



## On a Methodological Reboot of the Theory of Nations

Emil' Pain & Sergei Fediunin

To cite this article: Emil' Pain & Sergei Fediunin (2018) On a Methodological Reboot of the Theory of Nations, *Russian Politics & Law*, 56:1-2, 53-71, DOI: [10.1080/10611940.2018.1686920](https://doi.org/10.1080/10611940.2018.1686920)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10611940.2018.1686920>



Published online: 18 Dec 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 6



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



EMIL' PAIN AND SERGEI FEDIUNIN

## On a Methodological Reboot of the Theory of Nations

The recent discussion about the methodology of constructivism in the online journal *Gefter.ru*<sup>1</sup> seems symptomatic to us. Even though the participants in the discussion have (for the time being) limited themselves to criticism of constructivist approaches as applied to the study of international relations, the problems under discussion fit into the broader context of contemporary disputes about postmodernism, cosmopolitanism, and globalization. To a certain extent, all these questions engaging social scientists and the enlightened public return us to a rethinking of the most fundamental question of philosophy—the problems of consciousness and materiality.

The problem is that modern constructivism sometimes over-emphasizes the role of notions and cognitive schemes, to the exclusion of “material” factors—primarily resource and institutional constraints. In attempting to answer the question of “how,” constructivists forget that there are also the questions of “what”

---

English translation © 2017 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC, from the Russian text © 2017 “Gefter.ru.” “O metodologicheskoi perezagruzke teorii natsii,” *Gefter.ru*, May 10, 2017, <http://gefter.ru/archive/22113>.

Emil' Pain is Professor of Political Science at the National Research University–Higher School of Economics in Moscow. Sergei Fediunin is a PhD student at the National Institute of Eastern Languages and Civilizations (Paris).

Translated by Lucy Gunderson.

and “why.” In this form, constructivism becomes unrealistic and comes into conflict with another influential academic paradigm—institutionalism. And here it is worth recalling that, according to D. North, institutions are “humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic, and social interaction.”<sup>2</sup>

A methodological rethinking of the basic paradigms of social science reflects the growing dissatisfaction of both researchers and political practitioners with the gap between theories and contemporary political practice. Closing such a gap is quite complicated, especially today. In fact, it is unlikely that there has ever in history been a time more complicated than the current period for finding an acceptable convention for defining most socio-political phenomena. In January 2017, the political scientist Lilia Shevtsova defined this period as waning postmodernity, and (citing Zygmunt Bauman) “as liquid modernity, when everything has become blurred and there are no boundaries between principles and norms. There is neither friend nor enemy, war nor peace, lawfulness nor anarchy: everything has been mixed in one beaker.”<sup>3</sup> The fad for vague, blurred criteria and ill-defined arguments that are not founded on empirical data transforms all of social science into some sort of optional game, into prattle. But this intellectual disarmament is not just the result of a trend. It emerged under the influence of an array of deeply-rooted socio-political processes, rooted in communities’ decreasing influence on the shaping of the national and international agenda. In this article, we will attempt to analyze the manifestation of this engineered blurriness in nation and nationalism studies and to define an alternative methodological approach to this topic, which has been repeatedly touched upon in discussions on Gefter.ru.<sup>4</sup> For lack of a better, more specific term, we will for now designate this approach as constructivist institutionalism.<sup>5</sup>

### **The absolutizing of discourse vs. self-sufficient institutionalism**

Constructivism reigns free in contemporary nation and nationalism studies. In the 1980s and 1990s, the works of B. Anderson, E. Gellner, E. Hobsbawn, M. Hroch, which have become classics,

proposed that nationalism be studied as the set of ideas, ideological constructs, myths, and symbols that constitute a national community in the industrial era.<sup>6</sup> In this sense, a nation is the result of the targeted (at least to a certain degree) application of these ideas, constructs, myths, and symbols by ruling elites to create large groups of people united by a general collective consciousness and loyalty to their political entity (the state).

The further development of the constructivist approach could be defined as a “discursive about-face”: the lens through which nationalism is viewed as a variety of discourse or political language became dominant, while the nation became its product, that is, a discursive formation structuring people’s behavior.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the thematic field has been undergoing a fragmentation since the 1990s, and the passion for big theories of nationalism has been losing ground to individual case studies. Thus, contemporary studies of nationalism have come to understand this phenomenon as a “heterogenous cultural domain consisting of tacit cognitive and affective dispositions, routinized forms of talk, and ritualized symbolic practices.”<sup>8</sup> National communities also form in this cultural sphere. On the one hand, they are built “from above” by the ruling class and imagined by intellectuals (the elite), who create notions about the composition of a nation and national borders and the nation’s values, history, and place in the world. On the other hand, at the everyday or “popular” level, these notions are reinforced in large-scale commemoration practices (holidays and ceremonies), representations (various “places of memory”) and symbols (such as a national flag or anthem), and standardized narratives and myths (for example, about the origin or birth of a nation, its achievements, and the tragic pages of its history).

