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**THE MODES OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY
INSTITUTIONALIZATION: EVOLUTIONARY APPROACH**

SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION

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Statement of research problem

Political authority is grounded in mutual recognition of power relation between those who command and those who obey. It is a core or cores (loci, knots, junctions) of power circulation in a system of power relations. Political formations are anchored in explicit or implicit social contract. As Hannah Arendt stated, power is opposite to violence¹. Contemporary scholars distinguish normatively negative power as *dominance* from normatively desirable power as *empowerment*, which also could be labeled as *positive authority*, mutually recognized power for the common good.

As human society had been changing in the course of time, our perception of power and authority had been changing too. The renovation of scientific tools in XXth century, the emergence of new and modernization of the old means, modes, practices and fields of interaction and communication have led to new concepts of mediapower, biopower, cultural power, soft power, etc. Emancipation and empowerment of powerless people, growth of horizontal structures and so-called “crisis” of political systems (the gap between political institutions and the development of IT systems, emergence of new populist movements and etc.), are calling for the reevaluation of political authority institutions². The challenge is both external and internal for political science. During the last decades a lot of new data have been gathered in different fields of science. That is the call for a new approach for human society, involving the *evolutionary perspective*. The results from the fields of anthropology, ethology, game theory, psychology and evolutionary biology allow us to reveal the common evolutionary basis for the political authority institutionalization modes and its variability. These new results from boundary fields make it possible to highlight the evolutionary trends piercing both social and biological evolutions.

¹ Arendt H. *On Violence*. N.Y.: Harvest Book, 1970.

² Haugaard M. The faces of power, resistance and justification in a changing world // *Journal of Political Power*. 2020. Vol 13, No. 1. Pp. 1–5.

The thesis tends to solve two of the major problems. The first one is theoretical and methodological, and the second one is practical. At first the thesis analyzes and synthesizes the result from boundary fields and reveals the common bases of politician authority institutionalization evolutionary modes in the course of history. At second, the thesis examines these common bases on the data of three defining points or, to be precise, defining *positions* – evolutionary thresholds³ of the early anthropogenesis, the formation of traditional and modern political orders.

State of the field

The subject of institutional forms evolution is being developed now in the different fields of political science. The problem is the fragmentation of conventional approaches. I divide the literature into three major blocks according to their methodological similarities. The **first** is political theory and philosophy. The **second** is sociological approach. The **third** is biopolitical approach.

(1) Political theory holds two major traditions. The first one is phenomenological and rooted in the works of classics as Plato, Hobbs, Locke, Kant, Hume, Austin and etc.⁴ and related to the contemplation of what we are to understand about authority. The second one is normative theory. It deals with the issues of authority moral justification and contexts, when we can and may consider authority as desirable, as in the works by Ronald Dworkin⁵, John Rawls⁶, Josef Raz⁷, John Simmons⁸, Thomas Christiano⁹, Richard T. DeGeorge¹⁰, or we may *not*,

³ Kull K. Vegetative, Animal, and Cultural Semiosis: The semiotic threshold zones // Cognitive Semiotics. 2009. Vol. 4 (Supplement). Pp. 8–27; Higuera C.J.R., Kull K. The Biosemiotic Glossary Project: The Semiotic Threshold // Biosemiotics. 2017. Vol. 10, No. 1. Pp. 109–126.

⁴ Alexeeva T. Authority problems in political philosophy // Politea. 2005. № 2. Pp. 161–184. (In Russ.)

⁵ Dworkin R. Law's Empire. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

⁶ Rawls J. Political Liberalism. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

⁷ Raz J. The Morality of Freedom. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

⁸ Simmons A.J. Justification and Legitimacy: Essays on Rights and Obligations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

⁹ Christiano T. The Authority of Democracy // Journal of Political Philosophy. 2004. Vol. 12, No. 3. Pp. 245–270.

as in the works by Michael Foucault and his successors or anarchists from Robert Wolff¹¹ to Mark Huemer¹². Concerning the institutional aspect, most of the concept and theoretical models of authority (normative, critical, phenomenological, etc.) use the Weberian typology of legitimate rule as a foundation¹³.

Crucial idea I derive from the field of political theory is the following: *authority can't exist outside changing social context*. A subject can't proclaim itself an authority, authority can't be gained through domination and coercion. The position of an authority is being granted to a subject by other subjects. This factual observation is implicit, however sometimes being deprived of the attention, in *all* of the definitions in literature. Hannah Arendt defines authority as an opposite to coercion, a la voluntarily obedience, trust¹⁴. Dennis Wrong writes of a power relationship, where one holds *recognized* right to rule, and another – *recognized* obligation to obey¹⁵. Alexander Marey in his book on the history of the concept suggests *socially-recognized* knowledge¹⁶. Anthropologists researching animal leadership give the similar definition. A position of leadership among social animals is not just conquered by one (as in dominance hierarchy), but also is being given by other subjects, who do accept his role as power holder (however the one doesn't necessarily contradict the other).¹⁷

¹⁰ DeGeorge R.T. *The Nature and Limits of Authority*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1985.

