

THE CIVILIARCHIC FOUNDATIONS OF POLITICAL DEMOCRATIZATION IN ARMENIA

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Today it has become clear that there is no single road to democracy suitable for all. This means that there is no common rule to identify the factors conducive to it.¹

Ian Shapiro

Introduction

Today comparative political science treats political democratization in the Soviet successor-states as one of its central problems. We need to analyze it in order to comprehend the state of society and the health of the state as a whole. If resolved, this problem will provide us with the key to a much better understanding of the functioning of social laws in different situations, democratic modernization of the post-totalitarian states (the correlation among their political interests, behavior, and the activities of all sorts of institutions, groups, and leaders), and the meaning of national/transnational policies.

Political science² has already elaborated all sorts of models of the democratization of politi-

cal regimes, however, in practice, many problems of the development of deliberative processes and the politics based on them, the emergence of national polyarchy and the dynamics of the transformations in post-communist regimes are proceeding in a contradictory and ambiguous way.

liticheskiy rezhim Ukrainy posle 'oranzhevoy revolyutsii,'" *Politicheskaya ekspertiza: POLITEKS*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 2008, pp. 18-40; N. Lapina, "Rossiiskiy politicheskiy rezhim: ot-senki i interpretatsii," *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, No. 6, 2009, pp. 17-30; R.F. Turovskiy, "Regionalnye politicheskie rezhimy v Rossii: k metodologii analiza," *Polis*, No. 2, 2009, pp. 77-95; E. Pain, "The Political Regime in Russia in the 2000s. Special Features, Inherited and Acquired," *Russian Politics and Law*, M.E. Sharpe, Vol. 49, No. 3, 2011; M.G. Tirsikh, "Sovremennye podkhody k ponimaniyu politicheskogo rezhima: analiz v svete iuridicheskogo i politologicheskogo znaniya," *Akademi-cheskii iuridicheskiy zhurnal*, No. 3 (33), 2008, pp. 4-11; T.L. Karl, Ph. Schmitter, "Demokratizatsiya: kontsepty, postulaty, gipotezy," *Polis*, No. 4, 2004, pp. 8-9, and others.

² For more detail, see: N.A. Baranov, "Politicheskiy rezhim sovremennoy Rossii," *Izvestia Rossiiskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta im. A.I. Herzena*, Vol. 8, No. 35, 2007, pp. 54-64; Yu. Matsievskiy, "Po-

¹ I. Shapiro, "Pereosmyslivaia teoriya demokratii v svete sovremennoy politiki," *Polis (Politicheskie issledovaniya)*, No. 5, 2001, p. 54.

The practice of democratic modernization of the post-totalitarian states demonstrated that they lacked many important social, political, economic, cultural and spiritual prerequisites of liberal-democratic transformations which were present or are present in the West European countries. This means that the theoretical models of post-totalitarian transformations should differ greatly from those applied to the studies of transformations underway in Western Europe.

Radical transformations of political systems create “hybrid regimes” and cause instability. The multi-sectoral transformations (sociopolitical, economic, spiritual, and cultural), establishment of national statehood, and stronger security, systemic reforms and building a social system have made the post-totalitarian transit in the post-Soviet countries extremely conflict-prone; it has baffled even the political actors of these countries.

The Post-Totalitarian Nature of Regime Transit

In the post-communist countries, the widespread civil movements, which demonstrated a lot of dynamism in 1988-1991, played a civilizational role where democratization and *a new political order* were concerned. Society had to adjust itself to the radical social shifts caused by these movements. *Civiliarchic*³ governance, one of the key conditions for *humanizing* the government and state structures, contributes to the emergence of public power and consolidation inside social ties.