Constructivists emphasize that a “nation” as a discursive formation may be used by diverse forces: conservative and liberal, democratic and authoritarian, moderate and revolutionary.<sup>9</sup> The main thing from the viewpoint of the constructivist and particularly the discursive approach is how (and for what specific purposes) one ruling group or another imposes and promotes

uniformity among the governed population. Thus, the “national” distills to the reproduction of the universalization and standardization of the behavior and thought processes of people, while the sociopolitical characteristics of a nation (for example, civil society, its position in the polity, and the relationship of the nation-community and the state) are downplayed.

The constructivist approach to nation and nationalism studies, without a doubt, has played and continues to play the most important role in countering the essentialist interpretation of nations as “natural” and “time-honored” communities with supposedly unalterable mental characteristics. It is these specific interpretations that, in turn, were and remain the theoretical foundation of the ideologies of nationalist chauvinism, xenophobia, and racism. However, the discourse-centric approach to the problem of nations has at least two significant shortcomings.

First of all, it frequently fails to account for the “resistance of the material,” that is, constraints determined by the social and natural environment in which social development occurs. Real life has nothing whatsoever in common with a clean piece of paper, while nations do not resemble the random constructs of reason. For example, the political map of Africa and Asia gives us many examples of states “engineered” in the colonial or post-colonial eras. Even though they received geometrically correct borders from their creators, designed national symbols, and established national holidays, many of these states never established themselves as stable sociopolitical communities: these are failed states. History has rarely seen political projects to develop nation-states, but in places where this project has actually been declared, we see tremendous differences between intent and reality.

For example, the blueprint for an Italian nation was announced by leaders of the Risorgimento in the second half of the 19th century (“We created Italy, now we must create Italians,” Marquis Massimo d’Azeglio), but there are still doubts that, 150 years later, this blueprint has been realized as it was conceived. And this blueprint itself has changed repeatedly.

Under Mussolini, this was a blueprint for the revival of the Roman Empire with its overseas colonies, while today influential political circles of industrially developed regions of Italy (for example, the Lega Nord, thanks to which the term Padania entered into wide use) reject not just the overseas territories but even the south of Italy as a “secondary asset.” Various kinds of cultural material have been put to use for the engineering of Italians. According to Michael Walzer, “it was easier to make Italians out of Neapolitans, Romans and Milanese than out of Libyans and Ethiopians.”<sup>10</sup> Notions about the “omnipotence” of discourse in nation building appear particularly unrealistic now, when most developed countries, which are by all appearances established nations, are experiencing tremendous problems integrating migrants, and some of these countries are again having to deal with rising regional and ethnic separatism and other difficult problems related to managing cultural diversity. These problems do not yield to discursive pressure alone.

Second of all, viewing nations simply as derivatives of discourse marginalizes the direct connection between an imagined community and the real institutional organization of society. This primarily concerns the connection between nations and the formation of civic culture and political institutions: the contemporary state, institutions ensuring legal equality, and modern democracy or, more specifically, a regime of representative government.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, a paradoxical situation arises. On the one hand, contemporary approaches to nation and nationalism studies “skew” in favor of studying discourses and usage of the term “nation,” with a notable disregard for the role and unique aspects of institutions. At the same time, institutionalists, primarily economists, who devote a great deal of attention to history, have dispensed with any allusions to “nations” and “nationalisms.” For example, two of the most important recent works on the formation of modern institutions—*Violence and Social Orders* by D. North, J. Wallis, and B. Weingast,<sup>12</sup> and *Why Nations Fail* by D. Acemoglu and J. Robinson<sup>13</sup>—do not mention nation

building even once! One group of authors writes about the formation of institutions with “open access orders” (as opposed to “limited access orders” or a “natural state”), while the other group writes about the institutional conditions that make it possible to move from “extractive” political and economic institutions to “inclusive” ones. Both groups, however, ignore the context of nation-building of the past two centuries, which saw the maturation of emancipating institutions.

