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Expert Comment

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Institutional aspects of post-industrial civilisational development and formation of the new world order

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A state or polity has been, and continues to be, the minimal institutional locality of a civilisation. In the early stages of humanity's development, a local civilisation coincided with certain state establishments. The first well-known civilisation – Sumer – was located across 12 cities-states and smaller settlements in Southern Mesopotamia. Initially the Sumerians had a common cultic centre, however, since the third millennium BC, they were united under one emperor. A similar location pattern was typical for the corresponding state establishments of Ancient Egypt, Greece, India, China, as well as the Incas in South America. Japan was later 'discovered' by the West in the middle of the 16th century when Portuguese sailors reached its shores.

Along with the historical evolution of civilisations, they began to cover more and more adjacent territories and states. And only the industrialised civilisations of Europe and North America had reached a global scale by the mid-18th century, while other states were preserved as pre-industrial civilisations. Later, the phenomena modern-day globalisation and the post-industrial social and technological revolutions would have a significant impact on the process of a civilisation's evolution.

The current phase of globalisation emerged as a result of completely new transport technologies and ICT. It has redefined the role of territories and borders in the process of civilisational development. The post-industrial stage of globalisation differs greatly from previous stages. This is particularly due to the fact that "from the state of 'isolated civilizations', or simply international community of states, the world turned into the global

system with symbiotic relationship” (Held, et al., 2004, p. 58). A separate state cannot develop sustainably when it is an isolated civilisational locality – even when it does its best to keep its national and historical distinctiveness. The development of every state is closely linked to the development of others, to the entirety of the world in the current era of globalisation.

The formation of a new technological basis for a civilisation results in the faster development of political, social, economic, informational, etc. transformation processes within the entire scope of societal relations. The dynamic nature of post-industrial transformations can no longer be part of the static model in which each individual state undergoes a gradual transition, and later of the majority of states to a new level: the stage of ‘public development’, or the develop This post-industrial transition is a dynamic process for the formation of the institutional corridor for civilisational development.

During the transition process, groupings of individual countries that share similar basic trends for post-industrial civilisational development form one single flow. However, the trajectories of each state are not identical due to differences in relations and institutional construction of social fields, normativism, political and cultural stereotypes, basic technologies in the field of competition and power, and political methods to ensure the cohesion of a society. The categories of countries, based on shared trends, constitute flexible ‘shells’ that set boundaries for the groupings or ‘corridors of development’. However, the trajectories for post-industrial civilisational development may require adaptation but the individual countries.

Initially, the characteristics of each category or ‘shell’ determined the institutional consequences of political and technological phenomena in the 20th century, which then determined the post-industrial civilisational transition.

Changes in the concept of state institutions were a significant consequence of ‘the end of history’ phenomenon. It was important for many states in the field of real politics –

and for some states only in the form of constitutional provisions – to reject the statist approach to establishing institutions. This is so because the end goal of public development is to benefit all humans and societies, but not via an omnipresent paternalistic state. Rather, true public development comes about when substantive changes to the goals and methods of public authorities are made.

At the conceptual level a democratic state is defined as a political association of people based on a social contract stipulating that people transfer part of their freedom and power to the authorities. In such a structure it is only the citizens who are the source of power and have sovereignty; it is they who decide the amount and limits of the state's involvement in processes that regulate social relations.

State institutions during the post-industrial transition started to turn into 'management institutions' subject to statutory limits in terms of its duties and actions. This kind of managing government is meant to meet the needs and interests of its citizens, to provide them with state services, and to create comfortable and safe conditions for the citizens to enjoy their lives. At the same time, amid the process of post-industrial transformations, a state institution is asymptotically focused on two interrelated forms of a democratic state: a state of law and a social state.

1. A 'state of law'

The basic responsibility of a state of law is to protect the rights and freedoms of citizens, with the rights and freedoms to be unalienable and directly applicable. These rights and freedoms are acknowledged and guaranteed according to generally recognised principles and norms in international law and agreements, which take primacy over national law, aside from national constitutions. From this perspective the legal framework of the state becomes a constituent part of the global legal environment.

