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FEATURES OF THE POWER LEGITIMATION IN THE AGE OF POSTMODERNISM

Abstract

The crisis of legitimacy is an urgent problem in modern political science. After all, a necessary condition for the functioning of any democratic state is the legitimacy of power, recognition and support of the majority of the population.

The main methods used for this article are: political science—analysis of specialized scientific sources allowed to identify specific features of political science interpretation of key concepts and trace their development within political science, comparative—allowed to compare modernist and postmodernist approach to understanding the legitimacy of power and identify their main features, systematic approach, allowed to consider complex and multifaceted process with the corresponding internal and external features of functioning, historical—research of transformation of understanding of concept of legitimacy.

This article reveals the characteristic features of legitimacy in the pre-modern and modern times, however, the main focus is on the features of the legitimation of power in the postmodern era. Among them: the presence in the public consciousness and information space of a negative image of government and politics; total individualism; departure from modernist rationalism in the direction of creative search; legitimation through work with meanings, texts and images; rejection of the concept of «patience for the sake of the future» and the transition to the dominance of consumer society; the requirement to meet the needs of the «**here and now**». **Through the active involvement of economic, cultural, religious and other spheres in politics, today we can speak of the disappearance of legitimacy in its pure form and the establishment of its connection with other socio-political and economic phenomena.** Thus, to study this phenomenon today it is necessary to use the tools of other sciences, especially economics.

Key words: legitimacy, power, postmodernism, state, trust, transformation, crisis.

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**ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ЛЕГІТИМАЦІЇ ВЛАДИ В ДОБУ
ПОСТМОДЕРНІЗМУ**

Резюме

Актуальною проблемою в сучасній політологічній науці виступає криза легітимності. Адже, необхідною умовою функціонування будь-якої демократичної держави є легітимність влади, тобто визнання і підтримка більшою частиною населення.

Метою дослідження є визначення основних особливостей легітимації влади в постмодернізмі. Серед основних методів, які було використано: політологічний — аналіз спеціалізованих наукових джерел дозволив виокремити специфічні риси політологічного трактування ключових понять та прослідкувати їх розвиток в рамках політологічної науки; компаративний — дозволив порівняти модерністський та постмодерністський підхід до розуміння легітимності влади та визначити їх основні особливості; системний підхід — дозволив розглянути легітимацію як складний, комплексний та багатогранний процес з відповідними внутрішніми та зовнішніми особливостями функціонування; історичний — дослідження трансформації розуміння поняття легітимності влади.

Було розкрито характерні ознаки легітимації влади в домодерну та модерну лобу, проте, основну увагу сконцентровано саме на особливостях легітимації влади в добу постмодерну. Найбільш характерними із них є: присутність в суспільній свідомості та інформаційному просторі негативного образу влади та політики; тотальний індивідуалізм; відхід від модерністського раціоналізму в бік творчого пошуку; легітимація через роботу з сенсами, текстами та образами; відмова концепції «терпіння заради майбутнього» і перехід до домінування суспільства споживання; вимога задоволення потреб «тут і зараз». Враховуючи активне включення економічної, культурної, релігійної та інших сфер в політику, сьогодні ми можемо

говорити про зникнення легітимності в її чистій формі та усталення її зв'язку з іншими соціо-політичними та економічними явищами. Таким чином, для дослідження даного феномену сьогодні необхідно використовувати інструментарій інших наук, в першу чергу — економічний.

Ключові слова: легітимність, влада, постмодерн, держава, довіра, трансформація, криза.

Introduction

Society is a complex and plastic phenomenon, all elements of which must be in a state of mutual harmony in order to ensure the effective functioning of the whole system. The element that preserves this harmony and prevents the destruction and disintegration of society is legitimation, because they help to form a vision of the necessary social order in times of transformational change. After all, any reform is a change that, by modifying a particular part, affects the functioning of the whole system.

The problem of legitimacy is one of the key in political and legal theory, it was studied by a number of prominent authors, including: Yu. Habermas, E. Bistrytsky, V. Tsvykh, S. Proleyev, S. Makeev, P. Manzhola, Yu. Rosenfeld and others. In turn, the postmodernist paradigm was studied in their works by: Z. Bauman, J.-F. Lyotar, M. Fukuyama, T. Alekseeva and others.

Today, the crisis of legitimacy is especially widespread, caused by a decline in trust and real support for the government against the background of the formation in the public consciousness and information space of a politicians negative image and everything related to power and authority. In general, the negativization of «power» is characteristic of postmodernism, which denies a rational approach to understanding this phenomenon. Such trends are particularly pronounced for countries undergoing active transformation processes and have an unstable political system.

