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Configurations of political (dis)engagement in post-revolution, post-war Armenia: a person-centered analysis

Sona Manusyan

s_manusyan@ysu.am

Yerevan State University

Piruza Manukyan

Yerevan State University

Ani Poghosyan

Yerevan State University

Ani Gasparyan

Yerevan State University

Narine Khachatryan

Yerevan State University

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Abstract

Mass mobilization in Armenia in 2018 culminating in what became known as the Velvet Revolution was followed by several years of low political participation. This study asks whether that low participation corresponds to a single political disposition or to several. We apply latent class analysis to twelve items from the Caucasus Barometer 2024 survey of Armenia (N = 1,561), related to political interest, institutional trust, perceived fair treatment by the government, internal efficacy and powerlessness, with political actions treated as a distal outcome. Five configurations of political (dis)engagement are identified. The two largest configurations, together 49.5% of the population, show similarly low trust in institutions and differ mainly in political interest and internal efficacy. Seventeen percent of respondents reported any political action, and one third of them came from the more politically interested of the two largest configurations. Comparison with dimensional models could not establish whether the underlying structure is better described as discrete groups or as continuous variation. The contrast between the two largest configurations is based on a two item-measure of interest and needs to be replicated with validated scales. The findings are specific to a single cross-section collected between July and October 2024 in a rapidly changing political context and therefore have limited generalizability to how things stand now. They nevertheless indicate that inaction is internally differentiated, and that person-centered approaches such as LCA can capture subtle distinctions that aggregate measures miss.

Introduction

In 2018, Armenia experienced the most significant episode of mass mobilization in its post-Soviet period. Weeks of peaceful, decentered protests led to the removal of an entrenched government and demonstrated the population's capacity for coordinated political action (Abrahamian and Shagoyan 2018; Lanskoy and Suthers 2019) and, importantly, the capacity of the progressive civil society groups to guide that action (Socioscope 2019). Consistent with the broader observation that revolutions are emotional events above all, carried by highly affective arousal (Toska 2024), the Armenian revolution was a massive and euphoric mobilization experienced as a collective act of agency that broke with past authoritarian norms and revived expectations of democratic change (Broers 2021; Gevorgyan and Antonyan 2024).

The following years reversed this hopeful turn. The compounding crises of a mismanaged pandemic and severe territorial and human losses in the 2020 2nd Nagorno-Karabakh War launched by Azerbaijan (Kazaryan et al. 2021) were shortly followed by a profound national identity crisis (Terzyan 2025). Culminating in Azerbaijan's second military offensive and ethnic cleansing of Nagorno-Karabakh's remaining native population in 2023 (Freedom House et al. 2024), these developments delivered a combination of unprecedented shocks to Armenian society (Gevorgyan and Antonyan 2024). Various survey data track these shifts: interpersonal trust has remained relatively stable, while trust in political institutions rose after the 2018 political change and then fell after the war (Paturyan and Melkonyan 2024). By September 2024, 61% of Armenians said they did not trust any political figure (International Republican Institute 2024).

On the surface Armenia still presents as a highly politicized and engaged society: politics dominates everyday conversation and social media, and public discussion of the country's issues is quite intense. These discussions reveal persistent and substantial grievances toward the government on two interconnected fronts: the handling of the war and subsequent security challenges, and considerable disillusionment with aspects of the post-revolutionary domestic trajectory, including government decisions and practices that raise concerns about democratic governance and are widely seen as contributing to social and political polarization (Hovhannisyan and Meister 2026; Avedissian 2024). Yet, despite the salience of these grievances and their fragmented articulation among civil society actors, they have not translated into sustained collective action or vocal public criticism that was characteristic of the Armenian public life in years preceding the revolution. Protest episodes have occurred, but none has approached the scale of the 2018 mobilization or the ethos of the years leading up to it. Being now elite-driven, top-down mobilizations engineered by restorationist agendas rather than progressive grassroots networks, these attempts have failed to draw large publics. Commentators and monitoring reports interpret this outward idleness of the citizenry as political apathy. Freedom House, for instance, describes the Armenian population as politically apathetic and disempowered (Freedom House 2024). Yet whether withdrawal of this kind is a manifestation of across-the-board apathy, or something more differentiated in terms of underlying dispositions and orientations, is a question that requires further nuanced examination.

