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Политический процесс в новых регионах России: теоретические и методологические подходы

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Аннотация. Введение. В статье рассматриваются теоретические и методологические основы анализа политического процесса в новых субъектах Российской Федерации – Донецкой и Луганской Народных Республиках, Запорожской и Херсонской областях. Актуальность исследования обусловлена уникальностью их интеграционного пути, сочетающего постконфликтную трансформацию, институциональное строительство и социокультурную адаптацию в правовом поле России. **Цель.** Систематизировать основные теоретические концепции и разработать комплексный методологический подход к изучению политического процесса в новых регионах России, выявив его специфические черты и этапы. **Материалы и методы.** Исследование построено на анализе научной литературы по политической регионалистике, транзитологии и теории интеграции. Используются методы институционального, сравнительно-политического и системного анализа, а также контент-анализ нормативно-правовых актов и публичных выступлений ключевых политических акторов. **Результаты и обсуждение.** Выделены ключевые этапы политического процесса: конфликтно-сепаратистский (до 2022 г.), легитимационно-интеграционный (2022-2023 гг.) и этап системной институционализации (с 2024 г.). Обоснована необходимость применения синтетической модели анализа, сочетающей инструментарий транзитологии (учет нелинейности и роли элит) и теорий политической интеграции (ассимиляция и аккомодация). Особое внимание уделено факторам, осложняющим процесс: последствия военных действий, необходимость формирования новой политической идентичности, интеграция местных элит в общероссийские политические практики. **Заключение.** Политический процесс в новых регионах носит гибридный, многоуровневый и нелинейный характер. Его эффективное изучение требует отказа от классических линейных моделей транзита в пользу комплексных подходов, учитывающих уникальный контекст постконфликтной интеграции, доминирующую роль федерального центра и динамику взаимодействия формальных институтов и неформальных практик. Перспективным направлением исследований является сравнительный анализ интеграционных траекторий новых субъектов РФ между собой и с другими постконфликтными регионами мира.

Ключевые слова: новые регионы России, политический процесс, Донбасс, интеграция, транзитология, институционализация, политическая идентичность, федерализм.

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Research article

The Political Process in the New Regions of Russia: Theoretical and Methodological Approaches

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Abstract. Introduction. The article examines the theoretical and methodological foundations for analyzing the political process in the new subjects of the Russian Federation – the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions. The relevance of the study is due to the uniqueness of their integration path, combining post-conflict transformation, institutional building and socio-cultural adaptation within the legal framework of Russia. **Goal.** To systematize the main theoretical concepts and develop a comprehensive methodological approach to studying the political process in the new regions of Russia, identifying its specific features and stages. **Materials and methods.** The study is based on the analysis of scientific literature on political regionalism, transitology and integration theory. Methods of institutional, comparative-political and systemic analysis are used, as well as content analysis of regulatory legal acts and public speeches of key political actors.

Results and discussion. The key stages of the political process are identified: the conflict-separatist stage (until 2022), the legitimation-integration stage (2022-2023) and the stage of systemic institutionalization (from 2024). The necessity of applying a synthetic model of analysis combining the tools of transitology (accounting for non-linearity and the role of elites) and theories of political integration (assimilation and accommodation) is substantiated. Special attention is paid to complicating factors: the consequences of hostilities, the need to form a new political identity, the integration of local elites into all-Russian political practices. **Conclusion.** The political process in the new regions is hybrid, multi-level and non-linear. Its effective study requires a rejection of classical linear transit models in favor of comprehensive approaches that take into account the unique context of post-conflict integration, the dominant role of the federal center and the dynamics of interaction between formal institutions and informal practices. A promising area of research is a comparative analysis of the integration trajectories of the new subjects of the Russian Federation among themselves and with other post-conflict regions of the world.

Key words: new regions of Russia, political process, Donbas, integration, transitology, institutionalization, political identity, federalism.

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Introduction. The incorporation of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, and the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Oblasts into the Russian Federation represents an unprecedented case of large-scale political border changes and a complex, multi-layered integration process in modern

history. The political process in these new constituent entities of the Russian Federation is unfolding under a unique combination of factors: an unfinished armed conflict, profound socioeconomic transformation, active institution-building, and the formation of a new civic and political identity. Traditional theories of democratic transition or classical models of federalism prove insufficient for an adequate analysis. Therefore, there is a pressing need for theoretical understanding and the development of specific methodological tools that account for the hybrid, nonlinear, and contextual nature of this process.

Materials and methods of research. The methodological basis of the study is a synthesis of several theoretical approaches. Firstly, this is the toolkit **of political transitology**, revised taking into account the criticism of linear models and adapted to the conditions of "directed transit" under the auspices of the federal center. Secondly, approaches **of political regionalism are applied**, focusing on the interaction between the center and the periphery, the asymmetry of regional development and the specifics of regional political regimes. Thirdly, theories **of political integration are used** (in particular, the models of assimilation and accommodation), allowing for the analysis of the process of incorporation of new territories and populations into a single legal, economic and symbolic space of the state [1]. The empirical base consists of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, federal constitutional laws on the admission of new subjects, charters and legislation of new regions, programmatic documents of leading political parties, as well as data from sociological research conducted in these territories. The main methods are institutional and comparative analysis, discourse analysis of the public field, and expert assessments.

Research results and discussion. The analysis revealed three conditional, partially overlapping, stages of the political process in the new regions:

1. **Conflict-separatist (until 2022):** Characterized by the formation of political institutions in the Donbas republics amidst war, the emergence of their own elite groups, and the search for external legitimacy. The political process was subordinated to the logic of survival and military confrontation.

2. **Legitimation and Integration (2022-2023):** The key event was formal legal integration through referendums and the adoption of constitutional laws. This stage was dominated by the implementation of federal legislation, the creation of basic governing institutions in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, and the launch of socio-economic support programs. The political process is strictly centralized and controlled from Moscow.

3. **The stage of systemic institutionalization (from 2024):** The tasks of forming a stable and self-reproducing political system integrated into the all-Russian one come to the fore. This includes: a) adaptation of the all-Russian party system (integration of United Russia and systemic parties into the local political landscape); b) integration of regional elites into federal networks of influence and lobbying practices; c) formation of a new political identity combining local "Donbass" or "Black Sea" specifics with the all-Russian civic consciousness [2].

The main methodological challenge is the hybridity of emerging institutions, in which formal rules imported from the federal center are closely intertwined with informal practices rooted in the specific social capital of post-Soviet Donbas and southern Ukraine [3]. This creates the risk of "institutional gaps" and requires researchers to focus on everyday governance practices, not just regulatory acts.

Conclusion. Thus, the political process in Russia's new regions represents a unique laboratory for post-conflict state-building and political integration. Its theoretical understanding requires a rejection of orthodox models in favor of a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach. The synthetic model developed in this article, combining adapted tools from transitology, regional studies, and integration theory, allows us to identify key drivers and barriers to the process. Further research should focus on a comparative analysis of internal dynamics in various new regions, an examination of local elite adaptation mechanisms, and an analysis of the

population's perception of integration processes, which is a determining factor in the long-term sustainability of the new political reality.

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Conceptualization and research design — development of the general idea, goals and methodology of the study.

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