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LEGITIMATION TECHNOLOGIES AS FACTORS OF POLITICAL MEDIATION

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Abstract

This study explores the critical role of legitimation technologies in enhancing the effectiveness of political mediation as a mechanism for achieving societal consensus, resolving conflicts, and ensuring the stability of governing structures. Political mediation operates within the public sphere, fostering dialogue between citizens, authorities, and institutions to negotiate power, influence, and social cohesion. Legitimacy serves as both a prerequisite and an outcome of successful political mediation, granting mediators the authority to facilitate agreements and ensuring the acceptance of outcomes by conflicting parties. The study identifies and analyses key legitimation technologies – mythologization, symbolization, communicative, and value-normative technologies – that shape perceptions, mobilize public support, and construct shared realities necessary for consensus-building. Mythologization fosters emotional resonance through shared historical or cultural narratives, while symbolization appeals to archetypes and irrational aspects of human consciousness. Communicative technologies organize dialogue and reinterpret socio-political reality, while value-normative technologies instill norms and ideals that guide behaviour and legitimize decisions. Despite their potential, these technologies face challenges, including the risk of superficial agreement, manipulation, and the fabrication of consensus, which undermine genuine legitimacy and trust. The research underscores the existential importance of legitimation technologies in political mediation, demonstrating their capacity to transform polarized interests into cohesive societal frameworks. By integrating philosophical, hermeneutic, and cultural studies approaches, the study reveals the interconnectedness of cognitive, axiological, and psychological dimensions in constructing legitimate political mediation processes. Ultimately, the analysis highlights the dual nature of legitimation technologies as tools for both stabilizing governance and navigating profound socio-political crises through strategic communication and symbolic innovation.

Keywords: political mediation, legitimation technologies, mythologization, symbolization, political communication, conflict resolution, political consensus, public sphere, legitimacy of power

Introduction

Political mediation is an integral component of political and power relations, both within states and in the international arena. This is due to the fact that the political sphere of society is inherently engaged in regulating and reconciling the polarized and often opposing interests and values of various social groups.

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The ability to successfully achieve societal consensus through various forms of mediation between conflicting and antagonistic parties constitutes the essence of political mediation. It serves as a mechanism for mitigating social contradictions and conflicts while ensuring sustainable political development.

The concept of political mediation as a form of intermediation aimed at generating societal consensus encompasses a wide range of phenomena that function as a complex transmission mechanism for fostering public agreement and solidarity, preventing and resolving socio-political conflicts, and securing the necessary degree of legitimacy in political and power relations. Legitimacy, in this context, is not only an outcome but also a prerequisite and a specific framework within which political mediation operates. It is an essential element of mutual recognition between opposing sides, granting mediators sufficient authority to fulfill their roles and making the results of mediation at least minimally or maximally satisfactory for achieving consensus.

From a technological perspective on legitimacy attainment, it is reasonable to distinguish legitimization technologies as effective tools for ensuring the significance and authority of political relations, particularly in the implementation of political mediation. In this regard, it is crucial to determine the place and role of legitimization technologies in the process of political mediation.

Based on the above considerations, the objective of this study is to identify and conceptualize legitimization technologies as determinants of political mediation.

Methodology

The methodological foundation for studying legitimization technologies as factors of political mediation is based on a technological approach, which relies on the flexible integration of methodological tools inherent in philosophical, general scientific, and specialized scientific approaches. The combination of various cognitive approaches within the technological framework is dictated by our research strategy, which is oriented toward several key objectives.

First, it aims to explore the essential dimension of political mediation technologies by analyzing their role, position, and functions in preventing and resolving conflicts between opposing political forces. Second, it examines the structural implementation of these technologies by identifying the subject-object dimension of their application. Third, it investigates the cultural and historical factors shaping political mediation technologies through an analysis of the predominant cultural-historical modes of structuring mass perception and organizing collective experience. Fourth, it seeks to conceptualize the practical-political dimension of their application. Fifth, it highlights the communicative, value-based, and psychological aspects of legitimization technologies as determinants of political mediation, which define their effectiveness.

In light of these considerations, additional methodological approaches have been incorporated, including dialectical, hermeneutic, value-normative, communicative, and cultural studies approaches. The dialectical approach – characterized by the principles of complementarity of opposites, continuous development of thought, knowledge, and the world – enables both the synthesis of diverse cognitive approaches within the technological framework and a comprehensive understanding of the formation and implementation of legitimization technologies in political mediation. This approach views legitimization technologies, first, as a continuous process of innovation driven by adaptation to the varying contexts of a dynamic political reality and, second, as a set of political practices structured around criteria of expediency and effectiveness in ensuring political consensus.

The hermeneutic approach allows for the examination of legitimization technologies in political mediation as effective means of constructing and imposing a politically advantageous interpretation of reality, thereby securing sufficient political consent (consensus) for the acquisition, retention, and exercise of power. The value-normative approach elucidates the role of values and norms as determinants of the effectiveness of legitimization technologies in political mediation. The communicative approach facilitates the analysis of political mediation and legitimization technologies within the communicative dimension. Finally, the cultural studies approach enables an exploration of symbolic technologies and their legitimization potential in the process of political mediation and the formation of political consensus.

