

IDENTITY – A RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE ENCYCLOPEDIA STUDY

“IDENTITY: PERSONALITY, SOCIETY, POLITICS”

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Abstract. The article is an analytical review of a fundamental work on the phenomenon of identity prepared at IMEMO RAS under the supervision of Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences I.S. Semenenko. An interdisciplinary study in two books is devoted to the procedural aspects and dynamics of forms of identification of an individual and society in relation, first of all, to country, ethnic and religious affiliation, as well as the conditions for the formation of an all-Russian national self-consciousness from the point of view of civil and civilizational identification. The work substantiates a civilizational approach to the Russian and other largest nations of the world, continental and religious communities; contains an overview of such forms of collective identity as professional, racial, diaspora and others. The decisive role of cultural and identification factors in world politics and in the policy of nation-building, in ensuring the sovereignty and solidarity of state communities is noted. The books contain a bibliographic dictionary of leading scientists and a complete bibliography of scientific literature in this field. The publication is encyclopedic in nature and establishes a new scientific direction in the social and humanitarian sciences – identitarian studies.

Keywords: *identity, civilization, world order, national state, civil nation, Russia, India, China, nation-building, ethnicity, religion, cultural complexity, nationalism, solidarity, ethno-political conflict, “cancel culture”*

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I’ll start by expressing my high regard for the work of the research team at the Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences, led by Corresponding Member of the RAS I.S. Semenenko. The work in question is an encyclopedic publication on the topic of identity [1, 2] – one of the emerging and highly relevant subjects in contemporary humanities. Before discussing the content of this work and the significance

of its conclusions, I would like to highlight several aspects that make these two volumes an exemplary model of how major research projects in the social sciences and humanities should be conducted.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FORMAT AND STYLE

First, it is worth noting the boldness and broad scope of the project, which aims not to analyze a specific problem but rather a broader theme or even an entire field of study. Over the past couple of decades, identity studies have permeated various social sciences and humanities disciplines, often resembling an obligatory nod to a fashionable concept (a phenomenon that previously occurred with meta-categories such as modernity and discourse). The project examining the phenomenon of identity – arguably not a core topic for political science and one that sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists could just as easily claim – was conceived and successfully executed by political scientists specializing in international relations. In doing so, they demonstrated that large research teams possess the necessary expertise



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and personnel to tackle not only the research problems prescribed by their institutional charters but also truly innovative and genuinely interdisciplinary projects. This is one of the key lessons of this endeavor: major research institutes within the Russian Academy of Sciences have the intellectual resources to generate original ideas and ensure a high level of research organization.

Second, attention should be given to the interdisciplinary nature of the work – a concept frequently discussed by academics and those who claim to oversee science. The reality is that, for various reasons, including the pursuit of bibliometric indicators, modern academia has seen an influx of individuals skilled at obtaining academic degrees and increasing their Hirsch index. As a result, certain evaluation metrics for academic work have been institutionalized – particularly in the social sciences and humanities – that incentivize the production of formulaic articles labeled as “scientific” but often lacking substantive content. Many such articles are even published in high-impact journals for a fee. If one strips away the mandatory formal requirements of contemporary journal publications (abstracts in two languages, meaningless transliterations of references, and other structural obligations), the actual scholarly text often amounts to just 3–4 pages, sometimes co-authored by multiple contributors. In the social sciences and humanities, this is unacceptable, as – unlike in physics or mathematics – our discipline relies on the articulation of historical context and analysis, which cannot be replaced by formulas and conclusions. For us, a deep, well-structured, and compelling presentation of a topic or problem is an essential component of academic work.