Political non-participation or inaction, on its own, provides little information. The classic accounts of inaction suggest that it does not mean consent, nor does it mean people are incapable of acting. Gaventa (1980) shows that repeated defeat can lead to the internalization of a sense of powerlessness, and as a result grievances stop being formed at all, which may be mistaken for consent. Kuran (1991) suggests that when acting seems costly, people hide their real views, and a society can look calm and quiet until conditions change and possibilities for mobilization appear. Recent evidence from post-war Armenia itself showed that withdrawal is often active and deliberate rather than passive and unreflected (Manusyan et al. 2026). To distinguish the types of silence, we must examine citizens' beliefs and attitudes along with behaviors.

Research also shows that political orientations are not associated with action in a simple, uniform way. Political trust is positively associated with institutionalized participation such as voting, but negatively or not at all with non-institutionalized participation such as protest, petitions, and boycotts (Hooghe and Marien 2013). However, later meta-analytical research has shown that political trust is associated with formal participation but unrelated to informal participation (Devine 2024). Other orientations show the same complex pattern of associations with action. Since Gamson (1968) distrust has been expected to mobilize people only with the presence of internal efficacy, while distrust in combination with powerlessness has been expected to lead to withdrawal. One study found that distrust is related to direct-democratic participation especially among the politically knowledgeable; namely, people who are both distrustful and politically informed are more likely to use direct-democratic instruments to influence political decision-making as an alternative to relying on representative channels (Christensen 2018). Confidence in the system as a whole, which is a broader orientation than trust in specific institutions,

follows a similar non-uniform logic. It has been shown that normative engagement reaches its peak at moderate system confidence and is lowest at both extremes (Cichocka et al. 2018). Two different orientations can therefore produce (dis)engagement that is identical at the level of behavior.

These associations are, in turn, conditional on the political environment. People with a higher sense of distrust of institutions tend to protest more, and this association is stronger in more open political systems (Braun and Hutter 2016). How far individual-level characteristics translate into protest depends on durability of the regime and the state of empowerment rights (Williams 2023).

Current Study

Most findings come from studies of Western, relatively stable democracies, and whether these patterns hold in the Armenian case with all its peculiarities discussed above and with what can be emphasized as a layered and complex socio-political situation that both begs for protest and makes it unlikely, remains an open question.

This study therefore asks three research questions. First, what configurations of political (dis)engagement emerge in recent nationwide data from Armenia? Second, are these configurations better described as distinct types or as positions along one or more continuous dimensions? Third, how do political actions, treated as outcomes, differ across these configurations? Fourth, what methodological potential does latent class analysis offer for capturing latent potential for civic engagement amid post-revolutionary passivity?

Given the complex relationship between political behavior and the attitudes and beliefs, we use latent class analysis (LCA) to identify distinct configurations of political (dis)engagement. LCA is a model-based method that sorts respondents into latent classes, where each class is characterized by a unique pattern of responses across a selected set of indicators (Weller et al. 2020). LCA can reveal patterns that variable-centered approaches may miss (Thomas et al. 2024). Studies of this kind exist in political engagement research, but typically they classify people by their actions (Oser 2017; Alvarez et al. 2017; Laliberté et al. 2026). In our case, however, where the majority of the population shows no non-electoral action at all, classification based on actions alone would probably leave the large majority as a single class and would let the nuances of post-revolution and post-war civic (dis)engagement dynamics slip our attention.

Methods

Data

The data we analyzed come from the 2024 Caucasus Barometer survey of Armenia, conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) (Caucasus Barometer 2024). The sample included 1,561 respondents aged 18 and over.