Rule of law is the backbone for social regulation and political management in a 'state of law'. But this is purely to rules that are official law, not necessarily rights (Nersesyants, 1983). It is imperative to ensure that citizens' rights are given as much importance as laws in court systems, which "should take the central place in the system of law enforcement" (Zolotukhin, 2001, p. 62).

A state of law determines primarily the value-oriented legal component in the shell of each civilisational development grouping, where the trajectories of states' development correlate with the trajectory of their post-industrial transition.

Value-oriented legality can be defined as a system of principles for the activity of a person and a society, based on the principles and norms of international law as the highest social value, when citizens' rights are prioritised as universal and regulate the complex set of relationships among individuals and with the state.

A state of law also includes the accountability of public authorities, the supremacy of the law, and the independence of the judicial system. These, along with a number of political regulations in modern 'polyarchal democracies' represent a politico-administrative aspect of the 'shells' of civilisational development.

The politico-administrative aspects can be defined as a democratic political system which, along with fair and transparent political competition, facilitates the equal rights of citizens; the ability to choose the development trajectory of their society and country; and public authorities who meet the demands and interests of citizens.

2. The 'social state'

For the first time the notion of 'a social state' was suggested in the middle of the 19th century by German legislator and economist Lorenz von Stein (Kochetkova, 2008). Generally

speaking, a social state can be defined as an organization of state regulations when it is focused on providing and protecting social rights, which are referred to one of the basic categories of human rights.

The purpose of a social state the post-industrial development is to provide equal opportunity for the self-fulfilment of every person and guaranteed conditions for exercising these rights, at a minimum level at least. Every citizen in a social state is guaranteed to have the minimum necessary conditions for a decent life and protection against threats from natural disasters, technology, social and economic fluctuations, as well as the rights to participate in the political system, regardless of level of wealth or social status.

The creation of the social environment favourable for self-fulfilment and development of a person, as well as increasing the level of one's security, is a task shared by the state and the society. In a social state this is fulfilled through joint efforts and resources from state authorities, NGOs, charitable or volunteer organisations, based on partnership and mutual collaboration.

Private companies and entrepreneurs pragmatically and voluntarily understand the necessity for their direct and active involvement in the process of creating a sustainable social environment. As a result, a new post-industrial socioeconomic order should be established and implemented in different countries with different methods according to their specific contexts, peculiarities and existing socioeconomic rules.

3. Globalisation

As a result of globalisation, goods, capital, people, knowledge, communication means, weapons, crime, fashion, and beliefs quickly cross borders (Held, et al. 1999). Globalisation means not only a world economy based on an international division of labour; social processes also attain transboundary features.

The information-technology revolution, as coined by Manuel Castells (2000), is another component of the flexible 'shell' of civilisational development. When defining the genesis of the post-industrial world he notes that the information-technological revolution caused the rise of informationalism as the material foundation for a new society. With informationalism the amenities production, execution of power, and creation of culture codes became dependent on the technological possibilities of a society with information communication technology (ICT) at the core; its role was of particular importance for development of electronic networks as a dynamic, self-expanding form of organisation of human activity (Castells, 2008).

The intense shift of human activity towards the new ICT environment requires a reaction from governments when its global network infrastructure becomes the prevailing form of self-organization and expansion.

4. E-governance

Such a response is an 'electronic government'. The main idea of e-governance is the following. Firstly, the all state authorities and institutions are considered to be united in their response to public interests, and created primarily to provide state services to citizens and the private sector of economy. Secondly, the actions of the authorities should be open and transparent, while state institutions of all levels should be accessible to each citizen at any moment and in any location. Thirdly, in order to improve the quality and efficiency of a government's performance, an ICT-based format for state activities is implemented.

