

CALL FOR PAPERS

Living together 'in' diversity. National societies in the multicultural age

Central European University, Budapest, 21-22 May 2012

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary European societies have been recently characterized as having entered the age of 'super-diversity'. Migratory flows in particular have contributed to this transformation, due to the heterogeneous ethno-cultural, and religious background of present migrants, as well as their social status, age, and mobility patterns.

Among the effects this transformation has brought about is the increased challenge posed to the constitutive principle of the nation-state, i.e., the assumption that identity (nation) and politics (state) can and should be mutually constituent and spatially congruent. Thus, unsurprisingly, many states have started perceiving diversity as a 'problem', potentially threatening national unity, while anti-immigration and xenophobic attitudes have experienced a rapid surge.

Existing scholarship has offered insightful critical analyses of this 'backlash against diversity', documenting the rise of repressive state measures designed to limit access of new migrants to the national territory and citizenship. Other scholars have instead moved away from the idea of the nation-state, proposing either post-national solutions, which decouple the cultural (nation) from the political (state), or transnational paradigms, which implicitly discard the focus on the nation-state as not only obsolete but also politically questionable.

Yet, despite important insights from this scholarship, social and political life continues to remain largely structured by discourses, resources and institutions articulated at the national scale.

AIM

It is therefore the aim of the proposed conference to explore how 'living together in diversity' is imagined, narrated, organized, justified, and practiced within contemporary national societies. With the stress on 'in' rather than 'with' diversity we want to move away from reifying the dominant 'majority' society perspective, which assumes diversity as something 'carried' solely by immigrants and something that the 'native' society has to cope with.

Some of the questions that we are interested in are:

- What makes multicultural societies circumscribed by state borders cohere together?
- What are the ways in which the nation becomes re-signified to accommodate the ethno-cultural diversity of its populace?

- How do migrants position themselves in national narratives and political structures?
- What alternative modes and models of belonging are at work within present national societies?
- In which ways does the national continue to feature as a site of attachment?
- Is it necessary to have some form of common identification at the national scale to have functioning states in the first place?

Although we acknowledge that these questions are inescapably normative in character, we particularly welcome empirically- informed work. The privileged level of analysis we are interested in is the national scale, but papers focusing on sub-national and supra- national scales can also be welcomed inasmuch as they can offer insights regarding how living together in diversity works at the national scale. Regionally, the conference will focus on Europe, but contributions discussing other geographical contexts are also welcomed.

DEADLINES

All potential participants are invited to submit an abstract (250-300 words) to Tatiana Matejskova by **December 31st, 2011**.

By January 31st, 2012 participants will be informed about the acceptance of their papers.

Confirmation of participation and payment of the conference fee will be due on February 28th, 2012. The conference fee of 60 Euros will cover refreshments, lunches and conference materials.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

One of the most immediate outcomes of the conference is the publication of a selection of papers in form of both an edited book with a major publishing company and a special issue to be submitted to a leading cross-disciplinary international journal. On the longer term, the conference also aims to consolidate the collaboration among the participants in form of a cross-disciplinary research network, which might lead to collective research projects to be funded by the EU and other external bodies.

LOCAL INFORMATION

The Central European University is located in the historic centre of Budapest (Nador utca, 9 – 1051 Budapest). Accommodation will be available at several hotels in the vicinity of the CEU at a discount price (e.g. 50-80 Euros/night for a 3* hotel; 60-110 Euros/night for a 4* hotel, for single rooms). Cheaper accommodation can also be available at the CEU dormitory (single and double rooms available).

Budapest can be reached, among others, by train (<http://www.mav.hu/english/index.php> [2]) and air (<http://www.bud.hu/english> [3]). Participants might also consider Vienna's airport, which is connected to Budapest by bus and train (travelling time about 3 hours).

SPONSORSHIP

The Conference is sponsored by the following CEU departments and academic units: - Department of International Relations and European Studies - Department of Sociology and Anthropology - Nationalism Studies Program - Center for Policy Studies - Center for Environment and Security

FURTHER INFORMATION

For any further information please feel free to contact the main organizers:

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Links: -----

[2] <http://www.mav.hu/english/index.php>

[3] <http://www.bud.hu/english>