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FACTORS OF LEGITIMATION OF POLITICAL POWER IN ARMENIA UNDER NIKOL PASHINYAN

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Abstract. *Introduction.* The article analyzes the features of the functioning of political power in Armenia during the rule of Nikol Pashinyan. The authors determine the factors of legitimation of the political regime in modern Armenia. *Methods and materials.* Using the method of biographical analysis, the authors construct a political portrait of the Armenian prime minister. With the help of factor analysis, the most important factors of legitimation of political power in modern Armenia are highlighted. The sociological method is also used, recording the mood of Armenian society in certain situations arising in Armenian political life. *Analysis.* Nikol Pashinyan has the image of a politician who defends the interests of Armenia both within the state and in the external contour. This is predetermined by his political experience and the balance of power in the Armenian political elite. The factors of legitimation of the political regime depend on the current economic situation. The role of the Armenian political culture is also high. It is characterized by short expectations and a high emotional component. There are also special expectations of the society from a specific politician who is trusted to overcome the current political and economic crises. *Results.* The Armenian leader is constantly puzzled by questions of his legitimation. N. Pashinyan still has enough political experience to maintain political stability in the republic. Today, this is difficult to achieve, given the grave consequences of the defeat in the Karabakh conflict. One can see how his rhetoric changes in the case of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Relations with Russia are subject to high dynamics. The Armenian leader is trying to position himself as an ally of the West, improving relations with the USA and France. China is gradually taking on the role of an important geopolitical partner. Relations with Turkey are normalizing. The political maneuvering of the Armenian prime minister may confuse geopolitical partners. However, such behavior largely meets the interests of the state and N. Pashinyan's voters. The authors believe that the current political situation plays into the hands of the Armenian leader, who managed to convince society of his indispensability. *Authors' contributions.* A. Skiperskikh examines the political process in Armenia from the perspective of challenges for the political regime. M. Yepremyan studies the connection between Nikol Pashinyan's legitimation and internal and external factors. The authors consistently come to the conclusion that the Armenian prime minister is extracting the maximum for himself from the current political situation. The external and internal audiences receive a political signal from N. Pashinyan that Armenia is getting out of difficult geopolitical puzzles with benefit.

Key words: Armenia, power, legitimation, Nikol Pashinyan, political leadership, political regime, factors of legitimation, charisma.

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ФАКТОРЫ ЛЕГИТИМАЦИИ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ ВЛАСТИ В АРМЕНИИ ПРИ НИКОЛЕ ПАШИНЯНЕ

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Аннотация. *Введение.* В статье изучаются особенности функционирования политической власти в Армении в период правления Никола Пашиняна. *Методы и материалы.* Используя метод биографического анализа, авторы пытаются сконструировать политический портрет нынешнего армянского премьер-министра. При помощи факторного анализа выделяются наиболее важные факторы легитимации политической власти в современной Армении, определяющие политический дизайн армянского политикума. С точки зрения авторов, данные факторы напрямую связываются с текущей экономической конъюнктурой в республике, армянской политической культурой, ее короткими ожиданиями и высокой эмоциональной компонентой. Существуют и особые требования общественности от конкретного политика, которому общество доверяет преодоление текущих политических и экономических кризисов. В статье используется и социологический метод, фиксирующий настроения армянского общества, связанные с теми или иными ситуациями, возникающими в армянской политической жизни. *Анализ и результаты.* В статье внимание уделено политическому стилю Н. Пашиняна и сформированному им политическому режиму. Армянский лидер постоянно озадачен вопросами собственной политической легитимации. На данный момент времени Н. Пашиняну хватает политического опыта поддерживать политическую стабильность в республике, несмотря на тяжелые последствия проигрыша в карабахском конфликте. Особое внимание в статье уделено вопросам изменения риторики армянского лидера по вопросам нахождения в структуре ОДКБ. В отношениях с Россией присутствует неопределенность. Армянский лидер пытается позиционировать себя как союзника Запада, улучшая отношения с США и Францией. В качестве геополитического партнера выступает и Китай. Нормализуются отношения с Турцией. Политическое маневрирование армянского премьер-министра вызывает много вопросов у геополитических партнеров. Правда, в то же время является оптимальной политической моделью для самого Н. Пашиняна, армянского общества и интересов государства. В статье авторы пытаются определить, как Н. Пашинян убеждает общество в собственной незаменимости в настоящий момент времени. *Вклад авторов.* А. Скиперских исследует современный политический процесс в Армении с точки зрения вызовов для политического режима. М. Епремян изучает зависимость легитимации Никола Пашиняна от внутренних и внешних факторов. Авторы приходят к выводу, что армянский премьер извлекает максимум для себя из текущей политической обстановки. Внешняя и внутренняя аудитория получает политический сигнал от Н. Пашиняна о том, что Армения с пользой выходит из сложных геополитических пасьянсов.