¹¹ Wolff R.P. *In Defense of Anarchism*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

¹² Huemer M. *The Problem of Political Authority*. L.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

¹³ Die drei reinen Typen der legitimen Herrschaft, in: *Preußische Jahrbücher*, Band. 187, Heft 1, 1922, S. 1-12. / Вебер М. Три чистых типа легитимного господства // *Хозяйство и общество*. Т. 4. М.: Издательский дом ВШЭ, 2019. С. 404-414.

¹⁴ Arendt H. *What Is Authority?* // *In between Past and Future: Eight Essays in Political Thought*. London: Penguin Books, 2006. Pp. 91–141.

¹⁵ Wrong D.H. *Power: It's Forms, Bases, and Uses*. New Brunswick and L.: Transaction Publishers, 2002. P. 49.

¹⁶ Marey A.V. *Authority, or Obedience without violence*. SPb.: European University Publishing House, 2017. (In Russ.)

¹⁷ De Waal F. *Chimpanzee Politics: Power and Sex Among Apes*. Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1998.

(2) Sociology investigates empirical manifestations of voluntarily obedience¹⁸, constantly developing new optics and broadening the research focus from the simplest form voluntarily obedience to political orders to implicit regular practices, where political is implied, but not recognized even by actors¹⁹. Big conceptual models attempt to describe all of the power forms and their evolution. Such models have been proposed by Michael Mann²⁰, Douglas North, John Wallis and Barry Weingast²¹, and others. But ideal types tend to blend on the empirical level, and we encounter the problem of separating one type of legitimate rule from another. What we can do, however, and where sociological approach helps us, is to trace the evolution of these forms and to define the degree and proportion of such a blend, depending on historical time and space. To investigate empirical forms of political authority manifestations and to examine it as an institution or a practice, but not as an ideal type, – is a sociological approach achievement, which allows to use the evolutionary institutionalism optics.

(3) Biopolitical approach is required to create a wide conceptual framework of authority institutions evolution, which would include “animal leadership” and “animal authority” along with pure biological functionality, which is inherited and reinvented in the human society as well. The term biopolitics itself here means the combination of political science and ethology, as in works by Lynton Caldwell²², Albert Somit²³, Thomas Thorson²⁴, Konrad Lorenz²⁵, Niko Tinbergen²⁶ and etc.

¹⁸ Haugaard M. What is authority? // *Journal of Classical Sociology*. 2018. Vol.18, No. 2. Pp. 104-132.

¹⁹ Digester P. The Fourth Face of Power // *The Journal of Politics*. 1992. Vol. 54, No. 4. Pp. 977–1007.

²⁰ Mann M. *The Sources of Social Power*. Vol. 1-4. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

²¹ North D.C., Wallis J.J., Weingast B.R. *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*. N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

²² Caldwell L. Biopolitics: Science, ethics, and public policy // *The Yale Review*. 1964. Vol. 54, No. 1. Pp. 1–16.

²³ Somit A. Toward a more biologically oriented political science: Ethology and psychopharmacology // *Midwest Journal of Political Science*. 1968. Vol. 12, No. 4. Pp. 550–567; Somit A. Review article: Biopolitics // *British Journal of Political Science*. 1972. Vol. 2, No. 2. Pp. 209–238.

²⁴ Thorson T.L. *Biopolitics*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.

Data and concepts from biology can be used for the means and needs of social science²⁷ (not to confuse with critical postmodern “biopolitics”²⁸). It is important to move from abstractly theoretical view of power and authority to broad empirical-oriented, and biopolitical approach supplies us with necessary tools for this goal.

How power manifest itself on biological level is one the primary questions of sociobiology. Among the founders of this scientific school were Russian anarchists Peter Kropotkin²⁹ and Lev Mechnikov³⁰. Among the modern Russian scientists we should mention Alexander Oleskin, who has been introducing the Russian science to modern biopolitics during the last decades³¹. However, the field of biopolitics may include researchers from the different fields, such as cognitive or behavioral neurobiology (represented in Russia, for example, by the research of Institute for Cognitive Neuroscience of HSE).

In the thesis biopolitical approach is represented by data, research and hypotheses from the different fields: sociobiology³² used as a source of ideas on the border between social and biological. Ethology shows us with the variation of social power systems among animals from eusocial insects³³, which is similar to

²⁵ Lorenz K. *Evolution and Modification of Behavior*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.

²⁶ Tinbergen N. On Aims and Methods of Ethology // *Ethology*. 1963. Vol. 20, No. 4. Pp. 410–433.

²⁷ *Handbook of Biology and Politics* / eds. S.A. Peterson and A. Somit. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2017.

²⁸ Liesen L.T., Walsh M.B. The Competing Meanings of 'Biopolitics' in Political Science: Biological and Post-Modern Approaches to Politics // *Politics and the Life Science*. 2012. Vol. 31, No. 1-2. Pp. 2-15.

²⁹ Kropotkin P.A. *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*. London: Freedom Press, 2009.

