

*V. V. Puzanov***FACTORS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF EAST SLAVIC POLITOGENESIS**

The paper is dedicated to the factors and characteristics of East Slavic politogenesis. The role of internal (development of the productive economy, population density, natural environment, ideology) and external (war, distant commerce, cultural diffusion) factors is analyzed by using a multilinear approach. It is shown that on the eve of the formation of the Ancient Russian state, under the harsh natural conditions of Eastern Europe and low population density, the low level of productive economy (especially cottage industry) defined the character of the undeveloped social stratification and potestary institutions of the East Slavs. The geopolitical position at the civilizational fracture zones and the region's exposure to external invasions were another influence on these processes. With the impact of the internal factors being limited, external factors were crucial in defining the military character of the East Slavic politogenesis. Refs 38.

*Keywords:* East Slavs, politogenesis, productive economy, population density, ecological environment, ideology, war, foreign commerce, cultural diffusion.

*В. В. Пузанов***ФАКТОРЫ И ОСОБЕННОСТИ ВОСТОЧНОСЛАВЯНСКОГО ПОЛИТОГЕНЕЗА**

Статья посвящена факторам и особенностям восточнославянского политогенеза. На основе многолинейного подхода анализируется роль внутренних (развитие производящего хозяйства, плотность населения, природная среда, идеологическая составляющая) и внешних (война, дальняя торговля, культурная диффузия) факторов. Показано, что невысокий уровень развития производящего хозяйства (особенно ремесел) в суровых природных условиях Восточной Европы и низкой плотности населения определял неразвитость социальной стратификации и потестарных институтов у восточных славян накануне образования Древнерусского государства. Соответствующий отпечаток на эти процессы накладывали особое геополитическое положение региона на цивилизационных разломах, географическая открытость для внешних вторжений. В условиях ограниченности действия внутренних факторов ключевую роль сыграли внешние импульсы, предопределившие военный путь восточнославянского политогенеза. Библиогр. 38 назв.

*Ключевые слова:* восточные славяне, политогенез, производящее хозяйство, плотность населения, экологическая среда, идеология, война, внешняя торговля, культурная диффузия.

The relative roles of the external and internal factors in the East Slavic statehood genesis were a key issue in pre-revolutionary Russian historiography<sup>1</sup>. The Soviet historians interpreted the problem of politogenesis from the perspective of class formation, focusing on the deep internal processes of social development. From the second half of the 1930s a trend was set in wherein the role of external factors was underestimated and sometimes even denied. New approaches to the problem arose in the second half of the 1960s, when a number of researchers questioned the prevailing notion of state being the product of a class society. As for Ancient Russia, the works of I. Ya. Froyanov that showed the pre-

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<sup>1</sup> For historiographical matters see: [Puzanov 2012; Dvornichenko 2014]

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class nature of the Ancient Russian society and provided a new conception of East Slavic politogenesis were instrumental [Froyanov 1980]. Froyanov also paid attention to the role of the external. According to him, 'the consolidation of the tribes within "the Russian land" is impossible to grasp without taking the external factors into account'. The formation of Kievan Rus was a result of 'the conquests of the Polans' [Froyanov 1991, pp. 74–76].

Analyzing the transition of society to state, modern researchers tend to view the entirety of both the internal and external factors [Claessen 2004, pp. 101–117; Kradin 2012, pp. 212–213]. Among **internal** ones, a key role should be given to the productive economy that allows a surplus, which in its turn permits the division of labor, human exploitation, a stratified society, and a certain development of potestary structures [Istoriya pervobytnogo obshchestva 1988, pp. 5–269]. As a whole, the impact of a number of factors depends on the economic level while not being solely defined by it. For instance, a complex stratified society with its following transition to a state requires a certain *population size and density* [Claessen 2004, p. 108; Southall 2000, p. 242; Grinin 2006, pp. 108–111; Kradin 2012, p. 212]. Speaking about the latter, the environment might also play a major role along with economy. Finally, ideology, 'which explains and justifies a hierarchical administrative organization and socio-political inequality', is an important prerequisite for the establishment and development of the state [Claessen 2004, pp. 108–110].