Ключевые слова: Армения, власть, легитимация, Никол Пашинян, политическое лидерство, политический режим, факторы легитимации, харизма.

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Introduction. Current political processes in Armenia are associated with the current Prime Minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan. Former leaders of Armenia – Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Robert Kocharyan, and Serzh Sargsyan – were presidents. S. Sargsyan's attempt to retain power in Armenia as a result of constitutional reform in the status of prime minister (a similar scheme for maintaining power in the hands of the ruling elite can be seen in a number of post-Soviet republics) ended in failure. But new interesting faces have appeared in Armenian politics. N. Pashinyan turned out to be exactly such a face.

It would be a stretch to call N. Pashinyan a new face in Armenian politics. His arrival as an official face of Armenian politics took place only

in 2018. From his time as an opposition journalist in the 1990s to his time as a member of parliament in the National Assembly of Armenia, N. Pashinyan has been involved in Armenian politics in a number of ways.

The current Prime Minister of Armenia has been accustoming the Armenian domestic audience to himself for quite a long time. His image as a defender of Armenia's national interests was gradually formed. This allows us to single out the factor of the Armenian prime minister himself in the current Armenian politics. The leadership style of N. Pashinyan is distinct. We believe it is important to focus attention on the cultural factor of legitimation when culture acts as the energy source of political processes. In the process of

political legitimation in modern Armenia, an external factor also plays a huge role, the pressure of which immediately affects the fragile stability and the position of the Armenian elites. Economic problems in Armenian society have always been perceived with a certain degree of acuteness and concern. The economic successes of one or another team of politicians were directly linked to the future of Armenian society. Economic efficiency gave society the necessary hopes.

Methods and materials. The authors use a biographical method that allows them to see the prerequisites for political leadership in the past of the Armenian prime minister. The method of factor analysis is used. The Nikol Pashinyan legitimation is assessed as a combination of a number of accompanying factors. Among them, historical, economic, and cultural factors can be distinguished.

The work also takes into account the external factor that allows N. Pashinyan to position himself as a defender of Armenia's national interests. The study also uses secondary sociological analysis, which measures the public opinion of the residents of the Republic of Armenia on certain issues of domestic and foreign policy.

Analysis. The political biography of the Armenian prime minister includes a stormy youth. This was the heyday of the Karabakh movement (late 1980s – early 1990s). At that time, the legitimation of any politician in Armenia was constructed based on this factor. N. Pashinyan was a supporter of the first president, L. Ter-Petrosyan. At the same time, he publicly distanced himself from R. Kocharyan and S. Sargsyan. N. Pashinyan consistently criticized them and participated in various forms of resistance to the current government.

There is a section in N. Pashinyan's biography where he was imprisoned for political reasons (January 2011 to May 2012). He was accused of participating in riots during the election of S. Sargsyan for the first term. At that time, he gained important experience for himself, which influenced his political image. There are analogies with the fate of Armenian democratic politicians of the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the political biography of N. Pashinyan, there is personal participation in elections at various levels, from parliamentary campaigns (from 2007) to the elections of the mayor of Yerevan in 2017.

The secrets of legitimation of Armenian politicians should be considered in the feeling of short-term expectations of society. The mood of the Armenian voter is always changeable. The changeability of moods reaches its apogee during periods of electoral campaigns.

As Armenian political scientist Vigen Hakobyan notes, this is proven by the lists of candidates from the ruling party. The lists "demonstrate a disregard for previous political tricks, such as statements that businessmen should not get into parliament, ideas about 'old' and 'new'. They have a pragmatic task – to get as many percent as possible, and how they will get these percent, what voters will say about this, they are of little interest" [6]. It is significant that the expert opinion is given in relation to the political party "Civil Contract," which is connected with N. Pashinyan.

The political space initially attracts business figures. There is nothing surprising in the fact that some Armenian politicians are characterized by a penchant for bargaining and negotiations. This brings them closer to business representatives. It is not surprising that any well-known Armenian politician can find support among the influential oligarchy and make a pact with them.

In particular, S. Shkel talks about the strategy of co-optation in the context of the increasing role of political parties in Armenia. As a consequence, there is an "increase in the share of deputies elected by party lists and a decrease in single-mandate deputies" [21, p. 124].

