DESTABILIZATION PROCESSES IN THE MODERN WORLD

MECHANISMS OF STATE DISINTEGRATION. A GLOBAL ANALYSIS*

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As the events of the 'Arab Spring' and the Ukrainian crisis have shown, the state disintegration is a critical phenomenon for the entire World System and geopolitical balance. An increasingly accelerating globalization will inevitably lead to new state disintegrations and therefore, the study of the regularities of this process is an urgent task. The article attempts to outline some patterns of state disintegration in the past and present. The main emphasis of the research is put on the study of the elite conflict causes as one of the most important factors of disintegration. Based on the existing literature, the two most common disintegration mechanisms are considered, which have been defined as 'elite-centric' and 'state-centric.' In the implementation of the 'elite-centric' mechanism, the main cause of the elite conflict is the elites' actions, while in the implementation of the 'state-centric' – those of the state. The study shows that the structural reasons for the 'elite-centric' mechanism of state disintegration are a significant actual or institutionalized concentration of resources in the hands of a narrow elite circle and a legal political competition. The structural reasons for the 'state-centric' mechanism of state disintegration are the concentration of resources and means for their production in the hands of the state and a complete absence of legal political competition.

Keywords: *revolutions, geopolitics, state disintegration, elite conflict, historical regularities.*

Introduction

The more accelerated globalization, which undoubtedly has its positive aspects, leads to increasing political instability both at the level of nation-states and at the level of the World System in general. Globalization leads to a weakening of the state's sovereignty, a decrease in the level of its national security, and a limitation of the available means to surpass the political destabilization risks (Taiwo 2017).

So, globalization has already led to the collapse of some multinational states, which fact has actualized territorial disputes (*e.g.*, Kosovo due to the disintegration of Yugo-

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slavia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, or Crimea after the USSR collapse). Moreover, the development of information technologies has led to the synchronization of mass protest mobilization in different countries of the world, which became especially evident after the Arab Spring (more about such consequences of globalization see in Idowu and Oladiti 2016; Truevtsev 2016). Thus, globalization has generated such a phenomenon as 'waves of revolutions' (which will be discussed later).

In general, even though in the modern world the progressive role of revolutions is declining (Grinin 2018a; 2019), the consequences of such revolutions are now becoming more international. Revolutions always lead to serious political destabilization, and sometimes even to state disintegration (which occurs when state institutions are undermined and some territories are out of control). It can mean the risks of a civil war, a surge in crime, and other forms of a humanitarian catastrophe for the state itself. For the World System, it can have serious geopolitical consequences and cause international crises (Grinin 2019: 275); the state disintegration also increases the risks of international terrorism acts, the level of drug and slave traffic, and can generate flows of refugees (Truevtsev 2016: 80–82). We can cite the examples of Libya and Syria[1] to show the international negative consequences of the state disintegration caused by the revolutionary wave, when the crisis led to the flow of refugees and caused the migration crisis in Europe. Here it is appropriate to recall the geopolitical crisis that was caused by the state disintegration in Ukraine in 2014, which exacerbated the geopolitical rivalry between Russia and the West.

Therefore, understanding the regularities of state disintegration, as one of the possible consequences of the revolution and revolution wave, is vital for political science in general and for globalization studies in particular.

Before we start to formulate some historical and political dynamics patterns, it is worth clarifying the terminological apparatus. The concept of state breakdown is one of the most related to the concept of state disintegration. This concept was introduced by the American sociologist Jack Goldstone, who defined the state breakdown as 'any event that involves a crisis of central state authority, elite revolts, popular uprisings, and widespread violence or civil war' (Goldstone 1991: 12). The sociologist Randall Collins slightly corrected this definition and abandoned the criterion of mass violence to replace it with mass mobilization. He formalized the concept of state breakdown as including the following characteristics: fiscal crisis, elite deadlock and popular mobilization from below (Collins 2011: 578).

