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POLITICAL HISTORY PERIODIZATION AND ITS METHODOLOGICAL POSSIBILITIES AS A TOOL TO STUDY THE PROCESS OF STATE FORMATION

The article describes possibilities of political history periodization as a scientific method to learn long-term political processes including the process of state formation. The author of the article provides examples of the process of state formation periodization both within the world history and its current stage. The article also considers political history periodization of the self-determined (unrecognized) state on the example of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic. The conclusion is made, that periodization of the state formation process cannot answer the question why there appear new states in the world; but it allows us to consider the new states formation in connection with other political history processes and events, which certainly contributes to a more objective understanding of the state formation process nature.

Key words: political history, chronology, periodization, political process, state, process of state formation, self-determined (unrecognized) state.

State formation as a political process is an essential part of political history which substantively covers background and causes of certain states emergence as well as the events related to their developing and functioning; improvement and modernization of a political system; and state structure and state system features in a given country at different historical stages. For the purpose of a detailed study of state formation process in political history it is necessary to choose both the scale and the angle of studying the subject under research since this very choice implies a certain interpretation of political events related to state-building in one way or another. We believe, the most convenient forms of scaling are chronology studying the system of chronology and calendars of different peoples and nations and helping to establish the dates of historical events and time of social and political phenomena; and periodization aiming to show the course of political processes in their entirety (i. e., continuous and consistent) form.

The questions concerning political development periodization is a relevant methodological problem of political history, especially in the part aimed to study political processes. Periodization determines chronological sequence of stages in social development. Revealing these stages is usually based on decisive factors of social and political development common both to all countries and specific ones determining history of formation and development of certain states. As periodization reflecting political processes special features involves a high degree of systematization and generalization of the research material it is considered to be a tool for their study; and the objective attitude toward political history periodization makes it possible to move away from an intuitive determination of the stages of various political processes and events to their theoretical foundation. Therefore, periodization can be regarded as a special method to learn the longest political processes.

Thus, state formation process is associated with problems of periodization not only as part of the political history; it is also due to the fact that it takes place both in political space and political time. The scientific outlook and ordinary human experience allow perceiving time as a continuous moving stream and at the same time to divide it into conditional periods. In different cultures there was a need of dating events, and the ways of relating events to some time period were quite various: they could be based on the lunar and solar calendars, agronomic cycles, some dynasties ruling, as well as on certain symbolic events such as the world creation or Rome foundation¹.

Most researchers do not doubt that periodization is necessary to organize and analyze the events. However, the practice of periodization often causes academic debates connected with a significant degree of conditionality of determining the fragments of the past. The possibility of periodization of the most

¹ Репина, Л.П., Зверева, В.В., Парамонова, М.Ю. (2004). *История исторического знания*. Москва: Дрофа, 40.

important events in the history of public (including political) development is based on human society history perception as being continuous and uniform. Basing on the idea of common development process of human society one can determine some stages in it and compare one era to another basing on a variety of periodization criteria presented in political thought.

Thus, in the 8-7th centuries B. C. ancient Greek poet Hesiod divided peoples history into five periods – divine, gold, silver, copper and iron – claiming that people live less virtuously from century to century¹. In the 6th century B. C, ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras, by analogy with human life, considered history according to the theory of a circle when development goes along the same track: origin, blossom and death. And there is no any vector of history².

In the 19th century, German economist and statistician B. Hildebrand suggested his version of social development periodization according to the economy type. He divided history into three periods: natural economy society, monetary economy society and credit economy society³. His contemporary, Russian geographer, writer and sociologist L. Mechnikov, introduced another periodization of history based on the degree of waterways development: river period (ancient civilizations), Mediterranean (Middle Ages) and ocean (modern and contemporary time)⁴.

K. Marx, the founder of Scientific Communism, taking into consideration the principle of history materialist concept, developed his version of periodization based on the way of production or formation concept⁵. In accordance with this theory, social development appears to be a succession of socio-economic formations (primitive communal, [Asian], slave, feudal, capitalist and communist).

In the 20th century, a number of Western scholars considered historical process as an alternation of the same «cycles» of the local civilizations rotation. The most famous representative of this theory is A. Toynbee from England. Despite the fact that thirteen major civilizations determined by him developed independently from each other, they all had the same stages in their development: origin, blossom and death⁶.

According to historian and culture researcher A. Gurevich, methodological flaws of historical works are partly due to the fact that the idea of periodization is absolutized. Researchers see an independent significance in historical periods forgetting that in reality they are just models invented in order to structure the material⁷.

