics. France became one of the members of the tripartite Co-chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Group (alongside Russia and the USA) in 1997, which was engaged in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict regulation process.

However, following the 44-Day War in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020, and especially after Azerbaijani aggression on the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia in September 2022, the cooperation between the two states developed in the defense sphere. Particularly in October 2023, several documents were signed between the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia and the French Minister for the Armed Forces in Paris, including military education and military-technical cooperation.

The military-technical cooperation between the two states creates a possibility for Armenia to get access to advanced western military technologies, which are used in the development of the military-industrial complex of France.

Keywords: defence sector, military education, military-technical cooperation, arms trade, France, Armenia.

Introduction

Armenia and France have had long historical, cultural, and military relations for centuries. Particularly, the Armenian-French military relationships started at the end of the 11th century, during the First Crusade. This relationship developed during the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia. Many famous Armenian military figures had served in the French Army during the Napoleonic era. A brilliant example of the Armenian-French military relations is the military way of the Armenian Legion, which was formed during the First World War, and the activity of Armenian members (for example Missak Manouchian*) of the French Resistance during the Second World War.

* On 21 February 2024 Missak Manouchian and his wife Mélinée were entombed in the Panthéon of the greatest figures of France (Paris) for the commemoration of his execution's 80th anniversary. Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and French President Emmanuel Macron,

The Armenian strong community was formed in France. Diplomatic relations between the Republic of Armenia and the French Republic were established on 24 February 1992 (Official website of the MFA of the RA, 2024).

In recent years political relations between the two Republics have grown rapidly, which is also contributing to the development of the cooperation between the two states in the defence sphere.

The Potential Cooperation between the Two States in the Defence Sphere

Since the 1990s, strong political and economic relations were created between the Republic of Armenia and the French Republic. The latter became one of the members of the tripartite Co-chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Group (Russia, France, and USA) in 1997 and was engaged in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict regulation process.

Political relations between the Republic of Armenia and the French Republic grew rapidly, which also contributed to the development of the cooperation between the two states in the defence sphere. As a result, an Agreement was signed between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia and the French Minister for the Armed Forces on Cooperation in the Field of Defence on February 10, 2010 (Official website of the MFA of the RA, 2024).

Two years later (in 2012) between Armenia and Greece, a military contract was signed for the re-exporting of Franco-West German "Milan" antitank guided missile systems (ATGMs) to Armenia. These systems were supplied to the Armenian Army in 2013 ("RAZM.info", 2015).

After the 44-Day War of 2020 in Nagorno-Karabakh and, especially, since 2022 the cooperation between the two states also developed in the defence sphere. It was due to 4 main reasons:

Firstly, the Azerbaijani aggression on the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia in September 2022.

Secondly, after the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Armed Forces, the Russian Federation cannot realize the military contracts of supplying armament to Armenia.

Thirdly, Armenia is trying to find other sources of supplement for recovering its heavy losses of military equipment, during the 44-day war.

Finally, the weakening of its geostrategic position on the African continent, France is trying to strengthen its position in the South Caucasus region.

On September 27, 2022, within the framework of the working visit to the Republic of France, the meeting of the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia Suren Papikyan, and the French Minister for the Armed Forces Sébastien Lecornu took place. At the request of his French colleague, Suren Papikyan presented the situation which was created as a result of the Azerbaijani military aggression of September 13. Sebastien Lecornu reaffirmed the French state's position regarding the issue, which is, that the Azerbaijani troops should be

as well as Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia Suren Papikyan and the French Minister for the Armed Forces Sebastien Lecornu, attended the ceremony (Official website of the Prime Minister of the RA, 2024).

withdrawn from the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia. Following the meeting, an agreement was reached that the French Defence Department would send a special delegation to Armenia to get to know the situation on the spot (Official website of the MoD of the RA, 2022).

In the framework of his working visit to France next year, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, Suren Papikyan, attended the opening ceremony of the "Paris Air Show" at "Le Bourget" on June 19, 2023. He was invited by the French Minister for the Armed Forces, Sébastien Lecornu. Visits to the demonstration pavilions of French defence industry companies and meetings with their leaders are arranged (Official website of the MoD of the RA, 2023a). The following day, Suren Papikyan had a meeting with Sébastien Lecornu. A ceremonial welcome was held for the head of the Defence Agency of the Republic of Armenia, featuring a military band and honor guard. The national anthems of both the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of France were played during the welcoming ceremony. The welcoming ceremony was followed by discussions on the current status of implementation of the arrangements arrived at during the meeting in Paris on September 27 last year. Regional security issues were discussed as well (Official website of the MoD of the RA, 2023b).

Alongside Armenian-French military cooperation, the military ties between Armenian and India, as well as between French and India, are also rapidly advancing. As the result of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to Paris for the 14th July Bastille Day celebrations in 2023, where India was guest of honor, the two countries released a document entitled "Horizon 2047". This document states that "both countries are also working towards adopting a Roadmap on Defense Industrial Cooperation". Additionally, it highlights that India "is setting up a Technical Office of the Indian Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at its Embassy in Paris" in view of the "uptick in defense industrial collaborations" (Mackenzie, 2023). This collaboration is significant not only for India but also for Armenia, given its recent status as the main importer of Indian-produced weapons. Access to new western advanced military technologies, utilized in the development of the military-industrial complex, holds substantial importance for Armenia's defense capabilities[*].

The same day, on July 14, 2023, the President of the French Senate, Gerard Larcher, after the meeting with the President of the National Assembly of Armenia, Alen Simonyan in Paris, wrote on his "Twitter" page. "Speed up the supply of defensive weapons by France to Armenia in order to ensure its security" ("Armenpress", 2023a).

On August 9, 2023, the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, Suren Papikyan, received the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the French Republic to the Republic of Armenia, Olivier Decottignies, and the newly appointed Defence Attaché, Lieutenant Colonel Arnaud Helly. During the meeting, the sides emphasized the importance of establishing the Defence Attaché office at the French Embassy in Yerevan, which was implemented

[*] See more in detail in Nazaryan, H. (2023).

within the framework of the agreement reached in September 2022 between Defence Ministers Suren Papikyan and Sébastien Lecornu (Official website of the MoD of the RA, 2023c).

On September 28, 2023, in an interview with "Franceinfo", French Minister for the Armed Forces Sébastien Lecornu said. "The President (Emmanuel Macron) said that the integrity, sovereignty, and defense of the Armenian population are an absolute goal for us. I've met with Armenia's Defense Minister several times. Besides, I think I am the first Minister of the Armed Forces who's had so many contacts with the Armenian partner. We've opened a defense mission in Armenia that didn't exist before, and which allows to have daily dialogue with the Armenian military and Armenian authorities, particularly to examine their needs in case of necessity" ("Armenpress", 2023b).

During his working visit to the French Republic, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, Suren Papikyan, visited the Ministry of the Armed Forces of the French Republic on October 23, 2023, where a ceremonial welcome was held with the participation of the Military Band and Guard of Honour. The national anthems of the Republic of Armenia and the French Republic were played. Then, a meeting took place with the French Minister for the Armed Forces, Sébastien Lecornu. During the meeting, various issues related to the Armenian-French cooperation in the field of defence and regional security were discussed. New opportunities for the development of cooperation were outlined, including the acquisition of defence systems, military education, training, exchange of experiences, and other areas of mutual interest. Both sides highly valued the current status of cooperation and expressed readiness to make efforts to further develop it in the future.

Following the official meeting, a joint statement was made to the press, during which the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia expressed his gratitude to the French side for their comprehensive support to the development of defence cooperation. Afterward, documents on bilateral cooperation were signed at the Ministry of the Armed Forces of France (Official website of the MoD of the RA, 2023d).

Particularly, Armenia signed a contract to buy three Ground Master 200 (GM 200) radars manufactured by Thales Group and another contract with Safran Company for equipment including binoculars and sensors. Additionally, Armenia and France signed a letter of intent to kick off a process to purchasing Mistral air defense systems made by MBDA. Furthermore, during the following months, the French government is preparing to send a French military official to act as a defense consultant for the Armenian executive branch on issues such as armed forces training. France will also provide training to Armenian soldiers and assist Yerevan in auditing Armenia's air defense to identify blind spots (Kayali and Gavin, 2023).

The day after, as part of his working visit to the French Republic, the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, Suren Papikyan, visited The Senate of the French Republic. During his visit, he held meetings with Senate Vice President Pierre Ouzoulias, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and

Armed Forces Cédric Perrin, and Chairman of the France-Armenia Friendship Group Gilbert-Luc Devinaz. Discussions encompassed topics related to Armenian-French bilateral defence cooperation (Official website of the MoD of the RA, 2023e).

Additionally, Suren Papikyan met with the Chairman of the Commission on National Defence and Armed Forces of the National Assembly of the French Republic, Thomas Gassilloud, and the Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, Jean-Louis Bourlanges. Conversations focused on issues pertaining to Armenian-French bilateral defence cooperation and regional security. On the same day, Minister Suren Papikyan also visited the "Les Invalides" military rehabilitation and disabled veterans support center, where he got acquainted with the center's activities (Official website of the MoD of the RA, 2023f).

In a short period, on November 9, 2023, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, arrived in the French Republic and met with French President Emmanuel Macron at the Élysée Palace. During the meeting, the Prime Minister emphasized the importance of enhancing Armenian-French cooperation in all fields, including defence. Nikol Pashinyan and Emmanuel Macron exchanged views on regional peace and stability (Official website of the Prime Minister of the RA, 2023).

In December 2023, French senators called on the authorities to explore the possibility of sending 155mm Caesar self-propelled howitzers to Armenia, in addition to the other recently shipped weapons, as outlined in a defense budget bill of the French Senate. The document also mentions that Armenia will receive a total of 50 Arquus Bastion armored personnel carriers. While 24 of these vehicles are already being shipped, the remainder is currently in production ("Armenpress", 2023c).

In this context, the important fact for Armenia is France's plan to increase its monthly deliveries of 155mm shells. These deliveries are set to increase from 1,000 per month in January 2023 to 3,000 per month in January 2024, but Nexter Systems Company has raised its production of the Caesar self-propelled howitzers to six per month from two at the start of 2022. Meanwhile, Matra BAE Dynamics Alenia (MBDA) Company has doubled its production of the Mistral short-range surface-to-air missile to 40 per month (Ruitenberg, 2023). At the same time Thales-owned factory in Limours, which previously produced around 10 radars annually, now aims to produce over 20 per year (Kayali, 2024). The 2022 SIPRI report documented that France has increased its sales by 59 percent over the previous 10 years – more than any other country, and it may be possible that in 2024 France becomes equal to – or surpasses – Russia as the world's № 2 arms exporter (Thompson, 2023).

On February 2, 2024, representatives from the leadership of the Saint-Cyr Military Academy of the Armed Forces of the Republic of France visited the Military Academy named after Vazgen Sargsyan in Yerevan. The guests were presented with detailed information about the structure, activities, and educational programs of the Academy. Discussions were held on matters related to the interaction and cooperation between the two academies. Furthermore, on the same day, in the presence of Deputy Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, Arman Sargsyan, and the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the French Republic to Armenia, Olivier Decotigny, a modernly equipped French classroom was

inaugurated at the Academy. The symbolic act of cutting the red ribbon was jointly performed by a French cadet studying in Armenia and an Armenian cadet set to pursue studies in France, exemplifying the cooperative ties between the two Military Academies (Official website of the MoD of the RA, 2024a).

On February 23, 2024, in the framework of the working visit to the Republic of Armenia, French Minister for the Armed Forces Sébastien Lecornu and Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia Suren Papikyan signed several new agreements on cooperation between the two states in the defense sector (Official website of the MoD of the RA, 2024b). Particularly, during a joint press conference, Sébastien Lecornu announced France's readiness to supply various range Air defense missile systems to Armenia if necessary, emphasizing the importance of training for the development of the Armenian Armed Forces. Under another agreement, Armenian military officers will train in France, including in Saint-Cyr, the French national military academy ("Armenpress", 2024).

The characteristic feature was the fact that French Minister for the Armed Forces Sébastien Lecornu arrived in the Armenian capital with the representatives of MBDA, Nexter, Arquus, Safran, Thales, and PGM French defense companies. At the same time, it was reported that Armenia also signed a contract to buy assault rifles from the PGM company (Kayali and Gavin, 2024).

Conclusion

Thus, in recent years, the rapid growth of political-economic relations between the Republic of Armenia and the French Republic has significantly contributed to the development of their defense cooperation, particularly in military-technical aspects. Especially, this growth was notable during 2023. That was determined by the fact, that after the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Armed Forces, the Russian Federation cannot realize military contracts of supplying armament to Armenia. As a result, being a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Armenia is trying to find other suppliers to recover its heavy losses of military equipment during the 44-Day War. The military-technical cooperation with France creates a possibility for Armenia to get access to western advanced military technologies, which are used in the development of the military-industrial complex of France.

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THE STRUGGLE FOR TRUTH IN POLITICS: OVERCOMING RELATIVISM AND LIES

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Abstract

This paper explores the intricate relationship between truth and politics, discussing the philosophical and ethical implications of their interplay within democratic societies. The rise of post-truth politics, where emotional resonance overshadows truth in general, poses significant challenges to democratic values and institutions. The study examines the philosophical debates around political relativism, highlighting its impact on democratic principles, which can undermine rational discourse and informed citizenship. It draws on the insights of Hannah Arendt and Steven Lukes into the vulnerability of facts in political discourse, underscoring the tension between truth and political power. Through a synthesis of theoretical perspectives, this paper argues that the vitality of democratic systems crucially relies on the safeguarding of truth. It emphasizes the role of intellectuals, truth-tracking institutions, and optimistic standpoints toward people's rational abilities in navigating through the complexities of maintaining the integrity of today's public discourse.

***Keywords**:* truth, politics, post-truth, relativism, lies.

Introduction

Upon initial examination, the question about the relationship between truth and politics may appear simplistic or naive to people who, based on their perspectives informed by everyday experiences and some historical insights, often harbor the belief that the main, if not sole, motivation driving politicians and political parties is the pursuit and maintenance of power, with conflicting interests being subjugated to this overarching objective. This concept of politics is not merely grounded in intuition but has been extensively deliberated upon within the philosophical tradition. In “The Prince”, Niccolò Machiavelli urges readers to dispense with “fantasies” about politicians and politics and instead focus on realities. “Everyone will appreciate how admirable it is for a ruler to keep his word and be honest rather than deceitful. However, in our own times, we’ve had examples of leaders who’ve done great things without worrying too much about keeping their word. Outwitting opponents with their cunning, these men achieved more than leaders who behaved

honestly" (Machiavelli, 2014, p. 69). Machiavelli argues that the primary concern of rulers should be the acquisition and maintenance of power, suggesting that rulers should be willing to employ any means necessary, including deceit, manipulation, and even violence, to achieve their goals and maintain their rule. In this context, power and politics are fundamentally about winning at all costs. Politics becomes akin to warfare, with parties vying for control and seeking to prolong their reign. In his 1976 lecture series, "Society Must Be Defended", Michel Foucault explores how the logic of warfare permeates modern politics. He contends that "Civil war takes place on the stage of power. There is civil war only in the element of constituted political power; it takes place to keep or conquer power, to confiscate or transform it" (Foucault, 2015, p. 29).

While intuitively true, this description of politics presents challenges in providing a comprehensive, rational account of why the populace continues engaging with political processes in principle. One aspect to consider is the role of ideology and values in shaping political behavior. While power may indeed be a motivating factor for some politicians, it is obviously intertwined with broader ideological principles and policy goals. Political parties and leaders frequently espouse specific ideologies or platforms that reflect their vision for society, which goes beyond mere power acquisition. Therefore, the notion that politics is solely about power does not suffice to answer inquiries regarding the enduring interest of people in political programs, the ongoing attention to political figures and political news, and the participation in elections. Such a portrayal, reducing politics to a mere quest for power by a select group, overlooks the multifaceted motivations and expectations that make politics meaningful and drive civic engagement. Moreover, it also overlooks the diverse motivations and aspirations of ordinary citizens who engage in political processes. Individuals participate in politics not solely to gain power but to express their values, advocate for their interests, and contribute to shaping the direction of society. Political engagement can be driven by a desire for social change, a sense of civic duty, or a commitment to democratic principles, all of which transcend narrow conceptions of power politics. Additionally, the focus on power as the primary motivation for politicians ignores the complex dynamics of governance and decision-making. Political leaders must navigate competing interests, negotiate compromises, and respond to public opinion and societal demands, all of which shape the policymaking process. Simply reducing politics to a quest for power fails to capture the intricacies of governance and the myriad factors that influence political outcomes. Furthermore, the idea that politicians are solely driven by power overlooks the importance of accountability and public scrutiny in democratic systems. In functioning democracies, politicians are accountable to the electorate through regular elections, oversight mechanisms, and media scrutiny.