Literature review

The conceptualization of political mediation has a paradoxical nature. Many scholars emphasize its significance, explore specific aspects, and propose intriguing ideas, yet a comprehensive and cohesive theory of political mediation, along with its broad practical application, remains undeveloped. Nevertheless, our analysis of previous works that examine political mediation from various perspectives has allowed

us to construct a theoretical and conceptual foundation for research and to outline prospects for its practical implementation – particularly in the form of constructing and applying legitimation technologies within the mediation process. Bernard Lamizet defines political mediation as a distinct type of mediation that encompasses the political sphere and political forms of communicativity (Lamizet, 1998). Paul Wehr and John Lederach argue that legitimacy is a crucial component of political mediation, with the mediator serving as a legitimizer (Wehr & Lederach, 1991; Lederach, 1997). Jacqueline Deschamps refers to Jürgen Habermas's theory of deliberative democracy (Habermas, 1989; 1998), noting that political mediation can only be understood within the framework of the public sphere (Deschamps, 2019). Pamela Aall points out that the legitimate authority of a mediator arises "from the parties' perception that the mediator has the right to act as a third party and to demand changes in behavior or compliance with requirements" (Aall, 1996, p.481). In his study of political conflicts in Africa, Allard Duursma emphasizes the significant role of legitimacy in the successful conduct of mediation (Duursma, 2020). Simon Gadras directly addresses the issue of communicative legitimation technologies within political mediation. Analyzing the evolution of communicative practices in the context of local political mediation, he concludes that key political actors leverage digital platforms and master mediation techniques to acquire and maintain legitimacy as mediators, thereby securing access to the public arena (Gadras, 2010). Overall, the analysis of scholarly research on political mediation reveals an insufficient exploration of legitimation technologies within the mediation process.

Results

The Essence of Political Mediation

The legitimacy of both the mediator and the mediation process itself originally had a sacred character, with its roots tracing back to the New Testament. For instance, *The Second Epistle to Timothy*, written around 67 AD by the Apostle Paul on the eve of his execution, contains the following words: "*one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus*" (The Christian Standard Bible, 2017, 1 Timothy 2:5).

According to The Oxford English Dictionary, mediation and its cognate lexical units denote: the act or activity of serving as an intermediary; the act of intervening between disputing parties; advocacy on behalf of another; adopting a moderate position and avoiding extremes; interceding or intervening to facilitate reconciliation; acting as an intermediary in forming an agreement between two parties; providing means to achieve consensus as a neutral entity (17th century); accomplishing something through mediation; achieving peace or agreements by acting as an intermediary; ensuring outcomes through advocacy; serving as a medium or instrument in achieving a result or conveying a gift, among other things; attaining a result by mediating between an idea, an intention, and their realization; a country acting as a mediator in negotiations involving multiple parties; an agency serving as an intermediary; language as a medium; the condition or fact of serving as an intermediate agent, means of action, or conduit of transmission; instrumentality (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1997b, p. 3198-3201).

As can be seen, the concept of mediation primarily refers to the regulation of interactions between two parties through either subjective (a person, a country) or instrumental (language, an agency, gifts) intermediaries to achieve a positive outcome – such as mutual understanding, agreement, peace, reconciliation, or a settlement. It can be asserted that mediation is an ancient social practice involving a third party that assists two others in reaching an agreement or consensus through its regulatory capacity – whether through presence, active engagement, advocacy, representation, specialized methods, techniques, technologies, resources, or legitimate status.

Jacob Bercovitch defines mediation as "a process of conflict management, related to but distinct from the parties' own negotiations, where those in conflict seek the assistance of, or accept an offer of help from, an outsider [...] without resorting to physical force or invoking the authority of law" (Bercovitch, 2009, p. 343). Christine Servais views mediation both as a symptom and as a catalyst for social change, emphasizing its function on both the micro level (interpersonal interactions) and the macro level (cultural or institutional dynamics) (Servais, 2016). Michèle Guillaume-Hofnung defines mediation as "a process of ethical communication based on the responsibility and autonomy of those involved, in which a third party – impartial, independent, and neutral – facilitates the establishment or re-establishment of social ties and the prevention or resolution of the situation in question" (Guillaume-Hofnung, 2012, p.70). She differentiates between non-conflictual mediation, which pertains to everyday social interactions, and conflictual mediation, which involves preventive or restorative actions in disputes. Jean-François Six applies a functional approach

to mediation, identifying four types: creative mediation, which fosters the formation of new connections; renewing mediation, which strengthens weakened relationships; preventive mediation, aimed at averting conflicts; and remedial mediation, focused on conflict resolution (Six, 1990). According to Michèle Guillaume-Hofnung and Jean-François Six (1990), on a conceptual level mediation cannot be reduced to the settlement of conflicts (Guillaume-Hofnung, 2012; Six, 1990). Jacqueline Morineau draws a parallel between mediation and Greek tragedy, which historically emerged at the intersection of divine authority and rational law. She sees mediation as a contemporary response to social tensions, facilitating the resolution of conflicts between opposing worldviews (Mordineau, 1999). From a socio-philosophical perspective, Jean Caune emphasizes the linguistic and philosophical dimensions of mediation, arguing that it structures social interactions and enables individuals to comprehend their relationships with others (Caune, 1999). Bernard Lamizet conceptualizes mediation as a dialectical process between individual and collective experience, shaping public discourse and fostering a shared sense of social belonging (Lamizet, 1998, p. 45). Ernest Manghaim interprets mediation as both an analytical and political process, framing it within a typology of public spheres. He identifies democratic mediation, characterized by open discourse with respect for opposing views; persuasive mediation, which seeks to build consensus through influence or, in extreme cases, propaganda; and transcendental mediation, an idealized public sphere where communication is guided by mutual understanding and rational debate (Manheim, 1979; 1998).