Periodization thus appears to be one of the mandatory research methods in studying the process of state formation; and due to this it is connected with historical and comparative analysis (i. e., examining a state as a social and political institution and its practical embodiments as well as their development within certain historical periods). Periodization involves studying of state formation process by dividing its history into separate time periods for the purpose of either the most complete material presenting or highlighting the principal features of the state institution in a given period of its existence. This periodization is not something absolute; it is just a tool used by researchers to get a better understanding of the essence and significance of various historical events.

The most complicated problem of periodization as a method of learning is choosing a criterion. While developing periodization it is necessary to determine its levels and, after formulating criteria for identifying periods, set their boundaries. One should also work out the approaches to naming periods and compiling their content characteristics; besides, there is a need to put a conceptual and categorical apparatus of investigating the state formation process in order.

The new state emergence is a relatively rare phenomenon. History saw not so many periods with an active formation of the new states. As a result, political and legal sciences faced a methodological problem connected with the contradiction between new independent states emergence on the world political map, a possibility to continue this process in future global development and incomplete theoretical-methodological and practical approaches relating to various aspects of their legitimacy. Currently, there is a real contradiction between two fundamental principles of international law – the inviolability of borders and the

¹ Гесиод (2012). *Работы и дни. Теогония. Щит Геракла*. Москва: Либроком, 9.

² Жмудь, Л.Я. (1990). *Пифагор и его школа*. Ленинград: Наука, 12.

³ Гильдебранд, Б. (2012). *Политическая экономия настоящего и будущего*. Москва: Либроком.

⁴ Мечников, Л.И. (2013). *Цивилизация и великие исторические реки*. Москва: Айрис-Пресс, 254.

⁵ Маркс, К. (1959). *К критике политической экономии*. Москва: Издательская группа «URSS», 6-7.

⁶ Тойнби, А. (2010). *Постижение истории*. Москва: Айрис-Пресс, 231-234.

⁷ Гольшев, В. (1996). Периодизация истории: Время непрерывно и бесконечно. *Коммерсантъ*, 58 (1016), 19.

right of nations to self-determination. Traditionally, assessing events associated with new states emergence within political space, the first principle is prior for an international community. In our opinion, it is due to experts and policymakers concerns regarding the possibility of appearing an uncontrolled chain reaction of multinational states disintegration.

However, this approach denies recognition of a society as a dynamic system capable of self-development which not only improves itself but also creates conditions for progressive development of its structural elements and emergence of new elements. Such elements, in particular, are new states emerging on the world political map; and methodological basis of the new states genesis is, as a rule, the right of peoples to self-determination.

We should note with regret that today the criteria and mechanisms for legitimization both of the newly formed states and of the state formation process in general have not been developed yet in the world politics and international law. There are just attempts to adapt certain institutions and elements of the modern international relations system to the problem. However, more and more politicians, practitioners and political scientists from all over the world understand objectivity and irreversibility of the processes associated with changes on the world political map and emergence of new sovereign states. Focusing on studying of state formation in the current world we, thus, provide a bridge to the past and create preconditions for understanding the main trends of this process development in future.

State formation is a complex and diverse process characterized by many historical and regional features of each era, specificities of the local civilizations (ancient oriental, ancient, medieval in the East and West), socio-economic formations and other factors. However, according to Ukrainian political analyst V. Logvina, there can be a generalized genetic and historical scheme of the state evolution including several main stages¹. The state formation process starting during the primitive society disintegration did not stop throughout the history of human society and goes on at its present stage. Using V. Logvina's research logic we present periodization of the state formation process in political history based on the criterion of historical evolutionary processes causing the new states emergence:

- early stage, when the first public entities in the history of mankind appeared due to the tribal system decomposition; gradual leaders' separation from society; their appropriating administrative functions, power resources and social privileges; emergence of private property, classes and exploitation;
- imperial phase of the slave era is characterized by formation, development and decline of the empires as the greatest states and powerful military countries uniting different nations and territories in a common state;
- feudal stage includes the processes of emergence and development of a state which is an organization of the feudal proprietors class created for the benefit of exploitation and suppression of the peasants legal status;
- constitutional stage is connected with a state subordination to society and citizens; with legally outlined powers and the field of government interference; with legal regulation of state activities and establishing institutional and other human rights guarantees. The result of this stage is emergence of a modern-type national state;
- imperial phase of new time is a stage when emergence of centralized national states combined with the inter-state relations aggravation and the necessity to increase war potential as well as the beginning of colonial expansion result in consolidation of the existing empires (Russian, British) and emergence of new ones (Austro-Hungarian and German);
- contemporary (modern) phase covers the events between the 20th c. and the early 21st c. and is characterized by a variety of prerequisites and conditions for new states to appear. The most significant changes on the world political map within the modern era are associated with an incredible increase in independent states number.

