

Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Research on Military Modernization Within the Concept of Socio-Political Modernization

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Abstract: This article examines the concept of socio-political modernization as a theoretical and methodological basis for the study of military modernization. In addition, the article pays special attention to the objective and subjective components of this issue and their evolution.

Keywords: Civilization, evolution, revolution, endogenous, exogenous, social, modernization, factor, effect.

Introduction: With the emergence of human civilization, society has been in a state of continuous transformation, reflecting a natural and objective process of qualitative renewal and development. This process constitutes an inherent закономерность of social evolution. Contemporary social science has developed various theoretical and methodological approaches aimed at identifying the essence, sources, mechanisms, objectives, directions, and forms of development. Their analysis allows for the formulation of a number of methodological conclusions that are essential for understanding the phenomenon of modernization.

First, the fundamental source of development and modernization is the emergence and resolution of dialectical contradictions. The interaction and overcoming of these contradictions constitute the driving force of all forms of development, including societal development.

Second, modernization, as a specific form of development, represents the unity of two interrelated components:

- the objective component, which reflects the internal logic and regularities of changes occurring within social phenomena and processes;
- the subjective component, which encompasses the purposeful activities of individuals, social groups,

and political actors aimed at realizing transformation in accordance with objective developmental laws.

Third, the goals and forms of development and modernization may vary depending on historical conditions and societal needs. In a broad sense, modernization is directed toward the transformation and mastery of the natural and social environment in order to create and continuously improve favorable conditions for human existence and societal progress.

Fourth, social transformation may proceed in two principal directions:

- progress, understood as advancement from a lower level of development to a higher and more complex stage characterized by increased effectiveness and adaptability;
- regress, which denotes movement toward degradation, decline, or the loss of previously achieved developmental outcomes.

Within modernization studies, development is generally interpreted from an axiological perspective as a predominantly progressive process.

Fifth, the theory of modernization distinguishes between two principal forms of development: evolutionary and revolutionary.

An evolutionary form of development is characterized by gradual and predominantly quantitative changes

that do not fundamentally alter the core principles of the existing system. In the socio-political sphere, evolutionary transformation is typically implemented through reforms and institutional adaptation.

A revolutionary form of development involves abrupt and qualitative changes that lead to a radical restructuring of existing social, political, economic, or military institutions. In certain circumstances, revolutionary transformation results in the dismantling of established systemic principles and the formation of a new social order.

Sixth, successful modernization requires the participation of all major actors of social transformation. Regardless of whether reform initiatives originate from political elites ("top-down") or from society itself ("bottom-up"), sustainable modernization is impossible without broad public involvement. The population not only serves as the primary beneficiary of modernization processes but also acts as an active participant in their implementation, monitoring, and direction.

Seventh, modernization may be generated by both endogenous and exogenous factors.

Endogenous factors emerge from internal societal needs, including the necessity to overcome developmental lag, address systemic crises, or respond to the consequences of natural disasters and technological catastrophes. In this context, modernization frequently assumes the character of catch-up modernization, aimed at reducing the developmental gap between less-developed and more advanced societies.

Exogenous factors are associated with external influences, including military threats, interstate competition, foreign intervention, and international economic interaction. Historical experience demonstrates that military defeats have often served as powerful catalysts for modernization, revealing structural weaknesses in state institutions and highlighting the need for comprehensive political, economic, social, and military reforms. As noted in modernization theory, military setbacks have frequently acted as an impetus for transformative change, particularly when closely linked to economic backwardness and technological inferiority.

Taking the above-mentioned factors into account facilitates a deeper understanding of the essence of development and modernization, as well as related but conceptually distinct categories such as change, transformation, transition, modification, improvement, reform, optimization, and others.

Modernization represents one of the forms of

development. Unlike certain other types of change, modernization implies a fundamental transformation of the essence, structure, and functioning of a particular object, phenomenon, or process.

Social modernization is the process of renewing the socio-economic, political, cultural, religious, moral, and other foundations of society through innovations and improvements that correspond to contemporary requirements and the interests of various social groups. It represents a qualitative renewal, modernization, and enhancement of the socio-political and socio-economic environment without resorting to radical revolutionary transformations. As a result of such changes, a stable and viable social order is formed, creating the conditions necessary for sustained social progress. Modernization is oriented toward achieving higher levels of development, establishing a democratic and progressive society, and ensuring its long-term stability.