Mediation is a process of intermediation that involves third-party actors and the application of various tools designed to facilitate genuine or substantive consensus between two parties. Mediators, in this sense, can be not only individuals but also phenomena, methods, practices, and objects, whose role in achieving consensus depends on their legitimacy. Mediation takes on a specific character within political processes.

In a broad sense, political mediation refers to the regulation of relations between the state and society or between power actors through diverse forms of intermediation, fundamentally rooted in the process of communication. In a narrower sense, political mediation entails various forms of interest representation. Political parties and state officials, for instance, simultaneously represent the interests of society, specific social groups, and the state as a whole. The very term *representative democracy* inherently embodies the idea of mediation, as does the concept of the *ombudsman*. When representation is perceived as legitimate and unmanipulated by societal forces, it is more capable of reconciling interests, fostering societal consensus, and advancing national interests.

The concept of "consensus" has Latin origins (Simpson, et al, 1997a, p. 7660). The Oxford Latin Dictionary attests that the word consensus (from *consentio*) was used by Latin-speaking authors such as Marcus Tullius Cicero (Against Lucius Calpurnius Piso, In Defense of Publius Sestius), Gaius Julius Caesar (The Gallic War), Pliny the Elder (Natural History), Titus Livius (History from the Founding of the City), and Publius Cornelius Tacitus (Histories, Annals), among others, as early as the first century BCE (Glare, 2012, pp. 452-453). Even then, the notion of consensus encompassed several meanings, including: (1) agreement, unanimity, or concord in thought or sentiment; (2) a covert or deceitful agreement, a secret plot, or conspiracy; (3) similarity of purpose or action, harmony, concord; (4) something accepted by general agreement; (5) consent to a proposal or an act of approval; (6) agreement in action, joint action; and (7) emotional accord, sympathy. This indicates that even in antiquity, the term consensus was employed in political, legal, psychological, and cultural contexts.

Regarding its legal meaning, it is appropriate to recall Roman law. In Roman law, a consensual contract required only the mutual agreement of the parties to become binding. Such contracts gave rise to consensual obligations, which were valid solely on the basis of mutual understanding, without the need for any formalities (Simpson, et al, 1997a, p. 7660). Etymological analysis of the lexeme consensus suggests a broad spectrum of meanings, ranging from agreement, concord, and assent – possibly achieved through compromise, sympathy, shared understanding, or collective action – to secret collusion or subversive arrangements.

The idea of consensus in politics gave rise to contractualism, which fundamentally stemmed from the belief that societies exist only through agreement – a tacit contract between all individuals and, crucially, between individuals and political authority. According to contractualism, social relations and political obligations are founded on social agreements, which are essential for the well-being of all individuals and for the peaceful coexistence of humanity as a whole. The legitimacy of power derives from the idea of consent or consensus, just as the notion of the social contract does. It is no coincidence that consensus underpins the contractual theories of Grotius, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, who asserted that the state emerges as a result of a social contract. However, in reality, no actual contract was ever signed to establish the state.

Rather, it is evident that states arose through consensus, understood as an agreement to submit to a ruler or governing authority under certain conditions. From this, the idea of a constitution emerges as a system of mutual rights and obligations between rulers and the governed. However, both the constitution and the legal force of consensual contracts in Roman law are derived from consensus, meaning a form of agreement – either on submission or on a specific arrangement. Consequently, the essence of political mediation is defined as an ongoing process of achieving social consensus, the extent of which determines the legitimacy of political power relations.

Political mediation encompasses various methods, technologies, mechanisms, and processes through which political actors, institutions, and social groups negotiate power, influence, and social cohesion within a given political system. It occurs in the public sphere and plays a crucial role in democratic governance by fostering relationships between citizens, political authorities, and institutions. Political mediation facilitates the institutional organization of society and the development of diverse forms of political communication. Through political mediation, different social actors engage in political dialogue, construct legitimacy, and negotiate governance.

The concept of political mediation differs from arbitration and reconciliation. While arbitration involves a third party issuing a legally binding decision, mediation is a voluntary and non-binding process in which the mediator merely facilitates discussion and agreement. Reconciliation, on the other hand, is a broader concept that encompasses the restoration of relationships and social harmony. Mediation can serve as a tool within reconciliation by providing a structured dialogue that helps parties rebuild trust.