Each stage of the state formation process mentioned above can have its own periodization reflecting the peculiarities of state building unique for this time. The basis of periodization as a method to learn the history of political processes associated with the emergence and operation of new states in the modern world is constituted by the following theoretical and methodological principles:

- the principle of objectivity. Since any periodization is conditional and approximate, its base is the chronology of the changes on the world political map happened between the 20th c. and early 21st c.;
- the principle of multiple criteria. It is necessary to take into account the new countries political

¹ Логвина, В.Л. (2006). *Политология*. Киев: Центр учебной литературы, 84.

history involvement into the global and regional political history, the history of political events and facts of pan-European and global significance;

– the principle of knowledge contradictory. Periodization reflects actual formation of new states as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon which requires various assessments of certain events of political history.

In the 20th century, mass formation of new states as a result of evolutionary dynamics was observed:

– after the First World War, when multinational Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires stopped existing;

– in the middle of the 20th century, when countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America became free from century-long colonial rule;

– in the early 1990s, as a result of the collapse of socialist federations of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

Finally, for a better understanding of the state formation process between the late 20th c. and early 21st c. one can use the periodization of a particular newly formed state within this historical period.

For example, the basis for periodization of political history of the self-determined (unrecognized) Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, in our opinion, may be a criteria determined by domestic factors of state development associated with determining and evaluating the stages of the Pridnestrovian statehood formation between 1990 and 2015:

– the first stage (1990-1995) is realizing the idea of the Pridnestrovian state when republican authorities and public infrastructure were created. This stage was one of the most difficult in the history of the Pridnestrovian people; firstly, due to the lack of experience in state building and, secondly, due to the need to defend their right to live in an independent state by force of arms. However, the Provisional Supreme Soviet activity and 1991 Constitution of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic laid foundations of the Pridnestrovian statehood; and Pridnestrovian people heroic resistance to the Republic of Moldova armed aggression in 1992 made the Pridnestrovian state existence a political reality; and by 1995, the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic statehood foundations were basically created;

– the second stage (1995-2000) is connected with creation process and political creativity, the political tradition formation and improving cooperation between all public spheres, and above all, public authorities. During this period, the activity of all state mechanism elements was aimed at looking for an optimal model of state organization: 1995 Constitution of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic consolidated political and legal foundations of independent Pridnestrovie;

– the third stage (2000-2011) is associated with adoption of the Constitution of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic in 2000 and characterized by the final structure of the state apparatus and a relatively well-functioning mechanism of interaction of state bodies, political institutions and civil society;

– the fourth stage began in 2011 and is primarily connected with the constitutional reform carried out that year as well as with the change of the political elite: in December 2011, there was a democratic change of power as a result of the presidential elections in Pridnestrovie. The modern period of the Pridnestrovian development is characterized by intensification in activity of new generation of political elite.

The periodization of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic political history looks like this through the prism of political system evolution characterizing the internal factor of the self-determined state development. At the same time, we do not exclude the possibility to determine the stages of the statehood development in Pridnestrovie on the basis of criteria determined by external factors, for example, the international community attitude to the Pridnestrovian phenomenon and to the problem of self-determined (unrecognized) states. In this case, there could be, for example, the periods «before Kosovo» and «after Kosovo».

In the broadest terms, the statehood development in Pridnestrovie can be seen in relation to those states a territorial part of which Pridnestrovie was in different historical periods; and on this basis it is possible to identify the stages of the Pridnestrovian statehood formation within the period of the ancient Greek colony of Olbia; within Galicia-Volyn principality and as part of the Golden Horde; within the centralized Russian state and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; within the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. However, in our opinion, from the standpoint of the state formation process in a particular area (in this case in Pridnestrovie) the criterion conditioned by political development is the most preferred.

In modern political science, the problem of the state origin is still debatable. Periodization of the state formation process cannot answer the question why there appear new states in the world; but it allows us to consider the new states formation in connection with other political history processes and events, which

certainly contributes to a more objective understanding of the state formation process nature.

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