For our analysis LCA indicators were selected based on theoretical and empirical grounds in political psychology. Most of the selected indicators have been shown to have an association with political participation in the literature reviewed above, such as political interest, internal and external political efficacy, trust. Powerlessness as an indicator was also selected to reveal some associations that can explain inaction behavioral patterns. For analysis we apply the two items for political interest (“interest in national politics”, “interest in international politics” on 4-points response scale), three items for trust (“trust in the courts”, “trust in the government”, “trust in National Assembly” on 5-points response scale), one item indicating perceived fair treatment by government on 4-points response scale, two items on internal efficacy (“understanding the political issues”, “qualified to participate in political actions” on 5-points response scale) and four items on powerlessness (“officials do not care”, ”“politics is too complicated”, “people like me have no to say”, “voting makes no difference” on 5-points response scale). All the items were included in the model separately. Items related to political actions were not included in the model as indicators as those items are rare events, which can dominate class formation. They were analyzed separately as distal outcomes. The twelve indicators and four action items are listed in Table S1, with their Caucasus Barometer variable codes, full question wording and response scales. A number of demographic variables that were not included in the model were later used to characterize the classes: age, gender, settlement type, and education. The answers like “Don’t know” and “refuse to answer”, and the errors recorded by the interviewer were treated as missing. Cases with missing data on some indicators were kept.

Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted in three steps. The first step was conducted using LCA to identify configurations of political (dis)engagement in the population based on the above-mentioned indicators. The second step assessed whether the resulting structure represented distinct configurations or continuous dimensions. The third step treated political action as a distal outcome in relation to political engagement classes. Demographic variables as external validators were linked to the classes in the same way as actions.

Models were estimated using the poLCA package in R (Linzer and Lewis 2011). Each model was estimated from 200 random starting-points and the highest-likelihood solution retained. The solutions with one through six classes were compared. The number of classes was chosen primarily by BIC, other fit indices, and interpretability (Weller et al. 2020).

We then applied two diagnostic procedures. First, we assessed local dependence among indicators using bivariate residuals. Where high local dependence was identified, the class enumeration was repeated with each affected item removed in turn. Then we compared the retained solution with a graded response model that was fitted to the same set of indicators using the mirt package in R (Chalmers 2012).

Finally, political actions and the demographic variables were examined in relation to the configurations of political (dis)engagement. All associations were tested under the complex survey design with the survey package in R (Lumley 2004). Categorical outcomes were tested through design-based (Rao-Scott) tests of association and continuous outcomes through design-based analogues of analysis of variance. The associations between classes and external validators were estimated with a bias-adjusted three-step (BCH) approach (Vermunt 2017; Bolck et al. 2004; Bakk et al. 2013).

Claude (Anthropic) assisted with text editing and restructuring, R coding, and literature search. All analytical decisions were made by the authors. The authors checked and verified all assisted content. The authors take full responsibility for the content of the study.

Results

Model Fitting

The results of fit statistics for one through six classes are presented in Table 1. The BIC reached a minimum at five classes and increased at six classes. The five-class solution was retained based on BIC. However, the difference between four and five classes was 45.4 BIC points, so the solution is not clearly defined. A four-class solution where the two configurations merge may be a defensible alternative. LCA was run from 200 different random starting points, and the five-class solution was reached by 131 of them. For comparison, the four-class solution was reached by 65. Entropy was .78 in the retained solution and was flat across solutions, so it provided a weak basis for making a choice.

Table 1
Fit indices for one- to six-class solutions.

k	logLik	npar	BIC	aBIC	AIC	Entropy	Min %	Reps
1	−24849.4	45	50029.7	49886.7	49788.8	—	100.0	—
2	−23815.1	91	48299.4	48010.3	47812.2	.779	48.1	200
3	−23377.6	137	47762.6	47327.4	47029.2	.780	20.7	188
4	−23143.4	183	47632.5	47051.1	46652.9	.787	17.2	65
5	−22951.6	229	47587.0	46859.5	46361.2	.782	16.2	131
6	−22818.6	275	47659.3	46785.7	46187.2	.786	12.3	91

Note. Reps = number of random starts (of 200) reaching the retained maximum. Min % = size of the smallest class.

