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Political drift of society as a category of political life

Abstract: The author considers four hypostases of the term political drift, political time passionarity and political time, with the help of which it is possible to analyse the vector of political development of modern Russian society. The study's subject is the political processes, which characterise political crises. The study's purpose is to analyse the political drift of society as a category of political life. To achieve the purpose and solve the tasks set by the author, Soviet, Russian, and foreign sources of information, including the works of the great philosopher Lev N. Gumilyov, were used. The author comes to an understanding of political drift as a category of political science, since it reflects the most significant natural connections and relations of real political life. Political drift is inherent in any society. Therefore, it is methodologically important to understand that the political drift of society cannot be considered in isolation from historical time. Based on the analysis, it follows that the category of "political drift of society" has an ambiguous interpretation: on the one hand, this indicates the complexity of the political phenomenon itself and the inability to use only one approach for its comprehensive characterization, on the other – the lack of elaboration of this phenomenon.

Keywords: political drift, passionarity, political time, political crisis.



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Политический дрейф общества как категория политической жизни

Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются четыре ипостаси термина политический дрейф, политическое время пассионарность и политическое время, с помощью которых можно анализировать вектор политического развития современного российского общества. Предметом исследования являются политические процессы, характеризующие политические кризисы. Целью исследования является анализ политического дрейфа общества как категория политической жизни. Для достижения цели и решения поставленных задач автором были использованы советские, российские и зарубежные источники информации, в том числе труды великого философа Л.Н. Гумилева. Автор приходит к пониманию политического дрейфа как категории политической науки, поскольку оно отражает наиболее существенные закономерные связи и отношения реальной политической жизни. Политический дрейф присущ любому обществу. Поэтому методологически важно понимать, что политический дрейф общества нельзя

рассматривать в отрыве от исторического времени. Исходя из анализа следует, что категория «политический дрейф общества» имеет неоднозначное толкование: с одной стороны, это свидетельствует о сложности самого политического феномена и невозможности использовать только один подход для его всесторонней характеристики, с другой – о недостаточной разработанности этого феномена.

Ключевые слова: политический дрейф, пассионарность, политическое время, политический кризис.



Introduction

A political crisis cannot only be a catalyst for rebellions, revolutions, uprisings, and riots, but also act as an independent political process affecting the drift of society. A political crisis can develop on the basis of economic, financial, governmental, and other crises, forming and developing in various spheres of society, or it can itself stimulate these types of social crises.

The political crisis has a different time duration. Political time is one of its parameters, it can be short-term, calculated in several days, or it can be long-term, lasting for years.

A political crisis may have an objective basis, e.g., a financial crisis that leads to a government crisis, a change of government, early parliamentary elections. Another option is when a political crisis is caused by the actions of conflicting political forces, political leaders, it causes significant damage to society as a whole and can trigger crises in other public spheres.

The consequence of the political crisis may be a different degree of change in the political life of society. The most profound changes are associated with a change in the political system, socio-economic structure. Such results of political crises are called revolutions.

The study's subject is the political processes, which characterise political crises.

The study's purpose is to analyse the political drift of society as a category of political life.

Based on the study's purpose, the following tasks were set:

- analyse the concepts of political drift;
- consider the society's drift from the viewpoint of the third hypostasis of this political category;
- determine the passionarity place in the political drift of society.

In the course of the study, historical, comparative, and deductive methods were applied.

To achieve the purpose and solve the tasks set, the author used Soviet, Russian and foreign sources of information, including the works of the great philosopher L.N. Gumilev.