³⁰ Mechnikov L.I. *Civilization and the Great Historical Rivers*. Moscow, Pangeia, 1995. (In Russ.) / Metchnikoff L. *La Civilisation et les grands fleuves historiques*. Hachette, Paris 1889.

³¹ Oleskin A.V. *Biopolitics*. Moscow, 2001. (In Russ.)

³² Wilson; *Sociobiology: A New Synthesis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975; Wilson D.S., Wilson E.O. Rethinking the theoretical foundation of sociobiology // *The Quarterly review of biology*. 2007. Vol. 82, No. 4. Pp. 327–348; Wilson E.O. *The Social Conquest of Earth*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2012.

³³ Batra S.W.T. Nests and social behavior of halictine bees of India (Hymenoptera: Halictidae) // *The Indian Journal of Entomology*. 1966. Vol. 28, No. 3. Pp. 375—393; Foster K.R., Ratnieks F.L.W. A new eusocial vertebrate? // *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*. 2005. Vol. 20. No. 7. Pp. 363–364.

human society only in the functional sense³⁴, to our close relatives – anthropoids. Fred Willhoite³⁵ was among the first to notice the straight functional analogue of political authority among primates. The idea had been further developed in the works by Frans de Waal³⁶, Jane Goodall³⁷, Roger Fouts³⁸, Christophe Boesch³⁹ and etc.

The research in animal leadership is presented in the thesis by the authors such as Mark van Vugt⁴⁰, Robert Hogan⁴¹, Zachary H. Garfield⁴², Ronald F. White⁴³. The studies in game theory (Robert Axelrod and his successors⁴⁴) and research in evolutionary logic and origins of altruism and cooperation⁴⁵ lays nearby. “Leadership” and “altruism” for the aims of my study are placed in the same conceptual field with “authority”: I intend to underline the indissoluble pragmatic connection between them. It is impossible to study the evolution

³⁴ Fokin C.V. 2021. (In Russ.)

³⁵ Willhoite F.H. Jr. Primates and Political Authority: A Biobehavioral Perspective // *The American Political Science Review*. 1976. Vol. 70. No. 4. Pp. 1110–1126.

³⁶ De Waal. Op. cit.

³⁷ Goodall J. *The chimpanzees of Gombe: patterns of behavior*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986.

³⁸ Fouts R. Apes, Darwinian continuity and the law // *Animal Law*. 2004. Vol. 10. Pp. 99-124.

³⁹ Boesch C. *Wild Cultures: A Comparison between Chimpanzee and Human Cultures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

⁴⁰ Van Vugt M. Evolutionary origins of leadership and followership // *Personality and Social Psychology Review*. 2006. Vol. 10. Pp. 354–371; Van Vugt M., Grabo A.E. The many faces of leadership: An evolutionary-psychology approach // *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. 2015. Vol. 24. Pp. 484–489.

⁴¹ Winsborough D., Kaiser R., Hogan R. An evolutionary view: What followers want from their leaders // *Leadership in Action*. 2009. Vol. 29. Pp. 8-11

⁴² Garfield Z.H., von Rueden C., Hagen E.H. The Evolutionary Anthropology of Political Leadership // *The Leadership Quarterly*. 2018. Vol. 30, No. 1. Pp. 59–80; Garfield Z.H., Hagen E.H. Investigating evolutionary models of leadership among recently settled Ethiopian hunter-gatherers // *The Leadership Quarterly*. 2020. Vol. 31, No. 2. 101290.

⁴³ White R.F. Political behavior and biology: evolutionary leadership and followership // *Handbook of Biology and Politics*. Eds. S.A. Peterson and A. Somit. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2017. Pp. 231-246.

⁴⁴ Durlauf S.N., Blume L.E. *Game Theory and Biology* // *Game Theory*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Pp. 119-126; Cowden C. Game Theory, Evolutionary Stable Strategies and the Evolution of Biological Interactions // *Nature Education Knowledge*. 2012. Vol. 3, No. 10. P. 6.

⁴⁵ Ridley M. *The Origins of Virtue: Human Instincts and the Origins of Cooperation*. London: Penguin, 1996; Alford J.R., Hibbing J.R. The Origin of Politics: An Evolutionary Theory of Political Behavior // *Perspectives on Politics*. 2004. Vol. 2, No. 4. Pp. 707–723.

political authority institutions in human society ignoring the issues of cooperation, altruistic behavior and leadership.

My conceptual premise rests on three anthropological notions. The first is Cultural Universals (Donald Brown and etc.⁴⁶). The second is bonding between social behavior towards power and biological mechanisms of our brain and body, as presented in findings of Dacher Keltner⁴⁷, Deborah Kelemen⁴⁸, Deborah Gruenfeld⁴⁹, Vasily Klucharev⁵⁰ and others⁵¹. The third is Supernatural Punishment Hypothesis (SPH) of Dominic Johnson⁵² and others⁵³. There are convincing data that the formation of big human groups was connected to the emergence (or institutionalization) of the faith in supernatural moral agents – transcendental ultimate authorities.