The disadvantage of these criteria is that they do not reveal the state disintegration but only indicate serious political destabilization. Goldstone considers a variety of state breakdown cases, including as different as the elite rebellion (Fronde in France in the seventeenth century), the civil war (in England in the mid-seventeenth century), and the revolution (France in 1789). To avoid conceptual stretching, it is necessary to add at least two more criteria to the above three (fiscal crisis, conflict of elites, and mass mobilization) to identify the state disintegration, namely: a change in the system self-description and territorial disintegration (for more details, see Shevsky 2021).

To select relevant cases of state disintegration, it is necessary to formalize them for searching in databases. The Polity5 database allows recording a fiscal crisis and, with some probability, a change in self-description through the indicator 4.6 (Interim) with the values –77 and –88 (the transition period and the collapse of the central authority). Territorial disintegration is recorded through indicator 1.7 (fragmentation) with any value ≥ 1 (max. 3). The Cross National Time Series (CNTS) database makes it possible to detect a fiscal crisis, elite conflict and mass uprisings through the following parameters:

- Indicator domestic4 (Government crisis) ≥1 (*i.e.*, more than one case per year when the regime's existence is under threat).
- Indicator domestic7 (revolution) ≥1. It is important to emphasize that the creators of this database define the revolution quite broadly and also include coups, attempts of such, and other similar events (Wilson 2018: 13). These two indicators in their totality indicate not only a fiscal crisis but also a conflict of elites.
- Indicator domestic6 (riots) ≥1.

For the period up to 2000, the indicator of territorial disintegration presented in Polity5 is absent; the indicator 'Secession' in database 'Territorial changes' of the project 'The Correlates of war' is used for the period up to 2000.

Based on the conceptualization carried out, we can provide a list of states that can be considered as having experienced disintegration (in chronological order):

Pakistan 1971
Ethiopia 1991–1993
Somalia 1991
USSR 1991
Yugoslavia 1991
Afghanistan 2001
Iraq 2003
Libya 2011
Yemen 2011–2015
Ukraine 2014

Perhaps this list is not exhaustive, but the use of databases makes it possible to level the researcher's voluntarism and assert that these states have definitely gone through state disintegration.

In this list, it is striking that half of the states experienced disintegration in the early 1990s, which makes us trace a certain pattern. These are the so-called 'waves of revolutions,' namely, the wave of anti-communist revolutions (Grinin and Grinin 2022; Grinin 2018b: 185).

Is it also possible to see the evidences of 'waves of revolutions' in other cases of state disintegration? We believe that the answer to this question may be positive. The case of Afghanistan in 2001 can be interpreted as a consequence of the anti-communist wave: the crisis of the Najibullāh's regime was caused by the refusal of the USSR from its support, which resulted in the emerging chaos, which the Taliban took advantage to seize power. The Taliban pursued a risky policy that led to the crisis of 2001.

Libya in 2011 and Yemen in 2011–2015 also organically fit the wave of the Arab Spring (Korotayev *et al.* 2014; Grinin and Korotayev 2022). The cases of Iraq in 2003 and Ukraine in 2014 are somewhat more complicated, but here, with some reservations, one can find traces of global revolutionary waves. Thus, some authors believe that the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003 can be interpreted as part of the 'global democratic revolution,' which was launched by the 'color revolutions' (Beissinger 2007: 261). Some also tend to consider the Euromaidan in Ukraine 2014 within the wave of 'Revolts against hybrid regimes,' including Thailand, Ukraine, Bosnia, Venezuela, Turkey, Tunisia, and Egypt (Korotayev *et al.* 2015a, 2015b; Rozov 2022).

As we can see, 'revolutionary waves' do not always end with state disintegration. Therefore, it is necessary to identify other conditions, besides the global context, that causes not only revolution but also the state disintegration.

Models of State Disintegration Mechanisms

First of all, proceeding from the previously proposed features, we will consider briefly what factors generally lead to state disintegration.

- Delegitimization of power leads to the rejection of the existing self-description or even the creation of a new one.
- The ineffectiveness of economic management and budget imbalance increases the risks of a fiscal crisis.
- Population dissatisfaction can lead to mass mobilization.
- Ethnic heterogeneity, national autonomy, and/or real or perceived oppression of population groups living in certain territories can lead to territorial disintegration.
- The intra-elite split can lead to their acute conflict with each other and/or with the state.