The reviewed publication, spanning 992 pages in the first volume and 512 pages in the second, brings together concise yet substantive (in the style of encyclopedic works) academic texts that examine various aspects of identity from the perspectives of multiple disciplines – philosophy, history, sociology, ethnology, law, economics, and, of course, political science. Contributors from numerous research institutes and universities participated in the project. As a result, the phenomenon of identity is examined by scholars from different fields, fostering a scientific dialogue and enriching knowledge. This, in my view, is true *interdisciplinarity*, which stands in contrast to superficial approaches and pseudo-interdisciplinarity. It is an example of open scholarly work, accessible to anyone interested in studying and applying its findings. However, there is an irony in the situation: according to ministerial evaluation criteria, a fundamental academic work such as this may not count toward its authors’ professional achievements (as it does not qualify as a monograph), unlike the questionable publications that appear in predatory journals. (This is a prime example

of flawed academic metrics and an inadequate system for assessing research output!)

Several stylistic qualities of this work should be valued in academic scholarship. First and foremost, the structure is well thought out, with sections and chapters that include introductory remarks and concluding summaries. The inclusion of references after each chapter – without overloading the text with excessive footnotes – enhances readability. Each volume also features an extensive bibliography of academic literature in the respective field. Additionally, a useful glossary and detailed information about the authors and their works are provided. The second volume further includes a list of metaphors related to identity that are prevalent in academic discourse (e.g., “perpetual crisis”, “memory wars”, “cancel culture”, etc.). This glossary reflects a growing need to clarify the conceptual framework of social research – a point that will be discussed later. The only element that seems somewhat excessive is the “cognitive map of the discursive field of identity” [1, p. 872–873], which is difficult to interpret even for specialists without additional explanation.

One cannot overlook the section in the first volume titled “Who’s Who in the Formation of the Research Field,” which contains around fifty concise biobibliographic essays on prominent scholars in this area. This is a kind of “gentleman’s set” of mainly Anglophone and Francophone authors, who are traditionally referenced by Russian researchers – though not always with full familiarity with their works. In this case, the essays are free of critical commentary, which can be attributed to the encyclopedic style of the publication. Nonetheless, this section is important for the Russian academic community, as it prevents domestic discourse from sliding into outright isolationism. It is impossible to deny the influence of foreign scholars on Russian humanities research – at times, this influence has even been excessive, given that we have distinguished scholars of our own. However, the dictionary includes only six Russian researchers, which may be seen as a reflection of this imbalance.

THE BIRTH OF A DIRECTION AND THE FATE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

Now, let us turn to the essence of what is called *identity* and to what is said about this phenomenon in the reviewed study. Avoiding historiographical polemics in defining the nature of identity and its diverse manifestations, the authors propose a number of important assessments and ideas that challenge superficial interpretations and the mythopoetic versions prevalent among scholars in the

humanities, some of which are quite popular. In this case, identity is at the center of all issues in its *political science dimension*, which is to be expected.

The word “identity” sounds quite euphonic in Russian, unlike the adjective derived from it – “identitarian” (in reference to an approach) or “identitarian” (in reference to studies) – but this may simply be a matter of familiarity with various linguistic innovations in science. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Spanish scholar M. Castells published books on identity in the age of globalization [3]; at that time, the term “identity” had not yet entered the scientific discourse of Russian social sciences. In the Russian translation of the title of Castells’ main book on this topic, the phrase “the power of identity” was omitted altogether as incomprehensible to the reader [4]. A few years later, when publishing my own book on the history and meaning of national identity in the Russian people, I also considered it best to replace the term “identity” with “self-awareness” in the title to avoid the pretentiousness of academic language and to be better understood [5]. I still believe that the familiar words “consciousness” or “self-awareness” (which are almost synonymous for non-psychologists) and the rather long history of studying this phenomenon – especially in its collective rather than individual form – represent nothing more than a preliminary stage in the study of what is now called identity. In the very recent past, this was referred to as “national self-awareness” (in an ethnic sense) or “class consciousness” (in a socio-political sense).