If we admit that “power exists only when it is put into action,”⁴ then the threat of its usurpation/monopolization is invariably around the corner. Sometimes even *polyarchic civilocratic societies* cannot affect political decision-making for want of efficient mechanisms for influencing this process. This explains why sociologists have singled out, from among the multitude of problems of democracy, people’s ability “to pursue democracy in the conditions of correctly organized state life and to make it the pillar of political freedom,”⁵ since “democracy is described as stable when the majority accept it as legitimate and when it is fairly efficient.”⁶

Social relations are obviously conditioned by the national and global specifics of democratization of political regimes.

- First, polyarchic democracies rely on state bureaucracy (within a certain cultural-civilizational expanse of the nation-state) for their functioning.
- Second, state power alone has “monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force;”⁷ this explains the social relevance of power⁸ and *the legitimacy of the legal order*. The possibility of this right being used and/or abused more or less freely, and the nature of such use/abuse depend, to a great extent, on public control over power, realized either by society as a whole or its components.

³ Civiliarchy (from Lat. civil and Gr. archy)—civil power, civil governance, civil control. Civiliarchy is used to denote civil power based on civilized mechanisms and principles which ensure civil control over power. In this case, political regimes can be described either as civiliarchic and non- (anti-) civiliarchic (see: A.S. Alexanian, “Grazhdanskoe obshchestvo: tsivilitsentrizm i tsivilitet,” available at [<http://www.espi.ru/Content/Conferences/Papers2006/2006razd1/Aleksanyan.htm>]).

⁴ M. Foucault, *Beyond Structuralization and Hermeneutics*, Chicago, 1982, p. 219.

⁵ B.N. Chicherin, *Sobstvennost i gosudarstvo*, Moscow, 1883, Part 2, p. 332.

⁶ R. Aron, *Esse o svobodakh (Essay on the Freedoms)*, Moscow, 2005, p. 102.

⁷ M. Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” available at [<http://www2.selu.edu/Academics/Faculty/jbell/weber.pdf>].

⁸ See: N. Luhmann, *Vlast (Trust and Power)*, Moscow, 2001, pp. 135-150.

- Third, the process is also influenced by institutional competence and functional efficiency of the political regimes and their ability to create and use all types of *institutional functionality* to maintain civilian legitimacy.
- Fourth, a variety of civil motivations that meet institutional “formulas,” group interpretations, and the desire of the political subjects to be involved in political decision-making depend to a great extent on how the situation develops.

This means that we should pay attention to the methods of organization and realization of power; the post-Soviet states have demonstrated new forms of socioeconomic and political institutional responsibility.

Civiliarchy as Convergent Democracy

At the national level democratization of the political regime is a linchpin of the global regime of democratization. According to Andrey Melvil’s apt formula, “democracy guaranteed at the national level is a *sine qua non* of international democratization,”⁹ which means that there is a mechanism of mutually conditioned development.

The expert community has coined the following terms to describe the hybrid nature of the political regimes and oppositions in the Soviet successor-states: “political radicalism,” “catching-up (falling behind) modernization,” “supra-modernization,” “*regime change*,” “*changes inside the regime*,” “principal opposition,” “systemic and a-systemic opposition,” “structural and non-structural opposition,” “real, consolidated/stable democracy,” “proto-democracy,” “quasi-democracy,” “protective democracy,” “developmental democracy,” “deficit of democracy,” “principal anti-democratism,” hybrid regime,”¹⁰ etc.

The democratic political regime (as distinct from the European type of polyarchy) and institutionalization of its structures in the post-communist expanse follow development patterns of their own. While in Western Europe sociopolitical “convergences,” compromises, and consensus of the “inoculated majority” created the demand for democratic institutions, in the post-Soviet expanse this demand was a product of spontaneous mass movements. It should be said that the “convergence” of the regimes in Europe and the combination of traditional and modern elements in them (*convergent democracy*) manifested themselves in social dynamism and mobility which, in the final analysis, created representative mechanisms of power and the checks-and-balances system in which the executive, legislative, and judicial powers were strictly separated. Election laws, political parties, the parliamentary majority, local self-administrations, etc., developed within this system.