A combination of these conditions alone is already quite exceptional, yet even this is not enough "for the development of a state; there is also needed some cause that triggers the developments" [Claessen 2004, p. 110].

The most important **external** factors are *war, distant commerce and cultural diffusion*.

Agriculture (and ancient societies that arrived at the status of a state are preeminently agricultural) 'does not automatically create a food surplus' itself unless the necessary social mechanisms are present [Carneiro 1970, p. 734]. But in order for these to enter the scene, the economy must have the capacity to produce a surplus if need be. This need might be caused by the desire to exchange produce for some other commodity or by having to pay tribute to a strong enemy. Here we approach the vital factors of *war* and *distant trade*.

It is fair to wonder whether the external factors were a mere 'trigger' for the origins of a state or had a purpose of their own. The answer seems to depend on a particular situation, namely on the readiness of a society to transform into a state. The factors of politogenesis might be figuratively compared to transplants: one easily takes root in a poor soil (it is enough to water it once or twice), while another requires hothouse conditions. In one case, they might be so developed and full of vitality that they need but a little push to sprout. In the other case, they may be weak and undeveloped and require special treatment; i.e., an external factor. In any case, though, a certain amount of external influence is indispensable.

What were the roles of the internal and the external in the East Slavic politogenesis?

The main occupation of the East Slavs at the time was agriculture with farming as a key industry in which they "made considerable advances" [Sedov 1982, pp. 236–238]. Researchers mark the improvement of the agricultural inventory, whose range and decoration from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries approach those of Ancient Russia [Istoriya ukrains'kogo selyanstva 2006, p. 40]. Some authors, though, consider that the use of iron plowshares in the 8–9<sup>th</sup> centuries by the East Slavs is undemonstrated and suggest a hoe-type agriculture [Franklin, Shepard 1996, p. 73]. Both views seem extreme. However, even optimistic researchers admit that "metal and stone tools" were not as popular as the wooden ones "well known by the ethnographic data" [Istoriya ukrains'kogo selyanstva, p. 40].

According to some scholars, the level of “development of soil treatment technique” in the southern part of the East Slavic area together with paleobotanical data may indicate the ‘two- and three field system’ [Gorbanenko 2012, p. 108]. Even if that is true, it should not be forgotten that the fallow land in these parts, given the availability of free land, was more efficient and continued to be widely used well into later times, even in Novorossiia of the 19<sup>th</sup> century while there was enough free land [Sovetov 2010, p. 40–42]. Shifting cultivation was common in the North.

With the land resources available and with the domination of large communities, “extensive” forms of land tenure (fallow and shifting cultivation) were quite efficient and enabled to get a considerable surplus product, if necessary. Of course, such a laboursome system did not encourage the community members to produce a surplus product just for the quantity (only the current needs and the necessity of extra supplies for emergency cases were satisfied). However, it had a certain potential for growth that was triggered by the rise of the *poliudie* system.

Handicrafts were an important resource to compensate for the unfavourable conditions of the East Slavs’ economy. Before the impact of the external factor (foreign commerce, necessity of paying tribute), they were aimed at satisfying the immediate needs of the community and had little influence on the environment.

In terms of farming and cattle breeding, the Slavs were considerably inferior to the Saltovians of the Khazar Khaganate. While the need for meat was covered by hunting (from 1/3 to 2/3 of ‘the spoils of the chase in relation to domestic animals’ while the Saltovians had need of 1/10 of that), the great lag in horse-breeding made the East Slavs considerably less efficient agriculturally and less ready for war.

Metal working was another important indicator of a mature society. On the eve of the Ancient Russian state it remained at a low level [Minasyan 2012, pp. 281–284]. Metal artefacts are very rarely found in the East Slavic monuments and their range is sparse. Tools for professional blacksmithing, jewellery, armoury are very rare, nails are singular [Minasyan 2012, p. 281–284; Terekhova, Rozanova, Zav’yalov, Tolmacheva 1997, pp. 201–214], “although they had been used long since in the other regions of Asia and Europe”. Northern regions of Russia, where complex technologies of ironworking had been permeating since the 8<sup>th</sup> century, are an exception. Significantly, the most complex and high quality iron articles were made in those regions of Russia, where the Norman presence had previously been strongest [Puzanov 2007, pp. 276–277].