However, while considering the role of ideology, citizen engagement, governance dynamics, and accountability mechanisms, we can develop a more nuanced understanding of politics that goes beyond reductive portrayals of power-seeking behavior. It is true that the relationship between truth and politics is fraught with complexities that cannot be ignored. As German American philosopher Hannah Arendt states in the opening paragraph of her famous essay: "No one has ever

doubted that truth and politics are on rather bad terms with each other, and no one, as far as I know, has ever counted truthfulness among the political virtues. Lies have always been regarded as necessary and justifiable tools not only of the politician's or the demagogue's but also of the statesman's trade" (Arendt, 1968, 227). Lies have long been ingrained in the fabric of political life, serving as a tool to gain advantage. Conversely, expecting sincerity or truthfulness from politicians has historically proven futile. Throughout history, truth has frequently been in opposition to politics.
Despite this, why does pursuing truth in politics matter now? The significance of truth has heightened in contemporary times and escalated into a pressing concern due to a multitude of setbacks, including problems with the polarization of opinions and overly complex communications, the decline in the authority and trust in experts, science, and traditional institutions, the loss of trust in human rationality and faith in democracy. Proponents of so-called post-truth politics argue that we currently live in a world where people judge, and act based on their feelings rather than facts and expertise. In this regard, post-truth politics is deeply rooted in postmodernist ideas that challenge traditional notions of truth and knowledge, creating fertile ground for manipulations. In his book "The Logic of Practice", French sociologist and public intellectual Pierre Bourdieu (1990) critiqued the dichotomy between objectivism and subjectivism, considering it the 'most ruinous' division within social science. The rejection of objective truth by postmodernists led to a reliance on individual emotions and subjectivity as alternatives. Postmodernism fostered a cultural climate characterized by skepticism towards truth and knowledge, leading to a disregard for epistemic authority and a rejection of moral absolutes. This shift played into the hands of destructive forces, particularly evident in contemporary politics. Indeed, the prevalent post-truth political narrative relies on some implicit, questionable empirical and normative assumptions and allies with totalitarian and authoritarian ideas. Arendt argues that "the ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction … true and false … no longer exist" (Arendt, 1951, p. 474). Likewise, some of the recent public philosophers are also concerned with the possibility of post-truth politics being a "pre-fascist" or "pre-authoritarian" condition. In this regard, Lee McIntyre notes in his book: "One might imagine a no less chilling exchange in the basement of the Ministry of Love in the pages of George Orwell's dystopian novel 1984. Indeed, some now worry that we are well on our way to fulfilling that dark vision, where truth is the first casualty in the establishment of the authoritarian state" (McIntyre, 2018, p. 4).

The idea that people are no longer interested in truth seems counter-intuitive and absurd. As long as we know ourselves and our past, we have always been involved in the quest for truth. Truth-telling plays a fundamental role in shaping our collective understanding of human existence, our interactions with the world, and our relationships with one another. Commencing with the Platonic victory over Sophists and later at the beginning of the 17th Century with the Cartesian achievement over the consequences of Reformation, such as sprawling uncertainty and skepticism, the Western history of thought has asserted truth as the world's cornerstone, thereby delineating a philosophical tradition that underlines human inherent inclination

toward the pursuit of truth. Truth shapes the common fabric of reality, providing the foundation for orienting ourselves in the world. The emergence of the post-truth concept directly contradicts this longstanding tradition, which endures as a foundational principle in contemporary philosophical discourse.

Regarding politics, it is a noble activity involved in getting and using power in public life, where people collaborate and compete to quest for the common good. The relationship between the common good and truth is foundational in the context of politics. For politics to be just, it may rely on certain norms like respect for justice, human rights, freedom, and truth ─ objective principles that govern its practices. Truth matters in every field, including politics, because it is essential for fostering trust and accountability, as well as ensuring justice and fairness, promoting social cohesion and harmony, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of political systems. Therefore, for politics to serve the common good effectively, decisions must be based on accurate information and evidence.

Politics and Relativism

The relationship between truth and politics dominated in the mid-twentieth century totalitarian regimes, underscored the threat associated with purportedly objective or absolute truths. Given the deleterious consequences associated with political dogmatism, there arises a necessity for a form of political relativism.

Relativism is a philosophical doctrine that dates back to ancient Greece and stands as one of philosophical inquiry's most intricate and controversial constructs. It suggests that concepts such as truth, falsehood, morality, and reasoning are contingent upon differing cultural frameworks and perspectives. Its influence extends across various domains of human knowledge, including science, religion, ethics, and political theory. Over the past decades, relativism has gained traction as a principle shaping political ideologies and practices. This shift is partly attributed to the recent demise of Marxist ideology, resulting in a loss of confidence in enduring political truths. Within this paradigm, the conception emerges that the future engenders opinions rather than absolute truths, decisions are contingent upon deliberation rather than scientific certainty, and their validation lies in the numerical support they garner rather than their intrinsic merit. This perspective echoes the doctrine espoused by the Sophists, wherein truth is reduced to a decree of the majority.

Some critics of relativism assert that political anarchy inevitably follows from its adoption. The accusation that relativism leads to political chaos stems from its rejection of absolute or universal standards and the acceptance of the complete contingency of opinions, merely seeking acquiescence. Given that all opinions are considered equally valid and contingent, there is a risk of breaking down commonly accepted norms and principles necessary for political stability and a degree of irresponsibility among political actors. Critics contend that societies descend into chaos without shared norms, which can fragment society along ideological lines. Rather than fostering a sense of common purpose and collective identity, the relativistic approach encourages the spread of competing interest groups and identity politics, sharpening social divisions and undermining solidarity. On the other hand, concerning political irresponsibility, this approach can create fertile ground for

political leaders to exploit relativism to consolidate power and portray themselves as the sole arbiters of truth and morality in a fragmented and polarized society.

Political anarchy can arise when relativistic acceptance of contingency leads to a loss of confidence in democratic institutions and processes. Suppose individuals perceive their opinions equally valid regardless of their adherence to democratic norms and principles. In that case, they may become disillusioned with representative democracy and turn to alternative forms of political expression or activism, potentially destabilizing democratic governance. Populist movements, social media activism, civil disobedience, and acts of extremist groups represent forms of political expression and activism that could undermine democratic institutions and processes. Indeed, populist rhetoric can exploit societal divisions and undermine democratic norms by promoting simplistic solutions and fostering distrust in established political processes. At the same time, social media can facilitate the spread of misinformation, create echo chambers, and propagate polarizing narratives that undermine trust in democratic institutions and exacerbate social divisions. Finally, direct actions like civil disobedience can disrupt democratic processes, undermine the rule of law, and escalate tensions between activists and authorities.

However, proponents counter that relativism fosters tolerance and pluralism, which are essential for democratic coexistence. As a broad framework, relativism is associated with democratic ideologies due to its aim of establishing theoretical or dispositional bases for promoting less dogmatic, more inclusive, tolerant, and open-minded individuals and societies. These qualities are undeniably vital interests for any democratic society. As well, to be a defender of democratic values means to be against stances and values arising from political dogmatism, absolutism, and universalism, and their attendants, such as authoritarianism, despotism, and autocracy, which are associated with rejecting pluralism, egalitarian ideas, and individual freedom.

Indeed, it is commonly acknowledged that democratic principles are inherently aligned with a relativistic perspective, while authoritarian ideologies often derive validation from absolutist or dogmatic stances regarding knowledge and morality. However, the connection between relativism and political ideologies, along with their implications, is more complex than expected. The complications arise from the fact that, while a relativistic perspective doesn't always align with democratic values, it's also possible for non-democratic political ideologies to be rooted in relativistic principles. In other words, relativism has been invoked to rationalize both democratic and totalitarian ideologies and policies.

A renowned Austrian philosopher, Paul Feyerabend (1924-1994), asserts that all political traditions possess equal value and merit mutual tolerance. According to him, all cultural and political traditions (of Western civilizations, Third World countries, etc.) may not be compared and ranked; they are just what they are. Any meta-criteria that aim at allowing tradition to be considered legitimate or accepted must be rejected. Feyerabend claims the impossibility of a universal political standard and contextualizes the political units, claiming that all customs, religions, and legal norms are valid within their local domains. Meanwhile, Feyerabend is convinced that traditions can benefit from studying each other, a position known as opportunism. He

calls for all traditions to be granted the same rights and opportunities, requiring a fair dialog process and equal exchange. No culture can be superior to others due to any universal truth or objective knowledge. Feyerabend develops his theory of democratic relativism, drawing from Protagoras's assertion that "Man is the measure of all things" (Feyerabend, 1988, p. 44), arguing that traditions are human constructs imbued with anthropomorphic qualities: "The laws, customs, facts that are being put before the citizens ultimately rest on the pronouncements, beliefs, and perceptions of human beings" (Feyerabend, 1988, p. 48). Feyerabend's democratic relativism posits that diverse societies may have different perceptions of the world and truths (about what is acceptable and unacceptable). At the same time, fundamental assumptions are subject to debate and determination by all citizens, in principle. In this context, Feyerabend's advocacy for direct democracy and the empowerment of the common people appears straightforward and politically simplistic, a stance he seeks to challenge in his provocatively titled book, "Farewell to Reason": "Modern dogmatics, living in democracies where pluralistic and libertarian rhetoric prevails, seek power in a more underhanded way. Distinguishing between 'mere beliefs' and 'objective information', the defenders of scientific rationalism tolerate the former but use laws, money, education, and PR to put the latter in a privileged position" (Feyerabend, 1988, 84). In democratic states, group interests and power relations are at high stakes, and, as Feyerabend acknowledges, mere calls for equal participation and deliberation of all citizens will not easily dissolve them. Feyerabend's theory of political relativism involves normative judgments without detailing practical implementations, giving it the semblance of a utopian vision rather than a robust political theory. Political relativism, notably in Feyerabend's framework, often neglects the development of tangible strategies for integrating relativistic principles into daily political practices. This neglect encompasses the resolution of conflicts among different groups, the establishment of flexible standards relevant to different contexts, and the crafting of pragmatic approaches.

However, critics claim that tolerance (including inclusivity and flexibility) is not solely confined to being a "relativistic virtue" at its core. Embracing a relativistic doctrine may not be essential for cultivating social and political tolerance. "The confluence of tolerance and relativism has created the unfortunate impression that to be a tolerant liberal one must also accept relativism. The conceptual connection between relativism and tolerance is far from clear. For one thing, the true mark of tolerance is to accept a point of view that one considers wrong, but the relativist is not, or at least not obviously, in a position to judge any point of view as wrong. Moreover, if all values are culture-relative, then tolerance could be a value only for those cultures that judge it in that light. Hence, relativism would lead to tolerance only for those who already recognize the value of tolerance" (Baghramian, 2020, p.20). Given the inherent diversity, subjectivity, and arbitrariness within personal experiences, recognizing, and valuing political tolerance may suffice. On the other hand, our fundamental convictions, particularly democratic convictions such as tolerance, equal rights, and opportunities, may not inherently rely on an epistemological theory for justification despite the potential contribution of relativism to reinforcing them.

The denial of universal values positions relativism as an intellectual backing for autocratic and populist political regimes as well. Autocracies utilize relativism to validate their "alternative" models of democracy, based on their different cultural and historical contexts. Unrestricted by any constraints and empowered by the total freedom afforded by relativism, these regimes adapt their traditions to democratic principles, selectively incorporating Western democratic values while rejecting others and integrating local traditions as they see fit. Populism, which political theorists argue is primarily a political style or strategy rather than an ideology, also dismisses the notion of truth as a general normative structure. Within populist discourse, "we" and "they" or "the people" and "the elites" each assert their distinct versions of truth, thereby undermining the premise of a unified truth accessible to all. While embracing a relativistic concept of pluralism concerning truth, populists maintain the stance that tolerance should not extend across differing truths since they assert the supremacy of "our" or "the people's" truth over that of "others".

Hence, relativism arises as an intellectual asset utilized by both democratic and non-democratic politics, serving as both an ally and adversary to various conflicting and aligning political ideologies. This implies that merely adopting a relativistic perspective falls short of embracing moral and political values, including tolerance, openness, and equality, which are indispensable for the welfare and advancement of any democratic society.

Another inevitable outcome attributed to relativism is regarded as intellectual (theoretical) and dispositional uncertainty. Rejecting any overarching narratives or objective truths, relativism can leave individuals feeling disoriented and adrift. Indeed, critics argue the relativistic position lines up with intellectual indifference or a casual attitude towards intellectual pursuits, where one may not take the time or effort to critically examine concepts, explore complex arguments, or seek more profound understanding. This can result in a state of wavering belief in one's principles, values, or opinions, a reluctance to commit to a course of action, and superficial engagement with ideas. Instead, relativism contrasts with a strong sense of conviction and firm confidence. It can lead to intellectual or moral apathy, where individuals lack strong convictions because they see all beliefs and values as equally valid or invalid.

Intellectual or dispositional uncertainty poses significant challenges for individuals to engage effectively as citizens in the formulation of decisions pertinent to political tolerance, equal rights, and opportunities. In essence, it obstructs the realization of the Protagorean project, wherein the capacity for individuals to serve as the measure of all things remains elusive in practical application.

Politics and Lies

Trying to rescue politics from being irreversibly relativized, Hannah Arendt claims that even if we "admit that every generation has the right to write its own history, we admit no more than that it has the right to rearrange the facts in accordance with its own perspective; we don't admit the right to touch the factual matter itself" (Arendt, 1967, p. 7).

Hannah Arendt, a preeminent political philosopher of the 20th century, dedicated her intellectual pursuits to exploring the connection between truth and politics. This exploration is encapsulated in two of her influential essays, “Truth and Politics” and “Lying in Politics”. “Truth and Politics" was written in response to the criticism she faced after publishing “Eichmann in Jerusalem” in 1963 as a series of articles in The New Yorker. “Lying in Politics” was penned as a response to the public disclosure of the Pentagon Papers. In her writings, Arendt argues that politicians have always been interested in the denial of facts by making facts.

According to her, facts and events emerge from collective living and interaction because they are shaped by individuals’ experiences, perspectives, and interactions within a society. As such, they become intertwined with the fabric of shared memory and historical narrative, influencing how people perceive and understand the world around them. Due to this, she argues, factual truths often clash with political interests. Indeed, political power usually seeks to control collective memory by shaping historical narratives and controlling the dissemination of information. This control allows political authorities to maintain their authority, legitimacy, and control over public discourse. When facts challenge or contradict the narratives propagated by political authorities, they threaten to disrupt collective memory by introducing alternative perspectives or interpretations of historical events. This can involve erecting or, conversely, tearing down monuments or memorials that celebrate a particular narrative of history, engaging in revisionist history by reinterpreting past events, or whitewashing individuals and the actions of past leaders. It may also involve engaging in symbolic actions to influence collective memory, such as renaming landmarks or streets, changing national symbols or emblems, or carrying out public ceremonies or rituals that reinforce a specific narrative of history. Furthermore, political actors manipulate collective memory to serve their interests, promoting narratives that align with their agendas or ideologies. In doing so, they may suppress or distort facts that challenge their version of history, reinforcing their authority and control over collective memory.

Moreover, facts play a crucial role in maintaining a free and democratic society and ensuring our freedom. They enable informed decision-making, ensure accountability, promote transparency, underpin freedom of speech and expression, and help protect rights. Without facts, these pillars of democracy and freedom would be significantly weakened or lost. The ability of individuals to make informed decisions, exercise their rights, hold their leaders accountable, and participate effectively in the political process is contingent on the availability and understanding of information. Misinformation or lack of information can lead to manipulation, oppression, and the erosion of democratic processes. Arendt argues that because facts possess a compelling authority, they demand nothing more than acknowledgment or recognition and do not serve as vehicles for propaganda or persuasion. As factual truth stands diametrically opposed to opinion, persuasion, or propaganda, it resides beyond the purview of political discourse, operating outside the confines of power-conflict dynamics. Consequently, facts widely become subject to interpretation; politicians manipulate facts to align entirely with their agenda or political ideology.

