

ELTE Doctoral School of Sociology

2014/2015 Fall semester

Research Seminar on Russian and European Identity in Transition

Aim of the seminar

The aim of the seminar is to include students from various universities operating in the EU and in Russia to the EUinDepth Project which deals with the making of the European Identity in the 21st Century. The proposition is to offer this research seminar in all participating universities in order to collect qualitative data concerning the aspects of the formation of the European identity. As a result we can expect a collection of data from various parts of Europe and Russia based on the same principle of construction. The seminars would last in the first semester of the 2014/2015 academic year at each university. The final products (texts, ppt. presentations, vide reports) would be collected and presented together in the website of the project. On the basis of the collected data several comparative studies could be written.

Selected Topics

The participants are entitled to write an essay in English, following up one of the topics below. The minimum length is 10,000 characters. The deadline is the 23rd of December.

Legal discourse on European Identity.

The failure of the European Constitution shed light on the legal difficulties of the formulation of European Identity in legal forms. The “clash of civilization” paradigm developed by Samuel Huntington compels Europeans however to find solution to the problem of immigration of non-European, non-Western roots without the desire to be assimilated. The basis of European identity lays on common set of values that has not been properly elaborated yet. The analysis of parliamentary discourse in the individual countries as well as in the European Parliament concerning human rights, minorities, national identity could reveal common elements in contemporary political and legal thought on Europe as well as the differences.

Borders between the nations

The political borders between the various European countries have increasingly lost their power on identity formation. National sovereignty and the concept of political nations are in decline. In contrast, the cultural concept of the nation is on the rise even in countries which earlier have been considered as the primary examples of the political nation (e.g..France, The Netherlands). Immigration within the EU and to the EU created communities which are now willing to act like ‘melting pots’. This topic would deal with the question how people construct their national identity based on borders which do no exist in the physical space? Diaries, letters, video-clips, popular songs, blogs, on line communities transgressing the traditional borders can be studied. Russia and the other non EU states are extremely important in this context since compared with the citizens of EU the citizens of these state imagine Europe in a profoundly different way.

Populist movements, radicalism and euroscepticism

European societies underwent momentous changes in the past few decades. In response to decreasing competitiveness and increasing social inequalities a backlash of multiculturalism occurred and the idea of ethnically „pure” national community returned from the past. The resurgent populist political organizations such as the „Greek Dawn” or the Hungarian Jobbik have successfully exploited the social frustration and resentment transforming them into political capital. The qualitative research carried out in the individual countries by the student should focus on visual imagery, slogans, campaigning contents of these movements.

Outmigration and immigration between Russia and the EU member states

Since the Napoleonic wars Europe was a target continent for both the ‘Zapadniks’ as well as the “Slavophiles”. Waves of immigrants have arrived to the soil of the various European states and we propose to have a look of the present generation of immigrants. How they position themselves to the earlier immigrants? Is there any continuity between the waves of Russian immigrants or what we have now it is completely new in terms of motivation, values and identity? These questions could be studied by well selected case studies of the students living in the countries participating in the EUinDepth Project.

Representations of Europe and Russia in the offline media.

The aim of this task is to study the representation of Europe in the mainstream media in the individual countries on a longitudinal basis. Starting with 1945 issues such as peace, economic prosperity, migration, competitiveness, national identity, regional identity, minorities can be investigated. How representations of these issues have changed? What were the dividing lines and discussions? How the opposing political parties have exploited the political potential of the individual issues? How has developed the pro-Europe and anti-Europe patterns of discourse?

Representations Europe and Russia in the online media

The online media as opposed to the offline media has no center. The contents of the social media are produced by the consumers themselves. The study of the social media in relation to the representation of Europe should focus on the vast amount of texts, pictures, videos that has emerged in the context of Europe in the individual countries. The questions and issues to be investigated can be the same as the questions and issues rose in the case of the mainstream media. Facebook, twitter, blogosphere, homepages and websites of individuals, organizations and governments can be investigated.

Euro news vs national news services

In 1992, following the First Persian Gulf War during which CNN's 24 hours program was highly criticized as a sole source of information, the EBU (European Broadcasting Union) decided to establish Euro news to present information from a European perspective. The first broadcast was launched on 1 January 1993 from Lyon. The channel reaches more than 170 million European households and it also began to secure availability on digital mobile platforms. As a case study the investigation of the reception of the program among the audience of the individual countries could demonstrate the willingness to interpret the affairs of the world in terms of European identity.

