

INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL AND LEGAL CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF ENSURING SUSTAINABLE SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The article analyzes the political and legal culture as the most important factor that ensures the stability of the political and legal system of society. The tasks were also set to assess the features of the social, political and legal stability of society, the level and trends of political and legal stability, the rationale for the fact that a state without a political and legal culture cannot achieve peace and stable development of its citizens. It is based on the fact that the political and legal culture is the main factor in the stable development of relations between public authorities and citizens.

Keywords: Political culture, legal culture, social and political stability, state, social development, political and legal system, basis.

Introduction

In the current era of global change, the strategic goal of any state is to achieve sustainable development. Sustainable development is not merely a matter of national economic growth indicators; it is also achieved by establishing justice in social relations, effectively ensuring human rights and freedoms in societal life, and strengthening democratic institutions within the governance system. In this process, political and legal culture serve as vital institutional resources. The higher the level of a society's political and legal culture, the more transparent the activities of state bodies become, and the more informed and effective public participation in governance processes becomes.

Furthermore, sustainable development depends on the balance of interests among various segments of society. A high level of political and legal culture necessitates a legitimate approach to resolving conflicts. It enables the resolution of issues affecting

stability through legal mechanisms and institutional channels, thereby mitigating risks that threaten social stability.

Political and legal culture lays the foundation for the harmonious and effective functioning of state and societal institutions. In this process, institutional reforms aimed at enhancing political and legal culture—particularly strengthening legal education and supporting civil society institutions—guarantee the country's strategic, sustainable development.

Results and conclusions

When viewing the issue from this perspective, the factors ensuring stability can be conditionally categorized into political, economic, ideological, and socio-cultural factors. It is also necessary to take into account their interconnections and mutual influence. In this regard, Russian scholars Yu.V. Irkhin, V.D. Zotov, and L.V. Zotova emphasize the importance of highlighting the following key conditions and factors for a society's political stability: firstly, the effective functioning of the society's political-legal system and the successful resolution of its pressing tasks; secondly, a necessary level of public trust in state institutions—specifically, the system's ability to adequately represent the interests of the majority; thirdly, the legitimacy of the political-legal system; fourthly, the existence of a system that creates the necessary conditions for political-legal stability; fifthly, the assurance of citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms, and the achievement of consensus among political actors and participants; and sixthly, the rational distribution of powers between central and local government bodies. Seventhly, it involves governing the state and society—and optimizing their operations—in accordance with laws, traditions, ethics, and religious norms. Only then is it possible to achieve the interaction and harmony between political and legal cultures necessary to ensure societal stability [1, p. 391].

The ancient Chinese thinker Confucius developed ethical as well as political-legal principles aimed at strengthening society's political-legal system and ensuring its stability. He argued that if a society is governed solely by laws and order is maintained through punishment, people will strive only to avoid punishment and lose their sense of honor and shame. However, if societal order is upheld through high values, every individual develops a deep sense of honor and becomes an honest, upright person [2, p. 170]. It is evident that these principles, viewed through the lens of modern China's development experience, continue to lay the foundation for the sustainable

development of society today. Also noteworthy is Confucius's dictum: "Do not go to a country lacking tranquility; do not live in a state lacking order" [3, p. 90]. Indeed, lasting peace and tranquility cannot be maintained in a state that has not achieved stability in its political and legal system. No matter how simple such precepts from the great thinker may appear, they hold immense scientific and practical significance in today's era of global conflicts and perils.

It was only by the final decade of the 20th century that humanity realized the possibility of achieving sustainable development for the world as an integrated, unified society. As the renowned sociologist Anthony Giddens noted, human society did not exist as a truly integrated and unified system until relatively recent times [1, p. 576]. Consequently, the phenomenon of societal stability is often analyzed in close connection with issues of ensuring global peace and security. Historical processes clearly demonstrate that progress has never unfolded smoothly or without contradictions and risks; periods of disruption and abrupt shifts have also been observed. Nevertheless, accurately assessing and predicting the balance of power among various forces on a global scale remains a complex challenge today. In these complex times, it is an undeniable fact that alongside the forces driving societal renewal and progress, there exist forces that resist this process in various ways. Overall, humanity's current path of development continues amidst this clash of diverse interests and the struggle of opposing forces.

When considering these complex tasks, it becomes evident that there are various factors involved in shaping and continuously enhancing political culture. These factors encompass the objective of consistently advancing all spheres—economic, socio-political, and spiritual-educational—linked to the country's sustainable development. The realization of these tasks depends on the constructive spirit of society, the dedication of citizens, and the extent to which their political consciousness and political culture align with the current stage of development. This entails: a) the task of uniting citizens in the service of the state and the common good; and b) the necessity of harmonizing their interests while taking into account their respective social backgrounds. v) A country's development depends not only on economic factors but also on political ones. Even if a society possesses sufficient economic potential, the lack of political stability makes it impossible to utilize those resources effectively.

In general, the key political factors contributing to societal stability include a democratic political regime and civil society, which enable citizens to actively participate—through various political and legal institutions—in expressing, aggregating, and protecting their interests, rights, and freedoms. The role of state and municipal institutions in ensuring social stability is manifested in guaranteeing the equality of interests among key population groups, the timely resolution of various societal conflicts, and the cultivation of a political and legal culture—rooted in universal democratic values—within a democratically elected, effective, and legitimate political authority. In today's globalized world, one can observe countries trapped in a cycle of social unrest caused by internal instability and a lack of civic equality—unrest that, at times, escalates into coups d'état.

