

**Brigitta Balogh, Sergiu Băltătescu,  
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Adrian Hatos (eds.) European, National  
and Regional Identity. Proceedings of  
the International Conference “European,  
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**Book review**

How are identities formed? What are the implications of identity for well-being? Why is the question of identity relevant in policy-making, organizational management or culture? These are only some of the questions we could ask when dealing with the topic of identity. Defining who we are constitutes an important part of personality, being closely related to the life we live, to the degree of our satisfaction. Moreover, on a structural level, belonging to different groups and acting as part of them may determine the power and success of such groups in the competition for resources and domination, and explain the way in which societies function. Approaches to the question of identity can be manifold. Although the title suggests a policy-oriented approach, the articles in the volume *European, National and Regional Identity* use a multitude of perspectives including historical assessments and literary analyses.

The book is the result of the cooperation of three Universities in the Hungary-Romania border region in the frame of the ENRI project co-financed by the Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Co-Operation Programme 2007-2013. The volume contains three of the keynote addresses and 44 of the papers presented at the conference entitled *European, National and Regional Identity* held on 24-26 March 2011 in Oradea. The organizers have used a broad approach and invited papers in seven different sections (*Cultural Diversity and Social Capital; Qualitative Methods in the Research on European, National and Regional Identity; Social Identity and Well-Being; Identities, Representations and Prejudices; Identity and the Idea of Europe as Philosophical Problems; Levels of Identity: Europe, Nation, Region; and Institutions and Identity*), thus, the articles lack a close thematic focus to some aspect of identity, and cover a wide variety of topics.

Two of the three keynote addresses included in the volume present former research results: they explore the question of ethnic identity in Central and Eastern Europe (*Antal Örkény and Mária Székelyi: Constructing Border Ethnic Identities Along the Frontier of Central and Eastern Europe*), and analyze the characteristics of the authoritarian personality from a social psychological perspective based on survey results (*György Csepeli and Gergő Prazsák: New Authoritarianism*). Although both papers deal

with relevant social issues, they fail in their role of keynotes, as they lack both a general reflection on the topic of identity and a tone-setting character. On the other hand, David Bartram's article entitled *Identity, Migration and Happiness* urges socially relevant research, and discusses the relationships between pride in national identity and subjective well-being, inspiring researchers/readers to take into account the social consequences of their research and assume a morally responsible attitude.

The first chapter – that corresponds to the first conference section – contains six articles addressing the relationship between social capital and cultural diversity. The papers call on a multitude of approaches ranging from sociological to literary analyses: authors discuss the role ethnic diversity plays in the cooperation among those living in the blocks of flats in Oradea (*Adrian Hatos and Sorana Săveanu: Social Trust in the Romanian-Hungarian Cross-Border Area*), and describe Oradea as a model for Bram Stoker's Transylvanian city (*Marius Crișan: Oradea, a Model for Bram Stoker's Transylvanian City*).

Papers in the chapter entitled *Qualitative Methods in the Research on European, National and Regional Identity* are connected by the methodology they use. Nevertheless, the disciplines involved and the topics covered are also very diverse: from explanations on how ethnic-symbolic capital is turned into political capital (*Monica Stroe: Heterorepresentations of Saxonness and their Political Meaning in Transylvania*), to case studies about ethical issues in clinical psychology (*Sándor Kömüves: Identity in the Context of Severe Dementia*) and analyses of mobbing in organizations and the related legislation (*Rozália Klára Bakó and Tünde Szigety: Threatened Identities: Mobbing as a Form of Violence in Organizations*).

The third and fourth chapters both contain papers thematically related to the keynote articles: the introductory paper of the third chapter analyzes the relationship between identities and well-being based on international survey data (*Katarzyna Hamer: Social Identities and Well-being*), whereas István Murányi's article in chapter 4 (*Social Dominance Orientation of Hungarian National Radicals*) deals with the characteristics of the Hungarian national radicals as part of the New Authoritarianism study of 2010.

In the next sections we find philosophical-conceptual and policy-oriented analyses related to identity. Three authors deal with theoretical aspects: Tamás Valastyán presents different interpretations of the concept of "Europe" (*Europa-Reden. Kants, Novalis' und Nietzsches Vorschläge zu einer Europa-Interpretation*), Márton Artila Demeter assesses the development of nation-states and national identity from a historical point of view (*Aspects of National Identity*), and László Levente Balogh discusses the characteristics of victim discourses and nation-building strategies in a case study on Hungary (*Identitäten und Opferdiskurse*). Jiří Krejčík uses a more policy-oriented approach: focusing on the similarities in the attempts to form identity in Europe and India, he argues in favor of a secular identity-building strategy in Europe (*Building European Identity: India as a Model?*).

The thematic diversity that is characteristic of the entire volume is the most obvious in the final chapter entitled *Institutions and Identity*. The eleven articles in this section cover topics from the effects of the European minority protection conditionality on Romania (*Alina Alexandra Bot*), to the use of religious symbols in schools (*Gizella Horváth*) and the assessments on the European tradition of doing philosophy in public (*László Nemes*).

Unfortunately, the book lacks any attempt to unify the multitude of topics by using editorial introductory chapters; it is a simple collection of articles presented at the conference. Thematic summaries of the sections can be found on the conference website; therefore, those who need such guidance are advised to follow the structure and section summaries presented there. Nevertheless, the thematic and methodological diversity demonstrates the complexity of the question of identity, its multidisciplinary relevance, and proves the usefulness of international cooperation. Although the articles show a predominantly scientific conference profile, the variety of perspectives and approaches used make the book accessible to a wide readership.