The key ontological feature of an electronic government is to allow citizens the ability interact with authorities on a real-time basis, in a format conducive to the individual's needs.

The strategic goal of an e-government is to better manage the protection of rights and act in the interest of citizens and to involve citizens in the process of state's governance and management – in other words, to implement electronic democracy. The practical task of e-governance is to transform the relationship between the state and citizens and between the state and the private sector by applying ICT. Because of the higher level of availability via ICT, citizens and the private sector have a wider scope of interaction with an e-government.

5. The speed of trajectories towards public civilisational development

The trajectories of democratic countries are moving at different speeds. Countries that are 'further down the path' implement the mechanisms and regulations meant to better the whole of society. The countries lagging behind implement these mechanisms and regulations only to meet the minimum requirements for 'democracy', namely free and fair elections. These states can be called 'feckless pluralism', a term coined by Thomas Carothers as the following: "Countries whose political life is marked by feckless pluralism tend to have significant amounts of political freedom, regular elections, and alternation of power between genuinely different political groupings. Despite these positive features, however, democracy remains shallow and troubled. Political participation, though broad at election time, extends little beyond voting. Political elites from all the major parties or groupings are widely perceived as corrupt, self-interested and ineffective, absolutely indifferent to the country's fate. The alternation of power seems only to trade the country's problems back and forth from one hapless side to the other" (Carothers, 2003, p. 42-65). Albania, Indonesia, Mexico, Moldova, and Paraguay are examples of feckless pluralist electoral democracies.

Civilisational development under authoritarian regimes is marred by the fact that the legal and administrative protection of social rights is not implemented. Most of authoritarian governments understand the necessity to be an integral part of the post-industrial world, but they also aspire to stay in power. That is why authoritarian regimes implement mainly economic reforms, and to a lesser degree reforms that relate to ICT. Regarding ICT, these governments do so with a certain degree of hesitation due to political fears. Additionally, authoritarian states only shift to state-of-the-art technologies within the economic sector and in the sphere of recreation and entertainment.

At the same time, authoritarian governments such as the communist regime in China, the absolute monarchy in Saudi Arabia, or the dictatorship in Gabon, protect their ideological foundations and legal regulations from any significant transformation. While modern non-authoritarian governments, such as the regimes in Armenia, Nicaragua, and Mozambique do the opposite and actively embrace value-oriented legal and politico-administrative regulations that comply with the post-industrial transition, in order to establish their positions in the world community.

As for authoritarian regimes such as present-day Iran and Venezuela, and in particular the Democratic People's Republic of Korea – the last totalitarian regime in the world – have declared their major political goal to be the preservation of their national (traditional, religious, political) 'civilisational locality' in order to mobilise support and stay in power. At the same time, these governments take a position opposed to the post-industrial civilisational transition and retreat into self-isolation, doomed to fail as a 'drying swamp'.

It is likely that while they do not comply with the trajectory bound for post-industrial civilisational development, authoritarian states will sooner or later reach a bifurcation point where either the regime will change and the countries shift in the direction of post-industrial transition, or the states will cease to exist in their current form. This hypothesis is based on

the fact that advances or shifts in information communication technology require significant changes in the methods and mechanisms of political and state governance.

6. A new world order for the post-industrial transition

The need for a restructuring of the current global order is much needed for a variety of reasons. To begin, the number of sovereign states grew significantly after the end of World War II. While there were 51 founding members of the United Nations in 1945, by 2011 this number had increased more than three-fold.

Secondly, the dissolution of the USSR in 1991 meant the end of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (1949-1991) and the Warsaw Treaty (1955-1991). With the Soviet collapse came the end of the Yalta-Potsdam system of international relations, which had defined the bipolar world order post-World War II.

Thirdly, the necessity to establish a new world order is based on significant changes – internal and external – in the character of the civilisational development during the post-industrial transition. According to Alvin Toffler (2004) “while the Third Wave is spreading around the world the Second Wave key political unit – a nation-state – is falling apart under overall pressure. Some forces aspire to transfer the political power from the level of a state-nation to the level of sub-national regions and groups. Other forces are trying to lift it to the level of international agencies and organizations” (p. 500).