⁹ A.Yu. Melvil, “Stanovlenie transnatsionalnoy politicheskoy sredy i ‘volny’ demokratizatsii,” in: *Sovremennye mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia i mirovaya politika*, ed. by A.V. Torkunov, Moscow, 2005, p. 127.

¹⁰ See: R.A. Dahl, “Patterns of Opposition,” in: *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*, Yale University Press, New Haven, London, 1966, p. 342; D. Held, *Models of Democracy*, Stanford, 1996; V. Gelman, “The Extinction of Political Opposition in Russia,” available at [http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/pm_0340.pdf]; T.L. Karl, Ph. Schmitter, op. cit., pp. 6-27; T.P. Lebedeva, “Liberalnaia demokratiia kak orientir dlia posttotalitarnykh preobrazovaniy,” *Polis*, No. 2, 2004, pp. 76-84; A.Yu. Melvil, “O traektoriiakh postkommunisticheskikh transformatsiy,” *Polis*, No. 2, 2004, pp. 64-75; D. Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model,” *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 3, April 1970, pp. 337-363; E. Pain, op. cit.

Significantly, having successfully completed the convergence of sociopolitical transformations and having achieved compromises, some of the West European countries still remain constitutional monarchies. Those monarchies which blocked development were replaced with parliamentary or presidential republics. In fact both versions—leaving monarchs in power/limiting their power (constitutional monarchies) or removing them to set up a republic—meant *a new order of power, legitimacy, and law* and were evidence of successful and efficient convergent transformations.

It is highly important to say that in civilarchic democracies the democratic mechanisms were the product of a rational choice of the elite and civil society. In any case, the process was impacted by rational social and political determinants. The state of these mechanisms was an index of sorts of the dynamics of public policies. In the post-communist people's democracies, on the other hand, dominated by irrational determinants, sociopolitical processes bring about spontaneous/chaotic changes. In this case, the attempt to arrive at *institutional and functional democracy* produces unexpected results. Not infrequently, development of the post-Soviet political systems and regimes and their democratization gradually denigrate into political formalities, pure and simple.

West European sociopolitical history has taught us that civilarchic governance is not so much a result of *purposeful democratic development* as a product of sociopolitical, economic, spiritual, and cultural construction (*sociocentric experience*). It is based on dialog and responsibility, partnership, corporate citizenship, civilarchic culture, and national traditions, norms, and values. These factors served as the foundation of the future mechanisms of *civilarchic sociocracies*. To a great extent it is this distinctive feature of civilarchic democracy which served as a tool for legitimizing state power and a method of functioning of the political system.

In practice, legitimization¹¹/de-legitimization of political regimes and power are associated not only with active or passive involvement of the political actors, but also with the state of the institutional environment. As a social-state phenomenon, the political regime primarily demonstrates the government's ability to realize public potential and administrative resources.

The post-Soviet regime of people's power is trying to fit as well as it can into the current sociopolitical reality, while neglecting (or deliberately ignoring) the meaning of the liberal-democratic changes and, for this reason, ignoring a possible dialog between the people and the elite.

The above is amply confirmed by the post-Soviet parties, trade unions, NGOs, the media, and religious and other public organizations, which are only partially accountable to society and the citizens, or not accountable at all. The post-Soviet type of political actors are "things in themselves," to borrow the term from a famous philosopher, while their social status is extremely paradoxical.

The newly independent states boast numerous parties (including parties of power) of all ideological hues, numerous yet weak trade unions, religious organizations torn apart by squabbles, a large number of NGOs which have not become intermediaries between citizens and the state, social actors which act spontaneously in an effort to organize a social dialog and partnership, all sorts of highly politicized social networks, etc.

In some countries, state power and the local self-administrations demonstrate social and political irresponsibility, which ends in all sorts of Color Revolutions or a slide toward undemocratic regimes. An analysis of these developments reveals that a sort of proto-liberal technology of staying in power has appeared, which is being used by the post-Soviet political elites.