Clearly, the emergence of this new direction with the publication of the reviewed work did not occur in a vacuum. It was preceded by substantial, though not always entirely accurate, research efforts dating back to Soviet times. For example, in the early 1990s, I found it important to shift the meaning of the term “national (self-) consciousness”, which was perceived in an ethnic sense, toward an understanding of it as *Russian* (in a state-level sense) *self-awareness*. This transition has been slow and even painful due to the deep emotional and political weight of the concept, not to mention the inertia of generations of Soviet and post-Soviet scholars who have written extensively on the national self-awareness of Russians, Tatars, Chuvash, Yakuts, and others. Incidentally, the problem of heteroglossia (dual understanding) of the category of the national is not resolved by the authors of this work either. However, most of them lean toward understanding *national* identity as civic-state (or civic-civilizational) rather than ethnic, but this significant shift in meaning remains incomplete. Had the authors submitted their texts to well-known international journals such as the British *National Identities* (published since 1998) or the American *The National Interest* (published since 1985), they would have encountered issues with

the interpretation of this category and the entire field of study. In global academia – not just in the West – there is no ambiguity: “national” (whether identity, interests, or anything else) is civic, state-related, country-based. However, even in foreign scholarship, as in political practice, there are claims to use the term “national” for both identity and political projects on behalf of ethno-regional communities. The pages of the aforementioned journals do not always maintain strict terminological purity in this regard.

It is gratifying to note that the project leader and responsible editor of the work, I.S. Semenenko, holds a position similar to mine. According to her, “national identity is a multidimensional concept that encompasses political and sociocultural (ethnocultural) dimensions, which can sometimes coexist or mutually exclude one another. The concept of national identity is widely used in public discourse to denote the collective identity of a national-state (or one claiming such status) community and characterizes the self-awareness of its citizens as members of such a community” [1, p. 405]. Naturally, national identity relies on a sense of belonging to a nation, though different individuals and social groups may understand the latter not only as a country but also as ethnic or historical-regional communities. Denying them such self-identification would be unreasonable.

The aforementioned multidimensionality of the concept of “national identity” is also reflected in its applicability not only to countries but to other communities as well. This is, in fact, the reality of many states around the world, where “national” is used not only in a civic-country sense but also in ethno-regional contexts. Hence my suggestion to recognize the Russian people as a “nation of nations”, and the puzzlement of one of the authors of the reviewed work over this can be attributed to a misunderstanding of the issue. My position is precisely based on the multidimensionality of the phenomenon and the practical conviction that, for example, Madrid will not succeed in convincing the inhabitants of Catalonia to abandon the self-designation “*Catalan nation*” in favor of exclusively using the term “*Spanish nation*” for the entire country’s population. Both will continue to exist as long as Spain remains a state with internal autonomies. Indigenous communities within the Canadian nation have secured constitutional recognition as “*First Nations*”. Likewise, I believe that neither Moscow nor certain stubborn imperialists will be able to convince the Tatars, Chechens, Yakuts, and other ethnic groups to abandon their ethno-national identity exclusively in favor of an all-Russian one (that is, to become *Rossiyane* while forgetting they are also Tatars, etc., according to the list of Russian nationalities) – especially since not all residents of the country can

become “Russians” (*Russkie*). One would think this is quite clear, yet in many cases, the only viable formula for the peaceful and unified existence of Russia is grasped with great difficulty.

MODERNITY AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF IDENTITY

As a historian and anthropologist, I am particularly interested in a contemporary and relevant perspective on *modernity*, rather than the domestic discourse’s frequent obsession with past norms and values, which are often presented as immutable and almost sacred. Consequently, each new generation is expected not only to preserve but also to adhere to so-called traditional spiritual and moral values. However, perceiving modernity in a theological framework – as a prescription and a continuation of a trajectory determined by the past – is flawed and ineffective.