Result of study

First, it is necessary to consider the very concept of drift in relation only to political processes. The word “drift” itself has several meanings. I should turn to the Modern Dictionary of Foreign Words, in which drift is:

- 1) the demolition of a moving vessel from its course line under the influence of wind and currents; the angle (magnitude) of drift, i.e., the angle formed by the direction of the keel and the direction of the actual movement of the vessel; to drift is about a sailing vessel;
- 2) movement of something (ship, ice) carried by the current;
- 3) slow directional movement of charged particles superimposed on their faster random (thermal motion);

4) geological drift of continents, i.e., slow movement of continents in the horizontal direction

So, there are four hypostases of the term of drift. Now it should consider them from the viewpoint of social development. According to the first meaning, a society moving along a certain political course changes the direction of its movement under the influence of certain factors, e.g., only at the beginning of the 21st century, in Russia, the electoral legislation was repeatedly changed, and, consequently, the electoral process. The electability of the heads of the Russian Federation constituent entities was then canceled, then returned again. Elections to representative and legislative authorities were held personally for candidates, then according to party lists, according to a mixed system, then in a number of subjects of the Russian Federation in single-mandate districts. The legislation and practice of elections to local self-government bodies were changing. Today, the threshold for voter turnout in municipal-level elections has been removed altogether. Another example of a change in the political course in modern Russia can be its foreign policy activities. In the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the state authorities took a course to integrate into the world economic and political system, putting the country in dependence on the United States. Since the early 21st century, the vector of Russian politics has begun to shift to that part of the “political spectrum” that can be characterised as gaining foreign policy independence.

The second hypostasis presupposes the movement of society carried by the course of history. It is legitimate to consider the latter as a general trend in the economy, politics, and culture. The global economic crises as an objective component of the market economy leaves its imprint not only on the economic, but also on the political drift of society. If you look at the consequences of the economic crises of the 20th century, it is not difficult to notice that the way out of them, as a rule, shifted countries towards totalitarian regimes. A classic example is Italy (1922-1943) and Germany (1933-1945). An acute economic crisis arose here after the defeat of these countries in the First World War. The consequences of the economic crisis (mass unemployment, impoverishment of the broad masses of the people) stimulated the rampant revanchism and the establishment of fascist ideology.

If we consider the drift of society from the viewpoint of the third hypostasis of this political category, then it should focus on the internal movements of this society, in a certain sense abstracting from numerous external factors. With this approach, the field of research will include the slow movement (within a given society) of social strata, communities, groups, the expression and defense of their interests, which, depending on the political regime of a particular society, can take various forms. The movement of these elements of society constitutes its internal drift, which can change the entire political “landscape”.

The internal drift of society can occur slowly, its movement can be likened to a reciprocating movement. Or it may have a discontinuous character. This leap in political science is usually expressed in terms of revolution, political crisis, insurrection, rebellion. Since these definitions are used in relation to the same political events, we will give them our interpretation (*Hacker et al, 2015*).

Revolution, regardless of the political time, can be considered by such a political process, during which the state system and socio-economic formation change. The catalyst for revolutions, as a rule, is a political crisis. In the history of 20th-century Russia, the results of political crises were four revolutions: 1905-1907, February 1917, October 1917, 1991-1993. The

result of the first political crisis was the formation of the Parliament (State Duma), legal political parties. Russia as a whole began to “drift” towards a limited monarchy. The result of the second political crisis was the abolition of the monarchy and the preparation of the Constituent Assembly, supposed to solve the issue of the political structure of Russia. The third political crisis brought a new political force, the Bolsheviks, to power and changed the social and economic structure of Russian society. As a result of the fourth political crisis, the Soviet period of Russia ended, and the social and economic system changed.

A political crisis cannot only be a catalyst for rebellions, revolutions, uprisings, and riots, but also act as an independent political process affecting the drift of society.

It follows from the above analysis that the category of “political drift of society” has an ambiguous interpretation (*Arrighi, 2010*). On the one hand, it indicates the complexity of the political phenomenon itself and the impossibility of using only one approach for its comprehensive characterisation, on the other hand, it does the lack of elaboration of this phenomenon. It also determined the author’s position not to try to integrate the various hypostases of the “political drift of society”, but use them when considering various types of social movements.

A political crisis can develop based on economic, financial, governmental, and other crises, forming and developing in various spheres of society, or it can itself stimulate these types of social crises.