For countries undergoing systemic transformations within their socio-political systems, sustainable development can be achieved through comprehensive modernization encompassing all spheres of public life.

At present, various theoretical and methodological approaches to defining modernization have been developed. Modernization is frequently interpreted as an innovative transformation involving the adoption and implementation of new ideas, technologies, and practices in different spheres of human activity. In the context of Uzbekistan's development, modernization primarily implies the introduction of economically justified innovations, as well as the creation and application of new technologies and technological solutions aimed at increasing the efficiency of human activity. These processes encompass such fields as production, science, governance, and the management of material, intellectual, and financial resources.

The concept of "modernization" was introduced into socio-political discourse as an analytical category for identifying the characteristics of societal development and examining various aspects of world civilization. It reflects differences in the levels of development achieved by states and indicates the future directions and tendencies of social transformation. Based on traditional interpretations, modernization is understood as a complex process that includes industrialization, secularization, urbanization, the establishment of universal education systems, the development of representative political institutions, increasing social and spatial mobility, and other interconnected transformations. Together, these processes contribute to the formation of a "modern open society", which stands in contrast to the

“traditional closed society”. [4]

Within this framework, modernization is viewed as a developmental cycle characterized by the transition from a traditional agrarian society to an industrial society. This interpretation is commonly applied to developing countries seeking to approximate the institutional and technological characteristics of Western industrial societies. Consequently, modernization is closely associated with industrialization and the Industrial Revolution, which constitute the foundation for the emergence of industrial society.

Contemporary interpretations of modernization assign particular scientific significance to the concept by linking it to human development and the broader evolution of the noosphere. In this context, the noosphere is understood as the sphere of interaction between nature and society in which rational human activity becomes the principal and decisive factor of development. Modernization thus acquires not only a technological and socio-economic dimension but also an ethical and civilizational one, functioning as a moral imperative for societal advancement.

Accordingly, modernization processes cannot be confined solely to economic, scientific, or technological transformations. They are also associated with the formation of a new type of individual whose defining characteristic is an active aspiration to transform the surrounding environment, master nature and space, and consciously shape the conditions of existence. As noted in modernization theory, this type of personality is characterized by a proactive attitude toward reality and a belief in humanity's capacity to influence and direct social development. [5]

The emergence of this personality type is commonly associated with the Renaissance, when feudal social relations based on personal dependence gradually began to decline in Europe. This historical transformation facilitated the emergence of the autonomous and independent individual, liberated from traditional hierarchical constraints. According to V.A. Krasilshchikov, it was during this period that the first large-scale modernization process in world history began, laying the foundations for the subsequent development of modern civilization.

Initially, the term “modernization” emerged as a concept used to describe the processes taking place within the international community of states. Subsequently, it began to be employed to explain the nature and dynamics of transformations occurring within specific societies and countries.

Such approaches to understanding the essence of modernization significantly expanded the conceptual

boundaries of the phenomenon and contributed to the formation of contemporary modernization theory. Modernization theory began to take shape in the 1970s and has continued to develop actively within contemporary social and political science.

In studies devoted to societal modernization, many contemporary scholars and analysts refer to the fundamental principles of modernization formulated by Peter L. Berger:

- Modernization is, first and foremost, an internal achievement of developing societies themselves;
- Modernization processes occurring within different segments of the socio-cultural sphere are complementary in nature and mutually reinforcing;
- States that have reached more advanced stages of modernization do not necessarily impede those that are at earlier stages of development;
- Modernization processes generally follow a common developmental trajectory.

Modernization theories that gained prominence in Western Europe and North America during the final decades of the twentieth century are characterized by several important assumptions:

- Modernization can be viewed as the activity of individual and collective actors seeking to transform and improve their conditions of existence;
- Societies search for new developmental paths that correspond to their goals and aspirations; however, the successful implementation of modernization depends upon the compatibility of values and the availability of resources. Where essential resources are absent, modernization is unlikely to succeed;
- Modernization is not a homogeneous process of systemic transformation but rather a dynamic interaction involving supporters and opponents of reform, as well as reactions from various observers and stakeholders;
- Historically, the centers of social modernization shift over time, and new centers emerge. Today, rapidly developing countries such as the People's Republic of China, Uzbekistan, India, and many countries of Southeast Asia represent important modernization centers;
- The development of social welfare constitutes one of the principal indicators of successful modernization;
- Modernization is not exclusively a progressive process; it also encompasses periods of fluctuation, crisis, stagnation, and adaptation;

- Modernization possesses its own internal dynamics, and the final outcomes of reforms largely depend upon these dynamics.