By its very nature, mediation is a communicative process that fosters dialogue between parties. It is a tripartite process that involves articulating and interpreting different perspectives to reach mutual understanding. The primary goal of political mediation is to ensure the stability, continuity, and legitimacy of governing structures. One of its key functions is conflict resolution, as it helps mitigate political disputes and crises through structured dialogue. Another essential function is legitimization of power, which strengthens trust in political decisions and ensures their acceptance by involving multiple stakeholders. Political mediation also plays a role in public mobilization, enhancing democratic participation by creating channels for public discourse and representation. Additionally, it facilitates institutional communication, serving as a bridge between political institutions and society to ensure that governance aligns with public needs.

The legitimacy of political mediation enhances its effectiveness, particularly in the acquisition, maintenance, and exercise of power. It plays a crucial role in elections, coalition formation, and negotiations, contributing to the peaceful transfer of power. The acceptance of political outcomes largely depends on the legitimacy of the mediation process. By addressing internal conflicts within ruling parties and fostering dialogue between the government and the opposition, political mediation ensures governmental continuity. Effective mediation mechanisms contribute to the legitimacy of political decisions by considering diverse societal interests, preventing political alienation, and strengthening social cohesion and institutional trust.

Political mediation takes place in the public sphere, where state institutions, political actors, civil society, and the media interact. It facilitates negotiations and compromises between conflicting interests, helping to maintain social cohesion and democratic stability. As a fundamental process for sustaining dialogue, resolving conflicts, and ensuring the legitimacy of governance, political mediation is an essential component of democratic stability and institutional legitimacy. It fosters communication between the state and society, reinforcing public trust in political processes.

Political mediation typically involves state institutions such as executive, legislative, and judicial bodies, as well as political parties and movements, civil society organizations, journalists and media representatives, international organizations and diplomatic missions, and religious and cultural leaders. Each participant contributes to the mediation process by shaping political discourse, influencing public opinion, or directly facilitating negotiations.

Political mediation encompasses various dimensions, including legislative mediation, institutional mediation, crisis mediation, media mediation, and social mediation. Legislative mediation facilitates dialogue between stakeholders to advance the adoption of laws. Institutional mediation fosters collaboration between government entities and the public. Crisis mediation is dedicated to resolving political crises, protests, and electoral disputes. Media mediation involves shaping political narratives and influencing public opinion. Social mediation focuses on addressing the concerns of marginalized groups and promoting civic engagement.

Political mediation follows a structured process. One of its key elements is the presence of socio-political issues, which manifest as public grievances and demands. Another essential element is the mediator, represented by political intermediaries such as government officials, civil society actors, and the media. The negotiation process, including dialogue, compromise, and policy formulation, serves as the third component. Problem resolution, which involves outlining a roadmap and implementing policies based on the achieved consensus, constitutes the fourth element. The final stage of political mediation is the practical outcome, which strengthens the legitimacy of the governing entity. This cycle continuously repeats, maintaining governance legitimacy and addressing conflicts as they arise.

Political mediators act as neutral facilitators with recognized legitimacy, helping to translate societal demands into political action. Among these mediators are government officials such as presidents, ministers, and parliamentary speakers, independent institutions like constitutional courts and ombudsmen, as well as leaders of civil society, including human rights advocates and non-governmental organizations. The media and public opinion leaders, such as journalists and public intellectuals, also play a significant role. Additionally, religious and cultural figures, including clergy and traditional leaders, as well as international organizations like the United Nations, the European Union, and the African Union, contribute to the mediation process.

Political mediation plays a decisive role in resolving electoral disputes, such as contestations of election results, constitutional crises, including impeachment proceedings and constitutional amendments, and political transitions, such as regime changes and democratization. It is also crucial in managing social protests by facilitating negotiations between governments and protest leaders and in overcoming legislative deadlocks that hinder policymaking. By fostering dialogue, promoting consensus-building, and ensuring conflict resolution, political mediation remains a fundamental mechanism for maintaining stability, reinforcing legitimacy, and enabling responsive governance.

Mythologization as a Technology of Legitimation in the Process of Political Mediation

The creation of a legitimate space for the effective implementation of political mediation is closely linked to mythologization as one of the most effective technologies of legitimation. In the process of political mediation, mythologization serves as a powerful tool to enhance the legitimacy of the mediation subject. A mediator, acting as an intermediary between conflicting parties, must possess a legitimate status. Mythologization enables the construction of the mediator's image as a neutral, wise, and authoritative figure capable of delivering a fair resolution. For instance, the myth of the "wise politician" or the "true statesman," who is destined to build a just state for all, reinforces the perception of legitimacy. When skillfully employed, the technology of mythologization strengthens the authority of mediators, who serve as carriers of legitimate meanings and facilitate communicative mediation between opposing sides.

Bernard Lamizet connects political mediation with the collective creation of meaning and representations of reality, arguing that the political sphere itself acts as a medium through which people appropriate reality, transforming it into an element of meaning and representation (Lamizet, 1998, p. 45). The technology of mythologization establishes a shared legitimate foundation for dialogue in the mediation process. By constructing the necessary myths, mythologization helps to identify common ground between conflicting parties. Myths create a shared historical, cultural, or ideological basis that enables the search for compromise. For example, the myth of a "common historical destiny" or myths about shared suffering and heroic deeds in the past can unite even opposing groups around a common goal.

