

## CHALLENGES OF EUROPEAN CULTURAL IDENTITY IN INTERCULTURAL CONTEXT

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*Abstract:* This paper discusses the relationship between national and European cultural identities in an intercultural context. More specifically, how identities are activated in short-term sojourns of young people in different national cultural environments.

The problem of cultural identity has long been discussed in the late decades, especially due to the increasing phenomenon of migration in search of a job, an education and/or a change of lifestyle. We argue that cultural identity reacts to the changes in the environment. As long as an individual stays in his/her cultural environment, cultural identity changes slowly, as to incorporate new information into old patterns. However, when individuals find themselves in an intercultural context, cultural identity is challenged by the new patterns, and demands a considerable adaptive effort.

At present, little is known about how people experience European cultural identity in an intercultural context. Do people experience a sense of being European or rather of being citizen of their country? Does the European dimension of one's identity facilitate in any way the adaptive efforts to a new environment? In order to answer these questions we conducted twenty-four in-depth interviews with Erasmus students studying abroad between 3 and 6 months, in the last two years. The main focus of the research is how young people experience two different layers of cultural identity: national and European.

Research showed that national identity is the strongest cultural dimension of people experiencing an intercultural environment. European identity seems to be rather a theoretical construct than a well established presence. It does not merely support the adaptive effort of short-term sojourners.

## CAPITALS, CLASSIFICATIONS, AND LANGUAGE PRACTICES: CONFLICTING DISCOURSES OF SOCIAL EVALUATION IN CONTEMPORARY SERBIA

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*Abstract:* The paper aims at presenting the contours of the dynamic field of competing scales of evaluation – of people, social groups, and practices – operating in contemporary Serbia and shaping social inclusion and exclusion. We will be taking our leads from three theorists sometimes seen as incompatible: Bourdieu's notion of classification struggles, Boltanski and Thevenot's economies of worth, and Lamont's boundary work. This composite theoretical framework will be used to explore how these struggles are manifested in ordinary people's discourses in semi-formal settings. The paper will be based on analysis of qualitative data collected through focus group discussions set up as part of the research project "Social and Cultural Capital in Serbia". Special attention will be paid to

the differential use of language as a performative instrument in classification practices.

## CULTURE CONFLICTS BETWEEN OWNERS AND WORKERS ON RUSSIAN PLANTS

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*Abstract:* Economic changes (the development of market principles, the maintenance of competition, recognition of private property rights, etc.) face with resistance of various groups of contemporary Russian society. This resistance is rarely leads to the open expression of dissatisfaction. Probably, we should speak of the latent cultural conflict (modernizations type). The economic crisis only reinforces this gap.

The report considers the cultural conflicts by the case of the owners of the factory and its laborers. The report is based on data from sociological study one of Urals industrial plant.

At the plant it can be observed at least three groups, whose culture (philosophy, technology of behavior, actions symbolic) is opposed to each other: the owners, top management and workers. Workers are not aware of themselves as workers, their labor at the plant is perceived as natural condition, and the thought of occupational mobility frightens them. Owners use a wide interpretation of their status. In their eyes, they hold not only the plant, but partly its employees. Workers are eventually powerless and helpless. Their work is underestimated, wages may delay, working conditions deteriorate, and safety precautions are not observed. Company's owners do not have considerable economic knowledge; the plant for them is like a bottomless box from which one can borrow money. This opinion determines the dual position of top management: they share the views of the owners about the powerless workforce, but instead refuse their own professional claims.

As a result, formal and informal norms of labor at the plant have equal status. Workers, management and owners are choosing among them those that conserve the status quo and exclude changes both inside and outside. Employment at the plant alienates its workers from the rational participation in the economy. Ownership of the plant does not give its owners the opportunity to learn rational economic market behavior.

## HOW CAN THE FUTURE BE BUILT UPON THE PAST?

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*Abstract:* The Case of Latvia: March 16 vs. May 9. When Latvia became independence in 1991, it also inherited the legacies of the Soviet occupation. One of the most challenging legacies has been the disagreement between communities who have contrary understandings of themselves and history, in particular between local ethnic Latvians and (primarily) ethnic Russians who arrived with the Soviet regime. Although in 1994 the last Soviet armed forces left Latvia, 20000 retired members of the Soviet military (and their families) decided to stay in Latvia.

The conflicting understandings and identities between the Latvian and Russian communities is reflected in the very different com-