Lagging in technologies was less significant. Still, the Saltovian monuments provide more findings and a more diverse range of articles. Khazar blacksmithing produced primarily weaponry [Terekhova, Rozanova, Zav’yalov, Tolmacheva 1997, pp. 201, 299], including elaborate (sabres, combat knives, axes), while weapons are rarely found among the Slavs and are mostly for hunting.

The afore-mentioned lag of the East Slavs in metalworking is of paramount importance, unduly underestimated in historiography. In the era in question, the level of iron mining and ironworking defined the general level of the productive forces with all the ensuing consequences for social development, not to mention the society’s defensive capacity. Not surprisingly, at the time when the first light of history dawned on the East Slavs we find many of their tribes to be tributaries to the Khazars and Varangians. As it appears from the archeological data and reports of the Eastern authors, the Slavs, for the most part, could oppose the heavy armament of their adversaries with only arrows and darts.

Thus, it is only comparing to the previous period and the Baltic and Finno-Ugrian tribes that the Slavs made progress in agriculture and handicrafts on the eve of the Ancient Russian state. Such a situation was natural, considering the level of metalworking that inhibited implementation of advanced up-to-date tools and technologies. Nevertheless, agriculture and crafts were able to increase the surplus product, if necessary, which was one of the factors of state formation.

Colonial processes and economic progress lead to a considerable, fivefold, increase of the number of the East Slavic settlements in the 8–9<sup>th</sup> centuries in comparison with the 6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries. The settlement area increased [Timoshhuk 1990, pp. 86–87] and hillforts appeared [Timoshhuk 1990, p. 29–55]. Population density, however, remained low which is characteristic of all Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages. This, together with that mentioned above, slowed down the social and potestary hierarchization and made fighting external enemies difficult.

The East Slavic settlements were located nest-like. ‘The number of population on the territory of each nest of the community of the 8–9<sup>th</sup> centuries could reach not more than 350 to 400 people. The increase of the population in the communities was limited by the level of socio-economical development of the society’ [Timoshhuk 1990, p. 104]. Thus, even a big nest could provide only 40 to 60 fighters under general conscription. It was not enough to resist an attack of a small drekkar considering the combat experience and technical and tactical equipment of the Vikings or two dozen heavily-armoured horsemen.

B. A. Timoschuk carried out an all-round investigation of the territory between the Dniester and the Carpathians of about 4 thousand square km (100x40 km) where he discovered 25 nest settlements of the 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries [Timoshhuk 1990, pp. 73–75]. The average nest area is 70–80 square km. [Timoshhuk 1990, pp. 73–75]. Therefore, the population maximum here at the early stage of the ancient Russian state may have been 10,000 people. However, the number is incredible because some nests consisted of 2–3 settlements (see: [Timoshhuk 1990, p. 87, table 3]). According to the sagas, the konung’s men used to take three dozens of men or even fewer to collect tribute. A bigger troop could collect a bigger tribute (see: [Puzanov 2007, pp. 235–236]). The circumstances of the East Slavs were certainly somewhat different. Nevertheless, it is clear that 100–200 Rus’ men, referred to by Gardisi<sup>2</sup>, were enough to control a territory several times bigger than the investigated group of nests.

The undeveloped productive forces and large, sparsely populated areas defined the underdevelopment of material and social differentiation [Franklin, Shepard 1996, p. 73; Froyanov 2015, p. 68–71]. ‘...A single family emerging into a big family, stock, tribe, tribal alliance — these are the main units of the East Slavic social organization in 8–9<sup>th</sup> centuries’ [Froyanov 2015, p. 70]. This resulted in the underdevelopment of potestary institutions. At the same time the chronicles mention the Slavic princes, and the complexity of the East Slavic communities imply a certain ranking of chiefs. But was it a power ranking characteristic of a compound chiefdom or a ranking of the ceremonial status that had nothing to do with chiefdom [Carneiro 2000, pp. 88–91]? The available data favour the second variant, illustrated by R. Carneiro by the example of Kwakiutls: ‘although all Kwakiutl village chiefs were individually ranked in relation to one another, for example, this ranking reflected only their respective ceremonial statuses. No one chief, not even that

<sup>2</sup> ‘100–200 of them always go to the Slavs and force their maintenance out of them while they are staying there’ [Novosel’tsev 2000, p. 305].

of the highest-ranking village, could give orders to the residents of any other village than his own. For all their cultural elaboration, then, the tribes of the Northwest Coast never attained the level of chiefdoms' [Carneiro 2000, p. 88].