They seek to alter established truths and rewrite historical narratives through such actions.

Arendt contends that truth and politics intersect most profoundly within the domain of factual truths, asserting the necessity of separating them from other forms of truth. She outlines various categories of truth, including mathematical, scientific, philosophical, and factual truths, with the latter focused on human events and things that happen in the world. Unlike other forms of truth, factual truths are characterized by fragility and less durability. Particularly, facts about past events pose significant challenges for recovery without documented records. In other words, once lost or destroyed, facts remain irrecoverable. Arendt underscores the substantial political ramifications of this reality, suggesting that the primary concern lies not with media influence but rather with political authority, as facts present inconveniences to those in power. Indeed, politics consistently demonstrates a vested interest in either concealing or eradicating certain facts.

Arendt writes "The chances of factual truth surviving the onslaught of power are very slim; indeed, it is always in danger of being maneuvered out of the world not only for a time but, potentially, forever. Facts and events are infinitely more fragile things than axioms, discoveries, and theories—even the most wildly speculative ones—produced by the human mind; they occur in the field of the ever-changing affairs of men, in whose flux there is nothing more permanent than the admittedly relative permanence of the human mind's structure. Once they are lost, no rational effort will ever bring them back" (Arendt, 1977, p. 231).

Arendt believes that the real threat to facts is something she calls "organized lying", which she describes as coordinated and concerted efforts to undermine the factual character of human events. In her work, she illustrates the fragility of our collective reality and explains how the reality we all share and rely on can be disrupted by organized lying. This results in a surreal realm where evidence is manipulated, and documents are falsified, blurring the lines between fact and fiction. Politics is a dynamic field that requires individuals to take various actions. Engaging in politics requires acknowledging the constantly changing nature of reality. This means one must be resourceful and creative to navigate through the challenges that arise. Lying is one of the actions that individuals in politics may engage in, referring to the act of deliberately misleading others. In contrast to lying, accepting something as true involves a theoretical process that requires, for instance, evaluating evidence and concluding based on logical reasoning. Lying can have significant consequences, particularly in politics. It can make the past as malleable as the future, allowing it to be reshaped to suit the present agenda or needs. As Arendt affirms, "Since everything that has actually happened in the realm of human affairs could just as well have been otherwise, the possibilities for lying are boundless, and this boundlessness makes for self-defeat" (Arendt, 1967, p. 15). Politicians can change the narrative of history by altering the facts to suit their needs. Consequently, lying constitutes a rejection of the existence of factual truths, which can have severe implications not just for the fabric of societies but for the very destiny of nations.

There is a widely held belief that the purpose of lying in politics is to make it difficult for people to trust themselves and form informed opinions based on facts.

Political lies can erode individuals' confidence in their judgment and mental faculties by sowing doubt and uncertainty. This can increase political influence and control over public discourse because people may need to rely more heavily on the judgments and narratives put forth by politicians and other authority figures. However, it is also true that lying in politics can destabilize political institutions by eroding trust in politicians and undermining the legitimacy of the democratic process. When citizens lose faith in their elected representatives and institutions, it can lead to disillusionment, apathy, and even political unrest. This erosion of trust can weaken the social contract between citizens and the state, making it more difficult to govern effectively and maintain social cohesion.

While undermining trust in politicians may serve the short-term interests of certain political actors seeking to maintain power or advance their agenda, it ultimately undermines the strength and effectiveness of political institutions in the long run. Given that some political actors may prioritize their interests over the long-term stability and integrity of political institutions, this can compromise the ability to address pressing societal issues. Without trust in political leaders and institutions, democratic governance becomes more challenging, and the ability to address pressing societal issues is compromised.

Arendt cautions that we cannot allow politics to dispute the existence of facts. It serves an enormous importance for public institutions, such as libraries, newspapers, museums, archives, and universities, that maintain the factual account of reality. Arendt argues that the purpose of organized lying is not to replace some facts with others, which means to replace the truth with the lie but to undermine the character of factuality itself. The agenda of politics is to make facts seem like opinions. When facts turn into opinions, there is no agreed-upon basis for human action. Political decisions become meaningless because reality becomes malleable; it can be shaped and reshaped according to who is in power. Totalitarian leaders treat facts like enemies because they want to claim everything without evidence. If politicians are not required to respect facts, they become radically free. They say things and then claim never have said them; they rewrite history to serve their interests.

She emphasizes the crucial importance of acknowledging the constant threat to democracy posed by lies. For Arendt, the solution to combat relativism and lying in politics is the pursuit of factual truth, which she believes can only be attained and preserved outside the realm of politics. She argues that it should be the job of the true impartial scientist or philosopher. These individuals, unencumbered by partisan interests, are ideally positioned to pursue truth-seeking endeavors, and contribute to the public discourse with rigor and integrity.

Steven Lukes, a British political and social theorist, shares the same concerns as Hannah Arendt when it comes to politics and truth. He believes that politics should not be about imposing big or metaphysical truths upon whole societies, as this could lead to totalitarian regimes. Instead, he argues that empirical or factual truths should be considered and given more weight for politics to be effective in the long run. Lukes proposes several domains of life, including science, journalism, law, and public administration, as spheres of collective reasoning that should serve as guardians of truth. In these spheres, participants should ideally reach conclusions that

they collectively agree are justified as true based on evidence. Within these spheres, participants ideally reach conclusions based on evidence and shared norms, thus upholding the integrity of truth-seeking endeavors. In his essay "Power, Truth and Politics", Lukes argues "The norms in these various fields (e.g., replication in science, fact-checking in journalism, the adversary system in Anglo-American criminal law, bureaucratic rules, and public consultation in administration) are filters designed to help to ensure this by ruling out arbitrariness, idiosyncrasy, incompetence, favoritism, nepotism, negligence, subterfuge, skullduggery, malpractice, fraud, and corruption. They function to restrict the power of interest-driven parties to render truth impotent" (Lukes, 2019, p. 567).

Lukes advocates for greater transparency, accountability, and democratic participation as the solution to the problem of truth in politics. He calls for mechanisms to hold political actors accountable and for increased public scrutiny of government processes and decision-making. In this context, he asserts that liberal democracy provides the most conducive framework for conducting politics, where a win-at-all-costs strategy is entirely self-defeating Liberal democracy involves organizing political life to maintain impartiality, avoid imposing truths on everyone, and keep the question of truth open. He emphasizes the importance of defending institutions such as science, journalism, the judiciary, and public administration—entities that track and uphold truth—for advancing decent politics.

Conclusion

The intricate relationship between truth and politics, as explored throughout this paper, reveals both perennial tensions and profound implications for democratic governance. Politics and truth being conflicting has been a topic of discussion for a long time. Throughout history, politics has often been seen as being more about power than the truth. Nowadays, in the age of "post-truth", many believe that politics is more about lies, misinformation, and other manipulative tactics than truth. It begs the question: why do we think that politics has anything to do with truth?

As outlined in this paper, one perspective perceives politics through a narrow lens akin to warfare, where the sole objective is victory. This approach turns politics into a power struggle that centers on defeating the enemy, leading to polarization of society where manipulation of both people and truth becomes commonplace.

The quote, "You have your own way. I have my way. As for the right way, the correct way, and the only way, it does not exist", is often attributed to Friedrich Nietzsche, and quite precisely describes the position of relativism. Not only does it carry a profound message about the subjectivity of human perspectives in general, but at its core, it emphasizes the idea that there is not universally applicable or definitive path that can be labeled as the absolute "right way". Instead, it encourages us to recognize and respect the diversity of opinions, choices, and approaches, irrespective of the ethical implications. In the context of political discourse, the concept of "my way" has historically, and particularly in contemporary times, been interpreted to signify a willingness to undertake any necessary measures to achieve a particular objective or secure a victory (winning at all costs). Indeed, in the absence of right, correct, or the only way, the justification for "my way" lies solely with me

or my group, and it is based on the effectiveness of "my way" in facilitating our understanding and supporting us in achieving our objectives or desires. This is the distinct embodiment of post-truth politics' "my way" that we find ourselves immersed in today. Post-truth politics justifies its approach by arguing that there is no objective truth or reality to follow, allowing politicians to shape alternative narratives and interpretations according to their agendas. To achieve their objectives and suit their own needs, post-truth politicians take advantage of media dynamics, especially the proliferation of social media platforms, exploit societal polarization, capitalize on the public distrust in institutions, and, last but not least, prioritize winning more than anything else.

Another perspective on politics acknowledges the existence of a "right way" of conducting politics and arises from its commitment to liberal democratic frameworks. Liberalism, known for its advocacy of tolerance and pluralism, firmly rejects all forms of dogmatism, including totalitarian and authoritarian meta-narratives. This stance suggests that liberalism inherently aligns with a relativistic standpoint. As one can see, truth becomes something that can be entirely negotiated in both contexts, giving rise to political relativism.

However, amidst these complexities lies a pressing concern: the erosion of truth in contemporary political discourse. The rise of post-truth politics further complicates the landscape. In a world where facts are increasingly viewed through emotional and subjective interpretation, the very essence of informed citizenship and rational discourse is threatened. This shift towards a post-truth environment, where empirical evidence and factual accuracy are subordinated to emotional appeal and personal belief, poses a significant risk to the principles of transparency and accountability that underpin democratic institutions.

Relativism emerges as a significant philosophical and political doctrine that influences modern interpretations of truth and understanding in the political domain. Although relativism offers a critique of absolute or universal truths and promotes tolerance and pluralism, it also raises concerns regarding political anarchy, moral uncertainty, and intellectual apathy. Critics argue that relativism can lead to political chaos and undermine democratic institutions by eroding shared norms and principles necessary for political stability. Besides, the rejection of universal values also provides intellectual backing for autocratic and populist regimes, which selectively incorporate democratic principles while maintaining their own cultural and historical traditions. While cultural and historical traditions undoubtedly shape democratic systems, there are underlying universal principles and values that transcend specific cultural or historical contexts and are essential for the functioning of democracy. Without a shared understanding of these fundamental truths, such as human rights, sovereignty, rule of law, transparency, and accountability, it can be challenging, if not impossible, to establish and maintain a democratic society. Hence, rejecting the idea of universal or objective truths from a relativistic standpoint undermines fundamental principles, values, and norms rather than serving as a liberating force.

Those who defend relativism argue that it helps foster tolerance, openness, and equality, which are indispensable for democratic coexistence. Relativism challenges dogmatic and authoritarian ideologies, advocating for a more inclusive and open-

minded political approach. However, the link between relativism and democratic values is not straightforward, and adopting a relativistic perspective does not necessarily ensure the promotion of democratic principles. Additionally, while fostering intellectual uncertainty and apathy, relativism hinders individuals' capacity to engage effectively in political discourse and decision-making, which is so vital in a functioning democracy. Therefore, in navigating the complexities of contemporary political landscapes, it is essential for political actors and citizens to critically examine the implications of relativism and its role in shaping political ideologies and practices.

The exploration of politics and truth, as examined by prominent thinkers such as Hannah Arendt and Steven Lukes, emphasizes the complex relationship between factual accuracy and politics. Arendt's insights into the manipulation of facts and collective memory aim to prevent facts or evidence from being irreversibly relativized. She cautions against the dangers of organized lying, which seeks to undermine the very concept of factuality. While emphasizing the fragile nature of facts in the face of political power, Arendt vividly illustrates that political manipulation of facts is not merely about misinformation but a deeper, more strategic effort to reshape reality to fit the needs of those in power. Moreover, the political utility of lies, as a tool for manipulating public opinion and masking the true nature of policy decisions, has been a consistent theme from historical analyses to contemporary critiques. The deliberate distortion of facts serves not only the immediate goals of specific political actors but also reflects a broader strategic intent to control the political narrative and influence the policy-making process.

Arendt contends that the search for factual truth lies outside the realm of politics and should be entrusted to impartial scientists or philosophers. Lukes echoes this sentiment, advocating for protecting truth-tracking institutions such as science, journalism, law, and public administration. These spheres of collective reasoning serve as guardians of truth, upholding rigorous standards of evidence and integrity in pursuing knowledge. As for political figures, according to Lukes, while they claim commitment to a liberal democratic framework, it will be counterproductive for them not to cultivate openness to truth and willingness to engage in reasoned discourse.

In grappling with these issues, it becomes clear that the preservation of a democratic society depends crucially on the safeguarding of truth and the realm of factuality. Institutions such as journalism, academia, and the legal system, and intellectuals play an indispensable role in this process by scrutinizing political statements and actions, fostering public debate, and ensuring that principles and facts remain the cornerstone of public discourse.

Considering the solutions proposed by Arendt and Lukes, it's essential to reflect on the inherent optimism in their perspectives. Despite the challenges posed by organized lying and the manipulation of facts, both thinkers maintain a belief in the capacity of individuals to uphold truth and integrity in political discourse. They advocate for mechanisms that empower citizens to hold political actors accountable and participate actively in the democratic process. Indeed, by fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and democratic participation, we can cultivate a political environment where factual accuracy and reasoned discourse prevail.

In this regard, we can be cautiously optimistic about people's rational abilities to navigate the complexities of politics and truth. The challenge for contemporary politics is not merely to address the symptoms of lies and relativism but to reinforce the foundations of democratic governance through a renewed commitment to truth. This involves not only the commitment to truth-seeking endeavors and the defense of truth-tracking institutions that ensure transparency and accountability but also cultivating a public discourse that values and upholds the truth. As we move forward, the role of education in fostering critical thinking and discernment becomes ever more critical.

The journey towards reconciling truth and politics is fraught with challenges, but it remains an essential endeavor for those committed to the ideals of democracy and justice. The integrity of our political systems and the health of our civic life depend fundamentally on our capacity to engage with truth—both as a concept and as a practice—in the public sphere. To create a more informed, tolerant, and equitable society, we must strive to foster a nuanced understanding of truth and politics. As we confront the challenges of politics and truth, let us remain steadfast in our dedication to upholding truth and integrity in political discourse, thereby safeguarding the foundations of democracy for future generations.

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INSTITUTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF CIVIL CONTROL IN THE SECURITY SYSTEM: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

In the process of establishing democracy by the state, the institution of civil control by the society (non-governmental circles) is one of the modern primary elements. It is carried out by subjects of civil control, in particular, non-governmental organizations, individuals, public organizations, and several other competent authorities. Civil control over the security sector is a more complex and ambiguous process, which, on one hand, ensures the transparency and efficient operation of the sector, but on the other hand, makes it more vulnerable. Among state institutions, the role of parliament in exercising control over the security system is crucial, especially in states with a parliamentary government model, where the government is accountable to the parliament.

Keywords: society, civil control, security sector, non-governmental organizations, parliament.

Ensuring national security is one of the priority tasks of any state. If a state faces problems in terms of ensuring security, it becomes quite difficult, sometimes even impossible, to guarantee developments in other spheres. Unfortunately, the example of the Republic of Armenia illustrates how important the provision of national security is and what severe consequences its disruption can have for the state. And this is where a question arises: is only the state authorized to ensure national security, or is there any mechanism by which society will have the opportunity to control how national security is guaranteed?

In the context of the this issue, it is fundamental to analyze and evaluate what civil control means, by what methods it is carried out, and then what role it has in the process of ensuring the security system.

In general, control is one of the most important functions of management, providing an opportunity to identify deviations, errors, and shortcomings, and to look for new resources, and opportunities (without effective control, it is practically

impossible to effectively implement the other three general functions of management: planning, organization and motivation) (Arshakyan, 2014, p. 200).

The more open the activities of the state's governing bodies and officials are to the public, the smaller are their opportunities to abuse the powers given to them.

The role and importance of control are obvious, but it takes on greater significance when implemented in a "civil control" format. "Civil control" is exercised by "civil society". In a broad, philosophical sense, civil society is a way of organizing and managing public life, where the central value, the main operating subject, and the ultimate goal is the human citizen with his interests, demands, and rights.

