

Appendices

Appendix 1 Some Issues in the Theory of Historical Process

1. On Historical Process

A few words are necessary to clarify our understanding of the ‘historical process’ notion (for more details see Grinin 2007a, 2012a). The first point to note is that this concept is in no way synonymous with ‘world history’.¹ Of course, the notion of historical process is based on world history facts. However, firstly, there have been chosen only those facts that are the most important from the point of view of process and changes; secondly, this set of facts has been ordered and interpreted in accordance with the analyzed spatial and temporal scales, trends and logics of historical development of humankind (or at least the World-System) as a whole, as well as the present-day results of this development. In other words, historical process is in no way a mechanical sum of the histories of numerous peoples and societies, it is not even just the process resulting from movement and development of these people and societies. The historical process is a growing and even cumulative process of societal integration that has a certain direction and result.²

¹ However, even the very notion of ‘world history’ and ‘universal history’, although a number of scholars recognize it as an important concept (e.g., Ghosh 1964; Pomper 1995; Geyer and Bright 1995; Manning 1996), had been considered rather useless for a long time by historians and social scientists. But the most important is that ‘while historians increasingly recognize the importance of world history, they remain relatively ignorant about it as a developing field’ (Pomper 1995: 1).

² Between World History and the theory of historical process there are macrohistory, that is history on the large scale, sometimes telling the story of whole civilizations, sometimes of the entire world (Reilly 1999), but sometimes of particular dimensions of historical process. So macrohistory is a certain conceptualization of historical process. It is close in some respect to the theory of history. On the relation between macrohistory and theory of history see, for example, Galtung and Inayatullah 1997; Reilly 1999; Little 1998, 2000a, 2000b. However, it is already evident from the recommended reference list on macrohistory that includes in particular *Shapes of Philosophical History* by Frank E. Manuel (1965); *The Shapes of Time* by Peter Munz (1977); *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community* by William H. McNeill (1963); *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* by Kenneth Pomeranz (2000); *The Sources of Social Power* by Michael Mann (1986, 1993); *Civilization and Capital-*

The notion of the historical process of *humankind* does not imply that humankind has always been a real system. It implies the following: (a) we select a respective scale for our analysis; (b) we take into account the fact that over all the periods of historical process the societies, civilizations and its other actors have been developing unevenly, that is at a different rate of social progress; (c) from the methodological point of view it indicates that for the analysis of historical process the most important is the model of the influence produced by more developed regions on the less developed ones; (d) the interaction scale expands from one period to another until it reaches the scale of the whole planet (in this situation it becomes equal to the notion of the World-System); (e) hence, the historical process of humankind is, first of all, the process of movement from autonomous and isolated social mini-systems towards the formation of the present extremely complex system of intensely interacting societies; (f) when (and if) humankind transforms into a subject whose development as a whole is determined (at least partially) by a general and explicitly expressed collective will, the historical process in its current meaning will come to its end, and this will lead to the transition to a new generation of processes.

Thus, historical process is a notion that generalizes an intricate complex of internal transformations and actions of various historical subjects, as a result of which important societal changes and integration, continuous enlargement of intersocietal systems take place, transition to the new levels of development is going on, and in general (taking into consideration the present results and future prospective), humankind gets transformed from a potential unity into an actual one.

Of course, this definition of historical process is rather conventional; however, it has a considerable heuristic potential and makes it possible to construct generalizing theories. The critics of the notion 'world history process' rely on the idea that humankind is not a system that can be regarded as a real subject and that the humankind's history is the history of particular societies; thus, it is impossible to speak about the historical process of humankind (see, e.g., Milyukov 1993 [1937] 43–47; Hotsej 2000: 488–489). In the meantime it becomes more and more evident that the globalization process is making (and, in some respects, has al-

ism, 15th – 18th Century, Vols I–III by Fernand Braudel (1982); *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age* by Andre Gunder Frank (1998); *The European Miracle: Environments, Economies and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia* by E. L. Jones (1981), etc.

ready made) humankind a real subject. But if humankind is becoming a real supersystem and the process of this system's structuralization starts producing more and more tangible results, then why is it impossible to study the historical process of the humankind system formation? For example, McNeill (2001: 1) suggests that historians should 'make a sustained effort to enlarge the views and explore the career of humankind on earth as a whole'.