Mythologization, as a technology of legitimation, facilitates the mobilization of public support by generating myths that evoke emotional resonance, thereby encouraging civic engagement. For instance, the myth of "national revival" can serve as a foundation for mobilizing society in support of reforms. Mythologization also contributes to the stability of the political system by creating an illusion of continuity and predictability while offering society a comprehensible and acceptable vision of the world. For example, the myth of "stability and order" can be employed to legitimize government actions aimed at preserving the status quo.

It is important to emphasize that myths are not merely "irrational" fabrications accepted on faith without evidence. Harold Lasswell argued that political myths manifest in political doctrines and ideologies and are reflected in the structure of political consciousness through concepts such as *credenda* and *miranda* (Lasswell, 1949, pp. 10-11). Therefore, the technology of mythologization is always directed at both the rational mind and the emotions of its recipients.

Credenda (dogmas of faith) pertain to the sphere of rational consciousness and align more closely with political doctrines. These include statutes, constitutions, declarations, and treaties – texts that appeal to reason and establish trust in authority on a cognitive level.

Miranda, on the other hand, consists of symbols that shape attitudes and self-identification within a political myth. Their function is to inspire admiration and enthusiasm, strengthen faith, and foster a sense of loyalty to authority. Not only do they generate the emotions necessary for the stability of a given social structure, but they also encourage individuals to share these emotions collectively. *Miranda* includes communicative instruments such as slogans, flags, anthems, ceremonies, demonstrations, national heroes, and legends about them (Lasswell, 1949, pp. 10-11).

Mythologization as a tool of legitimation in political mediation is an extraordinarily powerful mechanism that shapes social reality through the lens of symbolic constructs and perceptions. It serves as a kind of transmission mechanism for ensuring social consensus and solidarity, as well as for preventing and resolving socio-political conflicts.

The essence of mythologization lies in the creation of an alternative reality, which is perceived as more credible than the actual one. "Information that is wrapped in a myth becomes sensually expressive, easy to remember, aestheticizing the life world of a modern person, and at best throws him or her into the arms of illusions, and at worst makes him or her the object of various manipulations, including political ones" (Kalynovsky et al, 2024, p. 35). This effect is achieved through a system of images, symbols, and archetypes that appeal to the deep emotional layers of human consciousness. The key components of this technology include language transformation, the introduction of new symbols, the reorganization of value hierarchies, and the use of prophecies and promises.

In the context of political mediation, mythologization plays a crucial role in cognitive, axiological, communicative, and psychological dimensions of constructing an imagined legitimate reality. In the cognitive dimension, it establishes a worldview that explains complex social phenomena through simple images and analogies. In the axiological dimension, it redefines the hierarchy of values, legitimizing the necessity of specific political decisions. In the communicative dimension, it creates a shared discursive space where opposing sides can interact within a framework of legitimacy. In the psychological dimension, it activates fundamental human fears and hopes, driving the search for compromise.

In political mediation, authorities frequently employ the mythological opposition of "us vs. them" to consolidate society around a common identity. This division can manifest as "insiders vs. outsiders" or "defenders vs. traitors," reinforcing political mobilization and justifying particular governmental decisions. Within mediation, this mechanism helps delineate political boundaries between conflicting parties and shapes negotiation positions.

The use of historical or national myths enables the activation of collective emotions, channeling societal energy toward supporting a particular political course. This fosters mass endorsement of decisions made during political mediation and aids in shaping public opinion that inclines the parties toward compromise.

Political mediation heavily relies on ritualistic aspects that enhance trust in both its participants and their decisions. Public meetings, the signing of agreements in symbolically significant locations, participation in national celebrations, or the use of ritualized phrases all contribute to the perception of legitimacy and the inevitability of political settlements. Thus, rituals serve not only to legitimize political actions but also to maintain political stability.

Communicative Technologies of Legitimation as Instruments for Managing the Process of Political Mediation

The effectiveness of communicative technologies of legitimation of political power is determined not merely by their direct contribution to legitimizing political mediation but by their ability to establish communicative conditions that foster trust between opposing sides – political actors and the society represented by public opinion. A fundamental requirement for such communication is the political actors' genuine commitment to addressing societal interests and treating individuals as unique beings deserving of the highest degree of respect, care, freedom, trust, and a promising future. Thus, the highest effectiveness of communicative technologies of legitimation in political mediation lies in structuring communication to uphold the dignity of individuals.

Since legitimation processes operate on the principle of exchange, respect for personal dignity, genuine compassion, benevolence, and the attribution of significance and legitimacy to an individual create a unique

context of obligation. This context requires the individual to affirm their own dignity through actions and behavior that carry legitimizing significance for the political force that positions itself as the initiator and implementer of engaged, empathetic communication practices. A perspective close to this is that of Michèle Guillaume-Hofnung, who defines mediation as "a process of ethical communication based on the responsibility and autonomy of the participants, in which a third party – impartial, independent, neutral, and whose authority is limited to what is granted by the parties involved in mediation – facilitates, through private discussions, the establishment or restoration of social bonds, as well as the prevention or resolution of the situation at hand" (Guillaume-Hofnung, 1995, p. 70).