The residual association showed local dependence primarily concentrated within the conceptual blocks (an average of 9.24 within and 1.21 between the blocks). The two interest indicators showed the largest residual of 42.0. Considering the size of this residual, enumeration was repeated with each interest item removed in turn. In both cases, the minimum BIC moved to four classes, and the two classes that were

mainly distinguished by interest merged into a single class. The residual between the interest items was larger in the five-class solution (42.0) than in the four-class solution (38.7). This is not the pattern that would be expected if the additional class absorbed this dependence. Thus, the five-class solution was retained based on the fit criteria described above. The implications of this local dependence for the contrast between the two configurations are addressed in the Discussion.

The Five Configurations

The design-weighted class prevalence rates were 26.9%, 22.6%, 18.7%, 16.1% and 15.6% (SE 1.2 to 1.6 percentage points). The mean posterior probability of assignment ranged from 83 to .90, and the entropy was 0.78. Table 2 shows the probability that a member of each class gives a high response for each item, together with the weighted proportion in the sample.

Table 2
Probability of a high response by class, and the weighted sample proportions.

Item	Sample	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5
Interest, Armenian politics	.63	.30	.95	.69	.67	.78
Interest, international politics	.45	.06	.85	.52	.43	.66
Trust in parliament	.18	.01	.03	.14	.14	.73
Trust in the executive	.29	.08	.11	.26	.24	.93
Trust in the courts	.23	.10	.07	.22	.30	.53
Treated fairly by government	.39	.19	.27	.35	.53	.80
Understand political issues	.40	.20	.52	.39	.31	.67
Qualified to participate	.20	.08	.29	.18	.17	.35
Officials do not care	.73	.90	.89	.80	.49	.41
Politics too complicated	.72	.81	.73	.80	.69	.65
People like me have no say	.66	.80	.75	.72	.42	.49
Voting makes no difference	.45	.56	.51	.53	.27	.34

For simplicity, we labelled the five configurations by their most distinguishing characteristics.

Class 1 (C1, “Withdrawn”, 26.9%) has the lowest values in the interest items (.06 international politics, and .30 national politics), the lowest in two trust items (.01 parliament, .08 executive) and internal efficacy items (.20, .08). This class also has the highest values on each powerlessness indicator (.90 officials do not care, .81 politics is incomprehensible, .80 have no say, .56 voting makes no difference).

Class 2 (C2, “Interested-Distrustful”) (C2, 22.6%) has the highest values in interest (.95 national, .85 international) with trust as low as C1's (.03 parliament, .11 executive) and the lowest trust in the courts (.08). Its powerlessness is close to C1's on all four indicators (.89 officials do not care, .75 no say, .73 politics incomprehensible, .51 voting makes no difference). Its internal efficacy is more than twice C1’s (.52 understanding, .29 qualification).

Class 3 (C3, “Intermediate-Alienated”, 18.7%) has intermediate values on interest (.69, .52), low on trust (.14 parliament, .26 executive, .22 courts), powerlessness close to C1 and C2 on three indicators (.80 politics incomprehensible, .72 no say, .53 voting makes no difference), but lower on the fourth (80 officials do not care).

Class 4 (C4, “Unaligned”, 16.1%) has intermediate values on interest items (.67 national, .43 international) and low trust, but the second-highest values on trust in the courts (.30) and perceived fair treatment (.53). It has lower than C1-C3 powerlessness on three of the four items (.49 officials do not care, .42 no say, .27 voting makes no difference).

Class 5 (“Loyal”, C5, 15.6%) has the highest values in trust items (.93 executive, .73 parliament, .53 courts), perceived fair treatment (.80), internal efficacy (.67, .35), relatively high values in interest (.78 national, .66 international) and the lowest powerlessness on two of four items (.41 officials do not care, .65 politics is incomprehensible).

Discrete or Continuous?