Decentralisation is the key method for transforming a state institution ‘from within’. Decentralising the government can contribute to the growth of social diversity, avoid domination of one group over another, and facilitate the process of segmentation and decentralisation of the economy. Centralisation of power is no longer effective, as it is not capable of quick and appropriate reactions to the increasing and diverse range of interests.

Political decentralisation is carried out by distributing duties across the various levels of government, from national to local, with social and political issues dealt with at the most immediate (local) level (the subsidiarity principle). Today such a 'federalisation' of power is not only the case in federative states, as it can be seen in democratic unitary states as well. Such a tendency is based primarily on 'glocalisation', which according to British sociologist Roland Robertson (1994) is the interconnection between the processes of globalisation and the local within the spheres of economy, politics, and culture.

According to Manuel Castells, due to influence of social processes, power is transformed and the major changes are related to "the crisis of the national state as a sovereign unit, while it is accompanied by the crisis of the form of political democracy which has been created within the last two centuries". And then he suggests that "globalisation of capital, growing amount of parties in institutions of power and decentralization of authority powers and their transfer to regional and local authorities establish a new structure of power which is likely to create a new form of the state – the network state" (Castells, 2008, p. 501).

7. External forces

According to Samuel Huntington, the transformation of state institutions from external pressure result from the fact that:

State authorities have significantly lost their ability to control the cash flow that is coming in and outside of the country, and they face more and more difficulties related to control over the flow of ideas, technologies, goods and people. In short, state borders have become extremely transparent. As a result of many changes plenty of people witnessed the gradual disappearance of a solid state – 'a billiard ball' widely acknowledged as the norm since the Treaty of Westphalia 1648 – and appearance of the complicated, diverse and multi-level international order... (Huntington, 1997, p. 58, translated from Russian).

Various nation-states appeared as a result of conflict over territories and resources, but in the present era, the concept is losing its dominance as a political unit of the world order.

As a result of globalisation, the world has transformed from an amalgam of national-states, with their activity based on absolute loyalty to the principle of national sovereignty and national interests. Now, in this post-industrial world order, national sovereignty is declining and national interests are being replaced by a convergence of national, regional, and world interests and goals. "Currently almost all national states have gradually got interconnected with functional elements of a greater model with global changes and global flows. International structures and relations covered almost all spheres of human activity" (Held, et al., 1999, p.58).

The 'internationalisation' of a state institution takes place when national states are 'penetrated' and become a constituent part of global markets, transboundary information and communication, and international legal frameworks. International political institutions and structures are being created that are granted force-involuntary power and that are active beyond state borders, regardless of distance.

It seems it is this transnational and primarily interstate organisation of power, assembled into an interrelated centralised and distributed infrastructure, that will provide the institutional foundation for the post-industrial world order.

This hypothesis is based on the fact that after the end of World War II one could see the beginning of rapid growth and expansion in international and interstate (inter-governmental) organisations based on various themes. It is expected that the majority of international organisations were established for the sake of interstate relations focused on the economic, financial, educational, and scientific spheres. But in terms of the post-industrial world order, it is political international organisations that are of the main interest. They were established for matters such as joint defense and security, as well as for

regulating international relations for a number of other reasons. Since 1945, the number of politically-focused international organisations increased from three to 32, which is more than a 10% increase. At the same time, it is of primary importance that the network of present-day politically-focused international organisations cover almost all of the world (perhaps Pacific countries to a lesser degree).

It is the multi-level network of political international organisations, with its centralised architecture, that needs to be improved during the formation of the post-industrial world order. At the same time, it is critical to improve the efficiency of present-day political international organisations, the United Nations to begin with, in terms of prevention and sustainable reduction of interstate and local military conflicts and political crises.

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