In the reviewed work, when considering identity in the context of transformation and “liquid modernity”, V.S. Martyanov defines his perspective on this fundamentally philosophical issue as follows: “*Modernity represents a post-traditional, functionally differentiated society composed of autonomous subsystems, predominantly manifested in the political form of territorial states, where market exchanges, rational bureaucracy, and inclusive institutions dominate, ensuring broad citizen participation in managing the social and political aspects of their own destinies*” [1, p. 304]. In such an understanding of modernity, a fundamental problem of identity arises within its intellectual framework. In an estate-based, feudal, or caste society, identity was transmitted from generation to generation within a static social order. In contrast, “*modernity, described through the concepts of hybrid, multiple, mixed, and fluid identity, has displaced rigidly stratified traditional societies that maintained stable lifestyles, unchanging social structures, functional roles, and societal values over long historical periods. The modern individual is inherently subjective and multi-identified. A complex, urbanized society requires differentiated identities, functions, and roles across multiplying social contexts. Increasingly, individuals arbitrarily shift their identities depending on age, situation, mood, cultural context, and citizenship. Under such conditions, the state can only maintain a desirable hierarchy of identities to minimize conflict and tensions in the socio-political order*” [1, p. 307].

This renewed understanding of identity is further elaborated by sociologist N.N. Fedotova, who questions “*the utopian notion of absolute identity stability in today’s unstable, non-linearly changing society*” [1, p. 292]. However, this does not negate the significance of identity

itself. What becomes crucial is the continuous process of change, destruction, acquisition, and formation of identity. “*This applies not only to individual identity but also to all identity-bearing entities – communities, societies, ethnic groups, nations, and states, meaning various forms of collective identity*” [1, p. 292]. Thus, the reviewed work emphasizes the processual nature and dynamics of identity, echoing the ideas of S. Huntington. In my earlier works, I also wrote about the primacy of *ethnic processuality* over the ethnic process itself, not about a prescribed identity but about *ethnic drift*.

N.N. Fedotova makes important conclusions: “*Previously, identity was considered attainable – going through a series of crises before ultimately achieving a certain stability until the next crisis. Today, identity is a continuous process of formation, existing between the poles of stability and instability, and inherently processual*” [1, p. 293]. This implies that individuals, groups, communities, and nations construct their identities throughout their existence, either maintaining continuity with the past or not. This idea challenges the notion of an originally given ethnic identity as a fundamental prerequisite for acquiring civic or national identity. This perspective is promoted by some psychologists who misinterpret mid-20th-century identity theories by classic developmental psychologists like Jean Piaget and Erik Erikson and are poorly informed about modern research in the field. A crude age-based division of identity formation is often cited: linguistic identity from 0 to 7–8 years, ethnic identity from 6 to 18 years, and Russian civic identity from 16 to 24 years, leading to the conclusion: “*It is impossible to arbitrarily and at will instill Russian civic identity in children or adolescents at any age without first developing linguistic and ethnic identity... The formation of Russian civic identity follows a rather rigid ontogenetic structure, is governed by psychological mechanisms, requires appropriate (primarily socio-psychological) conditions for its effective formation, and presupposes a long and sequential process*” [6, p. 303].

In the section on *ascriptive* (prescribed) and *acquired* identities, O.V. Popova offers a broader definition of ascriptive identity, which is assigned to an individual by society or the state not only during childhood but throughout life. These two forms of identity are characterized not only by interdependence but also by the fluidity of behavioral situations and identification choices. This is similar to an ethnically mixed family: one child is officially registered with the father’s nationality, and another with the mother’s. Yet, the situation is far more complex than a single-time choice. With societal development, social mobility, democratization, and increasing human interactions, the balance between ascriptive identities (ingrained from childhood) and acquired identities (developed over a lifetime) shifts in

favor of the latter. In contemporary Russian primary education, ethnographic instruction is being increasingly replaced with studies about the homeland and its symbols. Schoolchildren are more likely to identify themselves as, for example, Muscovites or Volgograd residents and consider Russia their homeland without defining themselves by ethnic affiliation. This suggests that a rigid division between ascriptive and acquired identities, as well as a strict hierarchy of identities, is either incorrect or, at the very least, deeply outdated.