There is one more special aspect of contemporary institutional studies. Economists, who generally show disdain for the phenomena of nations and nationalism, focus instead on empires and their role in supporting peace and prosperity. A special role is usually assigned to the British Empire, which created the so-called “liberal economic world order” in the 19th century, only to see it collapse in the beginning of the last century and later be resurrected under the aegis of the United States after World War II.<sup>14</sup> It is interesting to note that economists’ growing interest in empires coincided with a rethinking of the phenomenon of empire in history and political science over the past two decades: the 2000s saw a peak in publications containing positive assessments of past empires and proposals to adapt the model of the empire to the realities of today’s world.<sup>15</sup> Against this backdrop, a trend towards non-distinction between the nation and the empire is appearing with greater frequency among historians and political scientists.

### **Empire or nation: How to distinguish the differences?**

In the early 2000s, a relativistic approach started to assert itself in nation and nationalism theory. This approach posited the hybrid nature of social reality.<sup>16</sup> Within the framework of this concept, the “nation” and the “empire” are no more than ideal types, the poles of a pluralistic and heterogenous reality. In other words, neither nations nor empires exist *per se*—there are only shades of the “national” and the “imperial,” which intermingle in each specific society and region in a given historical period.

Historians viewing the history of European states in the 19th and 20th centuries through the prism of the interrelation of the processes of “empire” and “nation-building” take similar methodological positions.<sup>17</sup> Even though scholars like the authors of the recent volume edited by Aleksei Miller and Stephan Berger describe political formations like “nations” and “empires” without any difficulty and large-scale modernization processes in “nationalist” and “imperial” terms, they essentially refuse to differentiate between their unique characteristics and institutional consequences, instead preferring to speak about the fundamental indistinguishability (and indivisibility) of these two types of processes during the “long 19th century.” However, this philosophy of not differentiating between the imperial and the national in relation to the past directly influences an understanding of the present in some cases (see below).

Both concepts are fair in many ways: as in nature, mixed and hybrid phenomena predominate in society. But humankind learned long ago to make a choice and isolate the dominant trends. For example, we do not find pure iron, aluminum, or steel in real life—all these mixtures are alloys. But a housewife with no knowledge of metallurgy can easily choose between these metals when she buys a pan. If she needs a lighter one, she will buy an “aluminum” pan, but if she prefers something more durable (and, perhaps, more prestigious), she will buy an “iron” pan. The same goes for how political practitioners may rely, for example, on comparative sociological research to help identify dominant social trends. One of the most authoritative of these studies was conducted in 43 European countries following the methodology of R. Inglehart (2008–2010). This study showed various value systems, including two opposing ones: “initiative autonomy” (predominance of the values of individualism and initiative) and “power hierarchy” (dominance of the values of obedience and paternalism). Only the ratio of these classes differs. The first of these classes dominates in Northern Europe (ranging from 55 percent in Finland to 74 percent in Sweden), while the second dominates in CIS countries (from



50 percent in Russia to 81 percent in Azerbaijan).<sup>18</sup> Western Europe had the highest number of citizens on the continent and in the whole world prepared to engage in self-organization and be involved in institutions of civil society, while CIS countries had the lowest indicators for civic activities and values. This provides grounds to assert that today, Western European countries are the best examples of civic nations, where civic culture dominates, and the CIS countries demonstrate a predominance of the “subject” culture, characteristic of imperial societies.

Naturally, contemporary Russia, like other former Soviet states, cannot be categorized as an empire by its current official political and legal parameters. Neither, however, are they consolidated nation-states, as they clearly retain obvious symptoms of empire (“the imperial syndrome”).<sup>19</sup> Russia is a rump state that inherited from the imperial system of previous centuries an “imperial body,” that is, numerous densely-settled areas of previously colonized ethnic communities having their own traditional cultures. While horizontal forms of communication remain weak, the “imperial situation” is being reproduced in parallel, along with the isolated functioning of these communities, which are connected only by their subordination to the common center. Meanwhile, treaty relations and mutual obligations between the center and the regions, which are characteristic of federal states, formed in Russia in the 1990s but weakened in the 2000s, giving way to a regenerating—or, more precisely, regenerated—imperial hierarchy. Studies by the Levada Center (2006–2015) have shown that the most important characteristics of a civic nation—civic subjectivity, the realization of the principle of popular sovereignty—are not being reinforced in Russia. The overwhelming majority of Russians consistently note that they do not exert any influence over the political or socio-economic life of the state, their region, their city, or their district. The aspiration of Russian citizens to participate in or have an impact on political life has fallen in comparison to the 1990s.<sup>20</sup> It is important to emphasize, however, that this regression is in no way connected with any unique aspects of Russians as the

country's ethnic majority. These same Russians, including those born in the Soviet Union, display their capacity for civic activity and their ability to adopt liberal democratic norms in countries where these norms are not suppressed by the government. For example, in Latvia the political alliance Harmony Centre, which was primarily supported by the Russian population, won elections to Latvia's Saeima in 2011, and its leader, Nil Ushakov, has been the mayor of Riga since 2009.