In the case of N. Pashinyan's rise to power in 2018, an example of such a tactical alliance could be the story of his support by Gagik Tsarukyan's bloc. In 2018, G. Tsarukyan had a noticeable influence in the National Assembly of Armenia. Another influential Armenian businessman, Khachik Sukiasyan, also provided support to N. Pashinyan. The lists of the "Civil Contract" include the famous Armenian oligarch, Guren Arsenyan.

Trust in a political leader increases as he controls the information field. Control over information is an important source of power. Society ensures the functionality of political legitimation channels. When a politician is not very active, he cannot be visible in society. As a result, his ratings cannot be high. In particular, as for the Yelk bloc, its rating on the eve of the parliamentary elections in Armenia was only 3%.

On the contrary, the activities of K. Karapetyan, the then Prime Minister of Armenia, were supported by 77%. This is noted by a survey conducted by the Russian VTsIOM in Armenia in 2017 [23]. In principle, the noted anomaly is periodically encountered in the practice of democratic transitions.

The failure of the S. Sargsyan and K. Karapetyan team in the permanent conflict with N. Pashinyan is explained by A. Melville. The political scientist noted the advantage in legitimation of “not the centrist group of politicians who started democratic reforms, but the representatives of the radical opposition” [15, p. 68].

One detail in the political biography of the Armenian prime minister attracts attention. It is connected with his expulsion from Yerevan University. At that time, N. Pashinyan was on L. Ter-Petrosyan’s team in the presidential elections in 2008. An interesting episode occurred during one of the trials of N. Pashinyan’s journalistic publication in 2009. When the judge enquired about the journalist’s education, he ironically replied, “It’s hard to say” [16].

The current Prime Minister of Armenia is a bearer of many leadership traits that were in demand in Armenia in the early 1990s. He combines political youth and student life, participation in the Karabakh movement, work at the forefront of political journalism, and professional involvement in politics.

N. Pashinyan’s leadership type includes quite populist technologies. This significantly expands the public support potential. In particular, such was the “walking march” to Yerevan on March 31, 2018, from the central Vardanants Square in Gyumri [10].

N. Pashinyan has charismatic features that attract the sympathies of the electorate. Charisma as a resource simplifies the procedures of incorporation into the ruling elite. At the same time, it is impossible to unequivocally assert that legitimation technologies are aimed exclusively at the leader. The interests of the national state and society stand behind N. Pashinyan and the policies he pursues. The future of Armenia in the new world order, which is rapidly changing before our eyes, depends on the political decisions of the current prime minister.

The political legitimation of N. Pashinyan takes into account many features of the Armenian

mentality. Armenians are characterized by a tendency to protest, confusion, shocking behavior, and frequent changes of position to suit the current political situation. In our opinion, an important argument in favor of the legitimation of N. Pashinyan has always been his distance from the official authorities. Trust in the current Armenian leader can be defined as affective, constructed under a high emotional background, and produced where its object “has already established a strong, historical connection. In the Armenian case, such communities can be diasporas, professional, urban, and rural communities” [22, p. 95].

This disposition may be understandable to the Armenian voter. Distance from the government and persistent and regular criticism may evoke fair sympathy. N. Pashinyan was in opposition for a long period of time. This formed him as a critic of the government and a politician who has no obligations to it. N. Pashinyan quickly gained popularity among the people. As I. Fedorovskaya notes, N. Pashinyan “appears in camouflage at rallies but goes to negotiations in a suit” [7, p. 201]. At such a moment, a political leader cannot help but feel that he is at the forefront of public expectations. Each of his decisions takes on the character of a fateful one for the entire Armenian nation.

In a cultural context, N. Pashinyan’s behavior can be called trickster-like, characterized by “a fundamental force beyond anyone’s control” [8, p. 36].

N. Pashinyan’s volatility, which affects his behavior and political orientations, is a continuation of the hot-tempered Armenian character, Armenian political culture, and dynamic public sentiment. M. Babayan notes that “irascibility is determined by unspoken prescriptions of male behavior in Armenia, according to which brave people will not give in or tolerate the slightest hint of humiliation” [2]. Here we can talk about the constant creativity of Armenians. According to N. Berdyaev, the meaning of the existence of nations should be sought precisely “in creative movement, and not in eternal immobility” [5, p. 189].