¹¹ D. Held has formulated seven versions of legitimization: acceptance under coercion; legitimacy by force of tradition; acceptance of apathy; pragmatic acquiescence; instrumental acceptance; normative agreement; ideal normative agreement (see: D. Held, op. cit., p. 249).

The National Regime of Democratization

Political democratization calls to life both negative (false democracies) and positive phenomena; this is explained by the paradoxical nature of the geopolitical context of the post-communist political system.

Those who analyze the contradictory nature of the transformation and democratization of the post-communist regimes point to various aspects of their inefficiency. R. Sakva, for example, describes the new political order in Russia as a "regime system," while A. Volodin prefers "catching-up modernization;" A. Melvil writes about an "international democratization regime;" E. Shatskiy has used the term "proto-liberalism," while Ian Shapiro writes about the importance of democratization of "social relations by democratic methods."¹²

Regime democratization is an absolute necessity for the simple reason that its success is directly associated with political stability, the mechanisms of governance and power, rationalization of social relations, and functioning of the nation-state.

The problem is that democratization is not a purely domestic process since the supranational borders of this process have already created a new, transnational regime of legitimacy, the result of the macro- and micro-political changes. On the other hand, however, today "it is democracy of the nation-state, and its emergence is associated with the development of the nation-state."¹³ We should also bear in mind that "political integration occurs through democratic citizenship."¹⁴

There is any number of conceptions dealing with the emergence of democratic political regimes, as well as different approaches to the problem of their stability; all of them are geared at the development of democratic values, culture, and legitimacy. Let me remind you what prominent political scientists had to say on the matter. Raymond Aron, for example, rejected an "abstract universal regime;" Samuel Huntington believes that "the number and severity of a country's contextual problems appeared to be only modestly related to its success or failure in consolidating democracy;" Robert A. Dahl pointed out that "nothing in human experience tells us that democracy can't break down;" Andrei Melvil has stated that "today democratization is transnational not only because of the conditions but also because of its repercussions," while Fareed Zakaria has written that "democracy without constitutional liberalism is not simply inadequate but dangerous."¹⁵

¹² See: R. Sakva, "Rezhimnaia sistema i grazhdanskoe obshchestvo v Rossii," *Polis*, No. 1, 1997, p. 62; A.G. Volodin, "Grazhdanskoe obshchestvo i modernizatsiia v Rossii," *Polis*, No. 3, 2000, p. 104; A.Yu. Melvil, "Stanovlenie transnatsionalnoy politicheskoy sredy...", p. 127; E. Shatskiy, "Protoliberalism: avtonomiia lichnosti i grazhdanskogo obshchestva," *Polis*, No. 6, 1997, pp. 25-27; I. Shapiro, "Tri sposoba byt demokratom," *Polis*, No. 1-2, 1992, p. 84 ("Three Ways to be a Democrat," *Political Theory*, Vol. 22, No. 1, February 1994, pp. 124-151); V. Karasev, U. Kirienko, "Metamorfozy i avtonomii politicheskogo rezhima: Ukraina—2006-2007," *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, No. 9, 2008, pp. 58-71; A.S. Madatov, "Rol politicheskikh sobytii v smene regima," *Vestnik Rossiiskogo gosudarstvennogo gumanitarnogo universiteta*, No. 1, 2008, pp. 161-179; N.V. Narykov, "K probleme tipizatsii politicheskikh rezhimov," *Teoriia i praktika obshchestvennogo razvitiia, Filosofskie nauki*, No. 3-4, 2009, pp. 22-36; I.S. Romanchuk, "Kriticheskii analiz demokraticheskoy ontologii vlastnykh otnosheniy," *Vestnik Tyumenskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, No. 2, 2009, pp. 166-171; N.Ia. Petrakov, "Demokratia i novy peredel mira," *Ekonomicheskoe vozrozhdenie Rossii*, No. 2, 2009, pp. 8-16, and others.