The next step was to examine what form the underlying structure takes - discrete or continuous. To this end, graded response models with one or two dimensions were fitted to the same items and the same sample (see Table S1). As a result, the BIC prefers the two-dimensional model (46,965.6) over the five-class model (47,587.0), and the AIC - the five-class model (46,361.2 against 46,601.6). The class model had the higher log-likelihood but used 229 parameters against 68. The disagreement between those criteria reflects their different complexity penalties. To identify which description is correct, a model that includes both classes and dimensions would be required (Lubke and Neale 2006, 2008), and we did not fit such a model. The classes are therefore to be understood and described as configurations of political participation, and not citizen types.

The two-dimensional structure is informative about how the indicators are grouped together. The first dimension grouped trust in parliament (.89), the executive (.87) and the courts (.63), with perceived fair treatment (.58), and, in the opposite direction, the belief that officials do not care (− .60). These are the items that refer to institutional legitimacy. The second dimension grouped interest in international (.88) and national (.85) politics, understanding and qualification (.30 each). This second dimension refers to the attention to politics. The two dimensions correlated at .186 under oblimin rotation, thus, trust in institutions and attention to politics varied almost independently. However, these dimensions did not

describe all of the items equally well. They accounted for little of the variance in the internal efficacy items (.16, .15), and in three of the four powerlessness items (.14, .08, .06).

Political actions

First, it is important to mention that at least one of the four actions in the preceding twelve months was reported by 17.1% of respondents: attending a demonstration (9.2%), signing a petition (7.9%), contacting a government representative (7.0%) and NGO activity (5.2%).

In Table 3 the results of association of class membership with political action were presented (Table 3). C2 reported the highest rate on every item, and was about twice as likely to take any action as any other class. The largest differences were for attending a demonstration and signing a petition. Contacting a representative and participating in NGO activity did not differ across classes. Of respondents who took at least one action, 34.1% belonged to C2, which is 22.6% of the sample.

Table 3
Political actions by class, bias-adjusted three-step (BCH) estimates with 95% confidence intervals

Outcome	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	η²	p
Any action	.14 [.09, .19]	.27 [.20, .35]	.13 [.07, .18]	.16 [.08, .23]	.14 [.08, .19]	.024	.028
Number of actions	.19 [.12, .26]	.52 [.38, .66]	.22 [.09, .35]	.23 [.09, .36]	.19 [.11, .28]	.033	< .001
Attended a demonstration	.08 [.04, .11]	.19 [.13, .26]	.07 [.02, .11]	.06 [.01, .11]	.04 [.01, .06]	.039	< .001
Signed a petition	.04 [.02, .06]	.13 [.08, .18]	.04 [.01, .08]	.08 [.03, .13]	.05 [.02, .09]	.018	.022
Contacted a representative	.04 [.01, .07]	.13 [.08, .18]	.05 [.01, .08]	.05 [.01, .10]	.07 [.03, .11]	.017	.094
NGO activity	.03 [.01, .06]	.07 [.04, .10]	.07 [.02, .11]	.03 [.00, .06]	.04 [.01, .07]	.006	.195

Note. Estimates are BCH-corrected, with 95% confidence intervals in brackets. All rows are probabilities except, only the "number of actions" is the expected count out of four.

Under modal class assignment the association was also significant (Cramér's V = .124, p = .004). The weighted proportions taking any action were 14.5%, 25.4%, 13.4%, 15.5% and 14.2% for C1 to C5 respectively.

Demographic variables

Demographic variables are presented in Table 4. Age differed across classes ($\eta^2 = .053$, $p < .001$): C1 were the youngest (42.2 years), compared to 52.8 years for C2 and 52.0 years for C5. The proportion of

people with higher education also differed between classes (η^2 = .030, p < .001): 33.0% in C2 compared to 13.8% in C4. Neither gender (p = .300) nor settlement type (all p > .08) differed between the classes.