All of these corpora of literature are aiming for the research problem but from different sides. How, during the course of human history, the modes of political authority institutionalization changed and evolved? The first goal of the thesis is to

⁴⁶ Brown D. Human Universals. Temple University Press, 1991; Human universals and their implications // *Being humans: Anthropological universality and particularity in transdisciplinary perspectives*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000. Pp. 156–174; Norenzayan A., Heine S. J. Psychological universals: what are they and how can we know? // *Psychological Bulletin*. 2005. Vol. 131, No. 5. Pp. 763–784.

⁴⁷ Keltner D., Gruenfeld D.H., Anderson C. Power, Approach, and Inhibition // *Psychological Review*. 2003. Vol. 110, No 2. Pp. 265–284.

⁴⁸ Keleman D. Are Children „Intuitive Theists“? Reasoning about Purpose and Design in Nature // *Psychological Science*. 2004. Vol 15, No. 5. Pp. 295–301.

⁴⁹ Inesi M., Magee J., Gruenfeld H., Galinsky A.D. Power and the objectification of social targets // *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 2008. Vol. 95, No. 1. Pp. 111–127; Inesi M., Gruenfeld H., Galinsky A.D. How power corrupts relationships: Cynical attributions for others' generous acts // *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. 2012. Vol. 48, No. 6. Pp. 795–803.

⁵⁰ Klucharev V.A., Zubarev I.P., Shestakova A.N.. Neurobiological mechanisms of social influence // *Experimental Psychology (Russia)*. 2014. Vol. 7, No. 4. Pp. 45-56. (In Russ.)

⁵¹ Hogeveen J., Inzlicht M., Sukhvinder S.S. Power Changes How the Brain Responds to Others // *Journal of Experimental Psychology*. 2013. Vol. 143, No. 2. Pp. 755–762.; Wheeler M.E., Fiske S.T. Controlling racial prejudice: social-cognitive goals affect amygdala and stereotype activation // *Psychological Science*. 2005. Vol. 16, No. 1. Pp. 56–63.

⁵² Johnson D.D.P. *God Is Watching You: How the Fear of God Makes Us Human*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

⁵³ Lane J. Strengthening the Supernatural Punishment Hypothesis through Computer Modeling // *Religion, Brain & Behavior*. 2018. Vol. 8, № 3. Pp. 290–300; Hartberg Y., M.Cox, Villamayor-Tomas S. Supernatural Monitoring and Sanctioning in Community-based Resource Management // *Religion, Brain & Behavior*. 2016. Vol. 6, No. 2. Pp. 95–111.

establish links between these corpora, as well between theories and empirical data. By doing that I'm aiming to reveal the core and common evolutionary bases for political authority institutionalization modes variation. Solving this problem will allow us to make a dynamic evolutionary model consisting of many practical mods, that can be validated on empirical data of historical contexts, natural experiments and etc.

Research Problem

Despite the considerable results of comparative, empirical and idiographic studies of power structures and authority, there is still a gap between the results and yet influential, however not dominant normative and general theoretic approaches to political authority. That normative and general theoretic foundations, despite all the scientific value, are tend to influence and sometimes deform the analyses of practical institutional and behavioral representations of authority. It is needed not only to bridge that gap between empirical study of factual contemporary or historical models and speculative models, but also to establishing the common evolutionary bases of political authority institutionalization modes.

Research Question

What factors influenced institutionalizations of political authority structures on the three of evolutionary thresholds of social and political organization of human society: early anthropogenesis, the formation of traditional and modern political orders?

The aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to (1) reveal common evolutionary bases of political authority institutionalization modes, and to (2) validate that empirically. The objectives of the study are

1. to reevaluate critically of the core concepts of the research including

- political authority;
- institutions of political authority;
- modes of political authority institutionalization;
- ultimate (external) instance of political authority.

2. to review, critically reevaluate and generalize explanatory and interpretative models that exist in the science now, and explain the evolutionary shift from ethological animal leadership to human institutions of political authority, and how the human political authority institutions are evolving considering their biological predisposition. The common dynamic model is proposed on the ground of that generalized pattern, that can be verified on empirical data.

3. to test the dynamic model on the three of evolutionary thresholds of human social and political orders development: (a) the transfer from ethological practices to primal political authority institutions, (b) the transformation of primal orders under the pressure of big societies formation and external authority emergence, (c) during the preservation, development, complication, multiplication of external authorities by the course of history and its demystification and transformation on the grounds of accountability inside the modern institutions of democratic authority;

4. to correct our dynamic model of common evolutionary bases on the grounds of empirical validation, and to sum up our achievement: the common sociobiological predisposition of political authority institutionalization in general and the unique features that emerge and multiply at the level of practical modes.

The structure and limitation of the study

The thesis highlights two of the study achievements. The first one is a critical analysis of a wide corpora of scientific studies from different fields, that allows to reveal the common evolutionary bases of political authority institutionalization modes. Selection of literature and studies is done on the grounds of its relevance to our study and through the incorporation of data from boundary fields (biopolitics,

ethology, sociobiology, anthropology and etc.) Introduction and Chapter 1 describe the process of the analyses and the selection of data. The common evolutionary bases of political authority institutionalization modes are provided in the resume of Chapter 1, and also the conceptualization of the dynamic evolutionary model that allows us to validate these bases.