The trend towards not distinguishing between the concepts of "empire" and "nation" is to a great extent a response to a mythological radical contrast between empires and nations, which previously dominated in social sciences—assigning fully dichotomous meanings (a nation is "good," an expression of the "will of the people," a synonym for "progress," while an empire is "bad," a "prison of the people," "archaic"). But, as frequently happens when all sense of measure is lost, this critical approach resulted in "overkill," specifically the absolute refusal to differentiate between historically different types of relationships between states and societies. The academician Valerii Tishkov's famous formulation that "The Russian state, regardless of its organizational structure—monarchy/empire, a union of republics and country of Soviets, or a republic/federation—can and must be classified as a nation-state"<sup>21</sup> was the height of this overkill.

According to the radical constructivist approach taken by Tishkov, the concept of "nation" cannot be a category of analysis at all. For him, this concept is no more than a "metaphor," an "empty word," a "ghost word," which means that its academic use must be rejected.<sup>22</sup> Curiously, Tishkov cites Western scholars, including R. Brubaker, as the rationale for his methodological approach. But if we look at the writings of Brubaker, a logical constructivist influenced by the sociologist P. Bourdieu, we can see that he has a different approach, which in no way considers a nation to be a "fallacious concept." Recognizing that "a nation is a category of practice, not (primarily) a category of analysis,"<sup>23</sup> Brubaker proposes focusing

mainly on the study of the policies and practices that “flow” from the public use of the category of “nation.” Tishkov, who has in recent years been engaged in the promotion of the “metaphor” of the Russian nation, does not offer any bridge to the reformatting or rejection of imperial institutional forms and practices.

This kind of radical relativism is caused not so much by the logic of academic analysis, as by political motivation of a different kind. Thus, in Tishkov’s case, this is identification with the contemporary protective ideology “defending” Russia from disadvantageous comparisons with the West (as in, “we also have democracy, a nation-state, and rule of law”) and “normalizing” the Russian situation in a global context.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, the evolution of historian Aleskei Miller’s views can be explained by a different motivation—not ideological, but political-pragmatic. There was a time when Miller noted the potential for democracy in Russia and linked it with the creation of a civic nation. In 2008, he expressed the hope that “Russia can find a path to democracy as a nation-state.”<sup>25</sup> Several years later, in 2016, A. Miller (with F. Luk’ianov) asserted that “the notion of a ‘Russian nation-state’ as a developmental goal is cause for objection,” primarily due to the presence of politically mobilized ethnic groups that consider themselves nations.<sup>26</sup> While in 2008 Miller spoke of the need for a “national framework” for the transition to democracy and its institutionalization and of the harm caused by the recurring imperial system of relationships between Russia’s center and its regions,<sup>27</sup> today he completely avoids issues of democracy, the role of civic culture, and the principle of popular sovereignty when discussing the “national” question in Russia.<sup>28</sup> His assessment of the “imperial heritage” has also changed: experts from the journal *Russia in Global Politics*, including Miller and Luk’ianov (the editor-in-chief), propose accepting as a given the rejection of the choice between imperial and nationalist societies. In positing the “supremacy of national identity,” the authors believe that Russia should be an empire both outwardly (in relation to its “area of influence”) and

within (“Russia will have to play the role of the empire” in the Caucasus).<sup>29</sup>

### **The civic nation as a precursor to democratization and economic well-being**

Both of the trends prevailing in contemporary nation and nationalism studies—excessive focus on studying discourses at the expense of institutions, and a conscious refusal to distinguish between imperial and national types of political organization—mean that perhaps one of the central questions of political science and a key problem in contemporary political practice is ignored, namely the problem of establishing and maintaining a civic democracy. The problem is that the nation is not just a construct and not just a derivative of some societal processes; it is also a factor in democratic development.