The author of this section also touches upon debates regarding the nature of *ethnic identity*. Some scholars view it as ascriptive because *“it is society that dictates to individuals the characteristics of a given ethnic group and the criteria for ethnic self-determination through language acquisition, cultural norms, and values within a specific cultural-ethnic environment”* [1, P. 285]. Others argue that *“while ethnic identity is formed based on socially prescribed ethnicity, it is always the result of self-identification – a dynamic and prolonged process – and should therefore be classified as an acquired identity”* [1, P. 285]. From this perspective, a multiethnic state can construct a monoethnic identity based on ascriptive ethnicity, a monoethnic identity with another group, a biethnic identity, or a marginal ethnic identity. Additionally, one could add the globally recognized (except in Russia and some former Soviet countries) multiple non-exclusive identity to this list.

In general, the discourse on ethnicity today, much like past discussions on nationalism, resembles a kind of “black hole” into which various concepts are drawn along with the remnants of outdated theories [7]. For this reason, I share the concerns expressed by O.V. Popova and other scholars: *“Basic (visible) ascriptive identities – racial, ethnic, and gender – contribute to societal fragmentation more than others. This factor must be considered when applying positive discrimination policies to the participation of individuals with these identities in political life, as it becomes a source of new divisions and necessitates significant adjustments in state identity policies”* [1, p. 285]. Other authors have written on this issue as well [8, 9].

FASCINATION WITH CIVILIZATION

For those who doubt the Russian national project, *the civilizational approach* has become a kind of salvation, dominating contemporary public, academic, and media discourse. For many years, radical ethno-nationalists speaking on behalf of the Russian majority, as well as quasi-religious experts from the World Russian People’s Council, sought to replace the concept of a Russian civic nation and an all-Russian identity with the concept of Russian civilization and the Russian World. However,

their efforts never went beyond declarative documents and indirect references to the state-forming people.

Until very recently, the president, strategic planning documents, and the academic community were focused on defining the multiethnic people of the Russian Federation as the Russian nation and on achieving the main goal of national policy – ensuring the unity of the Russian nation while preserving its ethno-cultural diversity. With the entry of international political scientists and bureaucratic political technologists into the civilizational discourse, the civilizational approach – and within it, Russia’s self-identification as a civilization-state – took center stage in intellectual discussions and political rhetoric. At first glance, its proponents do not reject the idea of Russia as a nation-state and support the affirmation of Russian identity as the essence and form of nation-building. However, not everyone views the cultural category of civilization as an extension of the national project’s goals. This duality is evident in the reviewed work, particularly in sections and chapters discussing various civilizational identities and the fate of modern nation-states. On the one hand, one cannot disagree with the assertion by I.S. Semenenko: *“In modern political discourse, national identity is attributed to state formations regardless of the nature of their statehood development: it serves as the key meaning-forming foundation of state sovereignty. The radical changes in national-state borders in the 20th century necessitate the construction of new identities to legitimize these borders in mass consciousness”* [1, p. 411]. On the other hand, one of the book’s main authors, V.I. Pantin, in the chapter on identity in its international-political dimension, writes about national-civilizational identity: *“In contemporary philosophy, sociology, and political science, civilizational identity is understood as the identification or association of an individual, social group, ethnic group, or nation with a particular local civilization – a stable, long-existing supranational community of people and states within a certain territory, which maintains and reproduces its integrity, unique cultural norms, religion, values, traditions, and social practices, distinct from other civilizations”* [2, p. 303]. However, the concept of a *“supranational community of people”* remains unclear.

According to V.I. Pantin, the increasing relevance and growing role of civilizational identity in the modern world are linked to globalization-driven intensification of interactions between civilizations. This interaction leads not only to deepening cooperation but also to growing conflicts among states belonging to different civilizations, as well as to inter-civilizational tensions within the same state due to large-scale cross-cultural migration. Furthermore, the rapid development of Chinese and Indian civilizations, along with several other non-Western societies, has brought civilizational identity

to the forefront and questioned the previous world order based on Western dominance. In the context of modern Russia, which exhibits traits of a civilization-state and significantly differs from the classical nation-states typical of Western Europe and the U.S., *“it is necessary, on the one hand, to take into account existing social, value, and cultural divisions, and on the other, to pursue an identity policy aimed at gradually shaping a consolidating Russian state-civic and civilizational identity”* [2, p. 305].