Something similar can be seen in the descriptions of the Slavic potestary institutions of the 6–8<sup>th</sup> centuries by Byzantine and West European authors (Maurice [Svod 1994, p. 369], Prokopius of Ceasarea [Svod 1994, pp. 182–183, 368–373], Pseudo-Caesarius [Svod 1994, p. 254], Menander the Protector [Svod 1994, pp. 320–321] and others). Side observers note the collective decision making by the Slavs with the chief and people taking part together. If there was any transference of their own political realia, it was only in terms of further complication and not simplification of the social and political system of the Slavs, since the authors represent countries with developed social and political structures.

The second version of 'The Royal Frankish Annals', which reports the campaign against the Wilzians (Veleti), might refer to a ceremonial ranking. When Dragovit, "who was by far superior to all the the Wilzian kinglets (regulis) in nobility of his stock and authority of his age", accepted the power of Charles the Great, other "Slavic noblemen and kinglets (Sclavorum primores ac reguli)" subjected to "the power of the king" as well [Svod 1995, p. 471, com. 7].

A similar potestary picture is drawn by our chronicler referring to the East Slavs in the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century when he speaks about the murder of prince Igor by the Drevlians. We have the collective decision making by Mal, the princes of an inferior rank and the Drevlians. On the chronicle's pages, Mal behaves passively and is not referred to as the army leader. The chronicle depicts a triple power structure (prince — council of elders — veche), a characteristic of a military democracy era. Significantly, Constantin Porphyrogenitus — an author well-informed — also depicts the ruling and decision making system among the Rus' of the 10<sup>th</sup> century in a similar fashion [Puzanov 2014, pp. 47–52].

History saw the social changes caused by the socio-economical and external factors become entrenched in ideology, which, typically for those days, was expressed in myths. Mythology did not only cement the evolving system of social relations but was, in a sense, its source, even though it seems to be directed toward the past, not the future. In a clan society, it encouraged the ranking of kin communities according to their "nobility", i.e. closeness to a legendary ancestor<sup>3</sup>. Notions of happiness and luck promoted the rise of the luckiest and most active members of the society. On the one hand, it cemented such an order through sanctioning it (thus playing a conservative role), on the other hand it consecrated new phenomena (a progressive role). The myth provided the ideological basis for the political institutions<sup>4</sup>.

The mythology of the East Slavs before Ancient Russia was, however, rather underdeveloped. Naturally, most ancient Slavic legends of the first princes reflect the archaic power patterns, characteristic of poorly stratified agricultural societies [Shhavel'yov 2007, pp. 169–174]. In fact, 'the characteristic feature' of all the Slavic 'traditions is a peaceful process of power formation' (when 'all conflicts are solved ritually') and the prince does not perform any military or commercial functions [Shhavel'yov 2007, p. 174]. According to N. N. Kradin, the image presented in the Slavic legends 'does not differ much from an

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<sup>3</sup> Thus, for instance, the notions of aristocratic stocks were conceived.

<sup>4</sup> See: [Puzanov 2007, p. 199–200].

African chief who is solely engaged in the entertainment with his wives and drinking alcohol' [Kradin 2012, p. 217–218].

The military function can be traced neither in the chronicle portrait of the Drevlian Mal, nor in the actions of Vladimir the Fair Sun of the Bylinas (but not of his milieu).

Finally, the ethnic peculiarities of the Slavs in their perception of power are also to be considered. The Slavs valued freedom and considered the subjection to an emperor or king, typical of a number of their neighbours, as unseemly as slavery. 'The Chronicle of Bohemians' by Cosmas of Prague is emblematic with its legend of Libussa and voluntary election of the prince by the Czechs. The acceptance of the institution of principedom is equal to a voluntary enslavement [Koz'ma Prazhskij 1962, p. 37–45]<sup>5</sup>.