The process of validation is carried out on the three of evolutionary thresholds. The analyses of each threshold are the parts of Chapter 2. The starting point is the human universals concept of Donald Brown, which states that political authority institutions are universal for human societies. If one needs to answer the following question “why is that?”, it is necessary to use biopolitical perspective, that reveals evolutionary social and biological functionality of political authority institutions.

Consequently, *the first threshold* is a biological (evolutionary) functionality of authority institutions. The biopolitical approach provides us tools and data from the natural sciences. The logic is to increase cooperation within groups and punish free-riders, along with promotion of altruistic behavior. The statement that such a logic is present at the level of animal leadership has a solid prove. Cultural universals concept reassures that we can find institutions of such purpose in all of known human cultures, which is also proven empirically. Now it is possible to place human political authority institutions in the broader biosocial frame of analysis.

The second threshold is the emergence of external ultimate authority in the first complex human groups. They emerge in the form of supernatural agents. The necessary data is presented with Supernatural Punishment Hypothesis. The transition to big groups is connected to the emergence of faith into moralistic transcended agents. I claim that this is the emergence or external instance of political authority. Through the course of history, we can find a lot of examples of different external authorities. Three types of such a *traditional authority* presented in the dynamic model: the modes of supernatural agent(s), of an ideal image and

of ideology (or ideological utopia). The specific features of an external authority do determine the mode of political authority institutionalization in every given human society.

The third threshold is the modern democratic authority (inclusive of concepts of polyarchy⁵⁴, accountability⁵⁵ и monitor democracy⁵⁶, open society⁵⁷ and open access social order⁵⁸). The study is taking into account the data of democratic authority institutionalization and its external instance(s), represented as pseudo-transcendent concept of “the people” or “the nation”, and the concept of civil religion⁵⁹. The main feature of democratic power system is diversity. The system postulates the “rules of the game”, and many different external agents and different types and modes of political authority can co-exist in the space of a democratic politeia. In the practical hierarchy of authorities, however, the authority of “the people” (as demystified concept) as a main and only legitimate source of power, as holding the first place. However, the contemporary mode is trying to establish a loop between the external authority of people and everyday political life, through the practices of accountability, elections, power rotation, pluralism and etc. Such an operationalization of external authority was impossible inside big communities in the past, but today, because of modern institutions, bureaucratic systems and new technology, the trend is clear, and it is getting more and more powerful.

Theory and methodology

The field of the study is political institutions. The object of the study is the process of institutional change through the history, and data is derived from various

⁵⁴ Dahl R. Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition. New Haven (Connecticut) and London: Yale University Press, 1971.

⁵⁵ Schmitter P., Karl T. What Democracy Is... and Is Not // Journal of Democracy. 1991. Vol. 2, No. 3. Pp. 75–88.

⁵⁶ Keane J. Democracy and Media Decadence. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

⁵⁷ Popper K. The open society and its enemies. Routledge, 1995.

⁵⁸ North D.C., Wallis J.J., Weingast B.R. Op. cit.

⁵⁹ Gentile E. Political Religion: A Concept and Its Critics – A Critical Survey // Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions, 2005. Vol. 6, No. 5. Pp. 19–32.

historical context, natural experiments and observations from the wide range of studies. The foundation of the study is not concepts from literature, but critical reevaluation of the scientific results from different scientific fields. Evolutionary institutionalism and evolutionary morphology are the approaches that help to bring such different data together in the frame of my research paradigm. Evolutionary institutionalism considers institutions in the context of their development, and tries to reveal the common patterns of their development. It uses concepts from evolutionary biology, like “evolutionary pressure”, “selection”, “replication” and etc. It also puts in use biopolitical and biosocial approaches, raising the core question of the interdependence of logics biological and social.

Institutional analysis consists of three levels: *“First, the most basic and common level takes institutions as given and studies their effects. Second, the first method can be used as a form of comparative institutional analysis to study the implications of different forms of institutions. Third, the deepest level of institutional analysis is to take the institutions themselves as endogenous; and to explain how and why institutions are structured in particular ways, and why some types of institutions survive but not others. The third approach is both the newest and the least explored of the three approaches to institutions and is therefore likely to be a major frontier in the coming years.”*⁶⁰ The first and the second levels on the issue of authority have been developed in science, so I am aiming towards the third level. Why the political authority institutions structured exactly the way we observe them? I presume the answer is the institutional evolution: the survival of those who possess the largest reserves of adaptation potentials. A social institution needs to possess both an external functionality and to be fit with inner biological features of a living being to survive and consolidate.

To project a theoretical concept like “authority” on an empirical level of practices and institutions with a biological predisposition is not a new or an

⁶⁰ Weingast B.R., Wittman D.A. *The Reach of Political Economy // The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*. Oxford University Press, 2006. P. 6.

experimental approach. Ronald White, basing upon Van Vugt and Price research⁶¹, made a suggestion of a common model of the evolution of political leadership institutions⁶². His reconstruction is debatable; however, it is an important methodological example, and it gives a solid review of the current state of evolutionary leadership theory.

