

HISTORIOGRAPHY, SCHOOLS, AND CONCEPTS

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THE THEORY AND METHODOLOGY OF STUDYING ETHNIC HISTORY

The development of the humanities and their integration with a number of natural sciences has greatly expanded the scope of ethnic history. Whereas the topic of ethnogenesis had chiefly been the domain of historians (with the help of some data provided by ethnography, archeology, and linguistics), starting from the second half of the 20th century, research in ethnogenesis was augmented by geography and religious studies. At the beginning of the 21st century, anthropologists joined the study of ethnogenesis. Today, it is not rare that ethnographers and geneticists publish jointly. Naturally, this synergy of fields requires profound research in ethnic history. The exact contribution of each particular field of study needs to be clearly demonstrated and defined. At the same time, it is imperative that the analysis of events and facts be carried out within the framework of historical dynamics. A critical approach must be taken to both published papers and original sources. Thus, one must distance oneself from the confines of the regional, confessional, or linguistic affinities of the cultures or ethnic groups being studied. It is true that such methods may very well turn out to be a priori. This, however, can easily be mitigated by employing a multidimensional approach to analyzing facts and phenomena. For example, research in genetics allows scholars to delve into the deepest layers of ethnic history. Similarly, archeologists benefit greatly from using strontium isotopes, which help trace the migration routes of humans. Linguistic transformations suggesting interaction with neighboring peoples must also be taken into account. Studying ethnic history requires a comprehensive methodology, for the complexity and multidimensionality of the formation of an ethnic group is too complex and multidimensional for any single discipline to study alone. Thus, an integration of several disciplines is required: chemistry, physics, computer science, geography, and many more can all provide the much-needed extra help. Modern sciences allow an ethnographer, armed with interdisciplinary, systemic, and transdisciplinary approaches, to step outside of their comfort zone and take a broader look at the world. This, however, requires the scholar to be at least minimally familiar with many disciplines, for a comprehensive approach the boundaries between the various fields of study become blurred, and a synthesis of sciences emerges. A philosopher would say that the borders are being washed away and the methods are being smelted. Such rebirth of the methodology, progressing from simple to complex, creates metascience, which itself facilitates a holistic description of the phenomenon in question — in our case, an all-embracing history of an ethnic group.

Keywords: *history, ethnic group, theory, methodology, transdisciplinary approach*

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Refereces

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