¹³ S. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1993, p. 13.

¹⁴ "Habermas on Capitalism and Citizenship," available at [<http://www.jasondmacleod.com/?p=124>].

¹⁵ R. Aron, *Demokratia i totalitarizm* (Democracy and Totalitarianism), Moscow, 1993, p. 46; S. Huntington, op. cit., p. 210; R. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, Yale University Press, New Haven, London, 1989, p. 172; A.Yu. Melvil, "Stanovlenie transnatsionalnoy politicheskoy sredy...", p. 127; F. Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 1997.

In Armenia, democratization began in the late 1980s with the emergence of the Karabakh Movement, which later developed into the Armenian National Movement (ANM); it played the key role in the process of civilocracy and humanization of social relations in Soviet Armenia.

These and similar liberal-democratic movements were products of large-scale reforms of the “socialist way of life” launched by the Soviet leaders in the mid-1980s. The people on top believed that the new ideological slogans—perestroika and new thinking—would democratize Soviet society “by enhancing the human factor” since “broad democratization of all spheres of social life” was badly needed.¹⁶

Mikhail Gorbachev believed that democracy and wider self-administration were indispensable because “perestroika was possible only through democratization and thanks to it.”¹⁷

Even the fairly superficial democratic process stimulated not only the “human factor,” but also created new vistas for deepening “the democratic foundations of Soviet society.”¹⁸ The relatively more open pluralistic society (as compared with the totalitarian-bureaucratic system of governance) wanted to revive the long-forgotten national values and, hence, democratic rights and freedoms.

The awakened democratic potential of the national communities caused dramatic changes in the Soviet political system and launched vigorous development of the principles of social justice and respect for human dignity; it was under these impacts that the Karabakh Movement became the nationwide ANM.

Armenian Democracy between History and Transitology

Despite the political, social, and economic problems and contradictions no blood was shed at the initial stage of political democratization in Armenia; this is explained by the national and historical circumstances which predated the establishment of Soviet power in Armenia in 1920.

The founders of the First Republic of Armenia (set up in 1918) pointed to the political, social, spiritual, and cultural problems which interfered with the development of independent Armenian statehood (wars, refugees, famine, the vicissitudes of the Armenians in Turkey and other countries, etc.)¹⁹ and regress in all social spheres. It should be said that all negative aspects of the totalitarian regime apart, its advent in Armenia stabilized the situation to some extent.

According to prominent Armenian historian Nikolay Adontz, “having entered Armenia militant communism was disappointed to find a devastated country.”²⁰ At that time, Soviet power was the only force capable of protecting the Armenians against external threats.

The above suggests *the following principle of totalitarianism: “if all spheres of social life are undeveloped then the political regime will be totalitarian, that is, ‘all-embracing.’*” This explains why the Soviet totalitarian regime had a positive (progressive) or negative (regressive) impact on different countries and peoples. Raymond Aron offered the following formula: “In each society institutions of power should be adjusted to historical specifics.”²¹

¹⁶ M.S. Gorbachev, *Perestroika i novoe myshlenie dlia nashey strany i dlia vsego mira*, Moscow, 1987, p. 27.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁹ For more detail, see: S. Vratsian, *Respublika Armenia*, Tehran, 1982, pp. 153-263; Ruben, *Vospominaniia arмянского революционера*, Erevan, Vol. 7, 1990, pp. 125-126, and others.

²⁰ See: N. Adontz, *Arмянский вопрос*, Erevan, 1996, p. 167.

²¹ R. Aron, *Demokratiia i totalitarizm*, p. 46.

For example, in the early 1990s, the liberals came to power without bloodshed and violence; they did not remove the previous government and remained in the legal field—a unique phenomenon in the post-Soviet expanse. Two political forces—the Communist Party of Armenia (CPA) and the ANM—competed for seats in the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian S.S.R. at the election held on 20 May, 1990. The Armenian National Movement won and created a new mechanism of state power.