The thesis that national unity is the only precondition for democracy was expressed and substantiated by the renowned political scientist Dankwart Rustow as long ago as 1970.<sup>30</sup> He emphasized that national unity is a “background precondition in the sense that it must precede all other phases of democratization.”<sup>31</sup> This refers to the process of establishing democratic institutions in a state and a democratic consciousness in society. Democracy, as the rule of the people, is only possible after the formation of its agent—the people, the nation, that is, citizens recognizing both their membership in a specific community with its political system and their place in this system as a sovereign source of power. It is important to emphasize that D. Rustow uses the term “national unity” entirely rationally, purging it of the mystical flight of “*Blut und Boden*” or daily pledges of allegiance, notions about personal identity in the psychoanalyst’s sense, or about a grand political purpose pursued by the citizenry as a whole.”<sup>32</sup> Citing studies by Karl Deutsch, Rustow asserts that national unity is “the product less of shared attitudes and opinions than of responsiveness and complementarity.” He goes on to explain that “the background

condition [transition to democracy] is best fulfilled when national unity is accepted unthinkingly, is silently taken for granted.”<sup>33</sup>

Thus, we can conclude that national unity is not just a necessary background condition for the transition to democracy, but also to a significant extent its result. Some skills of social aid are also manifested in the conditions of political regimes preceding democracy. But for civic culture—whose main component is the participation of citizens in public life,<sup>34</sup> including in managing the state—to ripen and to become an unthinking habit that is taken for granted, there needs to be an extended historical experience of social self-realization. In other words, there must be an institutional environment of democracy that not only makes it possible for citizens to display such participation, but that also stimulates such participation. This approach, which we have labeled “constructivist institutionalism,” allows us to gain a better understanding of the nature of the mutual connection between the nation, democracy, and civic participation: the continuous process of imagining a national community in its connections with the values and behaviors of people has a direct impact on the creation of inclusive public and political institutions.

The realities of the current century provide ever increasing confirmation that civil society cannot exist purely in the virtual world, in the absence of a sense of solidarity among its members and of their practical participation. Liberal democracy and democracy in general cannot be built without a nation-state, since it “can only be realized within the boundaries of a clearly defined political community.”<sup>35</sup> This is exactly why the development of democracy is difficult, if not impossible, absent the development of a civic nation: without a national identity, feelings of solidarity among members of a political community,<sup>36</sup> and a civic culture, democratic institutions cease to function and the values of freedom and equality are deprived of any social basis. There is also an economic aspect to this interconnection. The key word here is trust.

According to the economist Paul Collier, loyalty to the nation and tools for civic oversight help legitimize the work of state institutions, making it more effective. Thanks to the existence of both horizontal and vertical trust, people see taxes not as the payment of a tribute to corrupt rulers, but as their share of the investment in supporting public order and well-being.<sup>37</sup> As a specialist in Africa, Collier notes that the main problem faced by modern African countries is that their elites and governments have been incapable of creating a unified national-civic identity that can be superimposed over ethnic identifications and can create conditions for trust in the state and a shift towards concern about common interests, rather than the interests of a narrow group. And conversely, the rare cases of success in Africa, as in the case of Tanzania, are connected with the practical application of a national model of organization.<sup>38</sup>

Let us now apply our approach to Russian political practice. While we dispute the ahistorical existence of nations as a supposedly inherent trait of any state and, consequently, intrinsic not just to today's Russia, but also to imperial and Soviet Russia, we also strongly disagree with the opposite extreme, which rejects the very possibility of the formation of a civic nation in Russia. Let us set aside imperial essentialism, which asserts the inescapability of empire in Russia and promulgates the ideologies of people like A. Dugin and A. Prokhanov, and turn instead to the opinion of scholars. For example, the historian Andrei Teslia, who defined Russia of the past and the present as an "imperial political formation," believes that "a civic nation is not possible here."<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, this position remains profoundly declarative and has not been confirmed by any argumentation (and, alas, this is more the norm than the exception in conversations about empire in Russia). We, on the other hand, assert the absolute opposite: preserving the current eclectic monster—no longer an empire, but still not a nation (at least not a civic nation with a single cultural space)—is a growing problem. Meanwhile, there is already a methodology for a concrete (not metaphysical) calculation of the cost of growing expenses

from reproducing the current policy. Evidence is accumulating that Russia cannot live as it lived in the epoch of classical empires. And the problem is not just that the rest of the world will not allow this: Russia's internal organization includes vast areas occupied by new, primarily economic institutions, which will suffocate in the face of low public trust suppressed by an authoritarian state.