In a narrow sense, emphasizing the role of non-governmental organizations in the processes of organization and management of public life, the notion of civil society is understood as the third sector: non-governmental, non-commercial organizations, foundations, associations of legal entities, creative associations, charitable organizations, civil movements and forms of action (H. Hovhannisyan, 2003, p. 17).

From the point of view of the official administrative process, civil control is the control over the activities of the state, community, and other bodies, as well as the officials. It involves evaluating the legality and effectiveness of their activities. In this format too, civil control is one of the main functions of civil society (Williams, 2021).

In every democratic state, public authorities strive to conduct public administration as openly and transparently as possible. This aspiration is, on the one hand, due to the demands of the citizens of the state, and on the other hand, the awareness of the need to have the trust and support of the citizens towards the public administration system. Considering these two factors, the theory of public administration currently prioritizes the establishment and widespread application of transparency and accountability principles in the security system (Cole, 2015, p. 14).

By transparency, it is customary to understand a situation where citizens, non-governmental organizations, as well as other institutions of civil society can get the information, they need directly from the state body managing it, without resorting to any other means (Hovhannisyan et al., 2005, p. 335). Ensuring transparency is crucial for the effectiveness of public administration, including the administration of the security sector.

Practice shows that public distrust often arises in the absence of information. Upon receiving fragmentary information about certain cases, citizens begin to form their own judgments, which do not always correspond to reality. The situation becomes more complicated when some mass media, taking advantage of the lack of official information, try to "find" sensational materials and publish them without proper professional analysis, thereby aiming to increase their rating. Society, in turn, wants to be fully informed about what is happening in the country.

In the context of the above-mentioned, civil control is emphasized as one of the most important functions of civil society, reflecting how democratically a state operates. In the framework of the institutional study of civil control, it is also important to specify the subjects of civil control. These subjects include organized groups of citizens, proactive citizens, representatives of society, non-governmental

organizations, and public organizations, as well as in several professional-expert circles, they include institutions with some kind of governmental relationship (human rights defenders, some state administration, local self-government) public institutions, chambers, councils, etc (Pishchulin, 2014).

Non-governmental organizations and institutes can participate in the policy-making process in the field of security and exercise control over the activities of state bodies implementing the policy. The interests of non-governmental organizations can include, for example, geographical-public groups studying the activities of local law enforcement agencies or the influence of military structures on nearby settlements, groups protecting the rights of ethnic, racial, religious, sexual minorities, and can also have a substantive nature, for example, environmental groups, peace activists - groups that protect human rights in various fields.

At the level of executive power, non-governmental organizations generally cooperate with responsible organizations more than with special services. The following main measures can be distinguished as the operational influence and involvement of non-governmental organizations in the executive power:

1. conducting research, gathering information, collecting comparative data from other countries, developing theoretical models, and presenting them to competent bodies;
2. preparing reports on specific issues to influence or support the emerging political direction to some extent;
3. general and substantive cooperation with the mass media;
4. sending experts to state institutions and other bodies in the field of security;
5. organizing training courses and programs on human rights protection, security sector control, and other similar topics (Johnston et al., 1996, pp. 14-15).

Apart from the non-governmental mechanisms, the human rights defender's institution or ombudsman, is also one of the important links in ensuring civil control. It has different names in different countries: in Scandinavian countries, it is called "ombudsman"; in Spain and Colombia, "national defender", in France, "mediator"; in Romania, "people's advocate", etc. (McKeon, 2014).

The human rights defender's institution has had its unique place in the legal systems of several countries with stable democracy. The International Bar Association has adopted the following definition of the concept of "ombudsman": "a service provided by the constitution or an act of the legislative authority, managed by a high-ranking public official accountable to the parliament, which accepts applications and complaints from the affected persons against state bodies, employees, employers or acts on its own initiative and is authorized to conduct an investigation, propose directed steps, and submit reports" (International Bar Association, 2020).

Some countries, developing the idea of human rights defender institutions, have created specialized institutions: defenders of children's rights, defenders of the rights of servicemen and their family members, etc. Scientific research institutes, scientific educational institutions, and expert centers, which can analyze the political course

conducted by the state, also play an important role among the entities that exercise civil control over the security system.

Civil control can be exercised in any area in order to ensure a balanced, legal state administration that preserves the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. One of the primary tasks of a democratic state is to ensure effective cooperation between the government and civil society. The state should be open to the subjects exercising civil control and support the process of making the actions carried out within the powers of the authorities of the state's governing bodies transparent and controllable.

While all this sounds promising, it is important to assess how beneficial control in the security sector is for the state, and whether transparency in this sphere will not harm the task of ensuring the state's national security. The democratic state must provide security that is effective, transparent, and accountable to its citizens. Therefore, the state is the most legitimate in terms of ensuring security compared to many public institutions. Additionally, civil control over the security system in democratic states also increases citizens' participation in political life (Cole, 2015, p. 15).

In the 21st century, civil control is one of the most essential elements for the establishment of democracy. Therefore, it is important to evaluate how to implement this control over the security sector, maintaining the need for civil control in democratic states while trying not to make this sector vulnerable. Civil control is especially important in ensuring the security of the state because the decisions made by the state in that area directly threaten the interests of the citizens.

Democratic civil control of security forces involves a series of processes, namely:

- Control of civil society in decision-making in the field of security,
- Parliamentary control over defense and security policy,
- Judicial control to ensure security forces adhere to the laws,
- Civil control by non-governmental organizations, mass media, and trade unions.

In their works, many political scientists and analysts have referred to the importance of the role of civil control in the complex path of establishing a state leading to democracy. Their works and analyses highlight the significant role of civil control, especially in the military sphere.

A notable analysis can be found in the work of the famous American political scientist Samuel Huntington. In "The Soldier and the State", Huntington provides a clear definition of civil control. According to Huntington, civil control is the proper subordination of specialized competent armed forces to policies established by civil society (Huntington, 1957, p. 72).

Huntington's definition of civil control is theoretically completely clear. However, from an operational point of view, the military sector of the state should be quite professional and flexible so that it can be subject to civil control regardless of the state's policy, while not making that sector vulnerable.

Giving importance to the role of non-governmental organizations as the subject of civil control, on the way to establishing democracy, nevertheless, the legislative body of the state, the parliament, is significantly distinguished as a subject of civil control.

Being a representative body, that receives a direct mandate from the people, it tries to counterbalance the executive power through control and implements the structures of checks and balances stipulated by the constitution (Harutyunyan, 1997, p. 28).

The role of the parliament is significantly emphasized, especially in states with a parliamentary system, such as the Republic of Armenia. When transitioning to a parliamentary form of government, issues of government stability, parliamentary control powers, parliamentary minorities, as well as the functions and election procedure of the President of the Republic are of particular importance.

In states with a parliamentary form of government, the government headed by the prime minister is responsible to the parliament, which enables the parliament to exercise control over the executive branch, including the field of security.

In every democratic state, parliamentary control over the security system is crucial for maintaining transparency and accountability. This control is based on several key powers that the parliament holds:

- The parliament adopts laws that clearly define the powers of the executive branch. It also sets the budget for state entities responsible for the use of force in both military and civilian government systems.
- The parliament has the authority to declare a state of emergency and state of war. It also has the power to extend and modify these declarations as necessary.
- The parliament determines by law which state body is authorized to decide to send military and civilian forces abroad for peacekeeping operations. It also grants permission for foreign armed forces to be deployed within the national territory (Peters et al., 2008, pp. 14-15).

The National Assembly of RA, as an elected representative body, exercises legislative power and establishes control over government activities (the National Assembly has serious and effective control levers over executive power). It controls the adoption and implementation of the state budget, the work of government and executive power officials, as well as the use of loans and credits received from foreign countries and international organizations (The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia).

As we understood, the role of parliament in ensuring the transparency and efficiency of the security sector is significant. However, the level of democracy within a state greatly influences the effectiveness of civil control by non-governmental organizations and the evaluation of government operations. Merely having a parliament formed through elections does not necessarily indicate a truly democratic state.

Usually, the parliament, as a representative body, regulates its own activities. However, the issue has historical roots. At the time when the parliament was opposed to the monarchy (during the dual monarchy), the executive branch fought to limit the time of the parliament's activity, so that it could at least avoid parliamentary control and gain some powers to carry out legislative activities (Mello, 2016, pp. 4-5).

Basically, it was the aspiration of the monarchical power, as a result of which the parliament worked in a sessional manner, and in the interim stage, the executive power was given the right to adopt temporary legislative acts (decrees, ordinances).

Thus, civil control is not an easy process, because not all states have different levels of democracy. Those states that are on the way to establishing democracy also face the problem of guaranteeing the level of effectiveness of civil control.

International organizations have adopted several resolutions to promote the implementation of civil control. UN General Assembly's resolution 55/96 (2000) "Supporting and Strengthening Democracy" is notable, where the UN General Assembly calls on states to support the establishment of democracy in the following areas: independence and unconstraint of the judiciary, civil servants, law enforcement officers and guaranteeing human rights in the military education system, as well as ensuring accountability of the security system and policies to a democratically elected civilian parliament (Nemitz & Ehm, 2019, pp. 4-5).

Therefore, the more democratic and developed a state is, the more open it is to its citizens. In this context, controlling the security sector is considered primary, because the state's fundamental function is to ensure the security of the state, society, and individuals. An important issue appears here: especially in the case of implementing it in the field of security, the most important thing is that this control tends to establish democracy, rather than the goal of making the given state vulnerable in the field of security by certain forces.

Thus, civil control is mainly carried out by non-governmental organizations. As a result, to understand the above-mentioned issue, the fact of by whose means and by the organizations with what purpose they are financed is also important. That is, how independent and self-sufficient this operation is.

Conclusion

It is necessary to emphasize that during the reforms implemented in the public life of the Republic of Armenia, legal and political reforms of the security system are topical issues, so that they are capable of neutralizing both internal and external threats to the country's security. Naturally, guaranteeing an effective security system of the state, which will ensure the mutual and balanced implementation of the interests of the state and citizens, is one of the most complex issues in the process of establishing a legal state and civil society.

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SYMBOLIC POLITICS: THE MAIN PROBLEMS IN ARMENIA

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Abstract

Armenia has entered the information age, and whether we embrace it or not, Armenian society has evolved into an information-based society. This shift has brought significant changes to Armenia's political landscape. Currently, there is a robust movement of political symbols and meanings in Armenia's digital information sphere. This movement significantly amplifies the role and significance of symbolic politics in the country's political arena. It's important to note that symbolic politics plays a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions of social reality. Moreover, in the information era, the relationship between authorities and society in Armenia is increasingly defined by symbols and images. The growing importance of symbolic politics in Armenia's information age presents novel challenges for political scientists. Although classical political science traditionally focuses on political processes and institutions, there is now a pressing need to study the symbolic dimension of politics. As a result, there is a demand for comprehensive research into the characteristics of symbolic politics in Armenia.

Keywords: symbolic politics, politics of memory, symbol, information-communication interaction, political myth, political ceremony, holidays, memorial days.

Presently, Armenia has stepped into the era of information, marking a significant transition towards an information-centric society, regardless of whether we embrace this change or not. Consequently, information technologies have permeated every aspect of Armenia's social and political environment, sparking considerable transformations. It is noteworthy that these changes exhibit a distinct (postmodern) nature.

Currently, Armenia is experiencing a notable increase in the dissemination of political symbols and meanings through its digital information sphere, thereby magnifying the importance of symbolic politics in the political arena. It's crucial to recognize that symbolic politics plays a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions of social reality. By leveraging information and communication technologies, authorities disseminate symbols favorable to the political elite to the public, thereby transforming politics into a symbolic ritual or ceremony.

The burgeoning prominence of symbolic politics within Armenia's information age landscape presents new challenges for political scientists. While classical political science traditionally focuses on analyzing political processes and institutions, there's now a pressing need to delve into the realm of symbolic politics, or the symbolic dimension of politics. Consequently, there arises a demand for extensive research into the characteristics of symbolic politics in Armenia.

Symbolic politics is an ancient aspect of political life, yet it only became a focal point for scholarly research in the mid-20th century. In the second half of the 20th century, American sociologist George Mead (1863-1931) developed the theory of symbolic interactionism. This theory emphasizes the role of symbols and symbolic meanings in social life. According to this theory, people attribute meanings and interactions to various objects through their interactions with one another. Symbols and symbolic meanings themselves result from the interactions among individuals, and their emergence and changes occur through interpretation and control (Gromov et al., 1997, p. 275). Symbolic interactionism considers an object, action, or word to which people relate as if it represents something else, a symbol. A flag is a symbol of the nation, and people relate to this piece of cloth as if it were the nation itself (Shibutani, 1969, p. 105). Symbolic interactionism posits that humans simultaneously live in both natural and symbolic environments. Microbes are part of the natural environment of human habitat and influence vital processes, whether their hosts know it or not. The symbolic environment is not a simple reproduction of the external world. Through the ability to use symbols, people are capable of altering their surroundings (Shibutani, 1969, p. 117).

The political symbolic environment can be considered a variation of the symbolic environment. Indeed, to reinforce the cultural foundations of its existence, authority consciously uses various political symbols. In this context, Clifford Geertz (1926-2006), an American anthropologist and sociologist and a founder of symbolic interpretive anthropology, asserts that at the political center of any complexly organized society are the political elite and a combination of symbolic forms expressing and justifying their rule. Regardless of whether the members of the political elite are elected democratically or not, they justify their existence through such symbolic means as ceremonies, external signs of domination and power, traditions, formalities, and compilations of stories inherited from previous governments or invented (Geertz, 1983, p. 124).

In the latter half of the previous century, Murray Edelman (1929-2001), a renowned American political scientist, emerged as a pivotal figure in the study of the symbolic political landscape, laying the theoretical groundwork for symbolic politics. Through his exploration of the symbolic environment, Edelman sought to elucidate several puzzling phenomena of political life that defy explanation within the confines of rational choice theory. For instance, he delved into questions such as why certain political ideas gain more popularity than others, why politicians invest significant effort in crafting and disseminating vacuous statements devoid of substantive meaning, and why the positions of opposing parties are framed in particular ways rather than others.

Murray Edelman's perspective on politics as a symbolic form focuses on its symbolic influence on both the political elite and the masses (Edelman, 1964, p. 2). He identifies two distinct manifestations of politics: politics as spectacle and politics as an organized activity pursued by groups aiming to secure specific, significant benefits. On one hand, politics unfolds as a grand display, characterized by a "parade of abstract symbols"; on the other hand, it functions as strategic action aimed at advancing particular interests (Edelman, 1964, p. 5).

Accordingly, politics assumes divergent meanings: for the active participants–a minority–it serves as a tool to achieve desired outcomes, while for the masses, it resembles a ceremonial spectacle. Edelman's framework essentially delineates a contrasting structure of politics, stemming from the profound contrast inherent in mass perception. To the audience of this political "drama", every event represents either a menacing threat that instills fear or a reassuring calm that inspires hope.

From this perspective, symbolic politics can unsettle or pacify individuals not through addressing or disregarding their demands directly, but by altering those very demands and expectations.

Murray Edelman posits that symbols employed in politics serve not only as a means of representing objective reality but also as integral components in shaping political reality itself. Drawing upon the principles of symbolic interactionism, he contends that humans uniquely reconstruct the past, perceive the present, and forecast the future through symbols. In this view, symbols play a fundamental role in mediating individuals' understanding of the world and their place within it, particularly within the realm of politics.

Human beings possess the innate ability to interpret sensory data symbolically. Symbols serve as tools for abstracting from reality, facilitating complex judgments, and planning actions. They can reflect, combine, distort, and even sever social ties, shaping individuals' understanding of the world based on sensory input. However, this symbolic capacity also predisposes humans to illusions, misunderstandings, and the mythologizing of phenomena, sometimes leading to erroneous actions.

Consequently, to fully elucidate political behavior, it is essential to consider how common meanings are formed and altered through the symbolic interpretation of diverse interests, circumstances, threats, and opportunities by individuals (Edelman, 1971, p. 2). Symbols carry contradictory emotional charges: they can inspire, reinforce, seduce, deceive, and mislead. The emphasis lies not solely on individual symbols like anthems, coats of arms, or flags, but rather on symbolic actions.

The impact of political symbols should be assessed not merely by their role in manipulating public consciousness by the political elite, but rather by their contribution to the masses' acceptance of the prevailing political order.