Like many other Armenians, N. Pashinyan and his family may be characterized by a luxurious life, visiting boutiques, outrageous behavior, and using expensive cars and private jets. This does not escape the attention of the press, which

believes that the prime minister's wealth is associated with state budget expenditures [9].

Since the legitimization of N. Pashinyan, his family and relatives have been gradually integrated into the political elite of Armenia. As a result, the popular leader has gradually lost his heroic aura that has accompanied him since 2018. The dynamics of the Armenian society's attitude towards N. Pashinyan can be assessed using sociological research.

According to sociological research conducted by the International Republican Institute (IRI) in Armenia in December 2021, 49% of Armenians trusted N. Pashinyan, while 48% did not. The survey data allows us to model the electoral portrait of support for the Prime Minister of Armenia. The electoral base consists of elderly people from rural areas. Support for N. Pashinyan is melting among the urban population. According to the same survey, the number of opponents of N. Pashinyan in Yerevan was 42% of the number of Armenians surveyed [18].

According to the Gallup International Association in May 2023, only 13.9% of respondents expressed full support for N. Pashinyan's rule. At the same time, 38.7% of respondents did not approve of his activities at all [17].

Through his political scheming, N. Pashinyan presents himself as a seasoned politician prepared to increase the "price" of this or that matter in order to maximize the positive impact on his own reputation. The emphasis on his personal service to state interests is also evident. This style is projected not only onto domestic policy but also onto the external contour. According to the American theorist A. Leyphart, at the moment of raising the stakes, the preconditions for "creating a broad coalition" are created [13, p. 63]. Let us recall that the current Prime Minister of Armenia himself was part of the collective project during the 2018 revolution.

N. Pashinyan knows how to negotiate, as well as how to provide an attractive theatrical background for the negotiation process. This is a component of his political style. This is how N. Pashinyan could be perceived at the moment when he was conducting negotiations at the Russian Embassy in late April 2018, preceding his political legitimization. The Armenian revolution was presented to the international community in a non-violent context. N. Pashinyan was compared to

M. Gandhi. Some experts saw in it tectonic national processes that became "an expression of self-awareness and conscious activity of the entire people, and not the result of the influence of external sources or only internecine party-political struggle" [3, p. 12].

The effects of N. Pashinyan's political maneuvering are also reflected in foreign policy. Armenia is surrounded by quite influential geopolitical players in the region. Relations with them largely shape the context of foreign policy. In our opinion, the opportunities for maneuver are becoming fewer and fewer each time. Geopolitical neighbors may demand more specificity in actions.

Back in 2018, the figure of N. Pashinyan did not raise any questions from the Kremlin. As I. Fedorovskaya notes, "the Kremlin understood that whoever came to power in the republic would hardly dare to complicate relations with Russia" [7, p. 199]. This thesis is proven by the experience of the previous presidencies of R. Kocharyan and S. Sargsyan. The Russian authorities were clearly not satisfied with the figure of such a leader of Armenia who could come to power by enlisting the support of the street. The politicization of street protest activity is associated with "color revolutions."

For the Russian side, the figure of S. Sargsyan was more predictable. Another optimal figure could be Prime Minister K. Karapetyan. Karen Karapetyan was received in Moscow and contacted [12].

The very fact of N. Pashinyan's coming to power "from below," contrary to the opinion of the current government, looked like an alarming signal. It is necessary to understand what irritation this fact could have for the Kremlin, which was indirectly voiced by M. Simonyan. N. Pashinyan was accused of creating favorable conditions for the activities of anti-Russian NGOs and of tendentious education of youth. Armenian NGOs that appeared under R. Kocharyan significantly increased their influence under the new prime minister. The reproaches from the Russian side seemed quite justified. The Russian ruling elite always greeted with concern the political changes inspired by "color revolutions" in geopolitical neighbors in the former USSR.

At the same time, critical statements from Armenians regarding Russia's tendentious reaction are also quite appropriate. A. Hanbabyan's commentary on the results of the revolution is

indicative when “the Russian media, which understands nothing, immediately began to write that, supposedly, the Americans organized another ‘Maidan’ in Armenia” [11].

After N. Pashinyan’s legitimation as prime minister, NGO representatives are gradually integrating into the government. At the same time, politicians from S. Sargsyan’s elite are leaving power. The development of the political regime under N. Pashinyan and the “appointment of Sorosites ‘walking with him’ has acquired a large-scale character. Groups of NGO representatives, activists, and media people were the organizers of anti-Russian actions in front of the Russian embassy in Yerevan. It was they who acquired the skills of ‘velvet’ revolutionaries in the US and Europe, which were used during the 2018 revolution” [20].

