

Section 7. Political science

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DEMOCRATIC IN THE POST-SOVIET STATES FEATURES OF MODERNIZATION

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the problems of modern development of the post-Soviet states, the main trends and processes of their democratic modernization. The author analyzes the validity of the use of the term “post-Soviet space” and expresses the opinion that this space is disintegrating into various segments, including on the basis of the ethnic matrix.

Keywords: *democratic modernization, national interests, transforming states, post-Soviet space*

First of all, let us note that it is no secret that the hopes of the political elite and the population of many post-Soviet countries for the democratic transition that began in 1991 were greatly exaggerated. This gave rise to the question for many experts whether the theory of democratic transition is entirely unpretending. There were even discussions about abandoning the idea, since it does not really explain anything – supposedly the old communist totalitarian models have been replaced by some conservative political structures that are hardly correlated with democratic standards and practically do not evolve. To what extent is this true and to what extent is such statements an exaggeration – we do not have the task of analyzing such a thing. We will only note one fact: the textbook “What is Democracy?”, translated into more than 30 languag-

es of the world (What is democracy? 1991), presents the history of democratic ideas, discusses the problems of civil rights, the rule of law, elections, culture, governance, and participation in political life, but nowhere does it contain a precise definition of democracy. And this is not at all accidental. Precisely because of its universality, as American authors Matthew Handel and Chester E. Finn noted, “the demand for democracy swept the whole world, becoming an epidemic” (Handel M., Finn Ch. E., 1995, p. 17).

In practice, this “boom” has led to the fact that, according to a number of scholars (S. Huntington and others), although about 30 percent of states are real institutional democracies, almost all countries in the world are formally democratic. Edgar Morin, one of the prominent Western followers of this

problem, analyzing the fate of democracy in the “USSR-CIS” space, notes: “The peoples of the former “Soviet Union countries” are in a vortex of a triple crisis: the loss of the guarantees of the economic-bureaucratic economy has by no means been compensated by totalitarianism, contrary to political life; democratic systems that have become dilapidated and have given way to weak and, in any case, no longer having strong roots – if we take into account that legitimate patriotism is giving way to militant and backward nationalism, stimulated by the economic crisis, the crisis of democracy and, finally, the countless problems of national minorities ...” (Moren E., 1995, p. 2).

Professor Jan Egbert of the University of Mannheim goes further in his reasoning, arguing that nationalism and democracy are derivatives of the same fundamental historical idea, namely the idea of popular sovereignty. Having identified five main forms of nationalism, he makes a rather pessimistic forecast: people of the 21st century will most likely have to face four types of nationalism: established nations; macroregional, continental nationalism of European, Indian and some other sub-nationalities; microregional sub-nationalism of weak nations; and finally, the collective nationalism of scattered and isolated ethnic minorities, as well as neo-nomadic, mobile social groups from territorial nations (Egbert Ya., 1996).

Unfortunately, in modern scientific discourse, one can also find a primitive understanding of democratic transition – supposedly in most CIS countries authoritarian regimes arose as a transitional form from totalitarianism, its “soft variant”. It is difficult to agree with this, because the emergence and essence of authoritarianism does not lie in someone’s “strong will” or “powerful clans”, but in the depth of the historical reality of certain countries, in the options and methods proposed for solving the problems that arose there. For example, S. Huntington notes: authoritarian regimes can effectively govern multinational peoples; democracies are generally not very suitable for solving ethnic problems; the democratic process itself and the functioning of democracy can complicate relations between ethnic, religious and other groups in society (Huntington S., 1990).

At one point, it should be noted that the democratic transformation processes of these countries coincide with the processes of globalization. In such conditions, post-Soviet countries, which do not have sufficient potential for fundamental structural reforms, often cannot solve their problems, and their attempts at independent action are constantly faced with resistance from member states of various blocs. It is for these reasons that political transformations in some states of the post-Soviet space take on a wave character. If we also take into account the presence of numerous conflicts, then the conclusion of the Russian political scientist D. Mikhailichenko that the impact of military conflicts on the post-Soviet space significantly reduces the institutional opportunities for democratization has not lost its relevance.

As we have seen, the above material allows us to draw several general conclusions regarding the main factors and trends of democratic transition in the post-Soviet states. The following can be distinguished as the main factors that directly or indirectly affect the state, form and dynamics of democratic processes in the newly independent states:

First, the economic factor: a) low and uncompetitive initial level of socio-economic development, weak internal economic relations, mainly raw material forms of international economic specialization; b) inconsistency in the implementation of market reforms here, dangerous tendencies to create a “market” type of economy, “opacity” of emerging market relations, including nomenclature capitalism, etc. c) weak participation of post-Soviet states in the development of world integration, therefore, the dominant forms in them still remain “national integration” processes. Thus, the low level of pluralism of market systems in the transforming states of this macroregion significantly weakens the democratic foundations of the political structure, creates material.