Table 4
Demographic variables by class, bias-adjusted three-step (BCH) estimates with 95% confidence intervals

Validator	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	η^2	p
Age (years)	42.2 [39.8, 44.6]	52.8 [49.8, 55.9]	47.8 [44.5, 51.1]	45.0 [41.3, 48.7]	52.0 [48.3, 55.6]	.053	< .001
Education							
Secondary or less	.57 [.51, .64]	.45 [.37, .54]	.50 [.42, .58]	.53 [.43, .63]	.57 [.49, .65]	.009	.208
Vocational	.25 [.19, .31]	.22 [.16, .27]	.24 [.17, .30]	.33 [.25, .42]	.26 [.19, .33]	.008	.318
Higher	.17 [.13, .22]	.33 [.26, .40]	.27 [.20, .34]	.14 [.08, .19]	.17 [.12, .23]	.030	< .001
Gender							
Female	.53 [.45, .60]	.48 [.40, .56]	.58 [.49, .67]	.63 [.52, .73]	.53 [.43, .62]	.010	.300
Settlement type							
Capital	.39 [.33, .46]	.44 [.36, .52]	.39 [.29, .48]	.34 [.25, .42]	.29 [.20, .37]	.012	.084
Other urban	.27 [.21, .33]	.26 [.19, .33]	.24 [.17, .32]	.31 [.23, .39]	.28 [.20, .37]	.002	.765
Rural	.34 [.27, .40]	.30 [.22, .37]	.37 [.28, .46]	.36 [.27, .44]	.43 [.34, .52]	.008	.237

Note. Estimates are BCH-corrected, with 95% confidence intervals in brackets. Age is in years; all other rows are proportions.

Modal class assignment gave the same pattern. Age (η^2 = .038, p < .001) and education (Cramér's V = .104, p = .002) differed across classes, gender and settlement type did not.

Discussion and Limitations

The primary objective of this study was to examine whether low political participation among Armenian citizens corresponds to a single, homogenous disposition or reflects distinct latent configurations. We used latent class analysis on twelve items covering political interest, trust in institutions, perceived fair treatment of the government, internal efficacy and powerlessness. As a result, we identified five configurations of political dis(engagement) among the Armenian respondents in 2024.

The main finding is that the two largest configurations together accounted for 49.5% of the population and showed relatively low levels of trust towards institutions. Those two configurations - Withdrawn (C1) and Interested-Distrustful (C2) have similarly low levels of trust. There is also little difference between them on the four powerlessness items. Their main difference is in the level of political interest and efficacy. The probability of a high response on the interest items is .06 and .30 in C1, and .85 and .95 in C2, and on the internal efficacy items is .20 and .08 in C1, and .52 and .29 in C2. This difference between the two largest disengaged configurations can be interpreted as a difference in psychological involvement in politics. Bromme and Rothmund (2021) reveal a higher-order factor such as political involvement which underlies both political interest and internal efficacy. In our data, however, the interest items separate C1 from C2 more clearly than the efficacy items do. The configurations also differ in participation, however, the level of participation in both remains relatively low (14% in C1, and 27% in C2).

Various kinds of disengagement have been discussed in existing literature. Gamson (1968) suggested that low political trust together with high internal efficacy is most likely to lead to mobilization, and that citizens low on both orientations are likely to withdraw (“Alienated” citizens). Dahl et al. (2018) studied apathy and alienation in relation to political passivity among adolescents in European Union countries, and found that what distinguished alienated participants from apathetic ones was cognitive awareness of politics. A comparable feature distinguishes our two largest configurations. However, the survey contains no clear measure of indifference, so we cannot say which of the two applies here. Amnå and Ekman (2014) had earlier used multivariate cluster analysis to identify distinct types of political passivity alongside active citizens, namely, standby citizens, who are characterized as attentive, and two generally passive types - the unengaged and the disillusioned ones. It should be noted that these comparisons are limited. Their samples were adolescents in established European democracies. And Dahl et al. (2018) assessed intended rather than reported behavior. Also, Amnå and Ekman’s (2014) two passive groups differed in political interest but not in participation, whereas ours differ in both.