Many recent studies confirm the existence of a "cyclical" relationship between economic development and the overall level of interpersonal and institutional trust. Summarizing these findings, the journalist L. Bershidsky described this relationship as follows: "If institutions and interpersonal relationships fail to deliver well-being, they don't merit much trust. But if people and institutions are not trusted, there's no incentive for them to deliver."<sup>40</sup> This just happens to be what we are seeing in Russia, where people are trying to avoid contact with the government in any way they can, living in many ways in a "garage economy" and off their own kitchen gardens, and are not standing up to corruption as a whole. In this situation, when citizens are not acting as "the people, possessing a state" (K. Deutsch)—that is, in the absence of a civic nation—it is equally impossible even to consider the formation of a real (rather than a simulated) democracy or long-term economic growth, in place of what has been built on the revenue from the extraction of natural resources. We believe that without the civic-national consolidation of Russian society, it will be impossible to move beyond the "super extractive state" described by A. Etkind, where the population (in the eyes of the government and in the structure of the economy) becomes superfluous or simply dead weight.<sup>41</sup>

Even though it is extremely vulnerable in its "pre-national" state, Russia is still not alone. Seemingly "post-national" Western societies (primarily Western European countries and the United States) are currently experiencing an erosion of democracy and a decline of liberal values. As soon as the civic-national identity weakened, the process of the fragmentation and "unravelling" of society began. The "uprising of the elite,"

which cast off the idea of a nation and general well-being in favor of a cosmopolitan consciousness and its own interests,<sup>42</sup> gave rise to a reactive wave in the form of an unprecedented growth in populism (both on the right and on the left) and a drop in citizens' political participation.<sup>43</sup> Over the course of many years, especially after the economic crisis of 2008, the trust gap between “the informed part of society” and the “mass population” in Western countries has been deepening, in terms of their attitudes towards key institutions, including education, the mass media, and particularly the executive and legislative branches of government.<sup>44</sup> The erosion of democracy and the refusal of wide swathes of the population to trust the ruling group and the values articulated by this group are a consequence of both ordinary citizens' and the elite's weakening sense of involvement in the production of national prosperity. Without reinforcing this sense of involvement and restoring civic participation, Western societies and, incidentally, Russia, will hardly be able to respond to the challenge of migration and the growing diversity of cultures and local and group identities. Civic institutions in European societies (and in Russia, due to the special historical aspects of its development in the 20th century) play an all the more significant role in the social adaptation of migrants, since mechanisms of social control in the form of customs and traditions, family relations, and parish (church) connections have practically lost their strength, especially in cities where migrants are concentrated.

Unfortunately, nation and nationalism studies do not pay particular attention to the complicated causes and institutional consequences of these processes, but instead study them in terms of the formation of new transnational identities and a critique of “methodological nationalism,” positing in passing (and frequently with undisguised pleasure) the crisis of the nation-state. It is hard to think of a more reliable means of “guarding” the theory against consistently irritating new challenges to practice.



## Notes

1. A. Kazantsev and V. Kravtsov. “Sovremennyi konstruktivizm. Dva suzheniia ob odnoi metodologii,” [www.gefter.ru](http://gefter.ru), December 14, 2016 (available at <http://gefter.ru/archive/20402>).

2. D.C. North, “Institutions,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 1991, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 97–122.

3. “Ischerpannoe vremia postmoderna. Interv’iu s Liliei Shevtsovoi,” Radio Svoboda, January 21, 2017 (available at <http://www.svoboda.org/a/28243845.html>).

4. For the most recent publications, see “Kosmopolitizm i suverennost’: chto grozit Evrope? Sotsiolog Frenk Furedi – o vozobnovlenii elementov natsionalizma XIX veka,” [www.gefter.ru](http://gefter.ru), April 12, 2017 (available at <http://gefter.ru/archive/21851>).

5. The term “constructivist institutionalism” is not new: this approach has already been used by different researchers, but in a relatively narrow sense. It is typically viewed as an approach that criticizes other branches of institutionalism (rational choice, historical and sociological institutionalism) and studies institutions as a product of the imagination of social agents. See S. Hay, “Constructivist Institutionalism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, ed. S.A. Binder, R.A.W. Rhodes, and B.A. Rockman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 56–74. In philosophy, the approach of “constructivist realism,” which acts as a connection between epistemological realism and social constructivism, was developed. Understandably, philosophers use this to solve their tasks. See in particular the article of V. Kharre and V. Lektorskii, “Konstruktivistskii podkhod v epistemologii i naukakh o cheloveke,” ed. V.A. Lektorskii (Moscow: Kanon+, 2009).

