



# Wednesday Seminars

WINTERSEMESTER 2018/19

**Valery Tishkov**

*Russia's cultural diversity and its perceptions*

Monday 15.10.2018, 17.00, HS C, IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock



**Valery Tishkov** is Professor of History and Anthropology and a full member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Director (1989-2014) of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. In 1992, he served as Russian Minister for Nationalities, since 2014 he is a Deputy Chairman of the Presidential Council on Interethnic Relations, founder of the Network of Ethnological Monitoring (EAWARN) focusing on nationalities policy, migrations and ethnic conflicts in the Post-Soviet countries. Currently, he is the Head of the History and Philology Division, Russian Academy of Sciences, and Scientific Director of the IEA RAS.  
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## ...kommende Termine

- 17.10.2018 **Petra Ezzeddine**  
Paradoxes of transnational care trajectories within the post-socialist gender experience
- 24.10.2018 **Richard Rottenburg**  
Critique, post-foundationalism and the need to do the right thing
- 21.11.2018 **Elisabeth Huber**

Russia's ethnic mosaic was growing because of newly acquired territories, movements of people from outside as well as internal migrations. Mixing, acculturation, assimilation did not reduce the diversity: the latter became a civilizational feature of this vast Eurasian empire. The ethnic diversity was the very essence of its political entity and many things depended on how it was perceived, categorized and governed. I analyze how the three factors: understanding (perception), categorization, and governance count and influence reification of entities called the group, the people, and the nation. I speak also on how Soviet and Post-Soviet experiences show that obsession with establishment of cultural differences and support to or violent suppression of ethnic groups impeded the governance of cultural complexity. My focus is not on "ethnic processes" but on "processing" through population census as a powerful instrument for constructing ethnic and linguistic groups. This procedure does not only legitimize the political entity formed by the counted population under one sovereign power but also lays a foundation for the ordering of ethno-cultural mosaic and developing of the governmental policy towards this diversity. Thus, I argue that ethnic groups are constructed not only by outside socio-cultural interactions but also by processuality imposed from above.

"Ethnic revival" after the breakup of the USSR took place along the borders of ethno-territorial units. Analyzing the scholarship on nationalities policy and interethnic relations in Russia published in the West since the fall of the USSR, I conclude that it underscores the ambiguous legacy left by the Soviet period in the national arena. In Russia's public and academic discourses, there was and still prevails an anti-constructivist trend, which however did not prevent the deconstruction of the nation as a metaphor. I speak against using the pre-given "list of the peoples" in national censuses and in favour of recognition of multiple non-exclusive identities. Finally, I argue against ethno-groupism in census practices and nationalities policy and I report on a recent national survey on public perceptions of the categories "nationality" and "ethnic identity".