Sociologists and political scientists have long known that elite conflict plays a key role in revolutions (and in state disintegration due to the revolution) (Goldstone 2001). Therefore, within the framework of the article, we will consider the emerging regularities of the elite conflict, which lead to state disintegration. The other factors are no less important for understanding the disintegration, but due to the limited scope of the article, we have to omit the analysis of all other indicators, except for the elite conflict as the key one.

If we turn to the analysis of the causes of the elite split and the subsequent conflict, relying on the existing literature, we can distinguish at least two of the most common and well-tested theories. As will be shown below, these theories are very similar, but they differ mainly in the vision of the key factor that leads to the split. One theory puts the actions of the elites at the forefront, the other – the actions of the state as an independent subject of the political process.

The so-called 'structural-demographic theory' most consistently considers the elites' actions as the cause for the state disintegration (see, *e.g.*, Goldstone 1991, 2017; Turchin 2003, 2013; Turchin and Nefedov 2009). It was originally created to analyze the dynamics of agrarian states but has become actively applied to contemporary cases

(*e.g.*, Korotayev and Zinkina 2011, 2022). This theory is based on the ideas of classical Malthusianism which considers overpopulation as the main reason for political instability and analyzes the correlations between overpopulation and elite actions. The growth of population leads to land shortage in rural areas. To find a job, people are forced to move to big cities, but it causes a decline in real wages due to the unemployment growth. The resulting inflation reduces the governmental incomes and forces the authorities to expand taxation. These actions cause resistance both on the part of the elites and the population. Moreover, elites also grow in number to increase the budget burden as they cost the government a lot of money. This leads to an elite split and rivalry for the reduced resources (Goldstone 1991: 24–25, 459).

It is important to note that sometimes the resource shortage for the elite can be caused not by overpopulation and, accordingly, by the lack of food for the population itself but by much faster growth in the number of the elite itself. These and other facts allowed the scholars working within the framework of the structural-demographic theory to claim that the key reason for state disintegration is not only and not so much the demographic growth, but rather 'selfish' elites (Goldstone 1991: 481).

According to the theory developers, one of the most striking but far from the only evidence of the elite 'selfishness' is their overproduction, that is, the presence of more elites and applicants for elite positions than society can offer (Turchin 2013).

An equally significant part of the researchers, without denying the importance of the elites' actions, argues that the causes of disintegration lie not so much within the state structures but in the plane of foreign policy problems and control over the territory.

Social science has accumulated enough knowledge about the consequences of an aggressive foreign policy and the control over territory problems for the state (Collins 1981, 1995, 2011; Kennedy 1987; Skocpol 1979).

This vision of state disintegration was most clearly formulated by Randall Collins on the analysis of the USSR collapse (Collins 1995). His principles are based on and derived from Weber's notion of the state (the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force): the state restricted by territorial or social barriers has fewer fronts to make wars, and it enables the state to accumulate resources. This advantage encourages territorial expansion and seizure of those polities which do not have such an advantage. But eventually, the state achieves the turning point when the new resources acquired with the conquered territories are also depleted, and the 'overextension results in resource strain and state disintegration' (Collins 1995: 1558). The state disintegration in his theory is a feedback loop: the geopolitical strain causes the lack of resources. As a result, it encourages the elite rivalry for these resources that, in its turn, reinforces the fiscal crisis. 'The mobilization of oppositional class forces from below' is organized to support a part of the elites, and the state ceases its existence in its current form.

Analyzing this theory, which Collins himself called the theory of geopolitical overextension, the researchers noted that it is correct to speak not only about geopolitics, but more broadly, about control over the territory (Li J 2002; Li R 2002). Thus, it is possible to say that state disintegration within the framework of this theory occurs not only due to disputes in the international arena but also due to internal reasons. Such an inter-

nal reason can be the permanent fight against the rebels in a certain territory, who are striving to achieve independence. Even when those wishing secessions do not aim to overthrow the central authority, fighting them can lead to colossal economic and reputational losses within the Heartland.