Murray Edelman further interprets symbols as mechanisms for "organizing the playbook of the knower of meanings". Political symbols serve as pre-existing semantic structures that aid individuals in processing information by simplifying it to the level of what is already familiar. They form the foundation of a structure that shapes the perception of social reality and, consequently, influences people's political behavior (Edelman, 1971, pp. 33-35). According to Edelman, the symbolic functions

of socially constructed meanings can be elucidated through concepts such as discourse, idea, image, myth, and symbol (in the narrower sense of signs or images that conventionally represent certain phenomena or ideas). These concepts serve as tools for describing and analyzing the intricacies of symbolic politics.

From this perspective, the notion of symbolic politics, encompassing both Symbolic Politics and Symbolic Policy, can be regarded as a tool for empirically understanding and dissecting political reality.

Central to Murray Edelman's theory of symbolic politics is the concept of the "symbolic act". A symbolic act refers to an action whose sole targets are symbols and the associated abstract concepts, disregarding the tangible objects related to those symbols. Political actions infused with symbols serve to bolster trust in authorities and facilitate adaptation to prevailing social conditions. Through these symbolic acts, the elite can further their material interests and influence the distribution of goods within the framework of the existing political system.

It's important to note that Murray Edelman links the concept of the "symbolic act" to a pragmatic interpretation of language. In this sense, the symbolic act, as a linguistic act, is itself a political act rather than merely a means of describing politics. Language, political events, self-perception, and other elements are all facets of the same action, mutually conditioning each other's meanings (Edelman, 1977, p. 4).

What we commonly perceive as political events, such as elections, are often symbolic constructs or performances because direct observation, let alone control, of real political processes is often beyond the reach of the masses.

The efficacy of symbolic acts in politics hinges on the tendency of individuals to predominantly think in stereotypes, thereby personalizing and simplifying political reality through symbols. This cognitive process aids people in navigating complex political situations by providing familiar reference points. The ambiguity inherent in political signals can evoke existential threats and instill fear. However, the mutual agreement on politically significant symbols can foster a sense of order and coherence in interpreting political reality.

As symbolic acts evolve into symbolic practices, the institutionalization of these acts occurs. This institutionalization solidifies the role of symbols in shaping political discourse and behavior, further reinforcing their impact on society.

Murray Edelman delineates two symbolic forms inherent in political institutions: myth and ceremony (Edelman, 1964, p. 16). Myth serves to elucidate established political ceremonies, infusing them with a spectacular dimension and fostering the illusion of mass participation in politics. However, it's crucial to recognize that the arbitrary utilization of myth and ceremony can backfire. "Accumulating symbols" with their corresponding potential are not arbitrarily constructed but develop gradually in tandem with the evolution of social life. Therefore, the strategic deployment of symbols must be informed by an understanding of their organic growth within the fabric of society (Edelman, 1964, p. 20).

The overarching characteristics of symbolic politics, encompassing various definitions, allow us to formulate theoretical propositions that should underpin the study of symbolic politics in Armenia. Symbolic politics is an inseparable companion of real politics, constituting a mandatory component thereof. Virtually all

real political actions entail a symbolic dimension, which exerts either direct or covert influence on the consciousness of the masses and their choices of behavioral options. Simultaneously, both authorities and opposition figures, as well as individual politicians, consciously undertake actions aimed at imbuing specific meanings and organizing the political landscape. These actions possess distinct political and symbolic significance. Whether serving as a component of real politics or existing purely as symbolic acts, symbolic politics interprets and thereby structures the socio-political landscape.

Symbolic politics finds its cultural and political roots in various foundational elements, including political myths, ceremonies, celebrations, and days of remembrance. A political myth is defined as a myth utilized for political purposes, such as the acquisition or legitimization of power, or the establishment of political dominance (Tsuladze, 2003, p. 56). It's widely understood that every political myth serves to conceal the interests of specific individuals and social groups. This definition underscores the pragmatic, applied nature of political myths.

Another definition characterizes a political myth as a complex of values encompassing presuppositions and irrational ideas that constitute an individual's entire worldview (Mikhaylov, 2010). This complex is shaped through the dissemination of ideologies, which act as propaganda and pseudo-rational interpretations of the foundational myth, ultimately serving as acts of faith. This broader definition highlights both the objective, cultural dimensions, and the subjective, ideological-technological aspects of political myths.

To have a clear and comprehensive understanding of the political myth, it is necessary to clarify what myth is in general. Myth and mythological thinking are inherent to human nature and are an inseparable companion of life. In connection with this, the following is mentioned in philosophical literature: Mythological behavior often comes to life before our eyes. We are not talking about remnants of the primitive psyche. Some aspects and functions of mythological thinking are important components of human nature (Eliade, 2000, p. 171).

Among the crucial cultural-political pillars of symbolic politics are political ceremonies, which wield significant influence in political life. These ceremonies essentially constitute symbolic forms of communicative action within the realm of symbolic politics. Inauguration ceremonies for presidents and parliament deputies, military parades, receptions for foreign representatives, and similar events all qualify as political ceremonies.

These ceremonies are intricately intertwined with political myths and frequently serve as vehicles for perpetuating and disseminating such myths within the public consciousness. The primary function of a political ceremony is to convey information to the masses about the government and its underlying values. Through these ceremonial events, governments seek to project their ideals and assert their legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

It's important to recognize that ceremonies, including political ceremonies, are rooted in general cultural practices. According to a common definition, a ceremony entails a stereotyped sequence of actions involving meaningful movements, words, and objects (Turner, 1983, p. 32). These actions are typically performed in

designated spaces to influence supernatural forces or beings. This definition underscores the sacred nature of the performers' attitude towards certain phenomena.

Popular ceremonies encompass various practices, such as standing during a moment of silence or the National Anthem. Additionally, ceremonies associated with death, burial, and remembrance are prevalent across cultures. Ultimately, ceremonies, including political ones, serve as symbolic forms of group behavior. They reproduce symbolic values, regulate and preserve group memory, and assert collective identity.

One of the cultural-political foundations of symbolic politics lies in holidays, celebrations, and memorial days, which serve as crucial tools of what is termed "memory policy". The politics of memory constitutes an integral component of symbolic politics, shaping the interpretation of the past. This interpretation encompasses a multitude of symbolic and cultural practices through which a society remembers or forgets events from its historical past.

It's important to note that the historical past serves as a significant resource for legitimizing governmental authority. Authorities often invoke the past, frequently resorting to historical myths, to justify their actions, decisions, and ideological stances. In doing so, they construct narratives about the past that align with their desired agendas and beliefs.

Currently, the symbolic political landscape of Armenia is characterized by a rich diversity of symbols, ideas, and concepts, often marked by contradictions and doctrinal interpretations that do not align with modern political realities. The implementation of symbolic politics in Armenia primarily serves as a response to the established political landscape, focusing on preserving existing political realities rather than envisioning and shaping a future political order.

During the execution of symbolic politics in Armenia, there is a tendency to utilize forgotten yet still active political symbols, leading to ambiguities within the symbolic space. These symbols often deviate from their original meanings, resulting in dissonance and alienation among the populace. This state of symbolic politics in Armenia underscores the authorities' challenge in legitimizing the current political order.

Therefore, there is a pressing need to conduct an in-depth study of the characteristics of symbolic politics in Armenia, exploring its place and role in political life. Specifically, research should delve into the symbolic political space of Armenia and the political symbols circulating within it to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

The challenges surrounding the symbolic policy implemented in Armenia can be broadly categorized into two main groups: theoretical and practical-applied.

Theoretical issues encompass the construction of the characteristics of symbolic politics in Armenia and its relationship with political reality, as well as identifying its role and significance in either legitimizing or delegitimizing the government. Additionally, theoretical exploration should include studies on the cultural-political foundations of symbolic politics in Armenia, focusing on understanding the mythological layers of mass consciousness, the circulation of political myths, and the significance of political ceremonies, holidays, and memorial days. Furthermore,

delving into the politics of memory, which involves how historical events are remembered or forgotten and its impact on contemporary politics, is of great theoretical importance.

Important practical-applied problems of the symbolic policy implemented in Armenia include studying the main models of interaction between the government and the masses in the information and communication space of Armenia, as well as analyzing the goals, strategies, and technologies of the actors involved in symbolic policy. Additionally, examining the online technologies utilized in the implementation of symbolic policy, along with modern technologies for the representation and observation of the government, are essential aspects to consider.

Conclusion

Today, in the information age in which Armenia has emerged, the role and significance of symbolic politics in political life have unprecedentedly increased. This elevation of symbolic politics poses new challenges for both politicians and political scientists, necessitating the study of symbolic politics implemented in Armenia.

Symbolic politics is an obligatory component of real politics, but in political life, some actions are purely symbolic in nature. These actions are aimed at impressing upon the masses certain meanings and constructing a political reality advantageous to political forces. The main functions of symbolic politics are the construction of socio-political reality and the legitimization or delegitimization of power. Symbolic politics has its cultural and political foundations, which include urban myth, ceremony, holidays, and days of remembrance.

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LEGAL STUDIES

THE LIBERTARIAN-LEGAL CONCEPT OF LAW

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Abstract

The essence and substantive features of the libertarian-legal concept were thoroughly analyzed in the article. The author of this concept is the world-famous scientist, Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences, V. S. Nersesyants. According to this concept, law, and rights, as well as legal law and non-legal law, are distinguished. The libertarian conceptual approach assumes all possible forms of differentiation and correlation between natural law and positive law, from separation and conflict between them to their overlap (legal law).

Keywords*: law, rights, positive law, legal law, liberal jurisprudence, natural law, formal-legal and liberal-legal approaches.*

The consistent overcoming of the disadvantages of the natural legal approach (in the field of legal axiology as well as in the ontology of legal epistemology) leads not to positivism and legalism, but to a theoretically more developed form of legal understanding. In other words, it leads to the concept of law, the value and significance of law, and the appropriate interpretation of the state.

In this regard, two different approaches are distinguished within the framework of the juridical (anti-legalistic) type of legal understanding. The first is the natural legal approach, which is based on the recognition of natural law as opposed to positive law (the term "positive law" originated in medieval jurisprudence). The second is the libertarian-liberal legal (or liberal-legal) approach to the general theory of legal understanding, which is based on the principle of distinguishing between right and law (positive law). In this regard, the current approach does not mean natural law, but formal equality (as the essence and distinguishing principle of law) and recognizes four normative specifications of law (Nersesyants, 2004).

At the same time, according to the libertarian-legal concept, the principle of formal equality is interpreted and explained as the completeness of three main components within the legal form (law as a form of relations): abstract-universal equality (equal norms and measures for everyone), freedom, and justice. As component moments of the principle of formal equality (and therefore also components of legal forms of relations), all elements of this trinity (equal measure, freedom, and justice) within the framework of the liberal-legal understanding of law

have a pure and consistently formal character, since law, as a form of relations, should not be conflated with the actual content of those relations.

The mentioned elements not only complement each other but also imply each other, as they are different aspects and forms of manifestation of a unified legal principle, which is the principle of formal equality. Such a formal-legal approach to law, which consistently separates the legal form (law as form) from the empirical content mediated by that form, constitutes the core of the libertarian-legal concept. As different forms of legal understanding, the natural-legal approach and the libertarian approach represent various stages and degrees of emergence, deepening, and development of the theoretical approach to law, and historical progress in the field of theoretical-legal thought.

The libertarian approach assumes and includes all possible forms of distinction and correlation between right and law, from separation and conflict between them (in the case of non-legal law) to their overlap (in the case of legal law) (Chashkin, 2014, pp. 58-75). The same logic applies to law and the state. From the libertarian-legal point of view, the state is perceived across the entire range of its legal and anti-legal manifestations (from the criminal state to the legal state).

According to the libertarian-legal (formal-legal) understanding, law represents a form of relations characterized by equality, freedom, and justice, defined by the principle of formal equality among participants. Wherever the principle of formal equality (along with the norms that define it) is present, it signifies the existence of valid law, the legal form of relations (Nersesyants, 2001). According to the liberal-legal concept, there is nothing in law except the principle of formal equality (and the concretizations of that principle). Any deviation from or contradiction to this principle is deemed illegal.

Equality represents a certain abstraction, that is, it is the result of conscious (thoughtful) abstraction of all the differences that are characteristic of the objects being equated. Equality implies the differences of the objects being equated and, at the same time, the insignificance of that difference. That is the possibility and necessity of eliminating these differences.

Thus, the alignment of different objects according to their numerical basis is abstracted from their various content differences (individual, gender, species, etc.). This is how mathematics was formed, where the composition and solution of equations play a key role and where equality, “purified” from qualitative differences, is brought to the abstraction of quantitative definitions. Legal equality is not as abstract as numerical equality in mathematics. The basis (and criterion) of the legal equality of different people is their freedom in social relations, in the form of recognized and confirmed legal capacity and competence. This is the peculiarity of legal equality and law in general.

Legal equality in freedom, as an equal measure of freedom, implies symmetry and equivalence in the relationships of free individuals (Nersesyants, 2004). Legal equality is the equality of free and independent subjects of law, according to a uniform norm of a common scale for all, equal measure. When people are divided into free and unfree, the latter are not subjects of law, but objects, and the principle of legal equality does not apply to them.

Legal equality represents the equality of the free and the equality of freedom, a general scale, and equal measure of individual freedoms. The law operates in the language and means of this equality, acting as a universal and necessary form for the existence, manifestation, and realization of freedom within human coexistence. In this sense, it can be said that law is the mathematics of freedom (Nersesyants, 1996, pp. 152-153).

Moreover, it can be speculated that mathematical equality, being a more abstract concept, has a later historical origin and is derived from legal equality. The further development and scientific elaboration of equality's foundations suggest that the idea of equality was introduced into law from mathematics.

Such an interpretation can already be found among the Pythagoreans, whose serious interest in mathematics was combined with a fascination with numerical mysticism and the extension of mathematical ideas about equality to social phenomena, including law. According to the Pythagoreans, the essence of the world, both physical and social, is a number, and everything in the world has a numerical characteristic and expression. They viewed equality as the proper measure of a certain numerical proportion, expressing justice (i.e., law with its principle of equality) in the form of the number "four", in line with their social mathematics (Maltsev, 2013, pp. 125-126; Bengston, 1960, pp. 108-109).

The spread of numerical (mathematical) notions of equality in social relations reflected an underdeveloped understanding of law, essentially ignoring the uniqueness of equality in social life as the formal-legal equality of free people. Having this principle of formal equality, the law itself is a kind of social mathematics in the sense of the teaching about inequality of equality in social relations.

Equality in the social sphere is always legal equality. Formal-legal equality is not legal equality. Like any form of equality, it is also abstracted, according to its own basis and standard, from real differences and therefore has a formal character (Nersesyants, 1983).

The history of law is the history of the progressive evolution of the content, scope, scale, and size of formal (legal) equality, preserving this very principle as the principle of any system of law and the principle of law in general (Nersesyants, 2004, pp. 333-334; 349-350). Each stage of historical development in human relations reflects its own scale and measure of freedom, its own framework of relations and subjects of freedom and law. Thus, the principle of formal (legal) equality remains a constant in law, albeit with historically changing content.

The historical evolution of the content, scope, and sphere of action of the principle of formal society is generally not a denial, but on the contrary, strengthens the importance of this principle as a distinguishing feature of law in relations and disagreements with other types of social regulation (moral, religious, etc.). In this context, law can be seen as a normative expression of freedom through the principle of formal equality in social relations.

The initial differences between people, considered (and regulated) from the point of view of the abstract-universal principle of equality (of equal size), result in the inequality of already acquired rights (the inequality of the rights of different individual subjects of law according to their content and scope). Law, as a form of

relations based on the principle of equality, does not eliminate these fundamental differences but formalizes and regulates them according to a common standard. It transforms vague, factual differences into the form of free, independent, equal persons with certain unequal rights. In essence, this is the specificity and meaning, limits and limitations, importance, and value of the legal method of mediation, regulation, and regulation of public relations.

Legal equality and legal inequality (equality and inequality in law) are legal definitions and concepts of the same order (presupposing and complementing each other), which are equally opposed to factual differences and differ from them. The principle of different legal subjects implies that the subjective rights acquired by them will be unequal. Thanks to law, the chaos of differences is transformed into an order of inequalities of equalities, structured according to a common basis and norm.

