Original Article

Ethopolitogenesis of Byzantine Superethnos

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Abstract

This work is aim to study the primary provisions of the biosocial approach to policy dynamics with regards to conflict. The paper's goal is to confirm the dependence of the policy dynamics from the ethnicity population dynamics. An analysis of the Lev Gumilev's concept that studied this relationship curried out. A numerical algorithm of ethnopolitogenesis formulated, based on the Gumilev's concept. This proposed to be universal and invariant with respect to ethnic groups, types of policies, historic eras regularity. To verify the numerical algorithm, the ethnopolitogenesis of major ethnic groups (Greeks and Armenians) of Byzantine superethnos was analysed. The analysis indicates that these ethnic groups developed as a whole in accordance with the numerical algorithm formulated.

Key words: Ethnopolitogenesis, Byzantia, Numerical algorithm

INTRODUCTION

Conflicting political dynamics is typical during the development of many countries. A variety of theories exists to explain these dynamics. One of these theories has received considerable recognition and links the political dynamics of agrarian states to demographic cycles. The structural-demographic theory, developed by J. Goldstone, is basing on this approach [1]. The primary concept of this theory is that population increases of the elite and peasantry result in domestic political crisis. An increase in the number elite citizens leads to the exacerbation of a struggle for resources and results in a fractionation of the elite and ultimately to civil war between its groups. The increase in the number of peasantry citizens results in a reduction of peasant holdings, an increase in prices, a reduction of products and goods available for consumption, hunger and riots.

However, the beginning of crisis and disintegration of a state may be caused by degradation of both the elite and peasantry without a significant population increase. A crisis may commence if the share of destructive elements among the elite increases and reaches a certain critical level of corrupt officials, amateurs, and criminals. A crisis is also likely if, among the peasantry, the share of beggars, malingerers and sluggards increases to a critical level. Thus, the political dynamics in its conflictual aspect may be synchronized by population quality dynamics.

Human populations from animal ancestry inherit population quality dynamics. This testifies to the dual biosocial nature of ethnicity. In animal populations, "the heterogeneity of its constituent individuals is the most important condition of population regulation" [2, p. 49]. Quality dynamics is one of the most effective mechanisms for population homeostasis by increasing the proportion of certain individual types to reach a high population density [3]. This theory is true in human populations as well.

Lev Gumilev is one of few historians who attempted to study the influence of population quality on historical dynamics. According to K. G. Frumkin, "Gumilev states the question of population quality participating in historical events, of the dependence of historical events outcome on this quality, and the most important thing – of the dependence of this quality from a share of the one or another human type in the total general population. The posing of such issues is referred to Gumilev's merits" [4, p. 19]. Frumkin refers here to Gumilev's types of passionaries (individuals possessing excess energy), subpassionaries (power-hungry individuals) and harmonic people (balanced energy individuals) [5].

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In Gumilev's concept, the primary subject of macro-historical processes considered an indivisible unity and interaction of ethnogenesis and polity genesis is ethnicity as a natural biosocial and social phenomenon. The primary subject of macrohistorical process, presented as indivisible unity and the interaction of ethnogenesis and polity genesis, is ethnicity, which regarded as a biosocial and socio-natural phenomenon. Biological hypostasis of ethnicity appears in the essence of passionary, subpassionary and harmonious types. The ratio of these personality types in relation to the entire population determines, in the Gumilev's terms, the amount of ethnic passionary energy, on which the progress and success of the population depends.

According to Lev Gumilev, the dynamics of the relative proportions of different traits (the dynamics of passionarity) determines the process of ethnogenesis, which may be understood as the process of ethnicity development (phases of ethnogenesis) and phase transitions which divide the population. These phase transitions (e.g. periods of crisis), by which large-scale internal conflicts are characterized, lead to the weakening and occasional dissolution of any state that was originally created by the ethnicity [5]. The term 'ethnopolitogenesis', which was proposed by P. V. Turchin [6, p. 54], infers that the dynamics of passionarity determine the process of ethnopolitogenesis.

METHODS

As a result of these amendments, a new concept based on the biosocial approach was formed. The primary provisions of this concept are as follows (the complete list and details on these provisions see: [7]):

I. The primary subject of macrohistorical process, presented as indivisible unity and the interaction of ethnogenesis and polity genesis, is ethnicity, which is regarded as a biosocial and socio-natural phenomenon.