The starting point for initiating and implementing legitimation technologies in the process of political mediation is the prevailing legitimate interpretation of reality. This interpretation is the product of a continuous communication process operating at global, regional, national, group, and inter-individual levels. Consequently, this implies that the legitimate interpretation of reality exists in multiple versions, differentiated by their level of formation and scope (global, regional, local, individual interpretations) as well as by the specific nature of their interpretation of the existing state of affairs and attitudes toward it. These include various sub-interpretations arising from different discourses (legal, moral-ethical, scientific, philosophical, religious interpretations) and counter-interpretations (anti-globalist, anti-capitalist, anti-oligarchic, anti-authoritarian, anti-totalitarian, anti-liberalist, anti-nationalist interpretations).

The legitimate interpretation of reality consists of widely accepted meanings, shaped at the societal or group level through communication, stereotypes, signs, symbols, customs, and rituals. More importantly, it is formed by cognitive, perceptual, and affective schemas that dictate operational rules influencing modes of reasoning, interpretation of various situations, perceptions of past, present, and future, as well as methods of activity and behavior.

The affirmation or transformation of an existing legitimate interpretation of reality – necessary for the successful implementation of a political course and a functional objective of legitimation technologies – is not achieved through the imposition of a fixed, ready-made interpretation with the expectation of its direct acceptance. Instead, it is facilitated by creating conditions that enable social actors to develop their own interpretations of reality. A predetermined interpretation that disregards the interpretative creativity of social actors and excludes dialogue with them fails to attract interest or persuade at best, and at worst, it provokes rejection, suspicion of hidden motives, and a search for ulterior meanings, ultimately failing to achieve its intended goal.

Thus, communicative legitimation technologies in political mediation focus on the formation and transmission of meanings based on specific historical, socio-cultural, and ideological structuring principles, as well as the available communication channels and means. Through these technologies, a political mediator initiates, encourages, implements, and modifies systems of meaning-constructing frameworks, cognitive, perceptual, and affective schemas. These frameworks segment individual experience into meaningful fragments, interpret it, shape and integrate beliefs, opinions, and knowledge about the world, and regulate and control the activities and behaviors of social actors.

Value-Normative Legitimation Technologies of Mediation

The legitimacy of political actors or their decisions is largely determined by their correlation with norms and values, which thus serve as explicit or implicit criteria for the process and outcomes of mediation. Consequently, the implantation of certain norms and values into public consciousness or the actualization of their significance constitutes crucial legitimation technologies. Norms and values possess substantial power in ensuring the legitimacy of authority, as they can unite and mobilize social forces while also regulating and directing political behavior.

Political norms represent rules for achieving political values, regulating political relations, and influencing the consciousness and behavior of political process participants. As Peter Katzenstein points out, norms are "collective expectations regarding the appropriate behavior of actors with a given identity" (Katzenstein, 1996, p. 5). In this definition, particular attention should be paid to the word "appropriate", which underscores the controlling and subordinating role of norms. Similarly, according to Stephen Krasner, "norms are standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations" (Krasner, 1983, p. 2).

According to Jean-Marc Coicaud, values define the legitimacy of political power, as they constitute the fundamental substance of rights and obligations, forming the basis of social consensus and the identity of both society and the individual (Coicaud, 2002, p. 14). "The political function of coordinating and directing society is legitimate only when it expresses the identity of that society. However, the legitimacy of power is

inextricably linked to the diffusion of group values across the entire system of its actions. The right to govern, as well as the normative energy of political power, depends on achieving this diffusion. The directives of this power obligate individuals only to the extent that they correspond to the identity of the community" (Coicaud, 2002, p. 14), asserts Jean-Marc Coicaud.

Given the necessity of ensuring the legitimacy of political power, the challenge arises of affirming, protecting, and promoting values that are significant to society and serve as the foundation for actions and their evaluations by social actors. State power plays a significant role in institutionalizing values as legal norms through legislative bodies that establish laws and judicial and law enforcement agencies that ensure their enforcement. In this context, one can speak of organizational or institutional technologies for establishing the obligatory role of values. However, beyond these institutions, political actors significantly influence the internalization of values by propagating ideas, using symbols and imagery, and employing emotionally charged or well-argued statements. Technologies such as mythologization, sacralization, ideologization, and virtualization play a crucial role in advancing and consolidating values, as they possess sufficient potential for the subtle objectification and ontologization of values – where the visibility or artificially constructed perceived significance of political objects is accepted as their essence.

One of the most effective legitimation technologies for values is the transition from fundamental, universally shared values related to the instinct of self-preservation and the need for self-realization (such as security, self-respect, homeland, freedom, order, work, family, and wealth) to more abstract ones (such as human rights, national interests, democracy, the market, and the rule of law). The effectiveness of this technology is based on the fact that fundamental values are perceived by most of society as primary and essential life needs, directly connected to everyday experience. They have a high integrative capacity regarding social forces, regardless of ideological orientations and socio-class characteristics. An effective technology for defending and promoting values is the dramatization of reality through the actualization of threats, which triggers the fear of losing one or several fundamental values (such as security, freedom, or order). This, in turn, generates a fear of losing both personal and societal identity and, simultaneously, confidence in the future.

