SCTCMG 2019

International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»

A FEW WORDS ABOUT METHODOLOGY OF STUDYING RUSSIAN NATIONALISM HISTORY

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Abstract

The given research is devoted to methodological aspects of studying the history of the Russian nationalism origin. Today there are many different theories describing nations and nationalism; however, not all of them are equally well in describing the specifics of the Russian nation, which is something that is not generalized but unites two different communities. Accordingly, forms of nationalism in these communities differ as well. Most researchers agree that it is possible to distinguish civilian nations and ethnonations. Specifically, the American and French nations are traditionally perceived as the reference civil nations while the Germans are deemed as ethnonation. The American and French nations are based on the state while the German base on culture commonality and common origin. At the same time both of them are designed elites (political, financial or symbolic) based on certain myths. The difference lies in exactly which myths and symbols are given a greater value. These statements are true for the Russian nation as well. As the study shows, two different Russian nationalisms began to take shape in the 21st century independently of each other. One of them being the state or imperial tried to unite all loyal subjects of the empire under the name of Russians. The other type of nationalism included only ethnic Russians. Both types of Russian nationalism seem reasonable to be explored in three forms being a cultural, political and everyday manifestation. All these three components were present in both types of nationalism although the degrees were different.

1. Introduction

Modern science does not provide unequivocal interpretation of such concepts as nation and nationalism. As it was wisely noted by Calhoun (2006), nationalism is too diverse to be explained by one general theory. The main theoretical approaches to the question of nations lie in the plane of their origin and essence. Did they always exist and are they biological objectively existing entities or did they appear only after the Great French Revolution? Are they imaginary communities designed by the ruling elites to manipulate the population? Between these two extreme points of view being primordialist and instrumentalist there is the majority of other theories attempting to explain nationalism.

In addition to examining the basic concepts of studying nationalism, our article will attempt to determine the most appropriate methods for studying the formation of Russian nationalism at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries.

2. Problem Statement

Today, there are quite a few high-quality review articles on the history of nationalism. The most topical is the article by Clott (2017) written for the Encyclopedia of Social Theory and published by Wiley-Blackwell. A schedule proposed by the Israeli scientist Abulof (2018) is also a very original and informative. It is devoted to distributing the most prominent scientists engaged in nationalism in two scales. The first indicated their views on when nations emerged (from antiquity to modernity); the second focused on why and how it happened. In addition to the above, there are other works that consider the methodology of the study of nationalism. Thus, in our article, we will not develop this question and will only touch upon those approaches that seem to be the most promising for studying the emergence of Russian nationalism.

3. Research Questions

In modern historiography there is a consensus that the concept of a "nation" does not have an unambiguous interpretation. There are two communities which differ both in origin and in modern condition. One of the entities is called the civic nation and is primarily a political association. Historically, this type of nation appeared in the 18th century as a result of the Great French Revolution and it is an integral part of the modern era. These nations are an artificial construct created by the state elite to mobilize society.

Another entity is called ethnonation. It was found before the 18th century and based on community of culture and faith in sharing a common origin. A civic nation is created by the state; however, ethnonations create the states themselves using nationalism. Tishkov (2013) gives the following definition of this process: nations are declared exclusively ethnic communities of a certain level of historical maturity and they create states that only in this case acquire the legitimacy of national states. The vivid examples of such a process in Europe are Italy and Germany. At the same time, ethnonations are also a construct united by imaginary symbols. Only in this case, the unifying ideas are developed not by the state and financial elites but by the representatives of the symbolic elite.

4. Purpose of the Study

It should be understood that there are no ideal types of communities of the first and second types. As a rule, civilian nations arise on the basis of historical myths as well and ethnonations are capable of including new groups. Moreover, it should be understood that throughout history nations are able to change their essence by leaning towards a greater degree of citizenship at one stage and giving a greater importance to ethnicity at another. At the same time, scientists operating with these two concepts should refrain from moral evaluations. As Rogers Brubaker rightly pointed out (Brubaker, 2006), each of the types of nationalism is associated with certain concepts leading to moral evaluations: liberal/illiberal, inclusive/exclusive, democratic/authoritarian, etc. However, such generalizations are not always reliable. For example, such a reference civic nation as Americans was characterized by racism until the middle of the XX century. In addition to restrictions on the rights of black people the fate of the Indians and the concentration camps for Japanese Americans during the Second World War can be provided as vivid examples. In our work it is planned to consider the extent to which these approaches correspond to the history of the formation of the Russian nation and nationalism.