As can be seen from the analysis of theories, they both postulate that the key factor in state disintegration is the elite conflict caused by a lack of resources. Theories disagree on the reasons for this lack of resources: the first puts the state at the forefront of action, the second – the elites. Therefore, it is appropriate to say that the analyzed theories describe the 'elite-centric' and 'state-centric' mechanisms of state disintegration. A natural question arises – why is the 'elite-centric' mechanism implemented in some cases and 'state-centric' in others?

Since one of the key characteristics of elites is ownership of the resources production means (Mann 1986), the possible answer to the question lies in this dimension.

It is logical to assume that when a significant part of material resources are concentrated in the hands of narrow elite groups and the means for the production of these resources are also in the hands of the same groups; then they can significantly influence the state policy to increase their wealth. When resources become insufficient, the elites begin to fight with each other, which means a reduction in the available resources for some of them (*e.g*., raiding, expropriation, *etc*.), leading to the intra-elite conflict.

In the other extreme case, when the resources and means for their production are actually concentrated by the state, then the elites do not have any significant opportunities to resist the state decisions since they are completely connected with it. But at the same time, not having an adequate checks and balances system in this case, the state can spend colossal resources on foreign policy and other risky actions, which ultimately leads to undermining the state budget, reducing the resource base, and, accordingly, to the intra-elite conflict for the depleting resources.

In the first case, it is logical to expect that legal political competition will be developed since it may support the elites' influence on the state and translate their opposition discourse. There will be no legal political competition in the second case since no significant actors will be capable of lobbying for its legitimization.

Case Analysis

We will analyze the assumed conditions in each of the specified countries and try to determine the exact reasons that led to the elite conflict, which ultimately led to state disintegration. The analysis is performed in a chronological order.

Pakistan (1969–1971). After the October military coup in the country in 1958, Muhammad Ayub Khan came to power and he initially established a military dictatorship, banning parties' activities. But after four years, he allowed the activities of the opposition and introduced a new constitution. One of the country's key problems was the regional imbalance between West Pakistan and East (later independent Bangladesh). The income of citizens of the country's western part was 24 per cent larger than in the eastern part; two-thirds of all production was also concentrated in the west (Maniruzzaman 1971: 230–231), while representatives of the western part also dominated the political sphere.

A key aspect that helps to uncover the mechanisms of state disintegration in Pakistan in 1971 is the structure of parliament and the relationship between business and government. While in West Pakistan, the parliament was dominated by landowners (58 per cent), in East Pakistan there dominated the representatives of business elite (32 per cent) and lawyers (25 per cent) (Maniruzzaman 1971: 226). However, it is important to emphasize that in both parts of the country, business was extremely concentrated in the hands of very narrow groups (Amjad 1976: 231). Ayub Khan's son was engaged in business, and he succeeded so much that the president's family would become one of the richest in the country (Siddiqui 1972: 105). Business representatives in parliament owned information resources and were able to mobilize the population for protests (Hussain 1976: 230–231).

It is logical to assume that having the resources to declare a new opposition discourse and mobilize the population, the East Pakistani elites actively used this, which led to the civil war in 1971 and the country' split into two parts. Despite the fact that Pakistan constantly waged wars with India, one can hardly claim that the country experienced disintegration due to territorial overstrain since the confrontation between the elites of the East and the West was observed from the very formation of the state.[2] The existing discrimination against the political elites of the East allows arguing with confidence that the country experienced disintegration due to the actions of the elites themselves since the elites of the East were practically excluded from the nationwide redistribution of resources and were subject to various kinds of repression (Hussain 1976: 231).