On 4 August, 1990, ANM leader Levon Ter-Petrossian filled the post of chairman of the newly elected Supreme Soviet, in which the following factions were set up: Republic (38 deputies), Artsakh (11 deputies), Liberal Democrats (10 deputies), and National Progress (10 deputies), while the Armenian Revolutionary Federation “Dashnaksutyun” (ARFD) faction was transformed into a deputy group with 12 members.²²

The last representatives of the old government became the new state leaders; on 23 August, 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian S.S.R. passed the Armenian Declaration of Independence; the next day it passed a law which changed the name of the Armenian S.S.R. It also passed a decision to hold a referendum on 21 September, 1991 on the withdrawal of Armenia from the Soviet Union.

In this way, *the ideal which presupposes that people exercise their power through their legally and legitimately elected representatives* was partly realized in the form of independence. The new institutions of state power and the development of parties became the “preconditions of democracy”²³ and the starting point of an all-embracing process.

Sociocracy and Institutional Reconstruction

The preliminary stage of liberal development lasted until 1995 when a multiparty system began to emerge in Armenia. In 1991, the Law on Public and Political Organizations supplied the national-traditional parties (ARFD, the Social-Democratic Gnchak Party, and the Liberal-Democratic Ramkavar Party) with legal frameworks. Twenty parties and public-political structures appeared at the same time. Progressive values were developed and accumulated until 1995 when the parliamentary elections of the second convocation and the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia created a deficit of legitimate power. The situation which took shape in 1995-1998 can be described as a crisis of liberalization.

In 1995-1999, however, only 5 parties and 2 deputy groups were represented in the parliament. The illegitimate elections to the National Assembly brought the pro-government alliance Republic an absolute majority; 150 deputies out of the total 190 were elected in the majority constituencies and 40 by proportional representation (see Table 1).

After the 1995 parliamentary elections,²⁴ party rivalry disrupted the smooth functioning of the regime; “the democratic institutions of the new society set up and constitutionally confirmed were not developed enough to be able to promote democratization in real social practice on their own.”²⁵

²² On 17 September, 1990, the following deputy groups were set up in the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian S.S.R.: Artsakhi kanch (26 deputies) and Azgaynakan (31 deputies); on 6 March, 1991, the Communist (25 members) and Republic (21 members) deputy groups were formed; on 28 November, 1991, the National Democrats group was set up with 10 members (see: [http://www.parliament.am]).

²³ D.A. Rustow, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

²⁴ There was also the Reforms deputy group (31 deputies) in the National Assembly; 21 deputies preferred to remain outside any faction or group. Later the Erkrapa deputy group with 17 members appeared (see [http://www.parliament.am]).

²⁵ G.A. Pogossian, *Armianskoe obshchestvo v transformatsii*, Erevan, 2003, p. 165.

Table 1

**Representation of Parties and Deputy Groups
in the National Assembly Elected in 1995²⁶**

<i>Ranking by Votes Received*</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Number of Seats</i>	<i>Percent of Votes</i>
1.	Republic	20 seats	50%
2.	Shamiram	8 seats	20%
3.	CPA	6 seats	15%
4.	The National-Democratic Union (NDU)	3 seats	7.5
5.	National Self-determination Alliance (NSA)	3 seats	7.5
6.	Reforms deputy group		
7.	Erkrapa deputy group		

* Parties and associations are ranked separately from the deputy groups.

This is explained, among other things, by the strong presidential power established by the Constitution of 1991 and the corresponding laws which invested the president with vast (formal and informal) prerogatives enabling him to personally affect political decision-making. In 1996, after the second presidential elections, mass acts of civil disobedience demanded that the president should resign.