More often than not, political crises do not end with such profound changes in the state’s political and economic system. Thus, in the states, which are parliamentary republics in the form of government, political crises often transform into governmental ones, occur quite often, but do not affect the basic economic and political foundations of society. A typical example is Italy, where political negotiations of the political parties’ leaders take place almost after every parliamentary election to form a majority-government coalition. The political consensus achieved in this case is temporary, since the ideology and basic values of political parties are often very different. In such cases, the political crisis can last for quite a long period of time, since the mechanism of its reproduction is triggered several times: the impossibility to create a parliamentary coalition, forming a government on its basis, the dissolution of parliament, new parliamentary elections, the search for consensus.

In the assessment of certain political events of a violent nature, such a concept as an uprising, a riot, a mutiny is used. However, there are certain differences between them there. An uprising is understood as an open armed action of social groups or classes against the existing political power (*Philosophical Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1983*). The uprising is planned in advance, it has a leader, certain resources for conducting an armed struggle. If the uprising wins, then its leaders become the political power, and its ideology becomes the dominant one. Otherwise, when an uprising is suppressed by the current government, it is declared a riot or a putsch, its leaders and participants are repressed.

A riot is defined as a spontaneous disorganized mass action without a clearly realized goal (*Philosophical Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1983*). The classical Russian literature of the 21st century (A. S. Pushkin) gives the definition of the Russian revolt as “senseless and merciless”.

The coup is associated with the performance of officer groups to establish a military dictatorship (*Philosophical Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1983*). Putschists often use the army or other state

power structures as direct perpetrators. They may be backed by other social groups with significant resources, primarily financial. The result of the coup, if it is realised, is not a change in the state system or a change in the social and economic formation. During the coup, one ruling group changes to another.

Insurrection, rebellion, mutiny, putsch unites action outside the legal field, legislation is replaced by expediency. All these political forms of protest significantly change the vector of society's development. The consequence of these violent forms of manifestation of population's social and political activity, as a rule, becomes a civil war.

Any civil war leads to a split of society and has its own impact on its drift. At the same time, this kind of split can exist for quite a long time and take place on different grounds: ethnic, religious, social, geographical, cultural, and ideological. Thus, the Civil War in Russia (1918-1920) split Russian society on ideological and social grounds. This split was mostly overcome during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) based on the consolidation of Soviet society in the struggle against Nazi Germany. At a new historical turn after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the split of Russian society manifested itself again. But now it has manifested itself in relation to the revolution, property, events and personalities of that time.

The drift of society can be realised not so radically. Changing the society's structure also leads to drift. The increase in the specific weight of some social groups and strata, and most importantly their real influence, significantly changes the qualitative composition of political elites, which, in turn, change the internal and foreign policy of the state (*Galvin et al., 2020*).

The fourth hypostasis of the concept of drift implies global tectonic shifts in the movement of peoples over long distances. These global processes are associated with assimilation, interpenetration of cultures, formation and disintegration of empires (*Orlov, 2016*).

If we turn only to the 20th century, we will see how Germany, the Austro-Hungarian, Russian, British, and Ottoman Empires collapsed. This disintegration had, among other things, long-term consequences. Thus, independent states were formed on the fragments of the Austro-Hungarian Empire: Hungary, Czechoslovakia (later split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Romania, Yugoslavia (later split into Serbia and Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovenia). The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was accompanied by the formation of new sovereign states within new borders, which were the result of political bargaining and compromise. At the same time, there was a compactly living ethnic minority in other States. This happened in Hungary, Romania, and almost all the former republics of Yugoslavia. This situation inevitably leads to constant political tension and periodic explosions on ethnic grounds. The colonial wars of the 17-19th centuries and the collapse of the colonial system in the 20th century fit into this context.

Considering this side of a drifting society, one cannot ignore Lev N. Gumilev's theory of passionarity (*Gumilyov, 1994*). If we consider political time in relation to large historical periods, then we will find the same patterns there. The political time of the same ethnic group within the framework of its ethnogenesis proceeds in different ways. In Russian science, the sociobiological understanding of the ethnos and the phases of its development is represented by the concept of passionarity by Lev Gumilev. For him, ethnicity is a phenomenon inextricably linked with the "feeding and accommodating landscape". An ethnos, according to Lev Gumilyov, cannot be a

social group, since it is not directly connected with the productive forces, although its culture acts as a social phenomenon.