Ethiopia (1991–1993). The state disintegration mechanism in Ethiopia is similar to the one observed in Somalia. After the 1974 revolution, the Provisional Military Administrative Council nationalized property and imposed very tight control over the citizens (Young 1997: 119). The new regime also did not gain popularity with the tax policy, as a result of which a significant amounts of resources were taken from the peasants (Tareke *et al.* 2009: 153). This fact together with unresolved national problems led to the confrontation between Tigray and Eritrea (regions of Ethiopia) and the central authority. The harsh discourse and the lack of legal opposition and leverage over the country's leadership predetermined the ways of solving these problems – open confrontation and no negotiations. It is worth recalling that in addition to fighting the insurgents of Tigray and Eritrea, Ethiopia was also forced to fight the Afar and Oromo Liberation Front, as well as to wage war against Somalia in 1977 and to conduct a military operation against Sudan in 1983. So it becomes obvious that from 1974 to 1991 Ethiopia faced a territorial overstrain, since the country was forced to spend a significant part of its resources on military operations. Thus, for example, in 1974, the funds received by the Ministry of Defense accounted for 18 per cent of all government spending, and in 1988 – already 44 per cent (Tareke *et al.* 2009: 137). These fiscal distortions, coupled with ineffective management and persistent counterinsurgency failures, led to an economic crisis (*Ibid*.: 159) and a complete de-legitimation of power, including among the military (Young 1997: 159).

Somalia (1991). Despite the fact that one of the key aspects of the country's political structure was clannishness (Ingiriis 2016), the structural reasons for the elite conflict

as a factor of state disintegration were fundamentally different from the one that was observed, for example, in Yemen, where clannishness was also present (see below). First, the clans, except for the ruling one, did not have enough resources for open rivalry, and the ruling clan itself became such not because of its wealth but because it was in power. Secondly, the Somali economy was nationalized, and the enrichment took place not through business activities but through the actual privatization of public finances (namely, finance, not means of production) (Ingiriis 2016: 129). Accordingly, those who had some influence on the state's policy were part of it and were not interested in confronting the dictator Mohamed Siad Barre (1969–1991) since their interests completely coincided with him as the embodied state.

One of the most important elements of Somalia's self-description, since Siad Barre came to power, was the idea of pan-Somalism, which determined almost completely the foreign policy and caused conflicts with Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti (Clarke and Gosende 2004: 134–135; Ahmed 1991: 117). It was this discourse that predetermined the future of the Somali system. The most important event that marked the beginning of disintegration was the war in Ogaden in 1979. Taking advantage of the revolution in Ethiopia, Somalia invaded its territory and, despite initial successes, this operation was unsuccessful, which significantly undermined the authority of the existing regime. Moreover, following the defeat in the Somali war, repression would intensify, primarily against elites (Clarke and Gosende 2004: 136). But the main result of the war was the economic and social consequences: the death of mobilized citizens in the war and the flows of refugees predetermined the political orientation of the north of the country (which suffered the most from the war). The constant de facto war with the north has undermined the country's already weak economy: in 1986, Somalia spent almost 29 per cent of the country's GDP on military needs (World Bank 2021). In this case, we observe the same cause-challenge of the elite conflict, described by Collins: the state spends a significant part of its funds on foreign policy, which leads to a crisis. However, in the case of Somalia, a substantial part of the funds was spent to control its own territory, which does not contradict Collins's theory: firstly, a significant delegitimization of power occurred due to the war with Ogaden, and secondly, in theory, it is not the foreign policy which the key point but the problems of control over the territory. Therefore, we can argue that the elite conflict, which led to the disintegration, occurred due to territorial overstrain.

The USSR (1991). In the USSR, as it is known, all resources were concentrated by the state, and the economic elites were closely linked with the political ones. Considering the authoritarian system of the USSR, the state turned out to be almost completely 'uncontrollable' since neither society nor economic elites could practically influence the course chosen by the country's leadership. The 'freehand' led to an active foreign policy, which in the long term led to an unbalanced budget, massive discontent, and conflict among elites. We omit a detailed analysis of the USSR disintegration since this analysis was brilliantly performed previously by Collins (1995).

