

JUSTICE AND LEGALITY AS THE AXIOLOGICAL BASIS OF SOCIAL STABILITY

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Abstract: *This article analyzes justice and legality as axiological foundations of social stability from philosophical, legal, and sociological perspectives. It examines the interrelation of these concepts, their role in ensuring legitimacy and social trust, as well as their impact on the development of civil society. Based on contemporary scholarly approaches, the paper substantiates that the harmony between justice and legality is a crucial condition for sustainable and consistent social development.*

Keywords: *justice, legality, axiology, social stability, rule of law, legitimacy, civil society, social trust*

In the context of contemporary globalization processes, socio-economic transformations, and the increasing complexity of political systems, the issue of ensuring social stability has become particularly relevant. The consistent development of any society depends not only on economic resources or the efficiency of political institutions, but also on the fundamental values underlying it. From this perspective, justice and legality emerge as the most important categories forming the axiological foundation of society. Axiology, as the theory of values, studies the moral standards of social life, and these standards largely determine the stability of society.

The concept of justice is one of the oldest and most universal categories of human thought, serving to ensure equality, fairness, and balance in social relations. In modern political philosophy, John Rawls defines justice as “the first virtue of social institutions.” According to his theory, social and economic inequalities are justified only if they benefit the least advantaged members of society [1]. This approach allows justice to be viewed not only as a theoretical concept but also as a practical political and social mechanism.

The modern interpretation of justice has been significantly developed by Amartya Sen, who plays a key role in contemporary political philosophy. He defines justice not as an ideal or perfectly designed system, but as a practical process aimed at reducing actual injustices in real life. According to Sen, the level of justice in society is determined by individuals’ real capabilities, that is, their freedom to choose and manage their own lives [2]. This approach enables justice to be assessed in practical terms and makes it an important factor of social stability.



In addition, the “capability approach” developed by Martha Nussbaum further enriches the concept of justice. According to her view, justice is realized when society ensures individuals’ basic needs and essential capabilities [3]. This perspective directly links justice with human dignity and freedom, emphasizing the moral responsibility of society to create conditions for a dignified life for all individuals.

Legality, on the other hand, is considered a fundamental institutional mechanism for ensuring order and stability in society. It implies the supremacy of law, equality of all citizens before the law, and the binding nature of legal norms. Ronald Dworkin interprets law as a system integrated with moral principles and argues that justice must lie at its foundation [4]. This approach leads to understanding legality not merely as a formal regulatory order, but as a category with moral content.

In contemporary socio-philosophical discourse, the relationship between legality and legitimacy is particularly emphasized. Jürgen Habermas explains legality through the theory of communicative action, arguing that laws should be formed through free and rational communication among members of society [5]. This allows legality to be interpreted as a product of social consensus.

The relationship between justice and legality is of a dialectical nature. Legality serves as a means of implementing justice, while justice functions as a criterion that determines the substantive content of laws. Joseph Raz identifies the rule of law as a crucial condition for social stability [6]. At the same time, Lon Fuller, in his theory of the “inner morality of law,” argues that legal systems must conform to principles of justice. If laws fail to meet these criteria, they are not accepted by society, which may lead to social instability [7].

Social stability is a multifaceted process grounded in social trust, political legitimacy, and effective institutions. In his research, Francis Fukuyama demonstrates that societies with higher levels of social trust tend to achieve more stable economic and political development [8]. This trust is formed precisely on the basis of justice and legality. In a society where a just and lawful system exists, citizens trust the state, voluntarily comply with laws, and social conflicts are significantly reduced.

Civil society institutions are considered one of the most important social mechanisms for strengthening justice and legality in modern democratic societies. Acting as intermediaries between state power and citizens, they play a crucial role in implementing the principles of social control, transparency, and accountability. Non-governmental non-profit organizations, independent mass media, trade unions, and various public associations contribute to maintaining social balance by representing and protecting citizens’ interests in public administration processes. These institutions are essential in ensuring the transparency of state bodies, making decision-making processes understandable to the public, and fostering social trust. As a result, corruption risks are reduced, the rule of law

in governance is strengthened, and citizens' participation in political processes becomes more active.

At the same time, the effective functioning of civil society is directly linked to a high level of legal culture. Legal culture is defined by citizens' conscious adherence to laws, their full understanding of rights and responsibilities, and their ability to properly apply legal norms in everyday life. If the level of legal culture in society is insufficiently developed, even the most well-designed laws may prove ineffective in practice. Therefore, the development of legal education, the cultivation of legal awareness among the younger generation, and the widespread dissemination of legal knowledge through mass media are among the most pressing tasks.

However, in the process of modern societal development, there are several systemic challenges that pose serious threats to the principles of justice and legality. Among them, corruption is one of the most dangerous social vices, as it undermines public trust in state institutions, leads to the unfair distribution of economic resources, and deepens social inequality. In addition, economic inequality exacerbates disparities between social groups, thereby contributing to the violation of principles of social justice. The lack of independence in the judicial system weakens the rule of law and negatively affects the adoption of fair decisions. Furthermore, a low level of legal literacy prevents citizens from effectively protecting their rights and increases inequality in legal relations.

To address these challenges, a comprehensive approach is required, which should simultaneously include both institutional and moral reforms. In particular, it is essential to further strengthen the judicial and legal system, ensure its independence, and increase its transparency. Strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms also contributes to ensuring transparency and accountability in public administration. At the same time, the development of the legal education system, raising citizens' legal awareness, and supporting civil society institutions serve to reinforce the principles of justice in society. In this process, cooperation between the state, society, and individuals plays a crucial role.

In conclusion, justice and legality constitute the most important axiological foundation of social stability. Their harmony ensures the effective and stable functioning of the social system, strengthens mutual trust among citizens, and guarantees the legitimacy of state institutions. In a society where a just and lawful system exists, social conflicts are reduced, economic development becomes more stable, and citizens' trust in the state increases. Therefore, in the modern context, strengthening these values should be regarded as one of the strategic development priorities of any state.

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