

THE THEORIES OF POLITOGENESIS IN EVOLUTIONARY SYSTEMS
by Mariam Khanzadyan,
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At the end of 2022, the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia published a rather remarkable and unique work in its kind in the field of the Armenian historiography “The Theories of Politogenesis in Evolutionary Systems”, authored by Mariam Khanzadyan, a researcher, representing this institute. The monograph was approved for publication at the scientific session of the Ancient East Department of this institute. Before publication, it was edited by Doctor of History, Professor A. V. Kosyan.

In the monograph, the theories of politogenesis, which were developed and presented within the framework of the most important concept of the era, evolutionism, have been discussed and presented in details. The work consists of an introduction, two chapters, an epilogue and a list of the used literature.

The first chapter (pp. 5-62) presents the evolutionist concepts of politogenesis. Theories on the concept are discussed in details. The careful examination of conceptual terminology and concepts should be highlighted here. The second chapter (pp. 63-151) presents the neo-evolutionary concepts of politogenesis, alongside with their theories and terminologies.

The work was written on the basis of the studies of the authors of the theories of the main evolutionary concepts and classical scientific studies of the field (ancient and medieval thinkers) from the period of (XIX century) to the 1980s of the XX century.

The main goal of the work, according to the author, is the presentation of the theoretical part of politogenesis to a wide range of readers, as well as to bring the neo-evolutionary scientific achievements of politogenesis into the scientific circulation in Armenia and to make the systematic presentation of classical evolutionary theories of state-building processes, including the coordination of K. Wittfogel’s theory and the works of Soviet-Armenian authors on the subject (pp. 3-4).

The first most important thing in this monograph is the unique approach and presentation of the work by the author. The author has obviously avoided the easy way of presenting the material according to the theories and chosen a rather complicated way, that is, to present the theories not only as theories, but according to the authors.

The work begins with a brief overview of the theories of politogenesis (pp. 5-7) and a thorough presentation of the concept of civilization (pp. 7-11). Summarizing all possible approaches to civilization as a term, the author generalizes that it is an internally complete and unique socio-cultural entity that followed the primitive age, in other words, the equivalent of an early state or complex society (p. 11). Then the study of the concepts of politogenesis up to the 19th century is presented, and then transitions to the study of the period of formation and further development of evolutionism (pp. 11-25). As a logical continuation of the latter, the author refers to classical evolutionism, rather extensive and detailed Marxist theory and K. Wittfogel’s “hydraulic theory” (p. 26-57). The author summarizes the first chapter with the sub-chapter “The Early Societies

of the Armenian Highlands under the Marxist Concept” (pp. 58-62). This sub-chapter, while conforming to the principle of a monograph and not having the goal of maximum study, leaves the impression of incompleteness. We hope that quite soon the author will make an attempt to address as completely as possible the prerequisites and nature of the emergence of tribal unions and state formations of the Armenian Highlands. The first chapter ends with the conclusion that in the post-Soviet period, issues of Marxist evolutionist typology have not been discussed in the Armenian historiography (p. 62).

The second chapter (pp. 63-151), entitled “Neo-evolutionary concepts of politogenesis”, almost entirely, with separate sub-chapters, presents the main representatives of the concept theory: G. Child, L. White, J. Steward, M. Fried, E. Service, M. Sullins, H. Marvin and R. Carneiro. The second chapter ends with the sub-chapter “Neo-evolutionism in the Armenian historiography” (pp. 149-151). In this subchapter, the author refers to P. Avetisyan’s work “The Armenian Highlands in XXIV-IX centuries BC. Dynamics of socio-cultural transformations according to archaeological data”, noting that the neo-evolutionary schemes and concepts known to the author in post-Soviet Armenian historiography have been used in that work (pp. 149-151).

One of the most important theoretical gaps in the work is the “incest” theory¹ of the Belgian sociologist and ethnographer Claude Levi-Strauss (by the way, the author’s name appears only once on p. 100). According to the theory of incest of C. Levi-Strauss, the most important factor in the process of human development was the prohibition of incest. This circumstance, according to C. Levi-Strauss, became the starting point of the social factor separating man from the natural world - shaping the structure of society and the emergence of the state.

It was not possible to avoid similar omissions in the monograph, however, we believe that it was most likely due to the methodological principle of the work. The monograph would definitely benefit from tables and diagrams of conceptual theories. Below we present the main theories of politogenesis, some of which for one reason or another have not been included in the monograph.

Divine (religious) - the theory of the origin of the state by God and supernatural forces prevailed for a long time. Representatives: Thomas Aquinas, F. LaBeouf, D. Ewe et al.

Patriarchal – the state is the result of the development of the family (Aristotle). The state acts as a big family, where a wise leader (father) takes care of his subjects (children) and uses power on behalf of all and for the common good. Representatives: Confucius, Aristotle, and others.

Psychological - the emergence of the state was associated with the presence of various human impulses aimed at ruling or subjugating their species. Representatives: Cicero, E. Fromm, et al.

Voluntarist - the emergence of states is connected with the voluntary activity of this or that “strong personality”. Founder of the theory is J. F. Maitland-Jones.

¹ Lévi-Strauss C., *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1949.

Public contractual (voluntary) - the state is in ensuring the universal reconciliation of people. People, coming to an agreement on the normal transfer of power, stop the “struggle of all against all” and organize life on a reasonable basis. Representatives: T. Hobbs, J. Locke, J.-J. Rousseau, D. Diderot, P. I. Pestel and others.

Organic - the state and law is considered as a product of the power of nature, as a variety of biological organism. Representatives: H. Spencer, I. K. Blunchley, R. Worms, et al.

Class (Marxist) – the state arose with the emergence and development of the family and private property. Division of society according to classes and class exploitation. Representatives: K. Marx, F. Engels, et al.

Violence - the state arose as a result of wars and conquests, during which the conquerors created the institution of the state to maintain their supremacy. If we consider the problem in its entirety, it becomes clear that the war required powerful organizational structures and was more a consequence of politogenesis than its cause. Representatives: L. Gumplovich, K. Kautsky, et al.

As well as the theory of incest, hydraulics, mutual exchange, and others.

The conclusion of the monograph (pp. 152-166) is quite remarkable, where the general conclusions of the evolutionist and neo-evolutionist concepts of politogenesis are summarized. So, the evolutionist teaching is able to overcome the complications that appeared during its development and, as in the case of neo-evolutionism, by revising its main tenets and interpreting scientific data in a new way, to rise on a qualitatively new level, conforming it to the requirements of modern science (p. 164).

As a summary, it is necessary to note that the author has mainly used the comparative method of analysis, which helped to show a proper scientific approach. The author has diligently collected and presented all available materials within the framework of the topic.

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