Yugoslavia (1991). Despite the fact that Yugoslavia was a socialist state, it is quite correct to say that the structure of its economy was not completely state-owned since

non-state enterprises played an active and significant role in its economic development. The specificity of the Yugoslav economy was that resources and means for their production were concentrated in the hands of national elites in each republic. Therefore, when an economic recession began in Yugoslavia, and the question of paying off a significant national external debt arose (Žižmond 1993: 105), the regional elites began to resist the demands for redistribution of income in favor of the state (Woodward 1995: 238, 258). As a result of the conflict, the richest republics – Slovenia and Croatia – were the first to declare their independence. Based on the foregoing, we may argue that the disintegration of the Yugoslav state occurred due to the actions of the elites. Until the mid-1980s, the state financed many regional economic projects, and when faced with a crisis, it tried to withdraw resources from the regions, which the national elites opposed. This behavior is based on the same logic as the elite overproduction – while in the classical version a certain group or several groups may lack resources, then in Yugoslavia, national elites have become such groups. This case also shows to what extent the fiscal crisis and the elite conflict are interconnected: while the state served as a source of enrichment for national elites, they supported it, as soon as the state stopped paying preferences and, moreover, required funds for its own support, the elites ceased to be interested in maintaining the status quo.

Afghanistan (2001). State disintegration in Afghanistan occurred in 2001 after the USA military operation (Sidky 2007), which was caused by the aggressive foreign policy actions of the Taliban. If we turn to the analysis of Afghanistan history during the period from 1996 to 2001, then we will actually distinguish the same political dynamics as in Iraq (see below): a complete subordination of all available resources, prohibition of political participation, formation of a system without any levers for the society to influence the decision-making and aggressive foreign policy (Crews and Amin 2008: 90–117). It makes no sense to describe in detail the history of Afghanistan in the period under study since the Taliban regime existed for a relatively short time and its destructive activities are widely known.

However, the important problem is that the Taliban came to power after the civil war of 1992–1996 after it had managed to subjugate 90 per cent of the territory, that is, when the state was already disintegrated. The origins of this disintegration lie in the unpopular activities of Najibullāh in 1986–1992, who, in turn, pursued a policy in the context of a de facto civil war that had been going on since 1979 and was caused, among other things, by engaging the Soviet troops into Afghanistan.

Thus, it turns out that the disintegration of the state in Afghanistan happened at least twice: in 1992 and 2001, but we will count only the case of 2001 since it has been better studied.

Iraq (2003). Despite the fact that there was an invasion of the foreign troops, Iraq is a vivid example of state disintegration due to territorial overstrain. As in the case of the USSR, the main factor behind Iraq's aggressive foreign policy was significant oil revenues and almost complete control over the economy. For example, in 1979, oil revenues in the state budget were 62.7 per cent, and the share of the public sector in total production in 1977 was 80 per cent (Marr 2017: 126–127). At the same time, about

40 per cent of the income received from the sale of oil was spent for military purposes (Colgan 2013: 104). Therefore, it is logical to expect that 1) the regime did not need broad internal elite support; rather, it created opportunities for the integration of those it deemed necessary, and 2) without restrictions within the country, the state would be inclined to conduct an aggressive foreign policy. The development of Iraq under Saddam Hussein resulted in international isolation and the subsequent introduction of troops into the country. After the war with Kuwait, almost a decade before the introduction of troops, Kurdistan was practically independent, and economic problems became visible. After the overthrow of Hussein, many of the groups he suppressed would revolt, which led to state disintegration.

Libya (2011). In Libya, as in all other analyzed countries, there are all the signs that we have defined as state disintegration. At the same time, the events taking place in this country since 2011 are difficult to analyze within the framework of the proposed model.

First, the key political positions were not institutionalized in the country, and there were no traditional parties and electoral system (Mattes 2008: 55–57). Second, those who held the key positions in the power structures and could somehow influence the decision-making process were included in a very narrow circle of relatives of Muammar Gaddafi (*Ibid*.: 74–77). The fact that literally in the first days of the protests, some part of the country's political elite went over to the protesters' side (Paoletti 2011) suggests that many elite members were disappointed. But it is rather difficult to understand what exactly caused this.

We know practically nothing about the distribution of income between different tribes and clans (Lamma 2017: 11–25). Moreover, due to the specific political structure of Libya, it is impossible to distinguish who concentrated the resources: the state structures or narrow groups since it is not entirely clear to whom exactly the main means of production belonged.

