

Abstrakty/Abstracts

EXPLORING THE NATION Nine Studies on Ethnicity and Nationalism

Peter Drál' and Andrej Findor (Editors)

1.

Representations of „Ethnicity” in Western Ukraine and Eastern Slovakia: Cognitive and Social Background of the Construction of a Social Identity in Multi-ethnic and Mono-ethnic Environments.

Martin Kanovský

The aim of this study is (1) to review critically some influential explanations of ethnicity and nation (Gellner, Weber) showing that they are implicitly based on a cognitive dimension; then (2) to propose some remarks concerning the necessary and sufficient conditions to explain properly the social construction of an ethnic identity; after that, this article presents (3) the detailed description of two psychological mechanisms, namely essentialism of social groupings and folk sociology (folk models of society) which are jointly an underlying background for ethnic classifications, always together with a particular social/cultural input. Finally (4), this study presents empirical evidence from the multiethnic site Storozhnytsa (Western Ukraine) and the monoethnic site Vernár (Eastern Slovakia) showing that the structure of folk models and implicit judgements concerning ethnic identity in both environments is very similar and based upon psychological essentialism. However, our evidence suggests that this essentialist construction of ethnic identity is always paralleled with and accompanied by pragmatic, non-essentialist identities which are constructed contextually to deal with the specific demands of a particular social environment. The conclusion is that social identity is necessarily plural, having always its essentialist components and pragmatic components with their respective regularities. To explain constructions of ethnic identity properly and without flaws is to take into account both of its dimensions: essentialist constructions based upon the underlying and well-described universal psychological mechanism triggered, but not created by social/cultural input, and pragmatic constructions based solely upon this social/cultural input.

Keywords: ethnicity, essentialism, social identity, folk models of society, structure of representations

2.

Slovaks and/or Europeans?: Collective Identities, Social Representations and Social Change.

Barbara Lášticová

Drawing on discursive approaches to social identity and on social representations theory, this study explores (1) discursive constructions of social representations of national and European identities (2) organizing principles of these representations, and (3) representations of relations between national and European identities in semi-structured interviews with Slovak young adults (18-24). Three discourses were identified, shaping the representations of national identity: banalising, individualist, and pseudo-determinist. They construct the nationality as ascribed by birth and are interconnected by the theme of national pride. When talking about attachment to Europe, the participants discuss its very existence, using the following discourses: (1) geographical; (2) political/economic, and (3) discourse about European culture. National and European identities are constructed as automatically nested, becoming salient in situations of intergroup contact. Their representations are formed by two main organizing principles: individual vs. collective (stressing individual distinctiveness vs. in-group solidarity) and active vs. passive (constructing identity as assigned vs. achieved/chosen).

Keywords: national identity, European identity, youth, Slovakia, European Union, social representations, discourse

3.

Collective Memory in Conflict and Conciliation.

Dagmar Kusá

This study explores the place of collective memory in ethnic identity formation and mobilization. It is a selective and purposeful dynamic process. Depositories of collective memory are within individuals. The transmission of historical narratives through societal channels conveys strong emotions, which aid in ethnic mobilization of social groups. The study looks into the dynamics of a protracted local conflict between the Slovak Heritage Foundation (*Matica slovenská*) and the Komárno City Hall (composed of a majority of ethnic Hungarian political parties) in Southern Slovakia. The key actors are political leaders from local and national political scenes. Local Slovak and ethnic Hungarian populations do not respond to the conflict in a significant way, suggesting that the local “small histories” of a mixed community help bridge over external pressures and mobilization attempts. An illustrative survey also indicates that the local opinion leaders tend to give more importance to history than a random sample, and ethnic Hungarians tend towards stronger ethnic identification than Slovaks.

Keywords: collective memory, ethnic identity, ethnic conflict, ethnic mobilisation, Slovak Heritage Foundation (Matica slovenská), Komárno.

4.

Slovaks: “The Most Loyal Hungarians” or “A Free Nation”? Social Representations of Slovaks in the Hungarian Press in 1914-1918.

László Vörös

In this study the author analyses the changes of social representations of the Slovak speaking population of the north-western part of the Hungarian Kingdom in the 19th century Hungarian/Magyar nationalist discourses. The focus is on the period after the 1867 Ausgleich, with particular attention to the years of World War I. The study is based on the analysis of five Magyar regional newspapers (issued in mainly Slovak inhabited areas), in which the author explores the usage of social categories (“people/folk”, “nationality”, “nation”) and stereotypes as they were utilized in the social representations of the Slovaks. In the analysis he follows how subtle changes within the predominant Hungarian/Magyar nationalist ideology of the “Hungarian (political) nation” and particular events in the domestic policy and abroad, influenced and in fact changed, the way in which the Slovak population was represented. The study has a substantial theoretical introduction, in which the author pays great attention to introducing his analytical tools (social representation theory and a theory of nationalism) and establishing a solid analytical vocabulary.