5. Research Methods

As it was mentioned earlier the theory of nationalism today is quite confusing. It began in the second half of the 20th century with the dispute between modernists (constructivists, instrumentalists) and primordialists (essentialists, perrenalists), which led to a disagreement in the view of the nation. Is it an objectively existing community being a certain stage in the historical development of human communities as is believed by primordialists? Or is it an artificial construction, an imaginary political community (Anderson, 2016)? And when did nations appear? Was it at the pre-modern stage, as is considered by the most primordialists (Abulof (2018) calls them perrenalists) or in the modern era, which can justify the name of modernists?

Supporters of various schools have different views on nationalism. Primordialists consider nationalism a way of nations to manifest in the political field. Constructivists believe that nationalism is a means of constructing nations for controlling the crowd. Modern researchers are increasingly attributing primordialism to nationalism rather than to a scientific approach to studying it (Coakley, 2017). Consequently, they give it space in politics not science. However, one should agree with Clott (2017) that primordialism has evolved to some extent and is still present in scientific discourse; thus, it would be premature to discard it completely.

Ethnosymbolism being a new methodological direction was an attempt to reconcile these two approaches. Ethnosymbolism is characterized by a combination of primordial and modernist approaches. Thus, ethnosymbolists agree that nations are artificially constructed but they do not believe that this is being done by financial and political elites and assign this role to representatives of the creative intellectuals, journalists and teachers. The age of nations is being older; however, it is limited by the time of writing systems without which the construction of nations would not be possible. And although many Russian-speaking authors today associate Smith with primordialists of various types (speculative historicism, neo-

Primordialism, or simple primordialism) one cannot fully agree with them. Ethnosymbolism is precisely the combination of two theories, although for radical modernists it seems too primordial.

The concept of the symbolic elite, which Sagitova (2008) participated in development of, arouses the interest as well. Although the author has a constructivist approach, her interpretation of the symbolic elite is more within the paradigm of ethnosymbolism. Sagitova (2008) defined symbolic elite as the scientific and creative intellectuals, replicating and creating ethnic values and symbols through the media.

Another method, which enables to remove the contradiction between these two approaches to a certain extent, was the division of nationalism into two types: civil (civic) and ethnic (ethno). The use of this terminology was justified by Kohn (1944) although in a somewhat different form than is customary today. Kohn (1944) believed that nationalism is divided into Western (civil) and Eastern (ethnic). In the first case, its origination followed the emergence of a national state and therefore it is political. In the east, nationalism appeared later, at a different stage of socio-economic development, therefore, it is primarily manifested not in the political but in the cultural sphere.

Currently, most researchers have discarded the terms Western and Eastern nationalism while having retained the division into civil and ethnic. Brown (2000) treats these terms as follows: civic nationalism is based on the idea of a community where citizens are equal due to common solidarity manifesting in the form of social contracts and emotional affection. Regardless of its ethnocultural or ethnic history everyone can become part of a nation through the adoption of generally accepted values and norms of their new nation. Ethnonationalism is considered by Brown an identity based on ideas of common origin, land, ancestors. At the same time, the scientist expands this theory by introducing the third variant, namely, multicultural nationalism.

National historiography adopts this division both completely and with some changes. Kara-Murza (2014) uses the terms Euro-nationalism and ethno-nationalism (while recognizing a certain conventionality of these terms). At the same time Kara-Murza (2014) interprets these terms more as a dichotomy of the constructivist and primordial approaches transferred from science to politics. In turn, Tishkov (2013) treats "nations" and "ethnonation" differently. The first concept in his interpretation has a meaning similar to the concept of citizenship and in the second case the actual civil understanding of the nation and ethnicity are mixed (Tishkov, 2013). Avksentyev (2016) distinguishes two traditions of using the terms "ethnos" and "nation". According to him, in Anglo-Romance tradition the nation is understood as co-citizenship not having an ethnic basis. And in the German tradition, which national historiography belongs to since the times of Slavophiles, the nation is perceived as the highest development of the ethnic group (Avksentyev, 2016).

Another way to classify nationalism is to divide it into hard and soft forms. Clott (2017), following Preston (2008), believes that "soft" nationalism adheres to the traditional liberal framework and tries to avoid confronting "we and they". "Hard" nationalism, on the contrary, adheres to the "we and they" discourse. In this case, self-identification goes through the exclusion of others; for example, racist "nationalist" movements contribute to the promotion of "hard" nationalism through the creation of extreme "we and they" categories that deny the right to be part of a nation to entire groups (Clott, 2017).

With reference to the methodological concepts applied to the study of nationalism it is worth noting the ones devoted to everyday nationalist practices. Yusupova (2017) addressed the issue of everyday

nationalism basing on the specific material of Tatar nationalism. In her article, the author describes how micro-social practices serve as the basis of nationalism (goods purchase, language use, listening to music, etc.). Although the work is focused primarily on the domestic aspects of ethnic nationalism opposing the state nationalism of an authoritarian state, this does not mean that the presented methodology cannot be applied on a bigger scale.