It is because of the peculiarities of state institutions and information secrecy the events in Libya, which began in 2011, were excluded from our analysis.

Yemen (2011–2015). The reasons and challenges for the elite conflict in Yemen are similar to those observed in Pakistan. First, there was a regional split in Yemen, which in this case went along the North-South line. Second, a significant part of the country's resources was concentrated in the hands of two clans (Issaev and Shishkina 2012: 38). The clan system of government, which essentially consisted of the power division between President Ali Abdullah Saleh's family and the Parliament Speaker Abdullah bin Husayn bin Nasser al-Ahmar's family, ensured the relative stability of the state until 2007. After the death of Al-Ahmar, the president ceased to reckon with the interests of the allied clan, which naturally caused significant discontent, especially among the sons of the deceased speaker. The situation was aggravated by the presence of several other divisions with the central government: with the Houthi movement in the north of the country and with the Southern Movement (Grinin, Korotayev, and Tausch 2019: 195). The Houthis initially opposed Saleh because they believed that he did not consider the interests of the population concentrated in the mountainous part of the

country, and the president himself at the early stages refused to engage in dialogue with them and somehow resolve the conflict (Brandt 2018). After the resignation of Saleh and the strengthening of the representatives of the Al-Akhmar clan, the Houthis united with the supporters of Saleh, and at the end of 2014, they completely seized power.

All these splits and contradictions are fundamentally important for the understanding of the current situation in Yemen. Still, within the framework of this study, it is important to understand the origins of the initial crisis because all other events are, in one way or another, a continuation of the development of the situation that was formed in 2011.

Despite the fact that the political system of Yemen until 2011 was actually subordinated to the president, in general, the activities of opposition parties were allowed, and it was through the party structures that the opposition discourse was expressed to mobilize the population (Grinin, Korotayev, and Tausch 2019: 191). For example, since the beginning of destabilization, a significant actor in the political process has been the unification of five opposition parties – the Joint Meeting Parties.

Ukraine (2014). The elite conflict in Ukraine was caused by the actions of the elites themselves. In Ukraine, the resources used to be concentrated by a small number of economic elite representatives, who, therefore, had the opportunity to actively influence politics (Aslund 2014; Matuszak 2014; Pleines 2016). However, Yanukovych tried to free himself from their influence, but instead of strengthening the state structures, he began to create his own clan. The examples of an 'unexpected' sharp increase in the fortune of those close to the president confirm this interpretation. However, the emerging of Yanukovych's 'Family' clan failed to re-subordinate the media, which became the main mechanism for mass mobilization (for more details, see Shevsky 2020).

The main reason for the territorial disintegration lies in the cultural plane due to the historical development of the country and its geopolitical position (see Grinin 2015 for more details).

Analysis

Earlier, we said that various mechanisms of state disintegration ('elite-centric' and 'state-centric') are associated with the dominant type of property and the degree of legal, political competition. Accordingly, to verify this assumption, it is necessary to check the following factors:

1) concentration of resources and means for them in the hands of a narrow group (concentration, C) or the state (Public sector, P);

2) competitiveness in parliamentary elections (Openness, O). If the indicator Leg4 (nomination process) in the CNTS database was 2 or 3 (partially competitive, competitive), or the PARCOMP parameter in Polity5 database (competitiveness of participation) with a value of 3 (fractional participation) and higher, then the system was considered competitive;

3) the presence of the opposition in parliament (Legal opposition. L), which will indicate that there is a legitimate opportunity to broadcast a mobilization opposition discourse. If the indicator leg5 (coalition) in the CNTS database has a value higher than 2 (more

than one party, state coalition, and opposition), then the system is considered as allowing parliamentary opposition;

4) the openness of the principles of competition and recruitment of parliament means its efficiency (Efficiency, E). If the indicator Leg3 (efficiency of the legislature) in the CNTS database was coded as 2 (partially effective) and higher, then the parliamentary system was considered effective;

5) the exclusion of significant groups from the political process (Discrimination, D). If the indicator Leg 6 (party legitimacy) in the CNTS database was less than 2 (One or more minor or 'extremist' parties were excluded), it was considered that the system had an exclusion from the political process of any significant groups.