II. In its development, ethnicity undergoes a series of age-phases or unstable periods of crisis, which are persistent periods and separate phase transitions.

III. A phase is the stage which occurs during the time period of ethnic system existence by which the ethnic system retains its steady state characterized by the absence of large-scale conflicts because the proportion of passionaries and subpassionaries has altered during the phase within the optimal range for this definition of phase values.

IV. The time period of ethnogenesis phases and phase transitions, including crisis periods within certain phases, are determined by universal, invariant numerical algorithms of ethnopolitogenesis, with respect to historical periods and aspects of uniformity of the polity.

1. Expansion phase: 0 – 340-360 years.
   Consists of the following periods: incubation (0 – 100-155 years), explicit (100-155 – 340-360 years) and conflict in the middle of the expansion phase (185-235 years) (denoted it as 1a). The explicit period begins with the creation of a state by an ethnic group during the period of 100-155 years.

2. Phase transition from expansion to acme (expansion-acme): 340-360 – 450-470 years.

3. Acme phase: 450-470 – 630-655 years.
   Within this phase a period of conflict due to passionarity unrest is identified (540-560 – 570-585 years) (denoted it as 3a).

4. Phase transition from acme to crack (acme-crack): 630-655 – 680-725 years.

5. Phase of crack: 680-725 – 755-810 years.

6. Phase transition from crack to inertia (crack-inertia): 755-810 – 840-875 years.

7. Inertia phase: 840-875 – 1302-1334 years.
   Three crisis periods exist within this phase: the first – 880-920 – 935-970 years (denoted it as 7a), the second – 1025-1070 – 1100-1145 years (denoted it as 7b) and the third – 1175-1215 – 1260-1285 years (denoted it as 7c). These crisis periods are separated by four stable periods.

8. Phase transition from inertia to obscuration (inertia-obscuration): 1302-1334 – approximately 1500 years.

V. Adversity (characterized by the violent nature of large-scale domestic conflicts) and major military defeats are primarily characterized by unstable periods.

Greeks were the most numerous part of the population of the Byzantine Empire, and have actually been the dominant ethnic group. Byzantine Armenians were the most significant ethnic minority in certain periods. Armenians occupied a prominent place in the ruling Class of Byzantium, from them the came out a number of emperors [8].

Byzantine superethnos included apart from Greeks and Armenians many other ethnic groups – of the Syrians, Jews, Slavs and others. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the ethnopolitogenesis of all the ethnic groups that were constituents of the populations of the Byzantine Empire. However, this is an extremely complicated task, and to reduce its labour intensity, we limited consideration to only the ethnopolitogenesis of Greeks as titular ethnic group and consideration of the Armenian ethnopolitogenesis, although such a consideration greatly simplifies the real picture of ethnopolitogenesis of the Byzantine superethnos.

The goal of this research is to verify the numerical algorithm through analysis of the ethnopolitogenesis of

major ethnic groups of Byzantine superethnos – Greeks and Armenians. This analysis must demonstrate that the distempers, major military defeats and dissipation of the state occurred primarily during of unstable time of the Greek and Armenian ethnic groups. To achieve this research objective, it becomes necessary to determine the starting points of ethnopolitogenesis for each major ethnic group of the Byzantine superethnos and to consider and verify their political history through use of the numerical algorithm.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The starting points of the ethnopolitogenesis of the Greek and Armenian subethnic groups were determined (method of determination of starting point see: [7]). The starting point of the ethnopolitogenesis of the northern Greek (descendants of the Macedonians) and Armenian subethnoses was around 9 BC, the starting point of ethnopolitogenesis of part of the Greek subethnoses can be defined as 278 AD. Probably in the middle of the sixth century, after the epidemic of bubonic plague in 542, the starting point of this Greek subethnoses has shifted off 278 on 237.