6. We should not forget that there are numerous differences between the concepts of these authors. For example, for B. Anderson, who in many ways draws on K. Deutsch’s communication theory, “imagined” nations are not “artificial” formations; on the contrary, he considered them to be entirely real in terms of consequences and placed them in one row with other large (i.e. by definition imagined) communities. But, as a Marxist historian, E. Hobsbawn attempted to describe nations as pure fiction, the “inventions” of the ruling elite that have little connection to people’s real lives. For a more detailed analysis of various concepts, see *Natsiia i natsionalizm: Problemmotematicheskii sbornik*, ed. A.I. Miller (Moscow: INION RAN, 1999).

7. See K. Kalkhun, *Natsionalizm*, trans. A. Smirnov (Moscow: Territoria budushchego, 2006 [1997]).

8. B. Bonikowski, “Nationalism in Settled Times,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2016, vol. 42, p. 429.

9. See K. Kalkhun, Op. cit.; V.S. Malakhov, *Natsionalizm kak politicheskaiia ideologiia* (Moscow: KDU, 2005).

10. M. Walzer, “Book Review of ‘Nations and Nationalism Since 1780’ by E.J. Hobsbawn,” *Social Contract Journal*, Winter 1990–1991, vol. 1, no. 2

(available at [http://www.thesocialcontract.com/artman2/publish/tsc0102/article\\_12.shtml](http://www.thesocialcontract.com/artman2/publish/tsc0102/article_12.shtml)).

11. For more on the principles of establishing a modern democracy, see B. Manen, “Printsipy predstavitel’nogo pravleniia,” trans. E.N. Roshchina (Saint Petersburg: Izd-vo Evropeiskogo un-ta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2008 [1995]).

12. D. North, J. Wallis, and B. Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders. A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). The Russian translation of this book was published in 2011 by the Gaidar Institute.

13. D. Acemoglu and J. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2012). The Russian translation of this book was published in 2015 under the title “Pochemy odni strany bogatye, a drugie bednye.”

14. See D. Lal, *Pokhvala imperii: Globalizatsiia i poriadok*, trans. B. Pinsker, ed. Yu. Kuznetsov (Moscow: Novoye izdatel’stvo, 2010 [2004]).

15. From comprehensive academic literature see N. Ferguson, *How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2003); N. Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (London: Penguin, 2004); J. Zielonka, *Europe as Empire: The Nature of the Enlarged European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); G. Miunkler, *Imperii: Logika gos-podstva nad mirom – ot Drevnego Rima i do SShA*, trans. L.V. Laninka (Moscow: Kuchkovo pole, 2015 [2005]).

16. See, for example, “Chto takoe ‘novaia imperskaia istoriia,’ otkuda ona vzyalas’ i k chemu ona idet? Beseda s redaktorami zhurnala *Ab Imperio* Il’yei Gerasimov i Marinoi Mogil’ner,” *Logos*, 2007, no. 1(58), pp. 218–238.

17. See S. Berger and A. Miller, eds., *Nationalizing Empires* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2015). This approach is also being developed by sociologists and leftist post-Marxist intellectuals calling for a rejection of the dichotomy “empire-nation.” See the articles in the thematic issue of the journal *Thesis Eleven* (April 2017, vol. 139, no. 1), which is entirely dedicated to empires and nation-states.

18. V. Magun and M. Rudnev, “Tipologiiia evropeitsev po tsennostiam R. Ingkharta i mezhstranovye sravneniia,” *Vestnik obshchestvennogo mneniia*, 2012, nos. 3–4, pp. 12–24.

19. E. Pain, *The Imperial Syndrome and its Influence on Russian Nationalism*; R. Kolsto and H. Blakkisurd, eds., *The New Russian Nationalism: Imperialism, Ethnicity, and Authoritarianism, 2005–2015* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016, pp. 46–74).

20. See *Obshchestvennoe mnenie – 2015. Ezhegodnik* (Moscow: Levada Center, 2016, pp. 54–68).

21. V. Tishkov, “Chto est’ Rossiia i rossiiskii narod?” *Pro et Contra*, 2007, vol. 11, no. 3, p. 37.

22. V. Tishkov, “Forget the ‘Nation’: Post-Nationalist Understanding of Nationalism,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, July 2000, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 625–650. The irony is that Tishkov proposes using the concepts of “state,”

“peoples,” and “culture” in the place of the category of “nation,” apparently deeming these concepts less metaphorical.