Arts and literature and national identity building

Europe has traditionally been one of the major concerns of authors, film directors, painters and sculptors. European identity issues raised by the contemporary arts and literature in the individual countries would be the target of investigation.. In Russia Sokurov’s Russian Ark

can be investigated in the individual European Countries their symbolic self-presentation during their Presidency would be an ideal subject. The European Cultural Capital Program is also a subject waiting for research.

Popular culture and identity

European identity cannot be formulated without popular basis which stems from contents, events, celebrities of popular culture. The language, the symbols, the rituals, the fads play a crucial role in the homogenization of the cultural practices in the individual nations resulting in development of meanings being distinctly European. This process has by no means been enhanced by the mass mobility of the EU citizens in the single European space created by the Schengen Agreement. Case studies of popular music bands, popular cultural events, fads and fashions should be carried out in this context.

Gender and Europe

Contemporary European societies have reached a phase when the traditional dichotomy of the roles of male and female are not valid anymore. The legal system in many European countries has recognized the rights LMBP people including the right to marital bonds. This process, however, was highly controversial reflecting divide in the individual European societies. It would be worth to study the LMBT dialectics of the emancipation process in the EU countries as well as in countries bordering with the EU.

Identity building through textbooks

Textbooks of history, arts and literature are ideal resources for studying national as well as European historical and cultural narratives taught in elementary and high schools. In the course of the research seminar students can analyze contents of textbooks with a special emphasize on paragraphs where Europe is referred. The results of the analysis will show how strong is the tendency in the individual countries to represent the own nation separated from the trends of development of Europe as a single historical region.

Sports in national and global contexts

International sport events, the opening and the closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games offer a unique opportunity to investigate the way of self-representation of the individual nations in terms of similarity and difference.

Schedule

25th of November (12:25)

Before the first workshop, the participants are obliged to watch the movie by Alexander Sokurov: Russian Ark (Русский ковчег) A full version can be found on youtube.

Introduction, Problem setting, List of Problems to be investigated

28th of November (14:45)

Living in the past. The I in the collective.

29th of November (12:25)

Gender models. Sexual colonization.

To be young and Russian

02nd of December (12:25)

An empire(?) of evil(?). Recent events in Russian foreign politics, and its interpretations.

05th of December (14:45)

Students discussions

06th of December (12:25)

Students discussions

Readings

Recommended readings

Calhoun, Craig 2007. *Nations Matter: Culture, History, and the Cosmopolitan Dream*. New York: Routledge,

Örkény, Antal (2011) „European Identity and National Attachment: Harmony or Dissonance”, in. *Corvinus Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* Vol.2 (2011) 1, pp. 33–61, see also <http://cjssp.uni-corvinus.hu/index.php/cjssp/index>

Required readings

Barth, Fredrik 1969 Introduction In Barth, Fredrik (Ed). *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries - The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*. (pp. 9-39). Boston, Little, Brown and Company

Brubaker, Rogers. 2011. Nationalizing States Revisited: Projects and Processes of Nationalization in Post-Soviet States. (pp. 1785-1814) *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34.

Brubaker, Rogers. 2004. Beyond identity. In Brubaker, R. *Ethnicity without Groups* (pp. 28-64.) Harvard College

Clarke, Simon 2008. Culture and Identity. In T. Bennet & J. Frow (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Cultural Analysis* (pp. 510-529). Sage Publications Ltd.

Piontkovsky, Andrei. 2006. East or West? Russia's Identity Crisis in Foreign Policy. London: The Foreign Policy Centre

Sökefeld, Martin 2001. Reconsidering Identity. *Anthropos*, 96(2), 527-544.

Recommended online articles:

<http://carnegie.ru/eurasiaoutlook/?fa=53297>

<http://www.vision.org/visionmedia/current-events-politics-russian-identity/5814.aspx>

<http://barentsobserver.com/en/security/2014/11/russia-plays-nuclear-war-games-barents-region-01-11>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/30/nato-jets-intercept-russian-warplanes>

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/anne-applebaum-nato-pays-a-heavy-price-for-giving-russia-too-much-credits-true-achievement-under-threat/2014/10/17/5b3a6f2a-5617-11e4-809b-8cc0a295c773_story.html

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/who-is-the-bully-the-united-states-has-treated-russia-like-a-loser-since-the-cold-war/2014/03/14/b0868882-aa06-11e3-8599-ce7295b6851c_story.html