Maintaining the level of power`s legitimacy is a necessary condition for the functioning of a democratic state, because it is always based on the voluntary transfer of power and its further recognition. To solve the problem of the legitimacy crisis it is necessary to study the changes that are taking place with this phenomenon in connection with the transition to the postmodernist paradigm.

Research methods

In order to fully solve the tasks and achieve the goal defined in the article, a number of general scientific methods were used. Among them: **political science** — analysis of specialized scientific sources allowed to identify specific features of political science interpretation of key concepts and trace their development within political science, comparative — allowed to compare modernist and postmodernist approach to understanding the legitimacy of power and identify their main features, systematic approach, allowed to consider complex and

multifaceted process with the corresponding internal and external features of functioning, historical – research of transformation of understanding of concept of legitimacy.

Results

With the departure from the modern worldview and the growing influence of the postmodern paradigm, there is a transformation of such key concepts as «power», «state», «law», and so on. This accumulates the need for theoretical search and approval in practice of new identification types. It is necessary to determine the current content in the theoretical discourse of the «legitimation» and «power» concepts, and to trace their transformation in postmodern conditions.

Today, the term «legitimation» mean a certain process of «approval» and recognition of power by society. In his works, E. Bystrytsky, for example, defines it as «the process of collective identity realization by the political system on the basis of common values» [1, p. 321, 329]. In general, within the framework of the philosophical and legal approach, legitimation is a necessity, which is explained by the nature of power.

In the «Encyclopedia of Postmodernism» «Power» is defined as the ability and it is about the ability to exist [2, p. 72]. A person cannot have power over another person unless such power is recognized as legitimate. Accordingly, the very existence of power depends on its legitimacy [3, p. 318]. Receiving the right to power, we legitimately gain the ability to manage political institutions through the implementation and consolidation of appropriate rules [4, p. 334].

There are pre-modern, modern and postmodern approaches to the interpretation of such a phenomenon as «power» and, accordingly, the understanding of its legitimacy. In the pre-modern sense, power is inextricably linked to religion. The religious worldview of that time perceived power as something divine, and accordingly, indisputable. It is the divine origin of power as a «gift of the gods», which was given to the elect and legitimized the further usage of power and the person who was endowed with them. This provide a positive understanding of the authorities.

In the modern approach, we can talk about such a key point as the «theory of the social contract» and the «reasonable» origin of the state. Unification and recognition of power over one another is a rational necessity that people are forced to address for a number of rational reasons (social interaction, war of all against all, organization of production, etc). Accordingly, the very idea that prompted the people to unite in the future is the factor that legitimizes the government. This legitimacy, unlike the pre-modern one, is not indisputable and is built on meeting the needs of those subordinate to those in power. Legitimacy is based on modernity on the inviolability of a number norms, doubts in which and the risk of their loss due to certain factors inevitably lead to crisis and delegitimization.

As for the postmodern approach, Habermas defines them as the absence of any absolute foundations of the right to power, the «crisis of legitimacy» as a consequence [4, p. 335]. We are faced with a situation where the right to power cannot be based on certain rational norms due to the absence of the latter. Accordingly, the attitude to power in its modern sense is a priori negative, and the possibility of legitimizing it is in serious doubt [4, p. 335].

Postmodernity—a term that now arbitrarily includes (or to some extent associated with them) a number of movements, sometimes incompatible, that emerged in the affluent regions of Europe and countries of European origin in art, architecture, literature, music, in social sciences and humanities, which raises radical doubts about the reliability of the foundations on which the claims to scientific statements are based [5, p. 327]. Postmodernism is used to define a certain period, which is characterized by a mixture of high and low elements [5, p. 327].

«Postmodern» is a concept that means a period of history that chronologically begins with the crisis of industrial society and develops towards the future [6]. This term was introduced into scientific usage by A. Toynbee in the 50s of the 20th century. It became widely used in the 1970s and marked the period of humanity's transition to post-industrialism. It is the changes that society has undergone during this transition and led to the isolation of postmodernism as a certain ideological trend [6]. In philosophical science, «postmodern» is associated with the name of J.-F. Lyotard and his work «The state of postmodernism» in which postmodernism was a consequence of the crisis of Western civilization and its basic principles [7]. In political science, the term appears in connection with the democratic student movements that spread in France in 1968.