Some of evolutionary institutionalists doubt such a division into stages⁶³. Indeed, the evolution of species goes on continuously, and it is impossible to identify some “point” where parents belong to one species, and children to another. While agreeing that an institution (as a social practice) is constantly in a state of changing, I proceed from the fact that a formalized division into stages or phases, or thresholds in development makes it possible to clarify the fundamental changes (mutations), to highlight differences and similarities. This is not a *new* generation, but a *next* generation, which retains the features of the previous ones (just as biological evolution does not “create” a *new* life form, but “edit” an existing one; and thus, preserving a continuity from the very first living things, and saving their evolutionary heritage and our genes). In this regard, institutions are understood and interpreted as complex combinations of formal and informal practices: the methodology of institutional analysis is taken from the perspective of historical institutionalism within the framework of new institutionalism.

The key problem of such an analysis is the attempt to establish a “starting point”. In the attempts to explain the origins of social, political or economic institutions, as Jeffrey Hodgson notes, new institutionalists have always assumed that some individuals are placed in a pre-existing condition with some pre-existing “rules of the game.” Trying to find the exact moment when the «rules» emerge, we

⁶¹ Price M.E., Van Vugt M. The evolution of leader–follower reciprocity: The theory of service-for-prestige // *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*. 2014. Vol. 8. Pp. 1–17; Price M.E., Van Vugt M. The service-for-prestige theory of leader-follower relations: A review of the evolutionary psychology and anthropology literatures // *Biological foundations of organizational behavior*. Eds. R.D. Arvey R.D., S.M. Colarelli. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015. Pp. 397–477.

⁶² White R.F. Op. cit. P. 237.

⁶³ Patzelt W.J. Comparative politics and biology // *Handbook of Biology and Politics*. P. 198.

can go deeper and deeper (The Problem of Infinite Institutional Regress), and most likely still are unable to imagine a «blank state of nature», even with the help of a thought experiment. Even game theory can't do this, because the basic rules are always set before the start of a simulation⁶⁴. In the thesis, orienting the study empirically and accepting the premise of the existence of "animal authority", I propose to solve the problem through an appeal to our biological roots.

The study is interdisciplinary, and I need to make an important methodological statement. All the data I derive from the fields where the author can't claim expertise are used with its interpretation and generalization by the specialists in the specific fields. I do not interpret such data myself and cite only the studies that have been recognized in the scientific mainstream. The criticism of data or concepts is presented when needed. Modern postpositivist paradigm of scientific knowledge claims that the main epistemological criterion is the valid result, and it allows to cross disciplinary borders if necessary.

One more statement about the terms. The thesis uses a concept of “external authority”. This means an external ultimate instance of political authority, existing *only* in the imaginative world of in the world of ideas. An appeal to an external authority and an interpretation of its “will” are the source for legitimation of political authority, that individuals can possess. The most widespread mode of external authority is supernatural agent. However, through the course of history, it develops and differs. An external authority can be a demystified one. An imagined community, like a nation, a people, a state as a Mortal God⁶⁵, a social contract – all of it can be interpreted as an external authority. As Svyatoslav Kaspé stated, “*when a state ceases to appeal to a transcendental, it starts to transcend itself. <...> a state doesn't just emancipate itself from God, but tries to replace him.*”⁶⁶ As a “god”, a “state” is also absent in the material world, however it influences our

⁶⁴ Hodgson J. The Evolution of Institutions: An Agenda for Future Theoretical Research // Constitutional Political Economy. 2002. Vol. 13, No. 2. Pp. 111–127.

⁶⁵ Hobbes T. Leviathan. 2001. Moscow: Myusl'. (In Russ.) P. 119.

⁶⁶ Kaspé S. Light and Power: The Panopticon as a Political Form and its Variations // Sociological Review. 2020. Vol. 19, No. 1. (In Russ.) Pp. 17–18.

everyday life and social interactions through immanent practices and institutions. Disciplinary subjection (as in Panopticon model) here is emerging too.

To separate religious transcendental authorities and secular external authorities, and to avoid terminological debates and misinterpretation, for secular external authorities I would use the term “pseudo-transcendent”. Such an object holds some features of a transcendent object in people’s mind, but doesn’t possess some sort of agency and formally doesn’t recognized as a holy object (but, at the same time, recognized as sacred one).

Contribution to the field

The studies of power and authority can be divided generally into theoretical philosophical debates and empirical case analyses. The thesis is making an attempt to bridge both of the gaps: (1) between normative theories of political authority and practical representations, and (2) between social sciences and natural sciences.