Every nation in the world has its own goals and interests regarding development. It is the unity of these interests and goals that binds a people together as a nation and a state. However, in global politics, spiritual factors and economic capabilities alone are insufficient; rather, democratic development rooted in the stability of the political-legal system is of decisive importance. "Without order in the state's legal system, neither the economic nor the political tasks of social development can be successfully resolved" [9, p. 94]. These factors define a country's development, the stability of its social environment, and its standing in the world. The modern world is striving toward precisely this.

In contemporary political science, the study of stability focuses not on eliminating social ideas that foster progress, but rather on examining evolutionary changes in social priorities and behaviors in this regard. In other words, the phenomenon of stability is viewed through the lens of "social integration." Perspectives on the factors of integration vary. For instance, Western scholars such as É. Durkheim, M. Weber, and V. Pareto believed that integration occurs based on values and norms shared by all members of society. Modern functionalists, particularly T. Parsons, argue that integration is facilitated by mechanisms such as a universal legal system, voluntary associations, and the expansion of the rights of societal members.

Without denying these phenomena, it is fair to assert that the stability of a society's political-legal system is determined by the level of its citizens' political-legal culture. Professor S. Otomuradov, who has studied the significance of political culture's development and its role in political processes, highlights its function in regulating political consciousness. According to him, political culture "exerts a positive

influence in preventing itself from becoming a factor that gives rise to political instability" [5, p. 5].

In this sense, the stability of the political and legal system is established within a democratic state—a state possessing a political system that embodies the society's culture, ideas, knowledge, values, and other components. In such a state, political authority is capable of ensuring the stability of the entire system. It is evident that the stability of the political and legal system is inextricably linked not only to social interests but also to all aspects of social relations associated with political-legal culture. The primary issue in this regard can be attributed to insufficient efforts to instill in the public consciousness the ideas of maintaining a balance between individual and societal interests while elevating legal awareness and legal culture.

It is also possible to identify factors that negatively affect the stability of the socio-political and legal system and to categorize them into external and internal factors.

Experience from the modern world demonstrates that developed nations often seek to leverage their advanced science, technology, and technical capabilities as instruments for securing economic gain or exerting political influence. Instances of countries attempting to establish global political dominance by projecting their economic and technological prowess can be observed. Such situations reveal a lack of sufficient political vigilance and political culture within the nations subject to this influence; this manifests in external factors where, despite recognizing the initial necessity of various forms of "aid" for development, these countries fail to fully grasp the potential long-term consequences for the nation and its people [5, p. 12].

In turn, the internal factors leading to the destabilization of a society's political and legal system can be described as follows: a) the existence of cultural and political divisions within society; b) the state's lack of attention—or complete disregard—for the social needs of citizens; c) intensifying illicit competition among political parties holding opposing ideological stances; and d) the introduction of unconventional ideas into societal life that run counter to national and human interests.

In general, political stability is a political-legal process that remains constant despite the influence of various external and internal factors. Under conditions of political stability, any deviations within the state are regulated within the framework of established norms. These norms may be either legal or ethical in nature. Achieving ideal political stability is impossible. Today, the global community is constantly

evolving, and the system of state governance is developing in harmony with the political and legal life of society.

Political stability is ensured by a society's political system (the core element of which is the state) and the effectiveness with which it carries out its functions; this, in turn, depends on public support from citizens:

- 1) "situational support"—expressing public opinion regarding specific decisions made by state bodies, as well as the public statements of political leaders holding authority and the effectiveness of political actions;
- 2) "systemic support"—that is, the consistency of positive assessments and views indicating approval of the activities of existing power structures within society regarding both domestic and foreign policy. A crucial factor in "systemic" support is trust in political leaders and the political system, as well as the readiness of various social groups to defend their interests within the framework of laws and legal and ethical norms.

Indeed, the stability of a political system is a complex phenomenon that encompasses such parameters as maintaining the governance system, establishing civic order, and ensuring the rule of law and the reliability of governance. In this regard, special attention must be paid to raising the level of legal culture in society, strengthening citizens' respect for the law, and providing comprehensive incentives to individuals who actively participate in combating legal violations.

According to political scientist R. Dahl, the successful implementation of processes of societal renewal is linked to the expansion of citizens' political participation in state governance (openness); this must be pursued alongside maintaining political stability, accelerating modernization, and ensuring an internal system of mutual security within the political regime [12, p. 58]. In this sense, political and legal culture serve to strengthen political stability in the country, foster the coordinated functioning of government structures, develop the foundations of civil society, reinforce the rule of law and legal order in social life, and ensure societal development and the well-being of the people.

Professor S. Otamuradov, analyzing the role of political culture in political processes, emphasizes that its development "enables the further strengthening of political stability in our country and provides the opportunity to collaboratively implement the tasks of building a democratic society—our primary goal" [5, p. 5]. In this context, one can conclude that the key aspects of a society's political-legal culture in ensuring

socio-political stability manifest in the prevention of indifference and apathy, the cultivation of vigilance and civic dedication, and the fostering of a sense of personal involvement in the country's destiny. One can conclude that the most important factors ensuring societal stability are the prevailing characteristics of our people—which hold a unique place in the society's political culture—such as social solidarity, composure in the face of social change, a commitment to peace and civic harmony, respect for the cultures, languages, and beliefs of other peoples, industriousness and mutual assistance, and an adherence to traditions and religious values.

In conclusion, the driving force behind the processes of societal stabilization consists of elements of the political process or political system; these elements comprehensively define the changes—determined in functional terms—that lead to socio-political stability. In other words, it manifests as a phenomenon that fully articulates the processes of stability within society, reveals the basis for the changes occurring in the social system, and identifies transformative trends.

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