The formally equal recognition of different individuals means recognizing of their equal rights to respective goods, and the possibility of obtaining this or that right regarding specific objects. However, it does not mean the equality in the rights already acquired concerning individual-specific objects, and goods. Formal equality is only a legal capacity — an abstract free opportunity to acquire, in accordance with the general scale of legal regulation, an equal amount of individually determined rights to a given object. In the case of formal equality and equal legal capacity among different people, the rights they actually acquire will inevitably (due to the differences between people, their real opportunities, life conditions, and circumstances) be unequal. These vital differences are measured and evaluated on the same scale and equal measure of the law, resulting in are the difference between rights acquired by a specific subject, belonging to him personally (and in that sense subjective). Such a difference in the rights acquired by different persons is a necessary result of the maintenance of the principle of formal equality of these people and not a violation, the result of their equal jurisdiction.

As a unique principle of legal regulation, the forms of manifestation of equality have a social-historical nature. This is due to the peculiarities of these forms in different socio-economic formations, at different stages of the historical development of law, as well as changes in the scope and content, place, and role of the principle of formal (legal) equality in public life.

At the same time, this principle, with all the variety and differences of its manifestations, has universal significance for all historical types and forms of law. It expresses the specific distinguishing feature of the legal method of regulating social relations of free individuals. Wherever the principle of legal equality applies, there is also a legal beginning and a legal method of regulation. Thus, where there is law, there is also the principle of equality. For this reason, the formal equality of free individuals is the most abstract definition of law, applicable to any general right and to special rights in general.

The concept of law as a form of social relations is also related to the principle of formal equality. The specificity of legal formality arises from the fact that law functions as a form of social relations of independent entities that are subject to a general norm in their behavior, activities, and relations. Their independence within the limits of the legal form of their relations and at the same time their identical,

equal submission to the general norm, defines the meaning and essence of the legal form of existence and the expression of freedom.

The legal form of freedom, showing the formal nature of the universality of equality and freedom, implies and expresses the essential unity of legal formality, universality, equality, and freedom.

Conclusion

Summarizing the conducted research, we conclude that Academician V.S. Nersesyan's liberal-legal concept represents a substantive novelty in the discipline of the theory of law. This concept addresses two major points: firstly, it tries to smooth out the contradiction between the theory of natural law and positive law; secondly, the concept distinguishes the substantive features of right and law, legal law, and non-legal law.

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THE WAYS OF RESTORATION OF ARMENIA'S DEFICIENT SOVEREIGNTY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CHANGING INTERNATIONAL LEGAL ORDER

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the examination of the legal and political foundations of the sovereignty of the Third Republic of Armenia and the revelation of the deficiencies thereof in the light of the current deep geopolitical transformation. Particularly, the former foreign policy model of Armenia is defined, and the details and consequences thereof are elucidated, i.e. Armenia pursued a client-state model of foreign policy, which implies a one-sided political stance and the vertical relationship between the patron state and client state, including a patron state's domination in the internal policy dimensions of the client state, such as economy, internal politics, etc. It is substantiated, that as a result of the aforementioned foreign policy model Armenia lacked appropriate means of maneuver when the interests of the patron state started to contradict Armenia's national interests. Therefore, the Armenian side lost the 44-day war and is subjected to continuous aggression from Azerbaijan.

The article contains certain proposals, that may positively affect the restoration of Armenia's sovereignty and the revision of Armenia's foreign policy model. In particular, Armenia should exit the CSTO, denounce all the military and security cooperation agreements, signed with Russia and within the CSTO, adopt the policy of non-alignment, shake off the economic dominance of Russia by designing special economic policy, directed to attracting non-EAEU investors, and creating prerequisites for further exit from the EAEU, as well as regain relatively stable control over the management of strategic public assets. Also, it is necessary to draw the line between the autocratic and corrupted systems of state government, which internally undermined Armenia's sovereignty and contributed to the complete failure of its foreign policy. To this end, the proclamation of the Fourth Republic from the author's point of view is deemed indispensable. As a result, the Armenian people, as a sovereign, will be given an opportunity to build a state from a "clean slate", eradicating all the institutional and political vices of the past.

Keywords: sovereignty, client state, the policy of non-alignment, the Fourth Republic of Armenia, Russia, the CSTO, the EAEU.

Introduction

The modern world order is in an unprecedented crisis, which questions the viability of very roots of the post Second World War international political and legal system. It can be safely argued that the ongoing transformation of the world order is a test of the resources of states' potential, accumulated so far, on which the future picture of the political map of the world depends. The total of the states' capacity resources is construed within the concept of sovereignty.

In the mentioned overview, naturally, the geopolitical outline of the South Caucasus is also changing. Since the achievement of independence, Armenia has been one of the important hubs of the power arrangement in the South Caucasus region, taking into account its geographical area, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, the complex and historically problematic relations between Armenia and Turkey, Armenia's border with Iran, the civilizational trajectory of the Armenian people and strong historical ties with the region. Despite its political potential, since Armenia's independence, the leadership of the state, perhaps bearing the complexities typical of a nation without a state for centuries and a survivor of genocide and avoiding the responsibility arising from the sovereign counteraction of threats from the Turkic element of the region, as well as due to negative internal political trends, affecting foreign policy, tended to actually ensure the country's security, outsourcing its maintenance to one power, in fact, completely subjugating Armenia to the interests of that power by using Armenia's economic, political and military resources to serve them.

In 2016-2023 the two wars in Artsakh and the occupation of Armenian territories demonstrated the "bankruptcy" of conceptual orientations, underlying Armenia's foreign policy and the harmful consequences of limiting Armenia's sovereignty to serve those orientations. As a result, the security architecture of the entire post-independence period has ceased to exist, and Armenia is faced with the imperative of active participation in the formation of a national security system, which is commensurate with the updated geopolitical realities and thus the creation of a new military-political balance in the region. This requires a radical revision of approaches to the sovereignty of the state and the task of conducting a self-sufficient policy as much as possible.

This research is dedicated to the above-mentioned problems and their possible solutions.

The current world order is undergoing a deep transformation. In particular, the paradigm of international law and security is being subjected to radical revision. Correspondingly, the balance of power and legal-political structures, derived from it, are changing in all focal regions. As a result, all states face the "natural selection" challenge. The latter especially touches upon small states, whose viability is being put to the test.

Actually, the cracks in the post the Second World War political and legal order were visible, starting from 2007, when the Russian president V. Putin held a speech in the Munich Security Conference, challenging the existing international legal order.

In particular, V. Putin raised the issue of dismantling the unipolar world order and its transition to the multipolar world (President of Russia, 2007). By this, one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council and a nuclear power voiced a demand for a cardinal change of foundations of the international relations paradigm, that emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War. Particularly, it is well-known, that now existing international legal order is built upon the principle of sovereign equality of states. Hence, did Russia question the inviolability of the idea of state sovereignty and its auxiliary principles (territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, non-aggression, etc.). The answer is yes. And subsequently, Russia embarked on unilateral actions, aimed at turning the Russian leader's political rhetoric into reality. In 2008 Russia invaded Georgia under the pretext of humanitarian invasion to protect the population of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as a result, occupying about 20 percent of Georgia's territory (Embassy of Georgia to the United States of America, 2020).

In 2014 Russian invaded Ukraine, occupying Crimea peninsula, the regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, having substantiated its actions by the necessity of protection of the Russian population, residing therein (Walker, 2023).

In 2015 Russia intervened in Syria's civil war and launched military operations against armed groups, fighting against the Syrian president's rule (Taddonio, 2022).

In 2022 Russia attacked Ukraine once more, declaring its goal to overthrow "illegitimate the Nazi regime" and forestall Ukraine's accession to NATO (President of Russia, 2022). Simultaneously, Russian-Turkish relations were consistently warming, in the context of which both Russia and Turkey strengthened Azerbaijan's positions in the region, as their key client in South Caucasus. Particularly, since the 2010s, Russia has been comprehensively arming Azerbaijan, supplying the latter with not only defensive but also offensive weapons. Turkey, in its turn, signed a Declaration on Allied Relations with Azerbaijan in 2021, known as the Shushi declaration, by which a start of gradual incorporation of Azerbaijani armed forces into the Turkish military system was signaled, and the obligation of mutual assistance in case of external aggression was enshrined. At the same time, Russian-Chinese relations warmed up, gradually acquiring a strategic character (Shushi Declaration, 2021).

Obviously, Russia's immediate objective was and is to delegitimize the principle of sovereign equality of states, conditioning states' right to exist by fictitious concepts of historical justice and ethnic dominance. Under this ideological cover, Russia endeavoures to restore its political hegemony in the post-Soviet territory and to integrate the former Soviet republics into a new type of political formation.

In order to face the existential challenges, arising within new geopolitical realities, the actual sovereignty of states, that is, the degree of their viability "on the ground" acquires additional importance.

Armenia has "met" these crucial historical events with its internal and external sovereignty, downgraded to a nominal level, not having self-sufficiency to ensure its internal and external security. Being unilaterally dependent on Russia, having handed over its economic, border security, military-technical and air defense, as well as main economic assets to the latter, Armenia, as a state, was completely incorporated into

the system of Russia's strategic and tactical interests and in case of their change was unable to independently face the external threats, that were accompanying it from the moment of secession from the Soviet Union (the Artsakh conflict and the danger of Azerbaijani aggression, arising thereof and the threat, coming from Turkey, which backs Azerbaijan). At the same time, as a result of foreign policy, unbecoming of a sovereign state, Armenia had no other institutional ally, that could compensate for Armenia's security vulnerability. The result was the defeat of Armenian forces in the 2016 and 2022 Artsakh wars, Azerbaijan's aggression towards Armenia, and occupation of several Armenian territories, with Russia remaining neutral and failing to perform its duties as Armenia's ally both at the bilateral level and under the auspices of CSTO. The latter also manifested a neutral stance, when Armenia was subjected to Azerbaijani aggression, notwithstanding the fact, that Armenia is a member of that organization of collective self-defense.

The above-mentioned sequence of events was the test of the sovereignty of the Third Republic, which failed. It can be deduced, that from the very beginning of its formation, 1991, Armenia radically deviated from the path of sovereign statehood, outlined in the Declaration of Independence, eventually reaching political default.

Meanwhile, the transformation of the autocratic political regime, which started as a result of the revolution and the restoration of the democratic constitutional order is not enough to overcome the legacy of the past and thoroughly renew the state mechanism, deviating from the constitutional idea of sovereignty. This statement was confirmed in 2020-2023, when Armenia, which has already returned to the principles of democracy and rule of law, was unable to overcome the challenges against its sovereignty. Therefore, the Armenian people, as a state-making entity, need a "new beginning", which should be manifested at the constitutional and political-symbolic levels.

"New beginning" from a constitutional perspective means full restoration of legal, political, and value pillars of statehood. This process commenced during the Velvet Revolution and is still ongoing. Though several significant steps were made toward strengthening statehood, however, the only fully completed "task" so far is the restoration of the legitimate government. Notably, the latter is indispensable but is only one item of constitutional reality, that ought to be built in Armenia. The issue is that the previous autocratic political regimes completely distorted the political, economic, and social foundations of the constitutional order through fraudulent elections and constitutional referenda, a monopolistic economy, and widespread multi-dimensional systemic corruption, social inequality, and lack of justice. As a result, the people were deprived of their collective political and social rights, and authorities practically beared no responsibility towards the electorate. This social and political landscape gravely affected social harmony and coherence, thus weakening the internal endurance of the state.

In light of the foregoing, there is a need for a new "social contract" between the people and the government – the new Constitution, which will reflect the restoration of a democratic political regime and provide necessary legal and political bases for the start of independent state-building from the "clean slate". These bases are – the

legitimacy of the constitutionally organized political process, protection of fundamental human rights, and social justice.

The text of the new Constitution should be balanced and take into account the socio-political and legal realities of Armenia, as well as a dialectic of their development, so that it is possible, on the one hand, to express the current reality through principles and legal norms and, on the other hand, to outline the vision of the state's overall policy, regardless of political forces in power. Along with the preservation of the parliamentary form of government, this also includes a review of the constitutional mission of the highest bodies of the state power and, based on it, a review and redistribution of functions and powers between the legislative and executive powers and within the latter, as well as those at the level of Presidency and the definition of effective constitutional solutions to political crises.

At this crucial point of the evolution of the sovereignty of Armenia, it is important to touch upon the problem of interrelation between the Declaration of Independence of Armenia and the Constitution. It is worth mentioning, that nowadays there is a lot of talk about removing the blanket clause, referring to the Declaration of Independence from the preamble of the Constitution on the grounds, that some of the provisions of the Declaration of Independence no longer correspond to social and political realities.

Despite the relevance of the existing problem, its importance cannot be reduced to the simple editing of the preamble of the Constitution. In the end, the fundamental value and normative importance of the Declaration of Independence for the legitimacy of the restoration of Armenia's sovereignty, in defining the guidelines for the internal and external content of the newly independent Armenian statehood and in the constitutionalizing of public and political life, is undeniable. Moreover, the Declaration of Independence per se has self-sufficient legal existence and special affiliation with the Constitution, which does not depend on the reference, made to the Declaration of Independence in the text of the Constitution. In particular, from the analysis of the actual text of the Declaration of Independence, it already follows, that it is not only a political but also a legal document because inter alia contains legal norms, that have compulsory character. In this context point 12 of the Declaration is of paramount importance. It reads as follows: "This Declaration shall serve as a basis for the development of the constitution of the Republic of Armenia and, until the new constitution is approved, as the basis for the introduction of amendments to the current constitution; and for the operation of state authorities and the development of new legislation for the Republic". That is, the parliament and other state institutions were constrained in their activity by the provisions of the Declaration of Independence and were obliged to unconditionally abide by them. It also follows from this, that the Declaration of Independence, before the adoption of the Constitution of sovereign Armenia, practically had the status of the Constitution, as it had a higher legal force than the Constitution of the Soviet Armenia of 1978 then still officially in force.

The problem of the interplay between the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence of Armenia has another dimension: like any existing legal and political document, the Declaration of Independence also faces the factor of time and the need

for its adequacy to current realities. Therefore, it is necessary to solve the question of correspondence of the Declaration of Independence to appropriate legal instruments. Particularly, if we proceed from the assumption, that the Declaration of Independence has self-sufficient legal existence and take into account its legal significance for the formation of national legislation in the pre-constitutional period of 1990-1995 and later for the development of the Constitution, it turns out, that the Declaration of Independence is a directly applicable normative legal act at least as a source of interpretation of legislation.

The constitutional law of different countries refers to the legal force and direct effect regime of the Declaration of Independence. In particular, the Constitutional Court of Latvia in its decision of November 2007 stated, that the Declaration of Independence has constitutional status, after the adoption of the Constitution the Declaration of Independence retained its validity, and the Constitutional Court has the right to examine the issue of compliance of laws with the Declaration of Independence, the preamble of the Declaration of Independence is a constituent part of that document, and the constitutional court can assess the disputed normative act also from the point of view of its compliance with the preamble of that document. The court also stated that the Declaration of Independence regulates the most essential, fundamental issues of constitutional law, therefore, its norms should be recognized as norms of constitutional law, that have binding legal force, even though this act was not adopted in accordance with the procedure established by the current Constitution (Harutyunyan & Vagharshyan, 2010, p. 36).

Having acknowledged the normative nature of the Declaration of Independence and the legal force of its norms, it is necessary to clarify, whether there can be a legal means of judicial review of the Declaration of Independence in the legal system of Armenia. To answer this question, it is necessary to find out what place the Declaration of Independence occupies in the system of normative legal acts of Armenia.

The Declaration of Independence was adopted by the parliament of Soviet Armenia, the Supreme Council, on August 23, 1990. Taking into account the object of regulation of the Declaration of Independence and its legal significance, as well as the political situation of the country at that time, i.e. the collapse of the socialist legal system and the process of establishing a new sovereign and democratic constitutional order, it is obvious that the Declaration of Independence was adopted as a result of performance of the legislative function of the Supreme Council and is a constitutional law per se. Being a product of revolution, when the old and new legal systems clash, the Declaration of Independence was superior to the Constitution of the Soviet Armenia and both in terms of the legal regime of its adoption and its legal content had autonomous status within the existing Soviet legal order.