Karl-Otto Apel assigns great importance to argumentative discourse among all possible participants in substantiating and legitimizing norms, particularly those that have become problematic: "The argumentative discourse of all possible participants is the ideal instance for the substantiation and legitimation of norms that have become problematic" (Apel, 1982, p. 680). Argumentative discourse as an instance of political power legitimation holds significant value as a mechanism for achieving social consensus, including in relation to value hierarchies, which are employed by the aforementioned selective legitimation technologies. As is well known, selective technologies operate through thematic restrictions and control over the composition of participants in public political discourse.

Jean Baudrillard highlighted the fact that the values of the majority of society are increasingly shaped by technologies of spectacle, which, through signs, symbols, and imagery capable of mesmerizing and enchanting, enable individuals to resist "the simplifying terror of the ideal hegemony of meaning" and thereby escape coercion while achieving an illusory "freedom" (Baudrillard, 2007, p. 15). Spectacle technologies combine dramatization, aestheticization, and stereotyping of the political world. While the technology of dramatization is based on instilling in the public the perception of the political world as an arena of struggle, the technology of aestheticization is rooted in the mass aspiration for beauty and the elevation of aesthetic criteria to the status of interpretative criteria for evaluating political actors, including in political relations. The technology of stereotyping, in turn, capitalizes on the masses' inclination toward a simplified and emotionally charged perception of political phenomena and objects.

The role of "significant others", including opinion leaders and political experts, should also be noted. Due to the special trust they enjoy from society, these figures wield social power to facilitate the promotion and consolidation of values in mass consciousness. In this regard, legitimate experts can serve as successful political mediators.

Legitimacy can stand in opposition to legality when it is established through the actualization of certain values perceived within a given community as a sufficient basis for supporting political actors whose actions contradict existing legal norms. In effect, this creates a foundation for the effectiveness of political mediation legitimation technologies, which, through the value-based judgments of authoritative figures (significant others), bring to public perception values whose recognition is deemed sufficient justification for any governing practices of political actors.

Values, in the form of norms and ideals, define different types of political mediation legitimation - namely, procedural and substantive. Procedural legitimacy depends on adherence to norms in the course

of implementing a process related to the exercise or acquisition of political power. Violations of procedural norms may lead to the results of political mediation or the authority of political actors being deemed illegitimate if they, as mediators, have breached these norms. Substantive (fundamental) legitimacy, on the other hand, is tied to the content of decisions and the outcomes of political forces' activities, which must align with the value orientations of the majority of society and move toward the realization of its socio-political ideals.

Frederick Barnard refers to the norms that determine procedural legitimacy as "agency values," as they serve as the standards by which politics is conducted (Barnard, 2001, p. 28). These norms define who, how, and in what manner governmental decisions are made – whether within the boundaries of designated competence and jurisdiction, whether a sufficient number of consultations have taken place, and whether conflicts of interest have been resolved. However, according to Barnard, while adherence to procedural norms ensures the correctness of decision-making and implementation, it does not determine the substantive justice of these decisions to the same extent as alignment with universally accepted, self-sufficient values – values that serve as criteria for substantive legitimacy and are independent of constitutional conditions or electoral outcomes (Barnard, 2001, pp. 27-28). Thus, procedural and substantive legitimacy can be seen as complementary.

Corresponding to procedural and substantive legitimacy, different legitimation technologies operate on distinct principles. First, procedural-normative technologies function through the implementation and modification of procedural norms. Second, ideal-establishing technologies justify or actualize socio-political ideals as the basis for political mediation. Among procedural-normative legitimation technologies, special attention should be given to the adoption of legislative acts that alter the competence of political institutions in accordance with the interests of political forces. By expanding the powers of certain governing institutions, these forces strengthen their influence over political processes. Another example of procedural-normative legitimation is the modification of electoral laws to create more opportunities for specific political forces to gain power. Such changes to procedural norms are typically justified by the pursuit of democratic ideals or the ideal of the rule of law. In practice, procedural-normative technologies are often complemented by ideal-establishing technologies.

It is important to recognize that democracy functions both as a set of normative principles and as a socio-political ideal. This dual nature allows it to play a significant role in both procedural-normative and ideal-establishing legitimation technologies. One could argue that democracy possesses a vast legitimizing potential regarding various political practices and systems. It is no coincidence that nearly all political regimes seek to proclaim themselves democratic, as do many political actors vying for power.

The substantial legitimizing role of democracy is explained by the fact that it is grounded in a set of values that provide meaning and purpose to social actors at both individual and collective levels. These values unquestionably include freedom, equality, and the recognition of human dignity. As such, values "constitute a spiritual and cultural basis for the safe functioning of social systems" (Danilyan, et al., 2023, p. 75).

Discussion

The results of the study allow us to assert that there are grounds for formulating a theory of legitimation technologies in political mediation as a sub-theory of political mediation. The challenges on this path stem from the absence of comprehensive theories of mediation and political mediation, which complicates the precise definition of mediation dimensions where legitimation technologies could be effectively applied. However, nearly every stage and component of mediation depends on legitimacy, which, as demonstrated in our study, can be effectively achieved through appropriate technologies.

