ON THE MODELS OF THE EARLY STATE FORMATION

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State and Historical Process

The Period of State Formation

From the Early State to the Mature

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Political Systems of Early States

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The main ideas

- **Multilinearity of politogenesis** and the variation of its forms have various manifestations.
- **The main causes** determining the politogenetic pathway of a given society are the polity's size, its ecological and social environment.
- The politogenesis should never be reduced to the only evolutionary pathway leading to the statehood. I designate various complex non-state political systems as **early state analogues**.
- Thus, it was only in the final count that the state became the leading form of political organization of complex societies.
An evolutionary process \textit{politogenesis} is much wider than the \textit{state formation process}, because there were many versions of political development. For a long period of time one could observe a more frequent emergence not of early states, but of \textit{polities of a special type that were non-states} with respect to the structure of their political administration, but that were comparable with the state as to many significant parameters.
The early state analogues are various forms of complex stateless societies that were non-states with respect to their structure of political administration or other features, but that were comparable with the state in many significant parameters: their size, sociocultural and/or political complexity, functional differentiation and the scale of tasks they have to accomplish etc.
Alternatives to Early State

There were many *alternatives* early state analogues. The sociopolitical evolution of late archaic societies had alternatives:

- these societies could evolve not only in the direction of early state;
- they also could evolve through the development of complex *stateless* political forms.
The main ideas

Two main types of the pathways to statehood

Within the ‘vertical’ model the state formation took place in a direct way, i.e. directly from small pre-state polities to primitive statehood.

Within the ‘horizontal’ model we first observe the formation of early state analogues that were quite comparable to the state as regards to their complexity, whereas later those analogues were transformed into states.
Two main models of the state formation process

- **primitive states**
  - small pre-state polities

- **early state analogues**
  - small pre-state polities
  - states

- **‘VERTICAL’ MODEL**
- **‘HORIZONTAL’ MODEL**
The early state

is a category that is used to designate a special form of political organization of a relatively large and complex agrarian society (or a group of societies/territories) that determines its external policy and partly its social order.

It is a power organization which
a) possesses supremacy and sovereignty (or, at least, autonomy);
b) is able to coerce the ruled to fulfill its demands; to alter important relationships and to introduce new norms, as well as to redistribute resources;
c) is based (entirely or mostly) on such principles that are different from the kinship ones.
The politogenesis is a process of separation of the political dimension/sphere within a society and the formation of political subsystem as a relatively autonomous subsystem, a process of emergence of special power forms of social organization, which is connected with the concentration of power and (both external and internal) political activities and their monopolization by certain groups and strata.
Factors determining the ‘choice’ of a given evolutionary trajectory

- environmental conditions;
- contact intensity both within a society and between societies;
- **a social system's size** that determines up to a considerable degree the volume of accumulated resources;
- **the level of complexity of tasks** that the respective social system has to solve;
- **potential of social system to react** to the external challenges.
The early state

can only develop within a society with a certain level of overall sociocultural and political complexity, within a society that has a sufficient volume of surplus and population. However, even within such social systems the state did not appear in many cases, it only emerged in particular, quite special circumstances.

The early state analogues

(the other complex societies) having reached this level of complexity did not form states, but developed along their own alternative trajectories.
Classification of states and their analogues according to their sizes

• the smallest early state – with population between a few thousands and 15,000

• small early state – with population between 15,000 and 50,000

• medium-size early state – with population between 50,000 and 300,000

• medium-large early state – with population between 300,000 and 3,000,000

• large early state – with population more than 3,000,000.
Accordingly the early state analogues may be subdivided into following groups:

- *the smallest early state* analogues;
- *small early state* analogues;
- *medium-size early state* analogues;
- *medium-large early state* analogues;
- *large early state* analogues

(however, stable forms of such analogues do not appear to have been attested).
Stateless polity may transform into a state from the following levels:

1) from evolutionary **pre-state level** – e.g., through synoikismós. This way was typical for some Greek societies, as well as for Mesopotamia in the late 4th and early 3rd millennium BCE;

2) from the level of **small state analogues** (e.g., this way the Great Mongol Empire of Genghis Khan started);

3) from the level of **the medium-size state analogues** (as happened, e.g., in the Hawaiian Archipelago);

4) even from the level of **the medium-large state analogues** (as happened, e.g., in Scythia in the early 4th century BCE).
The state formation usually requires the emergence of specific, unusual, new conditions and circumstances, extreme situations connected with sharp changes of habitual life, the necessity of new decisions and reforms:

- conquests or military amalgamations;
- a pronounced incongruence of old administration methods;
- civil confrontation;
- artificial concentration of population, or its sharp growth;
- weakening or discredit of power in conditions of emergence of complex problems;
- emergence of an especially outstanding leader;
- some important technological or social innovation etc.
The point that the state is born in special circumstances is relevant not only for primary, but also for almost all secondary and tertiary states, because for any concrete people this moment represents a serious evolutionary turning point.

This idea also provides an additional explanation for the mechanism of the ‘horizontal’ model of state formation that is of the state formation on the basis of state analogues.

If we have a clear analogue of an early state, then the transformation of an analogue into a state can occur through internal changes, reforms, development of old political institutions and emergence of new ones etc.
The competition of alternative political forms

The widest possibilities for the competition of alternative political forms are found within the interval of a polity's population **between a few thousands and a few dozen thousands.**

Beyond **the limit of 100,000** the possibilities of competition of such forms begin to decrease sharply (and its place is taken by the evolutionary competition between various forms of the early state).

The point is that in early state analogues the population growth over a certain limit may lead to its transformation into a larger and more complex analogue, but beyond a certain limit it leads either to this polity's degeneration (primitivization, disintegration), or its transformation into a state.
1. The possibilities of their existence depend directly on the presence of large sedentary civilized neighbours and the early state analogues' ability to compete with them in military terms.

2. Size, might, and complexity level with respect to the realization of external political functions of the nomadic agglomerations (‘empires’) correlated rather tightly with size, might, and political culture of those states, with which the nomads regularly interacted.

3. Early state analogues get significant advantages in marginal ecological conditions and with less perspective evolutionary economic forms (in particular, with extensive animal husbandry that implies a nomadic way of life). The sedentarization can change rather rapidly many forms of societal administration.
Conclusion

On the one hand, within the overall evolutionary process it appears possible to single out various real alternatives of development.

On the other hand, it is also possible to identify an ‘a mainstream’ evolutionary pathway that produced those forms that sooner or later became actually dominant, whereas the forms representing ‘lateral’ evolutionary lines could only compete with evolutionarily more perspective forms up to certain limits or within some special (usually marginal) natural and social environments.
THANK YOU FOR ATTENTION!