Having confirmed, that the Declaration of Independence is a law, it may be concluded, that as a law, the Declaration of Independence is subject to the abstract and concrete control of the Constitutional Court in accordance with the Constitution and the Constitutional Law “On the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia”. Therefore, if the normative requirements regarding the applicant and the content of the application are met, the Constitutional Court is authorized to interpret

the meaning and content of the Declaration of Independence as to its compliance with the Constitution. Accordingly, the Constitutional Court can determine what mode of legal effect the provisions of the Declaration of Independence have, whether they are norms of direct effect, principles, or goals, and which provisions are legally viable today and which are not. Thus, carrying out its constitutional function of ensuring the supremacy of the Constitution, the Constitutional Court will guarantee the legal coexistence and harmony of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The relevant decision of the Constitutional Court, in turn, will form an important part of the constitutional doctrine of Armenian sovereignty, clarifying the place and role of the Declaration of Independence and its provisions in the legal system of Armenia and making political speculations on this sensitive issue pointless.

At the political-symbolic level, to make the idea of a "new beginning" accessible and tangible to the broad layers of society, the state authorities of Armenia, as a legitimate government, that received the people's mandate, should declare the Fourth Republic of Armenia. Contrary to the claims of opponents of this idea, the proclamation of the Fourth Republic is not a play on words or demagoguery. It has semantic symbolism and objective determinism. In particular, the Third Republic of Armenia, as a political, legal, and value product of the Armenian people, has run out. In the historical memory of the people, it is associated with corruption, amounted to state capture, authoritarian political regime, and complete failure of the foreign policy, as a result of which Armenia has become Russia's client state with deficient sovereignty. Meanwhile, the proclamation of the Fourth Republic will capitalize, albeit belatedly, the ideology of the revolution, as a value condensation of the political categories of freedom and justice. The Fourth Republic is, on the one hand, a symbolism, and on the other hand, a political impulse regarding the future vector of the state, the constitutionality and people-centeredness of whose content must be filled by the current and future state power. Consequently, the Fourth Republic must become not only a component of the pre-election program of the ruling political team, but a supra-political phenomenon, an institutional and intellectual structure, that gives life to the ideas of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The Fourth Republic must embody the opposite of the vicious phenomena, presented, and analyzed above, that brought the Third Republic to institutional, political, and practical "bankruptcy".

International practice "knows" cases of radical changes in the historical-political movement of the state in this way. For e.g. the dynamics of the development of the republican order, established by the Great Revolution of 1789 in France, conditioned by historical events of major importance for the development of French statehood and political ideologies, closely related to them, were divided into stages of development, and dated as the First, Second, Third, Fourth and now the Fifth Republics. The basis of the Fifth Republic is the political belief of its founding president Charles de Gaulle regarding a sovereign, powerful France, having the status of superpower. This political ideology, named "Gaullism", is based on the institution of a strong president at the constitutional level, and as a part of the foreign policy doctrine, pursues the idea of France as an equal and full partner of the USA in

the NATO. "Gaullism" is even named the political myth of the Fifth French Republic (Mikhailov, 2022, pp. 60-62).

Notably, the ideological bridge between the Fourth Republic of Armenia and the Fifth Republic of France is the fact that Gaullism considers the sovereignty of the state to be an exclusive and non-negotiable value (Mikhailov, 2022, p. 66).

Proclamation of the Fifth Republic and adoption of the new Constitution in 1958, as political acts, were conditioned by the need to adopt a new course of foreign policy as a result of the defeat of France in the war against Algeria, a French colony fighting for its independence, and to prevent a civil war, brewing in France, due to the Algerian crisis (Mikhailov, 2022, p. 71).

In the Armenian case, there is both an internal political prerequisite for the foundation of the new Republic, that is, the transition from the authoritarian political regime to democracy, and an external political prerequisite, a complete nullification of the decades-long Artsakh conflict resolution doctrine and, as a result, defeat in the war. Otherwise stated, there is a need to start the process of state-building from a "clean slate" by re-proclaiming a sovereign and democratic state with the rule of law and having renewed ideological guidelines.

Another layer of the political-symbolic level of the "new beginning" of sovereign Armenian statehood is the change of the foreign policy model. The foreign policy model of Armenia in the aftermath of the restoration of independence may be formulated as "sovereignty in exchange for security".

The post-independence political elite could not shake off the stereotypes, underlying the existence of the dependent state entity of the Soviet era, when security and military-defense issues were completely handed over to the central government of the USSR, and the Union republics dealt only with current issues of the internal political agenda. This separation of jurisdiction is evident from the analysis of the text of the 1978 Constitution of Soviet Armenia.

After independence, the new political elite, which consisted of a large number of representatives of the former Soviet nomenclature, was unable to develop and implement a political course, strengthening Armenia's sovereignty, implying a resolution of the Artsakh conflict and the regulation of Armenian-Turkish relations, based on the genuine interests of the Republic of Armenia and without a disproportionate interference of third countries, the conduct of a multi-vector and balanced foreign policy, the creation of combat-ready national armed forces and a self-sufficient military-industrial complex, the diversification of foreign investments, significant participation of the state in the management of strategic public assets, countering corruption in a systemic manner etc. Instead, due to the inertia of the political system during the Soviet period, an economic-political environment was formed, which was, by and large, identical to the nature and content of the relations between the USSR and Soviet Armenia, where the legally sovereign Republic of Armenia voluntarily conducted a pro-Russian policy to the extent, that the presence of Russia in the Armenian economy and domestic politics was comparable to that of the central government of the USSR in the Soviet period. In fact, the Armenian political elite of the first post-independence generation chose the de facto

international status of Armenia as a client state of Russia (Abrahamyan et al., 2023, p. 7).

Within the Russian-subordinated foreign policy paradigm, Armenia's relations with other states had a complementary nature and were mostly focused on the humanitarian agenda, having only minor economic and defense aspects. The grave consequences of such a foreign policy are summarized above. Now we shall briefly elaborate on the approach that, in our opinion, should be adopted to ensure the real diversification of Armenia's foreign policy.

In today's newly forming multipolar world order the unipolar policies of small states, which, moreover, have an asymmetric and subordinate character, are not only ineffective but also carry existential threats. In particular, one of the features of the multipolar world is the strong competition between states, which is also manifested by multi-layered conflicts, being not always of a military nature and being conducted through informational, biological, and other means. The status of a sovereign state is no longer perceived as a somewhat static, once-and-for-all phenomenon and requires, that especially small states pursue a creative foreign policy as a result of an objective inventory of its own resources and occupation of adequate "niches" in the global division of labor and create guarantees or preconditions for its sovereignty and security through the establishment of mutually beneficial political, military, economic and humanitarian ties with the largest possible number of influential states in the world.

Inter alia it is worth mentioning especially the economic aspect, which is characterized by its potential to promote peace and security, with which it will be possible to establish trade and economic relations with as many regional and extra-regional partners as possible. Diverse trade and economic relations are one of the guarantees of peace because they create interdependence and mutually tangible interests between states, which significantly reduces the possibility of armed conflicts.

To achieve these ends the greatest possible freedom of political decision-making is necessary. The latter is conceptually possible if a small state does not have asymmetric and vertical relations with another state or group of states, including not being included in international or supranational organizations, limiting the state's sovereignty in the security sphere. This allows a small state to focus as much as possible on increasing its own limited strategic potential and not be burdened with multi-sector and multi-subject security obligations. It is also noteworthy, that the pretexts and grounds for the fulfillment of mutual security obligations of member states of international organizations of collective self-defense may not be sufficiently clear and predictable in practice, because in contrast to bipolar or unipolar world systems when the geopolitical opponent was known or did not exist at all, interstate relations in the multipolar world system take on a more complex and networked nature. Therefore, even for states in the same defense alliance the scenarios, in which they must fulfill their security obligations to allies, are not entirely clear. Moreover, there may be cases when, as in the case of CSTO-Azerbaijan relations, member states of an organization have strategic or even alliance relations with the state, that have performed aggression against their ally within the framework of that

organization. Accordingly, the political and economic "price" to be paid by the state for providing military aid to its ally within the organization may exceed the political benefit of ever receiving military-political support from the organization.

Such cases and ambiguities, including the tendency of international organizations to become bureaucratic and non-transparent in their decision-making, on the one hand, weaken the external guarantees of sovereignty and security of small member states of these organizations, and on the other hand, undermine the authority of these international organizations. Instead, the so-called non-aligned state has the opportunity to distribute its resources more purposefully and to build interstate relations from more realistic positions.

Although there is no universally accepted definition of "non-alignment", it is viewed as the policy of a state to refrain from joining any military alliance. It is noteworthy, that the policy of non-alignment is not a position during a certain conflict, but a comprehensive policy (Abrahamyan et al., 2023, p. 20).

However, if the policy of non-alignment is not combined with an active inclusive policy at the bilateral level or with small groups of political actor-states with overlapping interests and the institutionalization of that policy in the form of relevant international treaties, non-alignment will turn from a tool of foreign policy into a goal, leading not to state sovereignty and increased flexibility, but to self-isolation. In that case, the security risks of the state will even increase. Therefore, the policy of non-alignment should be the political and institutional measure that will serve the purpose of ensuring a true multi-vector policy of a small state. The latter allows especially small states, which are more sensitive to changes in the external environment due to the lack of resources, to reduce the risks from changes in international conditions or at least create balanced security "cushions" to manage them, since a priori there is no monopoly on the security and safety of the given small state. It should be noted that there are different approaches to the selection of means of adoption of the non-alignment policy. For example, Austria and Turkmenistan have declared a policy of permanent neutrality at the constitutional level, which is essentially a way of legally enshrining the policy of non-alignment (Constitution of Austria, Article 9a, para 1; Constitution of Turkmenistan, Article 2, para 1). In the case of Azerbaijan, a flexible option was chosen not to raise the policy of non-alignment to the constitutional level, but to leave the decision on duration of this policy within the jurisdiction of the executive power, depending on external circumstances (Avatkov, 2020).

In addition, in South Caucasus and more widely, in the Greater Middle East region, nodal interests with a complex structure are concentrated, the relations of stakeholder states are of an unstable nature, manifested in the forms of conflicts, temporary agreements and multi-level and multi-party alliances. At the same time, the balance of power in the region is determined by participation of not only regional, but also extra-regional global states, which creates additional complexity for more or less long-term policy development and implementation. This geopolitical structure is supplemented by historical tense relations between Armenia and Turkey, animosity between Armenia and Azerbaijan and incompatible foreign policy vectors of Armenia's rest neighbors Georgia and Iran, which necessitates existence of

flexible and responsive foreign policy in order to make up castellation of allies and partners, enabling to utmostly reconcile various mutual interests and, accordingly, to determine mutual rights and obligations in the field of security, including military and defense. Of course, the multi-vector foreign policy does not imply the same level or the same degree of intensity of relations with possible stakeholders; objectively, there will be and should be "first among equals", such as France, the USA, India, Iran, Greece and others, but it is important that Armenia does not have institutional constraints in providing an individual approach to each of the stakeholders and does not form "common enemies" typical of institutional security alliances. This will allow to formulate an independent system of mutual interests with geopolitical and regional actors, interested in sovereignty of Armenia, as a result of complementing the external guarantees of sovereignty and security, taking the following urgent steps: the withdrawal of border guards of the Russian side from all borders of Armenia, including the "Zvartnots" airport, as well as the Russian military base and other units of the Russian armed forces, located on the territory of Armenia, the joint anti-aircraft system arising from the CSTO and Armenian-Russian security and defense agreements, immediate denunciation of the agreements on the joint Armenian-Russian military force, exchange of strategic secret information and other agreements pertinent to military and security cooperation.

At the same time, Armenia should actively diversify its defense and security policy, based only on its national interest. Moreover, Armenia should find an optimal balance between the interests of global political actors and regional states, on the one hand, forming a new regional power balance, and on the other hand, strategically striving to pursue the policy of "zero problems with neighbors" in order not to become a "besieged fortress", because in any case, Armenia's geographical position dictates certain preconditions of foreign policy, such as at least normal and predictable relations with its neighbors. Another approach can create significant strategic risks for Armenia's sovereignty and uncertainties in the management of the latter. By and large, this will also be a process of learning from past mistakes, such as having a confrontation with some neighbors and practicing a policy of purely peaceful coexistence with others without strategic depth, Armenia, in 2016, 2020, and 2021-2023 fell in a security crisis, remaining alone in the region. As to the legal fixation of non-alignment doctrine, the issue of its constitutional enshrinement may be considered. The standpoint for any legal measure in this case should be predictability of Armenia's positioning for external actors.

In the context of strengthening economic sovereignty, Armenia should implement wide-scale diversification of the economy and gain state participation or management authority in strategic assets (communications, telecommunications, railways, strategic factories, mining, etc.) or increase their relative weight. At the same time, strategic realism, arising from the current international situation, should be given to Armenian-Russian relations, and in the light of the "agreement on disagreements" principle, known to the negotiation theory, the spectrum of relations, in which there are truly weighted mutual interests, should continue to function. The economy is such a sphere, where Armenia and Russia are objectively important for each other. Along with this, all the international agreements should be denounced

and all the guarantees, that ensure Russia's privileged economic status in Armenia, should be reviewed. In parallel, Armenia should provide state support to large investors from non-EAEU states to stimulate alternative business activity in Armenia, to promote system-building investments, and thus to overcome Russia's direct or indirect monopoly status in leading sectors of the economy. Strategically, Armenia should also consider the EAEU as a tool of Russian economic expansion and form necessary economic alternatives in order to stop the EAEU membership in the visible future.

The policy of non-alignment cannot be considered beyond economic sovereignty in the context of Armenia's geographical position, composition of neighboring states, and regional geo-strategic realities. The EAEU is a supranational organization, that actually develops the customs policy and some part of the economic policy of Armenia and participates in ensuring the implementation of this policy. This circumstance will obviously hinder the financial and economic maintenance of the restoration of regional self-sufficiency of Armenia and making independent decisions in this regard. At the same time, however, a dual approach should be taken along with the gradual expansion of economic sovereignty through diversification of economic relations, membership in the EAEU should be maintained, as long as there are still no sufficient guarantees of self-protection against economic sanctions of Russia after the termination of the EAEU membership and, in particular, guarantees to ensure macroeconomic stability and the social well-being of the population. Among such guarantees can be the conclusion of the Association Agreement with the EU, following the suit of Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine and thus the establishment of a free trade regime between Armenia and the EU member states, deepening strategic cooperation with Iran in the field of gas supply, institutionalization of economic cooperation with Georgia, etc.

Generally, the strategic vision of Armenia should be not to participate in any supranational organization and to develop its military-defense and economic ties in such formats, that do not have supranational institutions and extensive collective obligations due to the large number of participating states. In this way, Armenia will ensure the substantive protection of political decisions from interference and will keep its commitments to other external actors within the framework of predictability and feasibility.

Ultimately, the process of restoring the military and economic sovereignty of the Republic of Armenia is inevitable in order to ensure the political presence of the Armenian ethnos in its cradle, but at the same time, caution and balance are necessary in order not to be guided by the principle "all or nothing" and thus to avoid provocations, aimed at collapsing Armenian statehood.

Conclusion

The conducted research has shown, that since the beginning of the post-independence period, the sovereignty of the Republic of Armenia has already been subjected to disproportionate restrictions, both in military-defense, security, economic, and foreign policy terms. Particularly, the sovereignty of Armenia was limited in favor of one state, in order to receive security for the Armenian people.

However, that one-sided policy did not contain necessary guarantees of the viability of the political identity of Armenia in terms of ensuring bona fide fulfillment of the contractual obligation to maintain the security of Armenia by the beneficiary state, to whom the sovereignty of Armenia was surrendered. As a result, Armenia faced both a sovereignty and security crisis, the way out of which was the adoption of a comprehensive policy of restoration of national sovereignty. If in the past, until 2018, Armenia's internal resistance and political decision-making structure were undermined by the dictatorial political regime, now, when the democratic constitutional order is restored, there are necessary legal and political prerequisites for making groundbreaking political decisions.

The Republic of Armenia is not only a state, located in a certain geographical area, but the institutional source of the historical memory of the Armenian people and the genetic and dialectical interdependence of generations. Therefore, regaining control over the components of Armenia's sovereignty and their reintegration into the political-state structure of the new Fourth Republic is the only guarantee of the political survival and historical perspective of the Armenian people as a state-forming nation.