The work of Hearn and Antonsich (2018) is more theoretical. Accordingly, the article draws the line between banal nationalism and everyday nationalism. Both of them belong to microhistorical methods but banal nationalism is primarily associated with implicit, more subconscious, discursive forms that nationalism takes. On the contrary, everyday nationalism focuses more on the practical achievements of ordinary people doing ordinary things.

6.   Findings

Transferring the above methodology to the field of studying the birth of Russian nationalism it is possible to make several conclusions. In particular, one should agree with those researchers who distinguish two types of Russian nationalism. Hosking (1998) was among the first to pay attention to this and distinguished the nationalism of Russian and the nationalism of Russian people. In his judgment, the first, has a state nature, however, the second one had ethnic background. This idea was further developed by the Norwegian scholar Kolstø (2016), who, in accordance with modern methodological trends, called the first type of Russian nationalism state or imperial, and the second ethnonationalist. At the same time, it should be understood that two types of Russian nationalism did not develop in the 21st century but date back to the 19th century.

Russian nationalism originated in the 19th century under the influence of the ideas of Romanticism and German philosophy. Although, one should be careful in coming into line with Avksentyev (2016), who, as it was mentioned above, relates the national tradition of studying nationalism to the German school. Accepting the standpoint that the term "nation" in our country is primordial in nature, we should not automatically assume that it was originally formed, only ethnonation based on cultural values and belief in common origin, and there was no civic nation at all. At the same time, it is appropriate to take a cautious approach to perceiving the statement of Tishkov (2013) who stated that the Russian Empire under the last Romanovs was a national state, which is understood as a state with a common economic base, a territory controlled by the central authority, with common values and cultural foundations for the majority of the country's inhabitants. Almost any type of state that ever existed from a polis to a colonial empire will fit this definition and it is premature to base a conclusion on the fact that a civic nation existed in Russia at the turn of the century. It seems more reasonable to consider the process of two Russian nations merging at this moment to be artificially interrupted by the revolution. The impetus for both of these processes was the events in Europe, namely, the development of the ideas of Romanticism and the formation of the first national states.

Slavophiles were most susceptible to the spirit of Romanticism. Slavophiles began to reflect on the national characteristics of the Russian people when the state still formulated the official ideology on a non-national and religious basis in the form of the Uvarov official nationality. Just like romantics in other European countries they were inclined to look for national foundations in folk life and in folklore. In fact,

at this moment the construction of the Russian nation by the symbolic elite based on the pre-modern tradition and new myths took place. However, soon the state also started to appreciate the advantages the nationalist mobilization could provide and began to develop its own version of nationalism. And although in this situation the nationalism was a political one, it denied the ethnic basis (How could it be otherwise if the emperor was an ethnic German?) and it was similar to French civil nationalism to the same extent it was to the cultural ethnonationalism of Germany and Italy. On the one hand, the government tried to create a nation united by common myths and subject to nationalist mobilization without creating a civil society. In France these two processes being the formation of a nation and the formation of a civil society went at the same time and they are traditionally linked with industrialization and the establishment of the leading positions of the bourgeoisie in opposition to the aristocracy in modernist methodology. Predominantly, the agrarian and absolutist Russian Empire could not completely copy the French methods. Therefore, they focused on the cultural nationalism of Germany as well. Similarly, this type of nationalism had pitfalls, in particular, the already mentioned ethnic aspect. Thus, the imperial government arranged the formation of a new united nation on a cultural basis but without civil society and ethnic factor. At the same time, the reverse process was going on from below. Slavophiles and their followers as well as the state perceived culture and especially religion to be one of the main values of the Russian nation. However, they also linked the formation of a new nation with the development of civil society. Although, unlike the state they just paid more attention to the ethnic factor, for example, prohibiting German architects to create architecture in the Russian style (Bulatov & Bystrov, 2018).

7. Conclusion

Researchers should pay attention to the three areas of the formation and maintenance of nationalism (a cultural, political and everyday manifestation), highlighted in modern historiography to study both types of Russian nationalism, namely, civil (imperial) and ethno-cultural. The three components mentioned above were present in both types of nationalism, albeit to varying degrees. The state and, accordingly, a political will were primary for civil nationalism. The methods developed in the constructivist paradigm will be appropriate with this regard. When studying ethnocultural nationalism, the cultural component, which is better described by ethnosymbolistic methodology, comes to the fore. However, it is certainly impossible to deny the important role of the past and the culture for imperial nationalism, which was manifested in many different areas from architecture to literature (Bulatov & Bystrov, 2018). One cannot ignore the attempts of creating a political association of so-called non-state nationalists (especially at the present stage). At the same time, the study of everyday practices will help to better understand what the ideologists of Russian nationalism put into the concept of "Russianness" and what exactly was perceived by people and to what extent.

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