The common bases of political authority institutionalization modes, revealed in the study, allows to trace, describe, explain and analyze the evolution of political authority institutions from animal leadership (meaning ultimate biological logic of voluntarily obedience emergence) through the emergence of ultimate external authority (supernatural agent) and its different types (from gods to pseudo-transcendent ideologies), finally to the modern democratic authority. The study is far from the direct comparison to the global conceptual models that cover the whole human history like the concept of “social orders” of Douglas North, John Wallis and Barry Weingast or “extraction / inclusion institutions” of Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson⁶⁷, or social power evolution by Michael Mann. However, the main contribution is methodologically similar. The study establishes the common evolutionary bases and patterns, and on that ground suggests an approach to evolutionary dynamics scientific perception. The dynamical model is

⁶⁷ Acemoglu D., Gallego F.A., Robinson J.A. Institutions, human capital and development // Annual Reviews of Economics. 2014. Vol. 6. Pp. 875–912.

proven with pragmatic data, for the purpose of 1) bridging the gaps existing now in the research field; 2) revealing the universal foundation of political authority institution and trace the logic of its variations; 3) establishing tools for the further and deeper analysis and empirical models' construction.

Statements to be defended

1. Institutionalization of political authority structure(s) on the three of evolutionary thresholds of social and political organization of human society was driven by the multiplication and accumulation of (a) modes of ultimate evolutionary functional logic realization (preserving cooperation and punishing free-riders), (b) modes of combining evolutionary biological mechanisms with social mechanisms of the power relations realization.

2. On the threshold of early anthropogenesis in the small communities the mode of political authority institutionalization is inherited from our common with great apes predecessor. The new biological foundation for the human authority is our ability to imagine things and to have faith in unseen supernatural beings. This ability made possible to establish authority relations without direct and regular interactions between a leader and his / her followers, through the appeal to higher authority of nature, spirits, predecessor and even early gods.

3. The transition to large groups, where subject can't interact and see their leader or ruler on a regular basis, leads to a new complication of the institutionalization mode. Now it is a complex multi-level structure, based upon the practices of power delegation. Protoreligious external authorities, which previously performed the functions of explaining the world and transmitting social norms, acquire the function of legitimizing political power. The size of the community directly correlates with the degree of moralistic interference of supernatural agents (spirits, gods, God) in the daily life of a member of the community.

4. The traditional mode is based upon the factors of the religious and political transcendence of power. Later, with the emergence of secular power institutions, it

often acquires a pseudo-transcendental nature (“The State is a mortal god”). Traditional external authorities can differ significantly: they can be pagan, polytheistic, monotheistic religious systems, or religious elements incorporated into the polis system, and be represented even as a philosophical system like Confucianism or a more mystically oriented one like Buddhism. However, without the legitimization of power by appealing to any of the external authorities (the belief in which must be shared by the members of a large community), the long-term and stable existence of a community is not possible. The thesis provides examples of natural experiments (a) where attempts to legitimize power through an external instance that is not shared by members of the community had been made, (b) where rulers were relying solely on military and political pragmatic interests (which is a frequent characteristic of tribal confederations ruled by warlords).

5. Political authority in the modern democratic orders is based on pluralism, different options for the combination and cohabitation of various external authorities within the same community. The common basis for the legitimization of power in a democratic order is a pseudo-transcendental external instance of an imaginary “people”. Democratic practices, including primarily the practice of democratic accountability, are set to attempt to operationalize this external authority.

6. The dynamic framework model created for the purpose of the study suggests that the variation, multiplication and complication of changing forms and modes at various historical stages of the development of human communities occurs while maintaining a common foundation, and new modes are added and combined with the old ones. Institutions are capable of both progressing (becoming more complex) and degrading (simplifying and even collapsing). The evolutionary approach takes into account the variability and trends of institutional development, allows to identify critical transitions between levels and display different morphological layers.

Conferences

1. International Conference “Evolution of Human Capacities to Know and to Act, or: How to Convert Knowledge into Power”, INION RAN and HSE University. Moscow, October 30, 2019. *The importance of supernatural agent for a theory of political authority.*

2. Research seminar of HSE Doctoral School. Moscow, December 8, 2020. *Instituzionalizacia politicheskogo avtoriteta: evolyucionnyj podhod.* [The Institutionalization of Political Authority: Evolutionary Approach]

3. Round table discussion of METOD: Moscow Yearbook of Social Studies, “To Darwin! With Darwin! Beyond Darwin!”, INION RAN. Moscow, February 8, 2021. *Evolutsii Vlasti’: (proto)politicheskoye povedenie y zhiivotnyh.* [The Evolutions of Power: (proto)political behavior among animals]

Articles

In HSE University List of Highly Ranked Journals:

1. Fokin C.V. Supernatural Punishment Hypothesis (Critical Review) // *Politeia*. 2019. No. 1. Pp. 60—80.

2. Fokin C.V. Evolution of Institutions of Political Authority: Theoretical Framework // *Politeia*. 2019. No. 3. Pp. 33–54.

3. Fokin C.V. "Deep" Democracy and Political Authority // *Politeia*. 2020. No. 3. Pp. 34–61.

4. Fokin C.V. A Zombie of Biopower: Is the Concept Outdated? // *Politeia*. 2021. No. 4. Pp. 43–62.

In others:

5. Fokin C.V. Authority in the Eyes of Biology and Political Science // *METOD: Moscow Yearbook of Social Studies*. 2019. Pp. 138—150.

