

Krupkin P.L.

¹On a General Distinction in Socio-Political Systems: The Systems Identity Homogeneous and Inhomogeneous

Considering the whole set of social systems known to history, we can recognize a very interesting distinction that divides all systems into two large classes. This distinction is based on the degree of homogeneity of the political sphere of society, the extent to which representatives of the political class of the society separate themselves established on identity^{2,3} from the people under their control. From this point of view, we can recognize quite a large group of social systems, in which their political classes position themselves in a manner based on identity and socially far from the controlled population, up to the proclamation of their biological difference. For example, all "ancient regimes" – such as the European monarchies of the late Middle Ages, whose nobility often insisted on their biological uniqueness, can be attributed to such identically inhomogeneous societies. At the same time, in contrast to these monarchies, in the same Middle Ages there were city-states / republics, in which the identity separation of the political class from the governed fellow citizens was not so

¹ The essay is a translation from Russian of the publication (Крупкин П.Л. Об одном общем различии социально-политических систем: Системы идентичностно-гомогенные и негомогенные // VI Всероссийский конгресс политологов. Материалы. М.: РАПН, 2012. С.269-270), which were discussed at the 6th Russian Politology Congress in December 2012.

² The term *identity* in this work is taken in the meaning of *social identity*, which is a set of mental structures of a person that becomes emotionally important for her/his self-identification of her/himself to some group, as well as defining the norms and rules of behavior of people in the group, the rules of admission / exclusion of people to / from the group, details for recognizing the other as "being in" or "a stranger" for the group (Krupkin 2010a. p.122). This is other than a *personal identity* – the result of a person's internalization of a set of her/his social roles, which in general may not carry an emotional burden. Usually, all person's social identities are parts of her/his personal identity. The structure of social identity and the specified distinction between social and personal identities are detailedly discussed in the work: Krupkin 2010b.

³ A group of people who spend all their working hours managing other people, usually forms its own social identity. This identity is usually cemented by the social extinction of the people in authority, as well as by the intensive in-communication in the group for performing managerial functions in their headed collectives/groups/clans/associations.

strong. Another example of identity-homogeneous polities can be modern Western nation-states / liberal democracies, whose political classes clearly position themselves as a flesh of the people's flesh.

Throughout the depth of written history, we can find societies of both types recognized above. In the identity-inhomogeneous class of human polities there tend to be monarchies and autocracies, while cities–republics and nation-states tend to be homogeneous. This distinction was also implicitly reflected in the political thought of humanity: Plato, Hobbes, and many others contributed to justifying goodness of the inhomogeneous socio-political order, while the alternative tradition was developed by Aristotle, Machiavelli, Locke, etc.⁴

⁴ Here it makes sense to briefly touch on the difference between the distinction proposed in this paper and some other distinctions used by researchers in the analysis of broad classes of political systems. Let us start with what is discussed in political philosophy around the topic called "republicanism" (see Skinner 2006, Pettit 1996). In this regard, the identity-homogeneity of society is indifferent to the presence or non-presence of a "determining other". At the same time, even if the "determining other" is present, but the governing stratum considers people under control as being "their own", then the result may be a social order very close to the republican one – recalling that all ancient republics sincerely considered themselves to be the possessions of the gods. However, identity-inhomogeneity is usually based precisely on imposing the rulers as the "determining other" for the governed people, even when the ruling group can be arranged within itself to be quite republican. As the next dichotomy, let us consider the recently proposed division of political systems into traditional and enabling open-access-orders (North, Wallis, Weingast 2011). Political systems that can provide open access orders are identity-homogeneous, since they all belong to the class of nation-states. But traditional polities can be both homogeneous and inhomogeneous. The social identity structure of the ruling class in traditional states is well-characterized by a so-called "civilizational model": *"Civilizational identity is based on the principle of the sacred vertical: the communities forming the core are presented as carriers of special ideas and cultural practices that coincide with the existential purpose of humanity... And this is what makes the civilizational model potentially limitless. The concept of "we" refers to the bearers of a certain truth that is potentially capable of uniting all of humanity. This model is fundamentally hierarchical, which has its advantages. For example, it does not emphasize the homogeneity of the group in contrast to outsiders. Because of this, it is much more inclusive. However, inclusivity in this case does not mean that everyone who belongs to the community is equal. Just the opposite, because the degree of civility can vary. Civility is a quality that is acquired*