The dynamics of modernization processes may be understood as the movement and interaction of various social, political, economic, and institutional forces directed toward improving a selected object of transformation. The modernization of the military sphere is primarily a military-political process that not only transforms military institutions themselves but also influences numerous related sectors, while simultaneously altering the functions and activities of the political actors responsible for implementing modernization.

The concept of socio-political modernization serves as a theoretical and methodological foundation for research on military development because it is intrinsically linked to reforms in public administration, political institutions, national security, economic development, and international relations. Although the military sphere may be viewed as a relatively autonomous system, it remains closely connected with broader political and economic reforms, public attitudes, and the moral foundations of society. Consequently, the comprehensive reform of the military sphere—including the modernization of its organizational structures, management principles, technological capabilities, and human resources—cannot be fully achieved outside the broader framework of socio-political modernization. [1]

The concept of socio-political modernization primarily denotes the renewal of traditional institutions and social relations in accordance with contemporary requirements, alongside the improvement of legal, political, economic, and moral principles. This process is clearly reflected in state military policy. The restructuring of the Armed Forces, the modernization of military education and personnel training, the acquisition of advanced weapons systems and equipment, the expansion of international military cooperation, and the integration of information and communication technologies all represent manifestations of socio-political modernization within the military domain. [2] Therefore, regardless of how deeply military reform is examined, it cannot be adequately analyzed in isolation from its broader socio-political context.

The application of this concept as a methodological framework for military research is based on several important scientific principles.

First, military reform constitutes a complex socio-political process. It affects virtually all societal institutions, including political parties, government

agencies, non-governmental organizations, mass media, local communities, and families. Under conditions of modernization, these institutions must cooperate effectively, not only accepting innovations introduced within the military sphere but also adapting to them and contributing to their further development. [3]

Second, socio-political modernization requires the continuous improvement of the legal and regulatory framework governing military affairs. In Uzbekistan, documents such as the Defense Doctrine of the Republic of Uzbekistan and subsequent legislative acts are closely connected with broader political reforms and efforts to enhance legal awareness and legal culture. Similarly, the strengthening of military prosecutorial oversight, anti-corruption mechanisms, and the expansion of the social rights of military personnel can be interpreted as practical outcomes of modernization processes.

Third, the modernization paradigm necessitates an examination of the extent to which political consciousness and political culture are developed among military personnel. The effectiveness of military reforms depends not only on institutional changes but also on the political literacy of actors at all levels—from enlisted personnel to senior commanders, political leaders, and members of parliament. Concepts such as a “people-oriented army” and active dialogue between the armed forces and society stem directly from this understanding. A politically mature society is generally better positioned to implement military reforms effectively and sustainably.

Fourth, the concept of socio-political modernization is inseparably connected with economic reform. Economic stability constitutes the foundation of any modernization process. Defense budgeting, military procurement, scientific and technological integration, innovation, and professional military education all require sustainable economic resources, strategic planning, and effective financial management. Consequently, the application of socio-political modernization theory to military research presupposes an integrated approach that incorporates economic policy considerations. This perspective situates military modernization within the broader process of national modernization.

Fifth, the concept requires the reassessment of ideology, moral values, and socio-cultural factors. In the context of the New Uzbekistan, military reforms extend beyond technological and organizational modernization. They also encompass the development of the moral and ethical character of military personnel, the promotion of educational and

enlightenment activities, psychological support programs, patriotic education, gender equality initiatives, and youth engagement policies. These dimensions represent the socio-cultural and educational aspects of modernization.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the concept of socio-political modernization provides a comprehensive theoretical and methodological framework for the study of military development. It enables researchers to examine military reform within the broader context of legal, political, economic, technological, and socio-cultural transformations. Such an approach makes it possible to analyze military modernization as an integral component of overall state and societal development, ensuring that military reforms are implemented in harmony with other elements of the political system and in accordance with contemporary national and international requirements while serving the interests of both the state and society.

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