To assess who accumulate resources and means for their production, the qualitative assessments were used, the rationale for which was given in the analysis of each specific case of state disintegration (see above).

Based on the foregoing, a table can be compiled (see Table 1) that demonstrates which states have experienced disintegration through the Elite-Centered Mechanism (ECM) and which – through the State-Centered Mechanism (SCM). The value of 1 in the Table means the presence of a feature, and 0 its absence.

Table 1

Country	concentration (C)	Public sector (P)	Openness (O)	Legal opposition (L)	Efficiency (E)	Discrimination (D)
Pakistan 1971 (ECM)	1	0	1	1	1	1
Ethiopia 1991 (SCM)	0	1	0	0	0	1
The USSR 1991 (SCM)	0	1	0	0	0	1
Somalia 1991 (SCM)	0	1	0	0	0	1
Yugoslavia 1991 (ECM)	1	0	1	0	1	1
Afghanistan 2001 (SCM)	0	1	0	0	0	1
Iraq 2003 (SCM)	0	1	0	0	0	1
Yemen 2011 (ECM)	1	0	1	1	0	0
Ukraine 2014 (ECM)	1	0	1	1	1	0

Short Discussion and Conclusion

From Table 1 it follows that the 'elite-centric' mechanism of the state disintegration was observed in countries with the concentration of resources and means for their production in the hands of a narrow group in the presence of a legal political competition.

It is important to note that in two cases, there is a parliamentary opposition and the parliament itself is effective, despite the fact that there is an exclusion from political participation of significant groups of the population. In the other two cases, there is a combination of signs. If there is no parliamentary opposition (Yugoslavia), then there is parliamentary effectiveness and vice versa: if there is present a parliamentary opposition (Yemen), then there is no parliamentary effectiveness.

The 'state-centric' mechanism of state disintegration was observed in countries with the concentration of resources and means for their production in the hands of the state and where there was no legal political competition, an effective parliament, and where significant groups of the population were excluded from the political process.

Based on all that has been said previously, we can cautiously conclude that the state disintegration has some regularities associated with the possession of the main means of production and with peculiarities of political system.

As we can see, in some cases, disintegration resulted from close ties with other countries. An increasingly accelerating globalization can lead to new waves of revolutions and, hence, to new risks of state disintegration.

State disintegration will continue to lead to international conflicts (the events in Afghanistan in 2021 once again confirm this), as well as to change the geopolitical balance in the world (as after Ukraine 2014 or Syria 2015), and all this will be an inevitable consequence of globalization.

Globalization, as mentioned in the introduction, weakens the state sovereignty and makes states more vulnerable. The changing distribution of resources in the state caused by the international community, for example, through sanctions, military incursions, or aid to insurgents, leads to conflict among elites. If the proposed model of the structural causes for elite conflict as a factor of state disintegration is correct, then we can make a cautious forecast of how globalization can lead to an acute elite conflict in a particular country. In 2020, mass protests began in Belarus, where significant resources and means for their production are accumulated by the state and where political competition is low. Initially, according to our model, there were no reasons for elite conflict in this country, and therefore the protests were doomed to failure (Lachmann 1997). However, the subsequent actions of incumbent president Alexander Lukashenko led to the fact that Western countries began to impose sanctions, including against state-owned enterprises, which are the main source of income for the elites closely associated with the state. Thus, Western sanctions increase the risks of a conflict between elites inside Belarus (due to Lukashenko's policy) and therefore, increase the risk of state breakdown.

The preliminary results presented in the article require further testing and fitting into the broader context of the global political dynamics. All this will help to better understand and predict possible risks of political destabilization in the future.

NOTES

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[1] State disintegration in Syria would also have happened, if not for the interference of the Russian Federation.

[2] But it is worth noting that the enclave nature of Bangladesh has become one of the main reasons for the territorial disintegration.

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