The goodness of the identity-inhomogeneity of the social structure is usually legitimized by the corresponding political thought through two basic myths. Firstly, it is the postulation of the "war of all against all" as the basic condition of people in the absence of external control influence on them. And, secondly, it is a myth about paternalism, that the social lower classes simply cannot survive without the paternal care of the upper classes. The basis of the political thought of an identity-homogeneous tradition – the wisdom of the collective mind of the human community – in the case of an inhomogeneous tradition is usually pushed out of attention. All this gives rise to a good criterion for identifying the identity-inhomogeneous structure of the existing social order, which consists in answering the question: how closely is an ordinary social place of the common man isomorphic to the situation of a sheep in a flock with shepherds?⁵ It is

over time, with education, with moving up the steps of the social ladder and in geographical space. What is also important is that this model allows for double loyalty, so it is easily built over other identities that have a spatial and political dimension. Finally, being hierarchical, it does not insist on the symbolic equality of its members." (Malinova 2012). In contrast to the traditional political systems, polities that provide open access orders essentially have an attitude towards equality of participants: "A nation is a community united by an imaginary social identity, an important part of which is the psychological attitude (1) to sovereign statehood, and (2) to equality of people included in the community. // Each nation has its own self-consistent sacred complex, which, among other things, includes its values, such as the symbols of the community including its name (usually the self-designation of the country – real or assumed), the will for self-governing, the myth of the destiny of the nation, the generally accepted model of the common good, other myths of self-standing (about glorious ancestors, about the "golden century", about the antiquity of the origins of the national spirit, etc.), ideas about the national territory, the unity of the community and the equality of its members. // Functionally, the nation has its own political and legal systems operating within the framework of the system of national values, and ensuring the coordination of the interests of community members, the development of common strategies for action and conflict resolution." (Krupkin 2011a).

⁵ The emergence of the paternalistic myth is of particular interest because of its "unnaturalness" for the everyday experience of people. After all, the usual interaction of the upper and lower classes has always been mainly associated with a rent extraction by the upper classes, which cannot question a sufficiently-broad autonomy of the lower classes, and which results in producing enough goods, a significant part of which goes to the upper classes. Where did the paternalistic myth come from? A

precisely such a dehumanizing practice as the relegation of social lower classes in the minds of the upper classes to "cattle in the landscape", and the fixation of this in the daily routines of the social order, that clearly allows us to determine its identity-inhomogeneity. For example, in the USSR, the townsfolk were not only almost completely like "sheep in a herd", but, moreover, they were required to be exactly that "robot-sheep", since they (unlike, for example, the classical monarchies of the "ancient order") were not even allowed to "kick up" on occasion – which is an inalienable "right" of all those living⁶. Such devitalization gave a special "charm" to political inhomogeneity in the USSR.

In post-Soviet Russia, a common man "differs from a sheep" by the ability to perform "downshifting" (i.e., move to lower social positions, "dissolving into the landscape"), and the ability to leave the country. Nevertheless, the prevalence in certain relevant discursive layers of the very pejorative terminology towards the lower class shows the understanding of the border with them by the ruling class and its relatives in the Russian Federation. In addition, the Russian authorities very much disapprove of grassroots protest, but they like to talk about paternalism, and that "those there" will "kill each other" without paternal bossy care. So dehumanizing and devitalizing practices continue to define the existing social order, albeit in a slightly more "shabby form" than it was in the USSR. Plus, there are developing practices of fixation by various social strata of their "separation from those who are down" mainly through the creation of arbitrariness and the use of violent actions towards the "pushed down". Consequently, there is no reason to believe that post-Soviet Russia, as a result of social transformations of the last few decades, would suddenly become identity-homogenized, although it has changed significantly in some of its characteristics.⁷

natural hypothetical reason of its appearance may be the psychological attitudes of the servicemen for "the uppers" and the fact that the "uppers" cannot actually see/know the common men: when "looking down" they see exactly the "servicemen", whose general attitudes, whose "broadcast up" perception of the world, and whose stories about their experiences are generalized to get an image of the entire population. For details, see Krupkin 2011b.

⁶ The important characteristic to distinguish the living: "*Life always tends to question its limits / borders / boundaries.*"

⁷ See additional details on the elite mental border in the Russian public consciousness in: Krupkin 2010a. pp.307-321.

In conclusion, we will mention one significant risk imputed to inhomogeneous political systems by modern life – the so-called "color revolutions". Due to the self-positioning of the top of the ruling class "being separated" from the rest of society, there is a situation when the cost of intercepting political communication by a new alternative group of actors from the former political top / center is not very high. The history of identity-inhomogeneous polities has been famous before for various kinds of coups d'état – what can we say about the current situation, when the relative cost of blocking the armed and any other sub-systems of the polity via corrupting its agents has ceased to be significant for the main political actors of the world?

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