Quite often the notion of *humankind* is actually substituted with some other notions, like *civilizations*, starting from Danilevsky (1995 [1869]), Spengler (1939), Toynbee (1962–1963), and ending with Huntington (1996), or *the World System* (Frank 1990, 1993; Frank and Gills 1993; Wallerstein 1974, 1987, 2004; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1994, 1997; Arrighi and Silver 1999; Amin *et al.* 2006). Although we ourselves support the World System approach and try to offer our mite to the development of this theory (Grinin and Korotayev 2006, 2009; Korotayev and Grinin 2006; Grinin 2011a), we believe that such notions can be of much use, but only at a certain level and in certain aspects of analysis. And, of course, they differ from the notion of *humankind* both temporally (as the whole pre-agrarian epoch and the early agrarian period are left outside their limits) and spatially (if we do not try to make one notion a full synonym of the other). The attempts to substitute the notion of humankind with any other, less encompassing, notions are basically attempts to prohibit any research at a higher level of generalization; this is just a substitution of one level of research with another, a narrower one.³

2. On the Rules of Periodization

Many scholars emphasize the great importance of periodization for the study of history (*e.g.*, Jaspers 1953; Green 1992, 1995; Gellner 1988; Bentley 1996; Stearns 1987; McNeill 1995; Manning 1996; Goudsblom 1996; White 1987; Dyakonov 1999; Ershov 1984; Zhigunin 1984; Pavlenko 1997, 2002; Rozov 2001a, 2001b; Korotayev 2006). Gurevich emphasizes that 'the human thought cannot avoid dividing the historical process into definite periods' (2005: 681). There is no doubt that periodization is a rather effective method of data ordering and analysis, but it deals with exceptionally complex types of processual, developmental

³ These attempts have a long history. For example, Milyukov (1993 [1937]: 43–47) declared the world historical view obsolete and insisted that the natural unit of scientific observation is nothing else but a 'national organism'.

and temporal phenomena and thus, it simplifies historical reality. This might be the reason why some scholars belittle the role of periodization and some of them even directly oppose the notion of process and stages as mutually exclusive (see, *e.g.*, Shanks and Tilley 1987; see also Marcus and Feinman 1998: 3; Shtompka 1996: 238). One may agree that the contraposition of process and stages is a false dichotomy (Carneiro 2000) because stages are continuous episodes of a continuous process, and the notion of process can be used for the development of the notion of stages (Goudsblom 1996).

In fact, any periodization suffers from one-sidedness and certain deviations from reality, but as Jaspers noted, '...the purpose of such simplifications is to indicate the essentials' (Jaspers 1953: 24). Moreover, the number and significance of such deviations can be radically diminished as the effectiveness of periodization is directly connected with its author's understanding of the rules and peculiarities of this methodological procedure.

Our own research and analysis of different statements presented in the works on the problems of globalization allowed, with the account of the general systemic requirements, settling a system of methodological rules for developing a periodization of history, however, some of these rules we had to formulate completely independently.

- *Rule 1.* The presence of the same bases or criteria.
- *Rule 2.* The hierarchical scale of bases.
- *Rule 3.* The equality of the periods of the same level of division.
- *Rule 4.* The close association with theory.
- *Rule 5.* Necessity of additional basis.
- *Rule 6.* The correspondence to the main events and facts.

Regarding some of the rules (for more details on these laws and procedures see Grinin 1998b: 15–28; 2003a: 67–78; 2003b: 219–223; 2006a, 2006c, 2007c; Grinin and Korotayev 2009; see also Shofman 1984). Unfortunately, an insufficient attention is paid to these issues (and problems of periodization in general), which leads to complicated problems.

In particular, to develop a periodization one needs to observe the rule of the 'same bases', that is, to use the same criteria for the identification of periods with the same taxonomical significance, whereas many periodizations are not based on rigorous criteria, or the applied criteria are eclectic and change from one stage to another (*e.g.*, Green 1995), or

the scholars just base themselves on the following scheme: Antiquity – Middle Ages – Modern Age (see Green 1992).

The second point is how well the periodization bases are reasoned, and how they are connected with a scholar's general theory (Rule 4), as well as with the goal of periodization. For any periodization its basis is a very important point. One can choose different bases for periodization if to use constantly the same criteria. Different scholars choose different bases for periodization, ranging from changes in the types of ideas and mode of thinking (*e.g.*, Comte 1974 [1830–1842]; Jaspers 1953) to ecological transformations (Goudsblom 1996) and intercultural interaction (Bentley 1996). Many scholars, from the 18th century thinkers (Turgot, Barnave, Ferguson, Smith) to modern post-industrialists like Bell (1973) and Toffler (1980), base themselves on economic and technological criteria (see Grinin 2011b). Two extremes can be observed depending on the choice of criteria. Too often, when scholars ascribe absolute meaning to the chosen factors, in Pitirim Sorokin's words (Sorokin 1992: 522), 'they turn out to be partially right, but one-sidedly wrong at the same time'. Some do not think at all about the connection between periodization and theory (on this issue see Stearns 1987; Bentley 1996), or periodization is used as a sort of 'headband' for the main theory (*e.g.*, Toffler 1980).

Sometimes it is said that historians do not need periodization but these are usually precarious claims. In the history of any society the historians necessarily distinguish some periods. It is especially important for archaeologists whose generalizing work is unthinkable without connection with periodization procedure. However, it is necessary to separate local periodizations from global periodizations of world history.