The 1995 Constitution strengthened the position of executive power still more, along with the legal status of the president (limited much later by the constitutional amendments of 2005). Here is an explanation of the above: "Finally, as the new democracies became consolidated and achieved certain stability, they would confront *systemic problems* stemming from the workings of a democratic system."²⁷

The crisis of legitimacy and systemic problems was partly obvious in 1998 when President Ter-Petrosian resigned from office,²⁸ which happened, according to certain sources, because of disagreements over the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. It seems, however, that this is not true: the disagreements were probably caused by the problems of the legitimacy of power and consolidation of democracy. This is confirmed by the fact that the pro-government Republic alliance set up in 1995 fell apart when the president resigned.

The 1999 parliamentary elections demonstrated that the parties owed their election victories not so much to their programs as to the personal charisma and political will of their leaders. The 1995 elections were based on proportionate representation (out of 131 deputies, 75 were elected in the majority constituencies, the rest by party lists). Six parties and blocs cleared the 5% barrier: the Unity bloc received 41.69% (29 seats); CPA 12.09% (8 seats); the Law and Unity Bloc 7.96% (6 seats); ARFD 7.86% (5 seats); the Rule of Law Party 5.28% (4 seats); and the National-Democratic Union 5.17% (4 seats).²⁹

²⁶ [http://www.parliament.am].

²⁷ S. Huntington, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

²⁸ See: G.A. Pogossian, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

²⁹ [http://www.parliament.am].

It should be said that Armenia has not yet acquired an institutionalized party system, which explains why the leaders are associated with their parties. When a leader fails in the election race, his party either falls apart or degenerates into a purely formal structure. For example, in 1999 the Unity bloc, which consisted of the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) and the People's Party of Armenia (PPA), carried the day; it was headed by Defense Minister Vazgen Sarkisian and former First Secretary of the CC CPA Karen Demirchian. On 27 October, 1999, they were both killed in what is known as an Armenian parliament shooting; their deaths reduced the Unity bloc to a "political formality;" several months later it quietly retreated from the scene.

Table 2

Parties and Blocs Elected to the National Assembly in 2003³⁰

<i>Ranking by Votes Received</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Number of Seats</i>	<i>Percent of Votes</i>
1.	RPA	23 seats	23.66
2.	The Justice bloc	14 seats	13.71
3.	The Rule of Law Party	12 seats	12.60
4.	ARFD	11 seats	11.45
5.	National Unity Party	9 seats	8.91
6.	United Party of Labor	6 seats	5.67

Table 3

The Parties Elected to the National Assembly in 2007

<i>Ranking by Votes Received</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Number of Seats</i>	<i>Percent of Votes</i>
1.	RPA	64 seats (458,258)	33.91
2.	Prosperous Armenia	25 seats (204,483)	15.13
3.	ARFD	16 seats (177,907)	13.16
4.	The Rule of Law	8 seats (95,324)	7.05
5.	Heritage	7 seats (81,048)	6.00

³⁰ [<http://www.parliament.am>].

Stepan Demirchian, who replaced his father as the PPA leader, could not prevent its disintegration even though the party figured prominently at the 2003 parliamentary and presidential elections. Stepan Demirchian reached the second round of the presidential election together with the incumbent; at the parliamentary elections, the Justice bloc he had knocked together gained 13.71% of the votes (see Table 2).

The Rule of Law Party deserves special mention in this context: when its leader won the parliamentary elections and was elected speaker of the National Assembly, the party became part of the coalition government and survived only until the day the leader resigned.

This pattern continued until the election campaign of 2007; even when the parliamentary elections were still a year away, it became clear that the new political forces—the Prosperous Armenia Party as represented by its leader—had very good chances. This was confirmed by the parliamentary elections; here is the list of the winners: RPA, Prosperous Armenia, ARFD, the Rule of Law, and the Heritage Party (see Table 3).