The combination of high political interest and low institutional trust that we see in C2 corresponds to a commonly acknowledged category that our data cannot verify. Critical citizens, suggested by Norris (1999), support democracy as a system of government but are dissatisfied with its practical implementation. Our items did not include support for democracy, therefore, we can neither establish nor rule out that C2 configuration belongs to this category. C2 also endorses powerlessness at a rate similar to that of C1, which does not align with a category based on the belief that one can influence politics.

From an empirical perspective, the five identified configurations should not be interpreted as citizen types. A two-dimensional graded response model and the five-class model were fitted using the same indicators. The information criteria disagreed; the comparison therefore did not favor any particular representation. This is a common difficulty, as each model family can reproduce the other's structure (Lubke and Neale 2006, 2008). To resolve this issue, we need to fit models that include both classes and factors, which we did not do in this study.

The dimensions that emerged resonate, to some extent, with those described by Bromme and Rothmund (2021) as higher-order factors of general attitudes towards politics. There, political trust encompasses trust in institutions and external efficacy, and political involvement encompasses political interest and internal efficacy. As a result, the first dimension loaded trust in parliament (.89), the executive (.87) and the courts (.63), perceived fair treatment (.58) and, negatively, the belief that officials do not care what people like the respondent think (− .60). The second dimension loaded interest in national (.85) and international (.88) politics, and self-rated understanding of political qualification in political matters at .30 each. Bromme and Rothmund (2021) anticipated that both external efficacy and procedural justice beliefs would load on the higher-order trust factor, and our two corresponding items behave accordingly. However, the resemblance should be interpreted with caution, as they used validated scales, and our indicators are items from a general-purpose survey. Additionally, our second dimension only covers two of the aspects associated with involvement. The two internal efficacy items load more weakly on the second dimension than the interest items do.

The comparison provides no evidence that the configurations are discrete categories, and none that the underlying structure is continuous. The configurations differ in degree, and the boundaries between them may shift depending on the model specification. The four-class solution merges C3 and C4, and when either interest item is removed, C1 and C2 merge. For this reason, we describe the configurations as recurring patterns of political (dis)engagement without a claim about the form of the underlying structure.

17.1% of respondents reported at least one out of four non-electoral actions in the twelve months prior to the survey. The probability of taking at least one action was 0.27 in the Interested-Distrustful configuration (C2), and between 0.13 and 0.16 in the other configurations ($p = 0.028$, $\eta^2 = 0.024$). This association is small. That configuration also reported more actions on average (.52 against .19 to .23, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .033$). Among the acts taken separately, attending a demonstration differed most (.19 against .04 to .08, $\eta^2 = .039$, $p < .001$). Of respondents who reported any action, 34.1% belonged to C2. Contacting a government representative and participating in an activity of an NGO did not differ significantly across configurations ($p = .094$ and $p = .195$). Both forms of action were rare in the sample (7.0% and 5.2%), and the analysis did not reveal any class in which either was prevalent.

The orientation profiles only weakly correspond to political action. Action was reported in all five configurations. However, about one third of those who reported at least one action belonged to C2, which had the highest rate. We do not interpret these findings as evidence that orientations are not related to action at all. We used single items as orientations from a general-purpose survey, and it is not clear to what extent the identified association is affected by measurement error. The model specification mattered here too. Unlike traditional studies that use LCA, our design flips the order of classification. Previous studies classified citizens based on their actions and associated the identified types to other variables, but our approach classified by orientations and dispositions and then treated action as a distal outcome.

Among all demographic variables, age differed the most ($\eta^2 = .053$, $p < .001$). The Withdrawn configuration (C1) was the youngest (42.2 years), and C2 and the Loyal configuration (C5) the oldest (52.8 and 52.0 years). If we rank the configurations by mean age, that reproduces their ranking on both interest items in exactly the same order, though only the youngest configuration is clearly separated from the two oldest, as the confidence intervals overlap. It is not clear whether this pattern reflects change over the life course or differences between cohorts from a single survey. To address this issue, it would require comparing several waves of the survey, which can become part of our further inquiry.