Notably, in politics, it is acknowledged that "agreements become possible when disagreements are acknowledged as legitimate" (Cloke, 2001, p. 216). Susan Podziba offers a deeper analysis of the necessity of legitimacy in political mediation, arguing that the mediator should seek to transform the energy of public dispute into an "acknowledgment of the legitimacy of others' beliefs and concerns" (Podziba, 2012). According to her, the formulation of a shared societal goal helps to channel passions toward achieving a consensus-based agreement, while the existence of such a goal legitimizes substantial differences (Podziba, 2012).

Many mediation scholars emphasize that the goal of political mediation is consensus. It is worth noting that legitimation technologies enhance the legitimacy of the achieved consensus, thereby increasing the durability of political mediation outcomes. Particularly intriguing are the conclusions of certain researchers suggesting that fabricated consensus is increasingly perceived as a more adaptable alternative

for mitigating conflicts in contemporary societies (Eklou & Tonyeme, 2023). The issue of false consensus as a product of mediation is of significant importance.

Erving Goffman observed that, in social interactions, the outcome is often not a genuine consensus but merely the appearance of one (Goffman, 1959, pp. 9-10). Simply put, the audience sometimes accepts what the performer projects on a superficial level without undergoing any real internal change. "Agreement" or "consensus" does not necessarily embody Habermas's theory, in which both sides modify their positions to reach mutual understanding. Instead, consensus may emerge from more superficial motives, such as face-saving or coercion into a particular argumentation. In such cases, a truly legitimate outcome may not have been reached at all, but the audience assumes its role in the performance.

In essence, this is a technology of mutual imitative legitimation, which could be aptly termed "The Emperor's New Clothes," after Hans Christian Andersen's famous tale (Andersen, 2008). Recipients accept falsehood as truth because it serves their interests. However, this is dangerous, as the falsehood becomes an alternative reality that competes for legitimacy with actual reality in the perception of social actors – at least a portion of them.

Erving Goffman introduces the term "working consensus" to describe a compromise in which each social actor suppresses their immediate, sincere feelings, instead expressing a view they believe others will find at least temporarily acceptable. The maintenance of this superficial agreement – this appearance of consensus – is facilitated by the fact that each participant conceals their true desires behind statements that affirm values everyone present is obliged to uphold, at least verbally (Goffman, 1959, pp. 9-10).

Conclusion

Political mediation is the process of facilitating dialogue between conflicting parties in the political sphere, aimed at achieving societal consensus, preventing and resolving conflicts, and ensuring the stability and legitimacy of governing structures. It encompasses various mechanisms, technologies, and practices that enable political actors, institutions, and social groups to negotiate power, influence, and social cohesion.

Political mediation takes place in the public sphere and serves as a crucial instrument of democratic governance by fostering dialogue between citizens, authorities, and institutions. Unlike arbitration, where a third party imposes a binding decision, political mediation is a voluntary process in which the mediator merely facilitates dialogue and the achievement of agreements. It also differs from reconciliation, which seeks to restore social harmony, whereas mediation can function as only one tool within that broader process.

A distinctive feature of political mediation, within the broader concept of mediation, is that it deals with the regulation of political relations, where the interests of the parties involved are often polarized and antagonistic. Legitimacy plays a pivotal role in this process – not only as an outcome but also as a prerequisite for successful mediation. The legitimacy of both the mediator and the mediation process fosters trust in political decisions, strengthens societal acceptance of those decisions, and makes the mediation outcomes more effective in reaching consensus. Without legitimacy, mediation risks losing its effectiveness, as the parties may not trust the mediator or the results of the negotiations.

Effective legitimation technologies in political mediation encompass mythologization, symbolization, communicative technologies, and value-normative technologies. Mythologization as a legitimation technology operates by creating myths that unite conflicting parties around shared historical, cultural, or ideological foundations. Myths foster emotional resonance and mobilize public support. Symbolization legitimizes political decisions by employing symbols that structure perceptions of reality and appeal to emotions and the irrational aspects of human consciousness. Communicative technologies facilitate effective communication between parties, enabling consensus-building through the exchange of information and interpretations of socio-political reality. Value-normative technologies ensure the promotion and actualization of specific values and norms that serve as the foundation for legitimizing political decisions and actions.

The key differences among these technologies lie in their mechanisms of influence. Mythologization constructs common historical or cultural narratives, symbolization appeals to symbols and archetypes, communicative technologies organize dialogue, while value-normative technologies instill specific values and norms into public consciousness.

The challenges of employing legitimation technologies in political mediation stem from the difficulty of achieving genuine consensus. Superficial agreement or simulated legitimation – where parties merely accept the appearance of consensus without altering their positions – often complicates the process. Moreover, there is a risk of manipulation through myths or symbols, potentially leading to a fabricated

consensus that does not align with the actual interests of the parties involved. Another critical challenge is establishing trust between parties, as mediation legitimacy can be undermined in the absence of trust.

Thus, political mediation is a complex process that necessitates the use of diverse legitimization technologies to foster stability and consensus. However, their application is fraught with challenges related to ensuring genuine legitimacy and trust among stakeholders.

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