Today, legitimacy is becoming more complex due to the growing number of factors that can influence it, the growing blurring of the criteria by which it can be assessed, and the growing criticism of recognized rational principles of power by postmodernists. Thus, the concept of Max Weber, which for a long time was the basis of the whole theory of legitimacy, is now considered obsolete and not suitable for use in practice. More and more states and regimes build their power on multi-element legitimacy, which does not allow us to talk about any of its «pure» types [8]. At the same time, no power today can be called completely legitimate, it can vary from full recognition to complete denial, and this process always remains dynamic [8]. At the same time, there is a strong interdependence between the increase in the level of corruption and the decline in the level of legitimacy and, accordingly, between the decline in the level of legitimacy and the increased use of coercion. This is due to the dependence of the legitimacy of power on its economic efficiency, which is a key factor in postmodern society, which is recognized by the consumer society. Such stable interrelationships indicate the disappearance of legitimacy in its pure form and the establishment of its connection with other socio-political and economic phenomena.

Significant changes in the interpretation of the legitimacy of power were caused, inter alia, by the influence of postmodern trends in the socio-political sciences.

«Thus, the general tendency of postmodernism is not to eliminate the right to power, as this would mean the elimination of power itself. Rather, it recognizes that the right to power is constituted through the displacement and contextual application of power, and it is not obvious that their legitimacy derives from natural law or from rational agreement. » [4, p. 335]

Thus, this position of the postmodern interpretation of the phenomenon of legitimacy is nothing but a departure from modern total rationalization and scientific explanation. The creation of a general «metanarrative», which is designed to explain reality and establish certain patterns is uncharacteristic of postmodernism, which denies the very possibility of the existence of a «universal explanation», on this thesis in his works relied J.-F. Lyotard [7].

The focus of attention today is shifting from scientific explanations towards creative search and analysis of specific cases as opposed to attempts to generalize everything and reduce it to one typology. Postmodernism best manifests itself as a cultural phenomenon, demonstrating a departure from the canons of modernism. Just as Andy Warhol's works cannot be understood without taking into account their media context, so the legitimacy of modern power is in fact impossible without reference to its presentation in media space.

One can draw a parallel between the image that Warhol built and the image of modern politicians: «If you want to know everything about Andy Warhol, look at what is on the surface of my paintings and films, on the surface of myself. There is nothing under this. » [9, p. 74] The reluctance to focus on the study of the political sphere, the decline in the level of political culture and the growing role of mass culture leads to a serious change in policy priorities and the emergence of new means to increase the level of legitimacy. Today, more and more attention is paid to work with meanings, texts and images, with picture and style, and less and less work is done on filling and building strategy. This trend has turned politicians into a «reality show» where the main weapons are information and insults.

The study of politics in the postmodern framework discourse involves the search for new meanings of concepts already known to us, active involvement in the political game and game theorizing. Postmodernism abandons what is already known and offers to look for answers «from scratch», taking into account the emotional component and not being tied to the rational [10]

Z. Bauman speaks of the impossibility of the authorities using the thesis «to endure today so that the future is happy», this thesis is questioned and criticized, because postmodern society, as a consumer society, requires satisfaction of their needs «here and now». «Consumption is primarily an instrumental activity aimed at meeting the natural needs of man. In society, postmodern consumption

is primarily the consumption of symbols, not instrumental activity» [10]. Accordingly, this is what the construction of the entire government campaign should be based on now, so that it can receive a sufficient level of support.

It is worth remembering that the key feature of postmodernism is its opposition to power in all its manifestations. M. Fukuyama also speaks of such «numerous points of confrontation» in describing the «microphysics of power» where the imposition on society of certain decisions by power and discourse leads to the destruction of «individual-state» relations.

At the same time, there is no specific norm or truth that leads to the dominance of points of influence and results in a war of all against all. Which further fuels a person's total distrust of politics and deepens the crisis of legitimacy.

Conclusions

Summarizing all the above, we can conclude that the postmodern era is characterized by a large number of changes that have significantly affected the political system of society. First of all, it is worth talking about the prevailing total distrust of the government and government institutions, which was a logical consequence of a number of crises, transformations, conflicts and catastrophes of the past decades, which exposed the weakness of those entitled to power.

Postmodernism is characterized by: the presence in the public consciousness and information space of a negative image of government and politics; total individualism; departure from modernist rationalism in the direction of creative search; legitimation through work with meanings, texts and images; rejection of the concept of «patience for the sake of the future» and the transition to the dominance of consumer society; the requirement to meet the needs of the «here and now».

Such features lead to a deepening «crisis of legitimacy», which negatively affects the stability of the political system. Today, there can be no fully legitimate government, and this factor always remains dynamic. The level of legitimacy is closely linked to economic factors, which is a key factor in a postmodern society that is recognized by a consumer society. Accordingly, we are talking about the disappearance of legitimacy in its pure form and the establishment of its connection with other socio-political and economic phenomena.

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