The largely archaic character of the East Slavs's society resulted in democratic traditions being more stable in comparison to other Slavic peoples. It is also reflected in the legends that legitimize the institution of principedom. Unlike the Bohemians, our ancestors showed here both more love for freedom and wisdom. According to the legend of the chronicle, not only did they not intend to become the princes' slaves but also limited their authority by a special compact ("rank")<sup>6</sup>.

Thus, the internal factors of the East Slavic politogenesis by the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century had not ripened enough to rise independently to the level of state. The low level of metalworking did not allow the procurement of high-quality tools of trade and master them with the more progressive technologies. Under such conditions, there could not be any developed potestary institutions, capable of a large-scale political integration. The fact that they often became victim to the more organized neighbours, the Khazars, Varangians and Magyars, proves that the East Slavs were potestarily, militarily and technically weak.

Let us now turn to the external impulses of the East Slavic politogenesis. Most of the modern authors, who, following the line of Schtorch-Kluchevski, note the importance of the external factor, drawing attention not to war but to foreign commerce, namely its organization and integrating role (I. V. Dubov, A. N. Kirpichnikov, E. N. Nosov, E. A. Melnikov, V. Y. Petrukhin, *inter alia*) in Eastern and Northern Europe<sup>7</sup>. Such prioritization is arguable. In those circumstances foreign commerce was connected with a prestigious economy (it was not so much for the sake of profit as for acquiring prestigious goods: [Radtko 2002, p. 416]) and war and did not possess any value of its own (see: [Puzanov 2007, pp. 190–196]).

Statements of the "commercial" origin of Ancient Russia largely draw from the well-known testaments of Constantin Porphyrogenitus (of commercial expeditions by Rus' to Constantinople), treaties between Russia and Byzantium (which are often called "commercial"), reports of the Eastern authors (on the Volga commerce). However, it is not so simple. The archeological data does not permit to date the functioning of the route "from the Varangians to the Greeks" earlier than the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century [Androshchuk 1999, pp. 88–90]. Even allowing earlier commercial expeditions, the development of the Middle Dnieper region by the Norsemen seems to have started a few decades earlier,

<sup>5</sup> See: [Puzanov 2007, p. 99–100].

<sup>6</sup> "Irkosha: "Let us look for the prince among ourselves that he rule us and judge us by the *rank* and *law*" [my emphasis]" [PSRL 2, 1998, col. 14]. This rank is a historical reality. Rank is a legend-legitimization reflecting a system of interrelations between the people and the prince in the Ancient Russian city-states.

<sup>7</sup> See: [Puzanov 2007, pp. 190–193; Puzanov 2012, pp. 91–94].

which undermines the basis of the commercial theory of the origin of the ancient Russian state [Komar 2003, p. 104].

Anyway, in the 9–10<sup>th</sup> centuries foreign commerce could exist only by virtue of war and loot. To sell something one had to loot somebody, collect tribute, etc. Therefore, prestigious commodities were acquired in exchange for loot. Everything, though, is interconnected and foreign commerce, in its turn, could catalyze warfare.

Even later, distant commerce was not definitive for the society. Although there are examples that testify serious economic and social expenses when the commercial connections between separate regions were interrupted. One can recall that owing to Nizovskiy princes Novgorod was not supplied with grain [PSRL 3 2000, p. 253], and the Kievan land was left without salt through the actions of Rostislaviches [*Drevnerusskie pateriki* 1999, pp. 54–55]. As we see, economic levers were already used in politics back then.

War played a more important, independent and universal role in the integration processes in East Europe. Wars are the most ancient companion of the humanity [van der Dennen 1995]. According to I. Y. Froyanov, ‘the main, fundamental reason’ of the primeval wars lay in the sphere of perception of ‘the external world, always dangerous and hostile, spelling destruction and therefore requiring neutralization’ [Froyanov, pp. 487–489]. Hence, maximal damage tended to be inflicted to the opponent. Therefore ‘the primeval wars unlike the modern ones could considerably influence the demographic situation’ [Shnirel'man 1992, p. 22]. This influence was marked not only by the death of men but also by the abduction of women of the defeated communities by the victors (capturing women was an important stimulus of wars in ancient times) [Carneiro 1970, p. 735; van der Dennen 1995, p. 317–320, 422–423]. Thus, wars lead to a demographic decline of the defeated and stimulated a demographic growth of the victors instead.