In turn, ethnogenesis is a four-stage process of the birth, rise, decline, and death of an ethnos. The biological potential of a person plays an exceptional role in this process. Accumulating in ethnic groups, this potential leads to the appearance of excess energy – passionarity (*Gumilyov, 1990a*).

Obviously, the political timing of each stage of this process will be different. For example, at the birth and rise of Byzantium as a state, the emerging ethnos had a much greater passionarity than during the decline and death. The Byzantine ethnos passionarity as a whole allowed in the first two phases to reflect numerous attempts by other ethnic groups to reject its territory, to establish themselves as a hegemon in geopolitical terms. However, with the appearance of new strong players on the political map – Kievan Rus, the Ottoman Empire, the Christian states of Europe, – the Byzantine ethnos entered the stage of decline and dying, while its passionarity significantly decreased. Political time during these periods, no matter what political events it was characterised by, did not lead to a change in the phases of ethnogenesis, the Byzantine Empire ceased to exist.

Passionarity, according to Lev Gumilyov, is possessed by individual groups of people who involve the entire newly formed ethnic group in active intra-ethnic and international activities within certain geographical and historical limits. Having reached its apogee, the ethnos gradually comes to naught and dissolves into other ethnoses, appeared in comparison with the disappearing one in the passionate phase. The historical framework covering the period from the passion push to the death of the ethnos is one and a half thousand years. According to Gumilyov's concept of passionarity, a group of ethnic groups in one region is quite capable of creating a super ethnos based on the passion charge of geographically close peoples. Thus, having received a passionate impetus in the first century AD, the Byzantine super ethnos consisted of Greeks, Egyptians, Syrians, Georgians, Armenians, Slavs and existed until the 15th century.

Having reached its apogee, accompanied by internal rivalry and mutual destruction, the ethnogenesis of the super ethnos is inhibited. The passion charge in it is significantly reduced. There comes a phase of fracture and a huge dissipation of energy. For some time, the ethnos still functions by inertia. A new development only occurs if a new passionate population arises. However, it will be a completely different ethnic group (*Gumilyov, 1994*).

The analysis of political time based on the concept of passionarity has its limitations. Firstly, the emphasis on the close connection of the ethnos with the natural environment and, above all, with the landscape, removes from the scope of consideration many social and economic factors, which undoubtedly affect the political time. Secondly, the idea of one's own rhythms of ethnos development, which cannot be changed by people's consciousness, makes all four temporary stages of ethnogenesis purely closed social systems. In this case, political time is doomed to develop in the "cocoon" of these phases of ethnogenesis (*Gumilev, 1990b*).

At the same time, the theory of passionarity once again confirms that political time is an integral component and at the same time an indicator determining the content of the political life of super ethnoses.

Political time affects such qualitative aspects of political life as political regime, political leadership, political behaviour, political culture (Orlov, 2016). Within the framework of a specific political time, all political processes take place, all political institutions function. In turn, all these phenomena of political life affect political time, changing its pace, speeding up or slowing down its course. Thus, the presence of an active civic culture in society can create prerequisites for the emergence of political institutions and mechanisms of control by the society of power, and, consequently, accelerate the course of political time, and, conversely, low political culture of citizens leads to a slowdown in political time (Orlov, 2013).

Conclusion

Thus, we come to an understanding of political drift as a category of political science, since it reflects the most significant natural connections and relations of real political life. Political drift is inherent in any society. Therefore, it is methodologically important to understand that the political drift of society cannot be considered in isolation from historical time. The analysis of the political drift of society within a given political time should be realised comprehensively, considering various social, economic, natural and, cosmic factors.

From the point of view of the drift of modern Russian society, the above-mentioned phenomenon generates a mosaic picture, where along with linear motion we observe all others – pendulum, circular, return (Orlov, 2016).

It follows from the above analysis that the category of “political drift of society” has an ambiguous interpretation. On the one hand, this indicates the complexity of the political phenomenon itself and the impossibility to use only one approach for its comprehensive characterization, on the other hand, it does the lack of elaboration of this phenomenon. This also determined the author’s position not to try to integrate the various hypostases of the “political drift of society”, but to use them when considering various types of social movements.



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