Secondly, the political factor: a) the presence of a polyethnic structure of society in virtually all post-Soviet states, the spread of ethno-nationalism and the dominance of ethnocratic elites; 6) further formation and strengthening of the identity of post-Soviet states will be carried out, first of all, on a national basis; c) there is a combination of

market-capitalist relations and the remnants of Soviet thinking, the weakness of democratic traditions in political culture with elements of the formation of a pluralistic environment. In other words, the “blurring” and deformations in the process of democratic consolidation are decisively determined by the incompleteness of the post-communist transformation in the political, economic and socio-cultural spheres.

The “wave of democratization” in the post-Soviet states not only carried out the structuring of new institutions and technologies that to one degree or another meet the requirements of modern development, but also led to the emergence of completely new trends in their democratic evolution. First of all, we note that at least two main levels can be distinguished in the emergence of ethnopolitical conflicts: internal and external. The internal dimension of the problem lies in the active inclusion of ethnic actors in the political process, that is, in the emergence of an ethnopolitical process that acts as a process of interaction between sufficiently large groups of the population, each of which is characterized, on the one hand, by a necessarily expressed ethnic identity, and, on the other hand, by certain or de facto existing institutions.

Thus, ethno-national movements tend to sharpen the demands they put forward (from ethno-cultural to economic, from them to political, status, etc.) and, accordingly, to toughen the forms of struggle for their implementation. At the same time, a tendency can be observed: the period of pause is used not to find optimal ways out of conflicts, but to gather forces for their continuation.

The external dimension of ethnopolitical conflicts is manifested in the fact that in the era of globalization they increasingly take on the character of geopolitical problems (for example, the resolution of the conflicts in Kosovo, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, which have international causal significance). It is no coincidence that most governments involved in ethnic conflicts often try to explain their causes by external interference (real or imagined) in the internal affairs of these states.

Opponents of this approach, which is primarily reflected in the theory of primordialism, proceed from the fact that, in their opinion, the complex of ethnic relations,

ethnic life as a whole, with its associated features (ethnic history, psychology, mentality, etc.), a special social substance – the ethnic sphere, indisputably operates. Since here we can speak of the “real existence of an ethnic substance that is active and creates ethnically colored social phenomena”, then even primordialists in their extreme manifestations come to the conclusion that only the existence of the nation, the ethnos, is absolute, everything else is relative.

First, the formation of nations and nation-states is undoubtedly a historical process that goes back centuries. However, it is equally undeniable that since the beginning of the 20th century, the dynamics of state-building have been steadily accelerating. Thus, out of the nearly 200 states that exist today, there were only 15 in 1910, and each new period of geopolitical upheaval (the First and Second World Wars, the collapse of the colonial system, and world socialism) has only given this process an additional impetus.

Second, when analyzing democratic processes in the context of globalization, one cannot focus solely on conflictual factors and processes. This approach is understandable if we consider that globalization expands the communication “web” of interdependencies across existing borders and barriers between peoples, thereby uniting diverse ethnic identities into a global unity at the level of a new civilization.

Thirdly, the challenges and threats of globalization already today confront virtually all peoples (both those who created their own states and others) with a dilemma: either to preserve ethnic identity in their historical reality, or to search for a new formula for the adaptation of ethnosocial content. This means that no country in the world, especially a state with a multinational population, can ignore ethnic problems and contradictions in the context of ensuring its national security.

Fourth, the contradiction between the norms of international law that define the framework of state sovereignty and the processes of globalization that create the basis for the intervention of international and regional organizations in internal affairs, including in connection with interethnic conflicts, is deepening. This, in turn, leads to the emergence of leading world powers and in-

ternational supranational actors of neo-imperialism, the struggle for the redivision of the world, “double standards”, etc.

Thus, in political science and in the political practice of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, one can trace a certain transformation of existing ideas regarding the context of democratic transition – from simple to more complex and multi-factorial. In the era of globalization, when the cause-and-effect

foundations of conflicts shaking the world are transformed, there is a need, in essence, to change the theoretical and methodological paradigm in understanding democratic processes, and on this basis to form a multidimensional and multi-level functional system, in which the transfer of real national interests is a necessary condition for optimizing the modern process of democratization of society.

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