At a certain stage, with the appearance of a surplus product, war, among other things, becomes an important and efficient means of acquiring it. The society becomes ‘military’ and the consolidation of ‘the tribes’ and ‘tribal communities’ begins, caused, on the one hand, by the needs of expansion and optimization of the ways of getting the booty and, on the other hand, by defence from the other ‘booty hunters’. Thus, it was war that was the means or condition of the legitimization of the domination of one ‘tribe’ over another, the legitimization of an external exploitation. It was a primordial source of slavery and a way to legitimize human exploitation. War resulted in the manifestation of the will of gods and a new order established. What is gained in the battle is sacred (consecrated by gods, fortune, fate, etc). Therefore, war spoils were more honorable than commercial profit, the sword was nobler than scales, and the most important criterion of freedom, full rights, was the right to bear arms. The warriors’ stratum in stratified societies was superior to that of the merchants. Thus, war, like foreign commerce, was a means of achieving a high social status. *However, war was considered more prestigious.*

The needs of war and external exploitation determined the necessity of power institutions, whose impact was initially directed outwards. The most important of them were the institutions of the war-chief, militia and retinue. Until the possibility of a broad outward exploitation persisted, the prince and retinue, in the words of the chronicler, ‘fed on fighting the other countries’ [PSRL 3 2000, p. 104]. When these sources became scarce, the created structure began using its internal resources turning to the redistribution of the internal surplus product. D. Webster and M. Webb consider war to have allowed the chiefs to overcome the traditional tribal order that considerably restricted their power.

(see: [Shnirel'man 1992, p. 38]). As to the integration of the scattered "tribes" into complex potestary-political alliances as well as the establishment of the early state formations, they were impossible without applying (or the threat of applying) military force.

War legitimized the formation of a 'new' nobility that in the course of the politogenesis forced out 'an aristocracy by blood'. Violence was an important means of forming the institute of princely and royal power.

The perception of the initial 'building of the state' by the ancient Russian scribes is emblematic: they had no doubt that Russia was united by the labor and courage of the first princes [PSRL 3 2000, p. 104; PSRL 2 1998, col. 12, 39, 44, 111, 189–190, 237–238; PSRL 1 1997, col. 17, 50–51, 55–56, 126, 189–199, 263–264]. Many nostalgically recalled the days when the prince and retinue had fed on war. The ideal prince and retinue defend the Russian land from enemies and fed on fighting other countries. According to the notions of the time, it is not the retinue that is acquired by gold and silver, but gold and silver that are acquired by the retinue [PSRL 2 1998, col. 111, 189–190; PSRL 1 1997, col. 126, 198–199]. If commerce were considered as such a means, they would no longer be the prince and retinue in early medieval society.

Thus, the history of creation of Russia in chronicles is a history of conquests. The first princes and retinue in our sources appear not as merchants but as warriors. Like commerce, war and military raids as such create neither a new way of production nor a new social system. R. L. Carneiro rightly remarks that 'although war... is the main force of creation of the state it cannot be a sole factor'. Special conditions are necessary to make this 'mechanism of state formation' work. (Thus, while warfare may be a necessary condition for the rise of the state, it is not a sufficient one) [Carneiro 1970, p. 734]. As such he notes: 1) *ecological limitations* (limited resources and primarily a lack of land); 2) *political evolution* (elaboration in governing the society as a result of uniting the chiefdoms [and I will add — polities] into larger formations by virtue of conquests); 3) *concentration of resources* (i.e. areas with high concentration of resources that were fought for) 4) *social limitations* ('a high density of population in an area can produce effects on peoples living near the centre of the area that are similar to effects produced by environmental circumscription' [Carneiro 1970, p. 734–738]).