Pressure is also present from the external perimeter. It would seem that Armenia’s entry into the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in 1992, once relevant for the young independent republic, could have contributed to the pacification of the state’s geopolitical opponents. The benefits of Armenia’s accession to the treaty gave the ruling elite new chances for political legitimacy. Almost all top Armenian officials have spoken positively about the CSTO, emphasizing the importance of friendly relations with Russia. Over time, it became clear that the organization does not meet Armenia’s security needs, and Armenia’s CSTO partners have an ambivalent position. Russia’s position looked more than diplomatic, based on its own benefit in relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. Relations with its CSTO partner, Belarus, can also be called difficult for N. Pashinyan. At one time, N. Pashinyan “exposed” himself by being one of the first to congratulate A. Lukashenko on his victory in the 2020 presidential elections. The elections were not recognized by most of the world’s states and were accompanied by mass protests by Belarusians. Not noticing Armenia’s problems in the Karabakh conflict, A. Lukashenko focused the CSTO’s attention on other problematic areas. He noted that “military cooperation within the framework of the Union State of Belarus and Russia, and Belarus’s membership in the CSTO are the very same stabilizers that have a certain sobering effect on hotheads on the other side of the border” [19].

At the moment, N. Pashinyan finds himself in a difficult situation. Critical statements were voiced by him, who chaired the CSTO summit on May 16, 2022. N. Pashinyan’s speech was quite harsh and clearly condemned the current situation for Armenia. N. Pashinyan noted that “for a long time we raised the issue of the sale of weapons by CSTO member countries to a country unfriendly to Armenia, in which these weapons were ultimately used against Armenia and the Armenian people” [19]. At the same time, at the end of his speech, he thanked V. Putin for helping to stop the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh. As we will see later, this story ended sadly for Armenia. The territory of Nagorno-Karabakh came under the control of Azerbaijan. In March and October 2024, N. Pashinyan congratulated V. Putin, respectively, on his victory in the presidential elections in Russia and on his birthday. Examples of N. Pashinyan’s political maneuvering and frequent changes in his rhetoric are quite varied.

A new round of conflict between N. Pashinyan and the CSTO and Moscow took place in 2023. N. Pashinyan sends different signals to the domestic audience and to foreign observers. They contradict each other and maintain a high emotional background. In 2023, N. Pashinyan stated that he cannot even imagine how the situation will develop if Russia loses in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

Thus, on March 24, 2023, the Constitutional Court of Armenia ratified the obligations of the Rome Statute on the ICC, which issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin and children’s ombudsman Maria Lvova-Belova. In the Armenian political discourse, it was believed that this decision would not be implemented on the territory of Armenia, finding other motives in the court’s decision.

The ratification of the commitment had a strong information effect. This decision barely outshone even the presence of N. Pashinyan in Moscow at the military parade on May 9 among the heads of some post-Soviet states. The Armenian Prime Minister was so interesting to television that he was often shown in close-up during the broadcast.

A study by the “Center for Globalization and Regional Studies,” conducted among 900 residents of cities and villages – Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, and Martuni – in the period from June 1 to

September 1, 2017, shows that “50% of respondents believe that Armenia’s membership in the EAEU has a negative impact on the country. 37% of respondents believe that the deterioration of the economic situation is connected with Armenia’s membership in the EAEU, and 38% believe that the deterioration of the economic situation is partially connected with the same factor” [14].

The dynamics of public opinion in Armenia can also be controlled by N. Pashinyan. The Armenian leader is sometimes indignant about various collisions that arise in relations with this structure and then immediately softens his rhetoric. The situation changed during the aggravation of the Karabakh conflict and the situation in Ukraine. N. Pashinyan always leaves uncertainty for the Russian side. During his reign, he managed to create a reality in which his legitimacy is based on the mutual care of the state and society. Legitimacy includes the exchange of permanent obligations, as noted by the British political scientist J. Simmons [24, p. 10].

The clear connection between his own rhetoric and its legitimation by Armenian society, in our opinion, makes the Armenian Prime Minister a hostage of public opinion. And it is always different, changing with high dynamics.

Seeking to secure the support of a new influential partner against the backdrop of unstable relations with Russia and within the Collective Security Treaty Organization, N. Pashinyan is trying to build friendly relations with China. In 2019, he met with Xi Jinping in Beijing. The Armenian prime minister needs more serious security guarantees and influential partners.