Keywords: social representations; Hungarian/Magyar nationalism, Slovak nationalism, nationalist discourses; social categories, nationality, World War I

5.

Making “National History” Work: Representing “Cultural Superiority” and Creating Ethnic Boundaries in Slovak History Textbooks.

Andrej Findor

The author argues for a relational and action-oriented analytical perspective in studying nations and nationalism, centred on the alternative definitions of nation as a category of practice and nationalism as an activity of “doing things with nation-words”. The approach to “contextual” and “intentional” interpretation of historical texts is applied to an empirical case study. The author closely scrutinises representations of the foundational period of (Czecho)Slovak “national history” (5th to 10th Century AD) in Slovak history textbooks published in inter-war Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938). The analysis is focused on examining the fundamental aspects of “national history” as the authoritative system of the representation of the past – its putative natural (given), unique, ancient and universal character. The author examines conventional uses of categories of „national history” with their boundary making effects and their drive towards the establishment of „cultural

superiority” of (Czecho)Slovak ancestors over their German and Hungarian counterparts. Moreover, the study of the nationalisation of „cultural superiority” in history textbooks reveals not only the constitutive social and political character of such representations of the past but also the conative character of these historical speech acts.

Keywords: representations, ethnic boundary, national history, history textbooks, nation, nationalism, cultural superiority, interwar Czechoslovakia

6.

Nation, Religion and Modernity in South-East Poland: An Anthropological Case Study of Nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe.

Juraj Buzalka

In this study author analyses the dependency between nationalism and religion in societies whose common basis of political mobilization consists of rural social structures, agrarian imagery and narratives, and traditional religion. The author conceptualises these societies as post-peasant. Relying on analyses of ethnographic case studies and anthropological analysis of national and religious rituals from south-east Poland, author demonstrates the dependence of national mobilisation on institutional religion and the significant dependence of religion on the resources offered by nationalism. Due to the fact that religious and nationalist identifications and mobilizations represent parallel rather than sequential processes in the course of social transformations in many parts of the world, it is necessary to modify the conventional secularisation theory on the privatization of religion in modern conditions as well as the conventional view on nationalism as the only ‘god of modernity’ in post-peasant societies. It is not only necessary to understand the role of religion in nationalist politics but also the role everyday politics of religion plays in non-ethnic inclusion and for ordinary tolerance.

Keywords: religion, nationalism, secularisation, post-peasant society, belated modernisation, social transformations

7.

The Political Language of Nationalist Populism – Continuities and Changes in Political Discourses of Post-communist Poland and Slovakia.

Tomáš Strážay

This study presents a contribution to the analysis of political discourse in countries undergoing political, economic and social transformation. It argues that even two decades after regime change, nationalism and nationalist populism represent important challenges for countries in Central and Eastern Europe, regardless of their ethnic structure. Empirical analysis of party slogans and media statements of politically elite representatives shows

that a significant part of the political elite in Poland and Slovakia is inclined to employ nationalist populism in their statements in order to homogenize their electorate. The study has three main tasks. First, it aims at identifying and further analyzing nationalist populist appeals in the Polish and Slovak political discourse in the period of post-communist transition through qualitative and quantitative analysis of party slogans and media statements of the political elite representatives. The second task is to conduct a cross-country comparison in order to highlight similarities and differences between the Polish and Slovak political discourses in terms of the presence and usage of nationalist populist appeals. Finally, the study provides a cross-time comparison, which should underline the dynamics of changes in both Polish and Slovak political discourses in the course of ten years.

Keywords: political discourse, comparison, nationalism, populism, nationalist populism

8.

Laziness as an „Essence“ of Roma Ethnic Identity: Critical Analysis of the Slovak Social Policy Discourse

Peter Drál'

The chapter examines discourse about the causes of Roma poverty that, since 2000, developed in the Slovak scholarly literature, and later transgressed into policy and popular discourse. The paper discusses the impact that the concepts of the culture of poverty and dependency culture had on reinforcing negative reactions towards the poor which in Slovakia mainly turned against the Roma. This discourse demonstrated itself in the most exclusionary forms in February 2004 in a period of the so-called „Roma riots“, when the New Social Policy reduced welfare benefits and evoked public protests involving the Roma poor. It also interprets public representation of the social unrest which discursively ethnicized laziness, essentialized Roma ethnic identity, reified Roma poverty and justified exclusion of the unemployed Roma – a special case of the undeserving poor – from both material and symbolic resources.

Keywords: discourse, ethnicity, ethnicization, essentialism, social policy, poverty, symbolic violence

9.

How to Make an American. On the Limits of the Dichotomy of Civic and Cultural Nationalism

Lucia Najšlová

The goal of this study is to show that one of the earlier classifications of nationalisms – the dichotomy of ethnic vs. civic (sometimes referred to as organic vs. voluntaristic or cultural