23. R. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 7.

24. V. Tishkov wants all states of the world to be called nations on the basis of the fact that they are part of the UN and “consider themselves” nation-states (see V.A. Tishkov, “Rossiiskaia natsiia i ee kritiki,” in *Natsionalizm v mirovoi istorii*, ed. V.A. Tishkov and V.A. Shnipelman (Moscow: Nauka, 2007), p. 558.). Many questions arise here, for example: should we consider as democratic those countries and regimes that officially label themselves as such? If we take Tishkov’s position and follow formal logic, then we must recognize North Korea and Zimbabwe under R. Mugabe as democracies. Or should “democracy” also be crossed off the list of categories of analysis as “nation” was? In this case, then shouldn’t we do the same with a “rule-of-law state,” a “republic,” and so forth?

25. A.I. Miller, “Nasledie imperii: inventarizatsiia,” in *Nasledie imperii i budushchee Rossii*, ed. A.I. Miller (Moscow: Fond “Liberalnaia missiia,” Novoye literaturnoe obozrenie, 2008), p. 22.

26. A. Miller and F. Luk’ianov, “Otstranennost’ vmesto konfrontatsiia: post-evropeiskaia Rossiia v poiskakh samodostatochnosti,” *Rossiia v global’noi politike*, 2016, no. 6 (available at <http://globalaffairs.ru/number/Otstranennost-vmesto-konfrontatsii—18477>).

27. Identifying with the thesis of the political scientist N. Petrov, Miller wrote that the system of relationships between the center and the regions formed in the 2000s “is a major drag on both the country’s economic development and for the democratization and construction of an effective federation.” A.I. Miller, “Nasledie imperii: inventarizatsiia,” *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

28. See A.I. Miller, *Natsiia, ili Mogushchestvo mifa* (Saint Petersburg: Izd-vo Evropeiskogo un-ta v Sankt Peterburge, 2016).

29. “Mezhdu imperiei i natsiei. Pochemu Rossii ne nado delat’ etot vybor,” *Rossiia v global’noi politike*, 2017, no. 1 (available at <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/number/Mezhdu-imperiei-i-natsiei-18570>).

30. D. Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model,” *Comparative Politics*, April 1970, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 337–363.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 351.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 350.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 351.

34. G. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

35. P.A. Taguieff, *La revanche du nationalisme: Néopopulistes et xénophobes à l’assaut de l’Europe* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2015), p. 201. See also D. Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2000), ch. 5; P. Manent, *La raison des nations. Réflexions sur la démocratie en Europe* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006).

36. Bernard Yack proves that solidarity with a national community is far from a manifestation of irrational collectivism, but is instead a manifestation

of people's need for "social friendship." From this viewpoint, a nation acts as the hub of moral relationships between individuals. See B. Yack, *Nationalism and the Moral Psychology of Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

37. P. Collier, *Exodus: Immigration and Multiculturalism in the 21st Century* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), pp. 234–241. "It's no accident," writes Collier, "that French revolutionaries, heralding modernity, connected brotherhood with freedom and equality: brotherhood is the emotion that can reconcile freedom with equality. It is only when we view others as members of the same community that we can agree that distributive taxation is necessary for ensuring equity and does not infringe on our freedom" (Ibid., p. 237).

38. P. Collier, *Exodus*, Op. cit., pp. 239–240. See also T.H. Eriksen, "The Problem of African Nationhood," *Nations and Nationalism*, 2016, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 222–231.

39. A. Teslia, "'Natsiia' est' poniatie politicheskoe," *Rusofil*, January 12, 2017 (available at <http://russophile.ru/2017/01/12/понятия-нация-и-этнос-политически-не/>).

40. L. Bershidsky, "The West's Biggest Problem is Dwindling Trust," *Bloomberg*, January 4, 2017 (available at <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2017-01-04/the-west-s-biggest-problem-is-dwindling-trust>).

41. A. Etkind, "Petromacho, ili Mekhanizmy demodernizatsiia v resursnom gosudarstve," *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*, 2013, no. 2(88) (available at <http://www.nlobooks.ru/node/3432>).

42. K. Lesh, *Vosstanie elit i predatel'stvo demokratii*, trans. J. Smiti and K. Golubovich (Moscow: Logos, Progress, 2002 [1995]).

43. C. Taylor, "Is Democracy Slipping Away?" *The Social Science Research Council*, February 7, 2017 (available at <http://items.ssrc.org/is-democracy-slipping-away/>).

44. "2017 Edelman Trust Barometer Reveals Global Implosion of Trust," Edelman, January 15, 2017 (available at <http://www.edelman.com/news/2017-edelman-trust-barometer-reveals-global-implosion/>).