N. Pashinyan unexpectedly held a working meeting with R. Erdogan in Istanbul at the end of June 2025. The Armenian leader is probably using the tension in relations between Russia and Azerbaijan. It is important for him to appear as an independent political figure, ready to search for unexpected geopolitical allies.

N. Pashinyan is under pressure from the problems of his domestic policy, which is causing criticism from political opponents. The voice of the opposition in Armenia has always been sensitive.

At the same time, the republic is experiencing economic growth associated with the intensification of business activity. Economic growth is supported by remittances from

Armenians working abroad and Russian relocates who moved to Armenia due to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict after February 24, 2022. Quite a few intellectual relocators involved in the IT sector have arrived in Armenia. Thus, according to the Central Bank of Armenia, there has been a 2.8-fold increase in money transfers from individuals in the first four months of 2023 compared to 2022. The volume of transfers amounted to \$1.5 billion. The construction, services, and trade sectors are growing in Armenia, and the business climate is improving. According to the National Statistical Committee of Armenia, in January – May 2023, the construction sector grew by 16.7% compared to the same period last year, and the services market, growing thanks to the tourism sector, grew by 19.9% compared to 2022.

N. Pashinyan is creating an economic model where national characteristics and state interests prevail. Armenia entered the Top 4 countries exporting semiconductors for the defense industry to Russia in 2023. It does not seem surprising that the Minister of Finance of Armenia, V. Hovhannisyan, noted an increase in exports from Armenia to Russia by 187% compared to 2021 figures [1].

But the Armenian economy lacks financial resources. In this indicator, the state’s economy lags far behind European countries. As the Armenian Minister of Economy V. Kerobyan ironically notes, “to say that there is enough money in our economy means being out of touch with reality” [4]. In principle, in domestic policy, it seems that maximum efforts are being made to ensure that the state’s image on the external perimeter becomes better and better.

N. Pashinyan’s policy turns out to be dependent on a number of problems, the immediate resolution of which is practically impossible. At one time, the German political philosopher K. Yaspers noted that “provision of the masses is not carried out according to a specific plan, but in an extremely complex interaction of various types of rationalization” [25, p. 307]. The process of state development encounters numerous problems and challenges everywhere along its path. Armenia’s current economic development is largely hampered by the ongoing blockade of the country by Azerbaijan and Turkey. This affects its logistical attractiveness

and hinders the inflow of investments into the republic. Any investor investing in Armenia may face complex transport logistics. True, there are also positive developments in this direction. According to the Logistics Performance Index for 2019, Armenia ranked 92nd out of 160 countries, compared to 141st in 2016. The above factors make the expert community skeptical about the prospects for rapid growth of the Armenian economy.

According to Armenian economist A. Khurshudyan, “Armenia has not achieved much success in attracting foreign direct investment” [6].

Along with this problem, corruption remains a serious factor hindering economic growth in Armenia. N. Pashinyan, together with the Armenian government, identified corruption as the most serious problem.

Results. Armenian Prime Minister N. Pashinyan is an example of a politician who is historically, sociologically, and culturally close to the Armenian voter. His vast political experience and personal participation in fateful historical periods for Armenia have shaped him as a nationally oriented politician. N. Pashinyan expresses the interests of Armenian society and is responsible for the future of the state.

The gradual habituation to power and the emergence of corruption traps and temptations of power create a dangerous precedent for the current prime minister and his democratic style of governance, which, by the way, differs from the political style of his predecessors – three former presidents of Armenia: L. Ter-Petrosyan, R. Kocharyan, and S. Sargysyan.

The period of N. Pashinyan’s rule falls on a difficult time of foreign policy instability: with the aggravation of relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey, there is a gradual deterioration of relations with Russia. In September 2023, joint exercises with the United States, Eagle Partner 2023, began in Armenia.

The participation of his wife, public figure and journalist Anna Hakobyan, in September 2023, in the Kiev summit on mental health is also a confirmation of N. Pashinyan’s shift to the Western fairway. The first ladies of the states were guests and speakers at the event. Because of his political background, N. Pashinyan is able to continue adjusting foreign policy while

upholding his dedication to the interests of the country. The personal factor plays an important role in the legitimation of the political leader of Armenia, focusing on the personality of N. Pashinyan himself and his political style. The cultural factor is also noticeable, appealing to the unique codes of Armenian culture, traditions, and meanings. Current problems also affect the economic situation, which is an important factor in the legitimation of the Armenian government. These challenges can certainly adjust the processes of legitimation of N. Pashinyan for both the Armenian society and the international community.

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