Let us estimate the ethnic ages in which the Greek and Armenian ethnic groups experienced distempers and suffered major military defeats. Then, we can identify the periods in which there were troubles and defeats. The results are present in Table 1. In the third and fourth columns, the period numeration specified in parentheses beside the ages of the ethnic groups and in accordance with the following numerical algorithm: expansion phase – 1, conflict period in the middle of the expansion phase – 1a, acme-expansion phase transition – 2, etc. The ethnic age attributable to the stable period, as well as the numbering of this period, is shown in italics. The presumed period number signalled by a question mark.

Let us discuss the obtained results. Eight of the 17 cases of major military defeats and unrest listed in Table occurred during periods when all the subethnoses were in an unstable states (cases 1-2, 7, 10-11, 13, 15, 16). Three cases occurred during periods when Northern Greeks and Armenians were in the unstable states and remaining Greeks were in one part of the period in the unstable states and in the other part of the period in the stable states (cases 8, 12, 17). Three cases occurred during periods when Northern Greeks and Armenians were in the stable states and remaining Greeks were in the unstable states (cases 3, 4, 6). One case occurred during periods when Northern Greeks and Armenians were in the unstable state and remaining Greeks were in the stable state (case 5). There are two anomalies. Revolt of the

usurper Artavazdos from 742 to 743 was when Northern Greeks and Armenians were in the phase of crack and remaining Greeks were in the acme phase. Mutinies of Bardas Phocas in 971 and from 987 to 989, mutiny of Bardas Skleros from 976 to 979 were when Northern Greeks and Armenians were in the second period of the inertia phase and remaining Greeks were in the phase of crack. Let us explain these anomalies.

Armenian ethnos included several subethnoses. Their starting points differed. The starting point of the Armenians of Armenia Minor apparently was 32 AD. The starting point of the Armenians of Cappadocia, Pergamum and other areas of the Byzantine Empire was 9 BC.

Artavazdos was a Byzantine general of Armenian descent. In about 713, Emperor Anastasius II appointed the Armenian Artabasdos as governor (strategos) of the Armeniac theme, which occupied the old areas of the Pontus, Armenia Minor and northern Cappadocia.

Distemper often occurs at the end of unstable period. The ethnic age of the Armenians of Armenia Minor was 710-711 years old from 742 to 743 (742-743 – 32 = 710-711), which corresponds to an end of the acme-crack phase transition (this period denoted as 4).

The starting point of the Pontic Greeks apparently was 278 AD. Their ethnic age was 464-465 years old from 742 to 743 (742-743 – 278 = 464-465), which corresponds to an end of the expansion-acme phase transition (this period denoted as 2). Therefore, revolt of the usurper Artavazdos can explained as the final distemper of this phase transitions.

Bardas Phocas and Bardas Skleros were the Byzantine generals of Armenian descent. The ethnic age of the Armenians of Armenia Minor was 939-957 years old from 971 to 989 (971-989 – 32 = 939-957), which corresponds to an end of the first crisis of the inertia phase (this period denoted as 7a). The ethnic age of the Pontic Greeks was 693-711 years old from 971 to 989 (971-989 – 278 = 693-711), which corresponds to the end of the acme-crack phase transition. Therefore, the mutinies of the Bardas Phocas and Bardas Skleros can explained as the final distempers of these unstable states.

CONCLUSION

The result of the research became the verification of the numerical algorithm on the example of the analysis of the ethnopolitogenesis of the major ethnic groups of the Byzantine superethnos. The analysis showed that the

Table 1: The distempers and major military defeats during the ethnopolitogenesis of Greek and Armenian ethnic groups in composition of the Byzantine superethnos