The proportion of respondents with higher education varied across the configurations ($\eta^2 = .030$, $p < .001$). It was most prevalent (33.0%) in the interested and distrustful configuration, and least prevalent (13.8%) in the Unaligned configuration (C4). C2 is clearly separated from C1, C4 and C5, however, its confidence interval overlaps that of the Intermediate-Alienated configuration (C3). The proportion with secondary education or less ($p = .208$) and the proportion with vocational education ($p = .318$) did not differ across configurations. Neither gender ($\eta^2 = .010$, $p = .300$) nor settlement type differed significantly across configurations ($p = .084$, .765 and .237 for residence in the capital, other urban areas and rural areas respectively).

At least two thirds of the sample agreed on three statements: 73% agreed that officials do not care what people like them think, 72% agreed that politics and government seem too complicated to understand, and 66% agreed that people like them have no say. The level of the agreement on these items is not unique to Armenia. In a 2023 survey the median response from 24 countries was that 74% of people agreed that officials did not care what people like them thought (Pew Research Center, 2024).

Beyond the limitations noted above, there are several others that should be considered. The two political interest items had a bivariate residual of 42.00 within classes (against 8.34 for the next-highest pair). C1 and C2 largely merged when either item was removed. Therefore, the contrast between those configurations is based on a two-item measure and should be treated with caution until it can be replicated with more comprehensive and validated items. Similar caution applies to C4. We did not examine response styles, and an intermediate profile on Likert items may reflect not a distinct configuration, but a tendency to give middling answers across items. C4 should be interpreted with that in mind.

The next limitation relates to the measurement of political action. Four binary items capture a rather narrow range of political activity. Everyday and informal forms of civic engagement, and digital forms of participation, were not measured. Including these might reveal engagement in configurations that were shown to be the least active here. The final limitation concerns generalizability over time. The data used in this study was collected between 27 July and 10 October 2024. A series of political events of varying scale have occurred since then, including parliamentary elections in June 2026. Changes in a country like Armenia can happen quite quickly. The configurations therefore describe the population during that period. It is unclear, given the highly volatile Armenian context, whether the same structure would be found today.

Conclusion

Throughout the paper, we have deliberately used terms like configurations, orientations, dispositions etc. instead of groups or types both because the presented analysis has yielded relative and permeable rather than clear-cut differences between the classes, and because for the purposes of our study, it is precisely the often overlooked subtle, marginal differences between the political (dis)engagement configurations that require analytical attention. In a country where civil society groups and processes have lain low, and the public is overwhelmingly described in expert and academic analyses in generalized, flat terms of apathy and inaction, our analysis captures the non-salient difference that, for instance, Class 2 importantly has from Class 1, suggesting that some presence of internal efficacy beliefs and political interest forms a different citizenship profile with a different engagement potential.

The Interested-Distrustful configuration is particularly instructive when contrasted with C5, the system-trusting Loyal configuration. A configuration characterized by trust in the system is not, in itself, problematic; on the contrary, it may signal the consolidation and stabilization of political institutions in Armenia, as citizens come to rely more on the state and perceive conventional, non-disruptive forms of participation, such as elections, as meaningful avenues for influencing the country's direction. At the same time, it is important that citizens retain the capacity and willingness to question existing arrangements and challenge the status quo, a disposition more plausibly associated with the Interested-Distrustful orientation. Alongside political stability, being attuned to and keeping sight of these less visible forms of political participation, and the civic agency it reflects, is important both theoretically and in social practice.

Declarations

Author Contribution

S.M: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Supervision; P. M.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft, Writing– Review & Editing; A. P.: Writing-review and editing; A.G.: Writing-review and editing; N. K.: Conceptualization, Supervision, Writing – review & editing.

Data Availability

The data used in this study are publicly available from the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) through the Caucasus Barometer 2024 Armenia dataset:
https://www.caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2024am/downloads/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

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