In the first volume of the reviewed work, in the section on the political dimensions of civilizational identity, V.I. Pantin notes that the cultural-civilizational perspective on identity helps reveal the causes and factors behind many contemporary domestic and international conflicts. The *“dramatic, and often tragic consequences”* of ignoring historical, cultural, and civilizational aspects of identity include failed attempts to forcibly transplant social institutions (such as democratic and market institutions), which function effectively within Western civilization, into Islamic and other civilizations. *“The reluctance to consider customs, traditions, and cultural and social norms that have evolved over centuries, as well as the overly optimistic belief in the existence of a unified global civilization, can and already have led to severe inter-civilizational and ethno-social conflicts”* [1, p. 144–145].

These arguments about a kind of cultural deafness in politics (and in economics as well) are hard to disagree with. However, what about the frequent occurrences of brutal violence and conflict driven by the well-known *“minor cultural differences complex”*, where extreme violence and wars arise not only at inter-civilizational boundaries but also within them – even among *“one people”*? It seems something is amiss in the interpretation of civilizational differences, assuming they exist at all outside the imagination of those who write about civilizations. Clearly, in this framework, the Russian Federation as a civilization does not possess a purely national identity but rather a national-civilizational identity. Yet, in the interpretations of other authors in the book, this formula is often reduced simply to civilizational identity.

All the chapters in the third section of the first volume focus on civilizations outside Russia. Though written by international affairs specialists, the selection of civilizations and their defining characteristics illustrate that civilization is one of the most arbitrary and vague forms of human community classification. One could argue that civilization is largely *a cultural metaphor*, applicable to many historically contingent cultural complexes, proto-states, as well as modern culturally similar macro-regions, continents, and major countries.

The desire to reduce much of the past and present to a single concept is easy to challenge – this has been done repeatedly, beginning with the Soviet historian, academician E.A. Kosminsky’s critique of A. Toynbee’s works [10]. Harsh criticism has also been directed at neo-Toynbeism in the works of S. Huntington and F. Fukuyama. Historians have critically analyzed the writings of N. Ya. Danilevsky, Russian cosmists, and Eurasianists. However, the goal of this review is to highlight the interpretation of the world’s largest nations that are similar to Russia and together form today’s *“global majority”*, namely India and China, as well as other contenders for civilizational status.

The section *“Civilizational and Political-Cultural Perspectives on Identity”* in the first volume examines the formation and dynamics of Russian, European, North American, Ibero-American, Chinese, Indian, and Muslim identities. Leading specialists in these respective cultures and countries have attempted to identify the trends and contradictions inherent in each of these *cultural-civilizational communities*. Rather than debating whether continental, macro-regional, or religious civilizations are real or speculative, this discussion focuses on the world’s largest nations – India and China, which, along with Russia, are often classified as independent civilizations. To this list, BRICS members such as Brazil and South Africa could also be added.

The essence of the matter is that in all these sovereign states – with deep historical roots, complex cultural populations, religious and racial diversity, and world-class cultural achievements – the central goal of society and the state is nation-building: the formation of multiethnic civic nations – Indian, Chinese, Brazilian, and South African. The constitutions, laws, national and cultural policies, programs, symbols, values, calendars, education, propaganda, and scientific research in these countries revolve around nation-building (nation-building), reinforcing national identities through various formulas: China’s *“nation of nationalities”* (*Zhonghua Minzu*), India’s *“unity in diversity”*, South Africa’s *“rainbow nation”*, Brazil’s football-carnival-cultural symbiosis of *“making the Brazilian nation”* [11–23].

Notably, in none of these countries is self-identification as a civilization a programmatic or politically charged concept, though the term may be used in historical contexts by various social movements. It is precisely this vagueness of the term *“civilization”*, along with its absence in the state-building policies of the world’s largest nations, that explains my reserved stance toward the civilizational approach when it comes to Russia’s self-definition. The reviewed work fully participates in the fascination with the civilizational approach.

INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION: DEVELOPMENT – QUO VADIS

The reviewed work contains other profound observations and factual information, which allow for a sharper perception of the external world – and of Russia as well (the influence of international relations experts is evident). For instance, the chapter dedicated to diasporic worlds and their identities is of undeniable interest. In general, transborder and networked communities – both past and new – along with the identities of their members, their behavior, and the role of diasporas, cannot be fully covered even in such a comprehensive publication. However, many essential aspects of this vast topic are identified and evaluated in the section written by I.L. Prokhorenko. Unfortunately, one particularly relevant community, the Russian World, remains outside the scope of analysis. In post-Soviet public discourse, the Russian World was initially understood as the realm of Russophonia – that is, the collective of people connected to Russia, the Russian language, and culture. Today, it is perceived as “Russia +,” meaning Russia and those who form a single people with it.

The concept of identity as a resource for societal development has become crucial and productive for the social sciences. Unlike economocentric theories, this concept shifts the focus toward the ideological-political, social, and cultural motivations of individuals, ethnic and social groups, and nations – factors that either enable personal and societal progress or lead to their degradation. In modern divided societies, the formation and transformation of identity, as well as the associated subjective perception of social and political reality, are particularly significant. As I.S. Semenenko writes: “*Social dynamics are still measured by familiar indicators such as GDP growth, material well-being, and the quality of the human living environment. However, identity markers, commitment to the community with which an individual identifies, a positive vision of the future, and an individual’s orientation toward personal and societal development are equally important. These value orientations determine the social climate of society – a reality that is difficult to assess but fundamentally important for understanding social prospects, subjective in nature but objectively significant*” [2, p. 19].

The chapter *Divided Societies* presents an informative cognitive map of social divisions and their political projections [2, p. 33]. This map allows for tracing the historical dynamics of social divisions and their politicization in contemporary societies. Currently, the ethnopolitical (nationalism and separatism), as

well as geopolitical and geoeconomic, projections of social divisions play a significant role, as they become factors in ethnopolitical and geopolitical conflicts and confrontations.

The authors of the section *Identity: Challenges of Politicizing Discourses and Narratives* analyze from different perspectives the key issue of the interconnection between socio-political development at both micro and macro levels—a pressing topic in contemporary political science and sociology. Without addressing this issue, it is impossible to ensure long-term, progressive socio-political and economic development or to establish a link between personal values, individual motivation, and societal needs.

For Russian political science, discourses related to regionalization, regionalism, and regional identity are particularly important. Russia’s vast territory, multiethnic composition, and coexistence of different religious confessions have shaped its imperative for effective regional development management, reducing territorial inequality, and counteracting separatism. The authors’ study of regional, ethnocultural, and religious identities serves as a foundation for the effective governance of Russia’s state and societal development.

The reviewed work contains many more themes and topics that encourage reflection and discussion, but the review format has its limits, as does the author’s own awareness. Some issues of grand theory and grand strategy remain outside the discussion—especially since this aspect of the study *Identity: Individual, Society, Politics* has already been covered in a review by O.V. Gaman-Golutvina [24]. However, I will express one doubt regarding the assertion-prediction that we have entered a kind of post-Westphalian era, in which nation-states disappear from the historical stage, replaced by diverse coalitions reflecting the world’s multiplicity of experiences and conditions – states understood as the most significant and all-encompassing human associations. One could agree with this premise and the possibly implied expectation of replacing the UN with an *Organization of United Civilizations* or perhaps even *United Ethnonations* (the latter was a dream of the renowned Norwegian philosopher Johan Galtung [25]). However, the recent coronavirus pandemic and the role of states in both protecting and disciplining their populations, as well as intensifying competition among countries for resources and influence amid geopolitical upheavals, suggest instead that nation-states – understood as sovereign citizenships – are not vanishing from the historical stage. The observed reconfiguration of the modern world will likely occur without their abolition.

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