On the eve of the formation of the ancient Russian state in Eastern Europe, the first and the fourth of the conditions listed by R. L. Carneiro were not present. The main value for the victors were not the products of agriculture but of the forest industries (though feeding the retinue in *poliudie* played an important part in economy), while population density was low and land and forest resources were in abundance. However, in the course of time, the resource of furry animals decreased in the areas of the foremost development and one had to move further to the fringes in search of them, but these are the realia of the later times.

The third condition, *the concentration of resources*, was available in a peculiar way. These resources were the rivers that were not only the source of wildlife treasures but also, and above all, monopolies of long distance transportation lines. Of course, there was no lack of rivers (the river system in East Europe is one of the most branched). However, river transportation systems have a significant disadvantage: these ways render manoeuvring as good as impossible and therefore are easily controlled in the portage areas as well as in the river forks, rapids, fords, etc. It was for these strategic points that people fought. It was a fight not only for the control of the routes but for the control of the local tribes and the resources they possessed. Tribal alliances and separate scattered communities clung to

the rivers. While smaller communities could “hide away” in the deep of the woods or on the banks of small rivers, tribal communities could not do the same. Therefore the main condition of subjection was to get the central towns under control, lay them under tribute, which would be later distributed among the lower communities, even if they had been able to hide from the enemy, by the defeated themselves. Thus, those who controlled the main rivers largely controlled economic and political resources.

The impact of the second condition was also evident. Here the main force were mostly the Norsemen who constituted the military and administrative elite at the early stage of the ancient Russian state. It were they who formed alliances with separate “tribes” for the convenience of tributary exploitation of the East European ‘tribes’. Owing to this the Ilmenian Slovens and Polans, whose territories hosted the main Varangian residencies, came to prominence [Puzanov 2007, pp. 225–240, 246–247, 272]. The prominence of the Polans, who, according to the archeological data, most probably did not play any significant part in the formation of the ancient Russian state, is characteristic. In the 8–9<sup>th</sup> centuries ‘neither significant craft or community centres, nor any settlement concentration revealing their demographic potential were to be seen’ in their habitation area [Komar 2012, pp. 177–178]. Their prominence, as well as that of Kiev, begins with the coming of Rus’, when the Polans become the ‘Rus’ themselves [Puzanov 2007, p. 247, 262–272, Komar 2012, p. 177]. Kiev grew into a big town not due to the internal socio-economic processes that took place in the East Slavic area before the Varangians but due to its transformation into a centre of the Varangian-Russian government. [Puzanov 2007, p. 272; Komar 2012, pp. 177–178].

Finally, the East Slavs primarily owe the emergence of their towns not to commerce but to war (the necessity to defend from the enemies). And it is impossible to imagine the ancient Russian civilization without towns.

Cultural diffusion played an important part in the development of industrial forces and politogenesis among the East Slavs: elements of the more advanced Saltovian agriculture [Gorbanenko 2012, pp. 106–109], complex Scandinavian methods of blacksmithing [Puzanov 2007, pp. 275–277], military and retinue and potestary traditions (Varangian, Iranian, Turkic), etc. The Christian expansion to the pagan regions should be counted among the most important factors in both early and developed Middle ages. New religion did not only ideologically consecrate the forming political and social institutions but also was a force in their development. Christianity takes the mythological part of the politogenesis to a new level in terms of ideological comprehension and the scope of all the sides of social activities and profound penetration into social consciousness.

Almost everywhere, as the comparative historical data shows, the transformation of the tribal society into an early state could not happen exclusively through internally-driven development. An external impact was required (conquest, economic and cultural contacts, etc.). An especially important (at some stages crucial) role of the external factor is characteristic of such regions as Eastern Europe where the lack of internal connections (resulting from a low population density, underdeveloped economy, natural rather than anthropogenic landscape inhibiting contacts between communities, etc.) should have been compensated by external impulses. The geopolitical position at civilizational fracture zones and exposure to external invasions also came into play. The Nordic conquest and the necessity of permanent defence from an external enemy defined the military character of the East Slavic politogenesis. The Mongol-Tartar invasion and the Yoke would not only reinforce this tendency but change the vector of Russian civilization, determining a special

role of political institutions and power structures in the national history and the lagging (and in a sense, a subordinate role) of socio-economic processes behind political ones.

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