In 2008, Serzh Sargsian, who ran for RPA, won in the first round of the presidential election with 52.82% of the votes; he is the first Armenian president with a party affiliation, which will help to create a new political culture and party system in the republic (see Table 4).

Table 4

Results of the Presidential Election of
19 February, 2008

<i>Ranking by Votes Received</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes (%)</i>
1.	Serzh Sargsian	RPA	862,369 (52.82)
2.	Levon Ter-Petrossian	ANM	351,222 (21.50)
3.	Artur Bagdasarian	Rule of Law	272,427 (17.70)
4.	Vagan Ovannissian	ARFD	100,966 (6.20)
5.	Vazgen Manukian	NDU	21,075 (1.30)
6.	Tigran Karapetian	People's Party	9,792 (0.60)
7.	Artashes Gegamian	National Unity	7,524 (0.46)
8.	Arman Melikian	No party	4,399 (0.27%)
9.	Aram Arutiunian	National Agreement	2,892 (0.17)

The 2008 presidential election raised a wave of civil disobedience and rallies which have not yet subsided and which consolidated the opposition parties and their leaders (who had preferred to act on their own) within the Armenian National Congress (ANC). This is a totally novel political phenomenon, not only for Armenia, but also for the rest of the post-Soviet expanse.

To a great extent, the dialog between the government and the opposition ANC bloc was based on democratic responsibility, civiliarchic mechanisms used to address social problems, and rejection of confrontational policy. From the point of view of civil social responsibility, these processes were promoted by several factors, the main of them being protection of human rights and freedoms, social guarantees and quality of life, and development of democratic mechanisms and civil society.

A stronger opposition in Armenia and elsewhere in the post-Soviet expanse will not only contribute to social and political stability, but also to the security of the nation-state for the simple reason that it will minimize the threats of domestic destabilization and political isolation.

We all know that stability, efficient functioning, and development are absolutely necessary to make the political system immune to all sorts of internal and external impacts. Dynamic stability is a product of the constant changes in and balancing out of the systemic and intensive evolutionary processes inside the system.

Today, there are about 10 parties actively involved in Armenian politics (on the whole, there are over 70 parties in the republic). As a result, there is no, or practically no, inner party democracy; in this way, the status of the leader is greatly inflated, which makes the party a target or an actor of political manipulations.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that democratization contributes to social modernization, it still barely functions at the institutional level. The bureaucratic institutions and social relations are rationalized; the system of civil service is being streamlined, while central power and local self-administrations are delimitating the spheres of their respective competence.

The sociocultural dimensions of democratization presuppose a synthesis and transformation of the traditional political values. In fact, political thinking, conscience, ideology, political norms, and behavior of political entities have changed a lot even though in extreme political situations the national political culture may bifurcate. This means that civil culture demands greater responsibility from the political entities and requires their greater dedication to public interests. This alone can bring unity and cooperation of the entities of civil society, which ensures homogeneity and integration of the political sphere.

In 2005, the Constitution was amended in full accordance with the legal European regulations, which added efficiency to the checks-and-balances system.

Democratization, the human dimension, the rise of the middle class, the problems of efficiency, and control and balancing out of state power are important components of the post-communist social and political processes. The new system of state governance and the new methods of political leadership have offered new possibilities of institutional equilibrium, realization of the socially oriented model of market economy, development of the mechanisms of power, and management of social processes by political actors. This adds special importance to the civiliarchic conditions of integration and involvement of civil society in real processes. This will prevent the political system from reproducing the institutions of civil society for legitimizing undemocratic methods of governance.

The European dimension of democratization presupposes that the institutions of state power, political parties and public organizations draw closer together and new corporate structures are formed. Political democratization in Armenia (which can be described as national transformations) is invariably associated with the social and political changes in the European Union. An analysis of the problems of political democratization in Armenia brings to light the contradictions between the methods and means of political governance (conditioned by the external and internal specifics of the social and political institutions obvious in all the post-Soviet states).