As it follows from the aforementioned research material, the sovereign policy does not mean becoming a client state of another geopolitical entity, but implies a political worldview, based on the standpoints of etatism and protection of national identity and a foreign policy derived from them. Such a policy implies, that figures of permanent friend and permanent enemy should be absent, and therefore, there should be no saviors and liberators. Instead, there are and can only be equal allies and partners.

The Armenian people, as a sovereign, have only one unchanging and cornerstone constitutional mission: to protect and pass on its political freedom from generation to generation, which can only be embodied in the sovereign state. This mission should be the basis of the political behavior of the Armenian political elite and the electorate to whom it is accountable.

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LEGAL AXIOLOGY: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

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Abstract

This scientific article explores the meaning of legal axiology as a doctrine about the values of law, the legal (value-legal) meaning of law (positive law), and the state. The author examines both legal (positivist) and natural law approaches to legal axiology, emphasizing the features of these concepts. Additionally, the article considers the concepts of equality, freedom, and justice, determined by the principle of formal equality of participants in this form of relations. The author also presents the viewpoints of famous philosophers and jurists on legal axiology, including G. Hegel, I. Kant, H. Kelsen, etc.

Keywords: values, positivist approach, externprotos approach, legal epistemology, legal ontology, axiology.

Axiology is the study of values. The use of the concept of "value" in the specific sense of a moral imperative goes back to Kant. In his interpretation, value is something that has the meaning of obligation and freedom. This a priori world of the ought is defined by Kant as isolated and opposed to the world of the real (actual phenomena, relationships, and empirical "being" in this sphere), where cause-and-effect relationships and necessity dominate. Thus, we are referring to the normative and regulative significance of values, which, according to Kant, are a priori imperatives of reason: the values of what should be, demands, formulas, and maxims.

The categorical imperatives formulated by Kant in the application of morality and law are also connected with this moral obligation. Kant's followers, such as R. H. Lotze, W. Windelband, etc.) expanded on his ideas about the normative and regulatory significance of values and the establishment of values not only in the sphere of morality but also in the sphere of science, art, and culture in general. For example, the neo-Kantian Windelband interprets values as norms of culture and, in addition to the values of truth, goodness, and beauty, recognizes such values as the benefits of human cultures, such as art, religion, science, and law (Nersesyants, 1998, pp. 104-105).

A different approach to the problem of values is characteristic of thinkers from Plato to Hegel and their modern followers, according to whom being is good (i.e. value). However, in this context, "being" does not refer to empirical being but rather to the objective rationality of being, encompassing ideas, wisdom, and existence in the mode of what ought to be, and therefore, in the mode of value (Hegel, 1990).

The subject area and main topic lead to axiology, which addresses the problems of perceiving and interpreting rights as values (e.g., as goals, positions, imperative requirements, etc.) and corresponding value judgments (and assessments), in fact about a given right (positive right) and public power, as well as about the legal definition of the rights of the subject (i.e. from the point of view of law in the value sense).

When identifying right and law, the objective essence of law and, at the same time, within the framework of legalism, which denies the criterion of separation of law from arbitrariness, it is impossible to substantively discuss a purely legal assessment of the law and the legal value of law. Due to the denial of the objective properties and characteristics of law, independent of the legislator and the law, legalism in axiological terms essentially denies purely legal values and recognizes only the value of law (positive law) as a compulsory-obligatory establishment of power. Moreover, the value of law recognized by legalists (positivists and neo positivists) is, in fact, devoid of a purely legal value meaning. The logistical value of a law (positive law) is its universal obligatory nature, imperious imperatives, and not its universal significance based on any objective (not power-command) legal basis.

In this regard, the radical approach of the positivist Kelsen is noteworthy. According to Kelsen, the value of law lies only in its nature as an order or norm. In this sense law is characterized as a form of coercion. “It is impossible, as is often done”, Kelsen argued, “that law not only represents a norm (or command) but also constitutes or repeats a special value (such a statement makes sense only on the assumption of an absolute divine value). After all, law is valuable precisely because it is a norm...” (Kelsen, 2019).

It is important to emphasize that Kelsen’s “norm” is purely production-order norm, and not a norm of equality, freedom, or justice. It does not contain a single objective legal (independent of the legislator) characteristic of law. The Kelsen norm (and along with it, the form of law) is a “pure” and empty form of coercion, suitable for imparting imperative-command status and character to any arbitrary positive legal content.

According to the axiology of natural law, natural law embodies the objective properties and values of “real” law and therefore acts for the value assessment of positive law and the corresponding law-making power (in relation to the legislator and the state as a whole). Moreover, natural law is perceived as a moral (religious, ethical, etc.) phenomenon, essentially endowed with the corresponding absolute value.

The concept of natural law, thus, includes various moral (religious, ethical) characteristics along with certain objective properties of law, such as equality of people and recognition of their freedoms. As a result of such a mixture of law and morality (religion, etc.), natural law acts as a mixture of various social norms, as a

kind of moral-legal (or moral-legal, religious-legal) complex, from the standpoint of which this or that (usually ~ negative) value judgment about positive law and positive legislator (state power) (Nersesyants, 2005, pp. 126-127)

With this approach to the emergence of laws, public power is consolidated (in terms of values) not so much from the points of view of the purity of legal criteria (technical objective legal properties found in modern fundamental conceptual law), but rather from essentially ethical positions. These positions reflect the author's views on the moral (moral, religious, etc.) nature and content of the law. Despite the moral and legal properties and practically substantive characteristics of natural law in a generalized form, it is interpreted as the expression of universal and absolute justice of natural law, which positive law and state activities should align with.

Justice, therefore, is interpreted not in a formal legal sense, but as a moral or mixed moral and legal phenomenon and concept, with specific moral (or mixed moral and legal) content for each moral and legal concept. Consequently, various natural-legal concepts of justice, despite their claims to moral (or mixed-moral-legal) community and absolute value, in fact, possess relative value and reflect relativistic ideas about morality and law in general, and the moral values of the state in particular.

Along the way, the confusion of rights and morality (religions, etc.) Moral and legal concepts are accompanied and deepened by the ridiculousness of formal and factual, mandatory, and essential, norms and factual content, ideal and material, principles, and empirical phenomena.

On the plane of legal axiology, this is reflected, in particular, in the fact that the problematic of the legal value of the law (positive law) and the state is replaced by their moral (religious) assessment and the corresponding requirement of one or another (inevitably relative, private, special) moral or mixed moral -legal content and government activities. Such ideas are presented in the most concentrated form in the structures of natural justice, as a reflection of moral (or moral-legal) principles, properties, and values of "real" law.

These shortcomings, naturally, do not belittle such indisputable merits and achievements of the natural law approach in the field of legal theory and experience, as the identification and development of issues related to legal axiology (in close connection with issues of legal ontology and epistemology), issues of freedom and equality of people, natural legal justice, innate and inalienable human rights, legal restrictions on power, the rule of law, and more.

As for the indicated shortcomings of the natural law approach, including the axiological aspects, they are characteristic not only of the concepts of traditional and modern legalism but also of various purely philosophical teachings of the past and present, which in their perception of the moral (religious, etc.) One way or another proceeds from ideas and structures of a natural nature. In this regard, one can name the interpretations of the moral teaching about law, law as a "moral minimum", moral order, natural (moral, religious) ideas by Kant, Hegel, and their followers V.S. Solovyov, R. Marich (Kant, 1995, pp. 284-285)

Thus, in Kat's moral teaching about law, which is still significantly influenced by moral and legal ideas, the focus is on positive law and state morals, rather than legal

values. The very idea of a republic (Kant's version of the rule of law) is substantiated by Kant as a maxim of moral consciousness, as a requirement of a categorical moral imperative (Kant, 1988).

A moral interpretation of law and the state is also found in Hegel's philosophy of law, which he conceived as a consistent philosophical interpretation of natural law. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Hegel interprets morality as a special kind of right, classifying positive law ("law as law") and the state within the sphere of morality. Thus, they are considered moral phenomena, forms of objectification of moral value. The three sections of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right" are dedicated to abstract law and morality. Moreover, Hegel characterizes his interpretation of law, including positive law and the state, as "a moral teaching about duties, that is, as it is objectively, and not as it is supposedly contained in the empty principle of moral subjectivation, which does not determine anything" (Hegel, 1990).

Considering the shortcomings of the natural law approach, we should acknowledge the legitimacy of several critical positions expressed by representatives of legal positivism regarding the natural law doctrine. These shortcomings include the rejection of formal and factual law and morality in the interpretation of natural law, and the absolutization of relative moral values to which positive law and the state must correspond, etc.

In this regard, Kelsen's criticism of natural law is the most consistent. The most important function of the "natural-legal doctrine as a doctrine of justice", according to Kelsen, is the "moral-legal function", i.e., value (natural-political) justification or accusation of positive law. Defending the purity of jurisprudence, Kelsen reasonably criticizes the confusion of law with morality and other social norms observed among supporters of natural law teachings, and their demands for the morality of law, the moral content of law, etc.

However, these in themselves correct provisions are combined in Kelsen with traditional positivist provisions that supposedly "justice is a requirement of morality" and therefore positive law cannot be demanded to be fair.

According to the liberal legal axiology, the integrity of the law and the state lies in the fact that they act as a universal, necessary, and generally binding normative and institutional form for the expressing fundamental values such as equality, freedom, and justice. Overcoming the shortcomings of the moral-legal approach (in the field of legal axiology, as well as in matters of legal ontology and epistemology) leads not to positivism and legalism, but to a legal understanding and the value-legal value of law (positive law) and a theoretically more developed form of the state.

Thus, we are talking about a liberal axiology ─ legal axiology ─ based on the liberal concept of legal understanding, within the framework of the general theory of differentiation and the relationship between law and law (positive law).

The internal unity of legal ontology, axiology, and epistemology is based on the same principle of formal equality. The principle is perceived and interpreted by us as a prerequisite for legal ontology (what is law?), axiology (what is the value of law?), and epistemology (how is law understood?).

Ontologically, answering the question of what law is, we argue that law, in its essence, is formal equality. This formal equality encompasses the formality of

freedom and justice. Law, as a form (legal form of social relations) is ontologically the totality of these formal properties and characteristics: equality, freedom, and justice.

On the other hand, the law as a form — the legal form of the real — namely, the formal components - equality, freedom, and justice, should not be confused with the actual relations themselves, which are mediated, justified forms, and regulated with the actual establishment of relations of stability. Thus, equality, freedom, and justice, according to each interpretation, are legal formalities, not facts. They are formal-substantive (not material-substantive, not empirical) components, properties, and characteristics of rights and laws of form.

Both in ontological and axiological and epistemological terms, it is sufficient that the same measure of regulation, freedom, and justice can only be expressed and explained formally (formally legal). These concepts are seen as separate forms of expression and the general manifestations of the meaning of formal legal equality. Together with the principle of formal equality (and without contradicting it), they form a consistent concept of law and, as components, regularity and chronic universal justice form social relations.

Such a consistent structure of law means that in law (and in legal form) there is only what is in the formal principle of equality and is derived from it (through official-authority normative concretization in given conditions of this principle of law and in its identification towards a system of universal and generally binding norms of equality, freedom, and justice).

This concept of law allows, in line with the legal perception, to consider rational aspects and achievements of both natural law and legal positivist thought, and at the same time overcome their inherent shortcomings. In contrast to the natural law approach (formal legal and factual, law and morality, legal and production-legal values, their mixture with relative absolute values and their equality, freedom, justice, and law in general, it is generally mixed factual and moral-legal interpretation), the concept of law we develop is purely formal (formal-legal in nature), which is equivalent to law as a form of social relations.

Ontologically, this means that the constituent parts of this concept (equality, freedom, law, and the forms and norms that specify them) are purely legal categories. By the nature of the universal legal form, they are formal components, properties, and characteristics. Axiologically, this concept of law allows us to reasonably assert that we are talking about the legal values themselves (and only) and not about moral, religious, and other non-legal values.

Moreover, legal values—due to the abstract universality of law and legal form — are, universal and have a general meaning (and in this sense, absolute and not relative in nature). Thus, the law in its axiological dimension, acts not only as a formal bearer of moral (mixed-moral-legal) values, characteristic of the natural law approach, but as a purely defined form of legal values themselves. It serves as a specific form of a legal obligation, different from all other forms of duties (moral, religious, etc.) and value forms.

This perception of the value meaning of the legal form diverges significantly from the positivist approach. Due to the identification of law and law (positive law)

and the exclusion of objective properties regardless of the legislator and the law, positivism essentially denies purely legal values and recognizes only the value of law (positive law). Moreover, the value of law (positive law), recognized by positivists, is devoid of purely axiological meaning. The positivist "value" of a law (positivist law) is its official universal bindings, imperious imperativeness, and not its universal significance according to any objective (non-authoritative-legal) justification.

Contrary to this positivistic devaluation of law as an order of power, in the socio-legal concept of law in any arbitrary content, the legal form as a form of equality, freedom, and justice is qualitatively defined and meaningful, but only in a strictly formal legal sense, and not in the sense of one or another actual content, which is typical for the natural law approach. Consequently, in a formal legal sense, this form of qualitatively defined law is a form of obligatoriness not only in terms of general obligatoriness, imperious imperativeness, etc. but also in terms of its objective value universal meaning of law, in the sense of axiological and legal obligatoriness.

This concept of legal (formal legal) interpretation of the fundamental human values (equality, freedom, justice) as the main points of the legal form of obligation clearly indicates and fixes the value status of law. The framework of law as values, content, potential, and its peculiarity as a value imperative in the system of values and norms of obligation is established. From these positions, legal values can and should be determined in connection with what is essential and obligatory for law (law - as a due, as a goal, as the basis of requirements, a source of legal meanings and values) in the relevant area.

This area of the essential, which in terms of value is established from the position of legal production, is constituted within the framework of legal axiology (taking into account the characteristics of its subject, profile, and tasks) by law (positive law) and the state - with all its actual manifestations and dimensions, in all their real existence, as well as legally significant behavior of all subjects (and addressees) of domestic and international law.

In legal axiology this means, therefore, that we are talking about the assessment of value and the state (value criterion and evaluation) in the legal sense and the law (positive law) from the position of law, about law as due in the value sense, about requirements, the imperatives of universal obligatory nature (or non-compliance). Law in this case acts as the goal of law (positive law), state, and human behavior. This means that the law (positive law), the state and, the legally significant behavior of people should be aimed at embodying and implementing the requirements of the law, since this is precisely their purpose, meaning, and significance.

Law (positive right), the state, and the behavior of people are valuable only because and to the extent that they communicate with the law, express, and realize the purpose of the law, are valuable in the legal sense, and are legal.

Thus, the value of the law (positive law) and the state, along with legally significant behavior of people, according to the concept of legal axiology we are developing, lies in their legal value and meaning. The value of law as a due in relation to the law can be defined in the form of the following value-legal imperative: law, public authority, and the behavior of legal subjects must be legal.

Legal law, legal state (legal public authority, etc.), and legal behavior are, therefore, the legal goals and values of any positive (empirically existing and operating) law, any legal public authority, and subjects of law.

On this axiological plane, the relationship between the mandatory and the essential reflects the idea of positive law, public power, and constant improvement of the behavior of legal subjects. These are historically developing phenomena, sharing both achievements and shortcomings and are always far from the ideal state (legal due). In addition, in the process of legal renewal, the very meaning of legal proceedings, the entire complex of legal values, requirements, and obligations that laws, public authority, and the behavior of subjects of law must comply with - are updated, enriched, and specified.

Conclusion

The absolute nature of the legal law and the goal and requirement of the rule of law does not mean, of course, that today this goal (and the legal law required by it, lawful behavior) in its semantic content and value volume is the same as it was a hundred years ago or will be in a hundred years. A clear illustration of such changes is, for example, ideas about human rights and freedoms, the hierarchy and significance of legal values over the last century, their role in the process of legal assessment of current legislation, etc.

It is also important, however, that with all such changes and specifications of the hierarchy, scope, and meaning of legal values, we are not talking about refusal or removal from the legal goal - value (legal law, requirements of the rule of law, etc.), but about their renewal, deepening, enriching, complicating and concretizing in the context of new state realities, new requirements, new problems and new opportunities for solving them.

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