6. Fokin C.V. An Essay on Studying Power at the Interface of Politics and Biology // *METOD: Moscow Yearbook of Social Studies*. 2020. Pp. 196–211.

7. Fokin C.V. Evolutions of Power: (proto)political behavior among animals
// METOD: Moscow Yearbook of Social Studies. 2021. Pp. 245–261.

Summary of the data and findings

The three key principles of variability of political authority institutions: firstly, authority is one of the options for solving the problem of cooperation, meaning their functionality for improving cooperation, punishing free-riders and coordinating collective action; secondly, during the transition to large groups beyond Dunbar's number, the institutions of social authorities develop into institutions of political authority with the emergence of a religious moralizing supernatural instance, an absolute legitimizer of power; thirdly, the development, multiplication, complication of external instances of political authority in a community determines a mode of institutionalization – from the archaic through the traditional to the modern democratic. The framework model suggests that each new phase is included in the previous one. In other words, the common evolutionary function is preserved at each stage, just as supernatural (transcendental) external authorities do not “disappear” in a democratic society, although it ceases to play the leading role.

A large-scale analysis should be undertaken to validate the model. Our task is facilitated by the fact that today in science the features and internals of power institutions are well studied in almost all of the human communities, from hunters and gatherers to modern democracies. Being unable of conducting a laboratory experiment, I decided to focus on historical precedents and contexts, and natural experiments.

Application of the dynamic model to three of evolutionary thresholds, also labeled as critical social transitions, has revealed its usefulness and suitability. However, some important additions to the model were made, and some of the crucial exceptions were described. The data from primatology confirmed that already at the level of great apes, we find a combination of biological programs

and frameworks (environmental context, etc.) with experience and social development. This determines the variability of the social systems and hierarchies at the communities within one species. The dynamics of power and the way how it is “justified” within the group can be characterized as archaic authority. It carries out a control function and relies on the support of coalitions. If, however, he or she builds his power solely on domination, then he or she needs to have in his allies one who has prestige. Without the support of the group, such “violent power” is only possible over a short distance, and is not stable.

In the transition to human societies, the archaic practices of authority, where social and political power are often mixed, could be reproduced in small communities, where all members of the community had the opportunity to constantly see their leader and interact with him or her. However, when the formation of large communities began, archaic mode of authority couldn't fit anymore. Here the emergence, or rather, the reformation of an external instance, happened. Protoreligious practices that previously served to explain the world around, and were not moralizing in the sense of being directly involved in the daily life of communities, were able to serve as a justification for power and a source of authority in large groups, where individuals do not so often, and sometimes at all, do not interact with each other.

The variability of the external instance modes is great. It can be transcendental or pseudotranscendental, differ in degrees of morality (i.e., the rigidity of normative imperatives), be simple or complex, etc. However, the main parameters are: the reproduction of the “Panopticon” state, in which all “believers” must go through the process of disciplinary subjectivity, and existence in the world of ideas, based in human imagination and generated by people's faith in it.

However, is it possible at all for a community to exist without an external instance as a source of authority? Considering the results of the analysis, I can answer – yes, it is possible, but their existence, as in the case of pure dominance among great apes, cannot be long-term and stable. Power systems built on military

strength and conjunction of economic interests can be found in the paramilitary confederations of tribes ruled by warlords: the optimal example is the empire of Genghis Khan, fastened by military strength and economic interests, but after its rapid expansion, just as quickly disintegrated into parts. An example of a different kind can be found in Roman history, where the emperor Julian the Apostate tried to impose his own religious system to replace the one that had already spread in the empire, and in which his subjects believed, and he also suffered a defeat.

On the other hand, the model also takes into account examples of the opposite nature, when outside of a formalized institutional system, such as an existing state or a religious structure, an external instance of authority continues to exist and bind a community, whose members can be scattered all over the world. Such an example is the history of the Jewish people, and in the modern world these are the same "peoples without states" like the Kurds, who do not have statehood, but have their own, heterogeneous and fairly stable structures of power, leadership and authority.

The analysis of the modern system of democratic authority in the paradigm of the model is complicated, on the one hand, by the large amount of studies and concepts devoted to both ideological and practical institutional, procedural aspects of democracy. The reduction of all of those studies to a single denominator makes the consideration of democratic orders very general. Per contra, the democratic system as the rule of the people is obviously undergoing transformation right now: and, probably, now it is a stage of its resemblance. In this regard, the full-fledged operationalization of the external instance, which we wrote about, is not yet possible. Nevertheless, we must note the direction in which democratic communities are going now. Throughout the history of mankind, the external instance was usurped by its interpreters: persons in authority interpreted what is "the common good" in accordance with their own interests and ideas. The external instance itself remained transcendental or pseudotranscendental, nearly incomprehensible by pure reason. Neither God, nor the State, nor the Communist

Utopia – none of these modes of authorisation has the ability to directly declare its practical interests without intermediaries. However, the “people”, which is an imaginary collection of real people who have access to certain tools and procedures that allow the exercise of power, is an institutional innovation. In other words, “government of the people, by the people, for the people” ceases to be a rhetorical construction through the institutional processes we have described in our study.