#	The chronological framework of distemper and/or major military defeats	Age (years)	
		Northern Greeks and Armenians	Remaining Greeks
1	Revolt of Procopius from 365 to 366*.	374-375 (2)	
2	The defeat of the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire Valens by the Goths at the Battle of Adrianople in 378**.	387 (2)	
3	The unsuccessful campaign of the Byzantines against the Vandal kingdom in 468.	477 (3)	190 (1a)
4	Revolts in Constantinople in 476 and 479. Riot of commander Illa from 483 to 488.	485-497 (3)	198-210 (1a)
5	The Nika riots in 532. The invasion of the Persians in Mesopotamia and Syria in 540, the capture of Antioch. Loss of possessions of the Empire in Italy to 546.	541-555 (3a)	254-268 (1)
6	Revolt of Phocas in 602, the overthrow of the Emperor Mauritius. The revolt of Heraclius Older against Phocas in 608, enthronement Heraclius I in 610. Unsuccessful war with the Persians from 602 to 622, the loss of much of the Levant, Egypt and Anatolia.	611-631 (3)	356-376*** (2)
7	The defeat of the Byzantines by the Arabs in 636. Loss of Syria, Palestine, Upper Mesopotamia, Egypt from 636 to 642.	645-651 (4)	399-405 (2)
8	The rebellion of Leonty, the overthrow the Emperor Justinian II in 695. Loss of Carthage Exarchate in 698. Frequent violent change of emperors and the period of anarchy to 717.	704-726 (4)	458-470 (2), 471-480 (3)
9	Start of iconoclasm in 726, the executions of admirers of icons. Revolt of the usurper Artavazdos from 742 to 743.	751-752 (5)	505-506 (3)
10	Mutiny in the army in 790, removal from power of the Empress Irene. The defeat of the Byzantines by the Bulgarians in 792.	799-801 (6)	553-555 (3a)
11	Mutiny of commander Vardan Turk in 803. The defeats of the Byzantines by the Bulgarian Khan Krum in 808, 811 and 813.	812-822 (6)	566-576 (3a)
12	The revolt of Thomas the Slav from 821 to 823. The capture of Crete and most of the Sicily by the Arabs from 826 to 827. The defeats of the Byzantines by the Arabs in 830 and 838.	830-847 (6)	584-585 (3a), 586-601 (3)
13	The defeats of the Byzantines by the Bulgarians from 894 to 927. Capturing the whole of Sicily by the Arabs in 902 and of Thessaloniki in 904. Mutinies in the army in 904 and from 919 to 920. The revolt led by Vasily Copper Hand in 932.	903-941 (7a)	657-695 (4)
14	Mutinies of Bardas Phocas in 971 and from 987 to 989. Mutiny of Bardas Skleros from 976 to 979.	980-998 (7)	734-752 (5)
15	The revolt in Constantinople, the overthrow of Michael V, mutiny of George Maniac in 1042. Successful mutiny of Isaac Comnenus in 1057. The defeat of the Byzantines by the Seljuks at Manzikert in 1071. Successful mutinies of Nikifor Votaniat in 1078 and of Alexius Comnenus in 1081. Capture by Normans of Dyrrachium and invasion into Macedonia and Thessaly in 1082. The defeats of the Byzantines by the Pechenegs in 1086 and 1088.	1051-1097 (7b)	805-851 (6)
16	The defeat of the Byzantines by the Seljuks at Myriokefala in 1176. The revolt in Constantinople in 1182, the coming to power of Andronicus Comnenus. The revolt in Constantinople in 1185, the overthrow of Andronicus Comnenus. The capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204. The collapse of the Byzantine Empire. Wars between the states that emerged on the ruins of the Byzantine Empire.	1185-1213 (7c)	939-967 (7a)
17	The defeats of the Byzantines by the Turks at Magnesia and Nicomedia in 1302. The civil war between Andronicus II and Andronicus III from 1320 to 1328. The capture of Nicaea by the Ottomans in 1331. The civil war from 1341 to 1347. The capture by the Ottomans of Adrianople in 1362 and of Thessaloniki in 1430. The capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453. The death of the Byzantine Empire.	1311-1462 (8)	1065-1139 (7b), 1140-1200 (7), 1201-1216 (7c)

* Evidence of the political history of the Byzantium taken from the [9-10], ** Defeat contributed a stay of the Romans in an unstable state of the third crisis of the inertia phase in the fourth century, *** The starting point of the Greeks likely shifted from 278 on 237 during the middle of the sixth century. Both here and below, the ethnic age of the Greeks specified according to this point

distempers and major military defeats occurred mainly during the periods of unstable states of these ethnic groups. Therefore, the Byzantine Empire died, when the major ethnic groups of the Byzantine superethnos were in the unstable states. The northern Greek and Armenian subethnoses were in the phase transition inertia-obscuration. The other Greek subethnoses were in the third crisis of the inertia phase.

The occurred two anomalies explained within the bounds of the theory.

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