
‘The study of nationalism is the study of how elites strive to defend, strengthen, or even construct this sense of distinctiveness’ (p. 88), asserts Conversi, one the contributors. Nationalism is habitually associated with nation-building and has been depicted as one of the most powerful political forces of modern age. And this is achieved by indentifying and distinguishing the ‘others’ and building boundaries and frontiers. Now that the nation-sate in Europe, particularly in the European Union (EU) zone, has been acquiring a new significance, so has nationalism. The volume edited by Ireneusz Pawel Karolewski and Andrzej Marcin Suszycki explores through 13 articles (chapters) the significance that nationalism has in today’s Europe, and how the EU manipulates the ‘phenomenon’ of nationalism in the various countries and regions to craft cohesion, integration and a collective European identity.

The first major perception is that there are meaningful differences between Western and Eastern European nationalisms. According to Taras Kuzio, nationalism in Western Europe became known after two centuries of nation-state building as civic nationalism, whereas in the Eastern part of Europe it emerged as civic nationalism only under the communist era and after that. The present meaning of nationalism evolved in the West in the 1960s and in the East in the 1990s. Kuzio asserts that civic nationalism concentrates in three main areas: citizenship and the vote, gender, and immigration, thus being more pluralistic and inclusive.

With the institutionalization of the EU, a debate over European identity began. Karolewski claims that there is a new strategy in European nationalism which intends to build a collective identity based on ‘a national sense of belonging in a non-nation-state environment’ (p. 59).

However, Karolewski argues that there is a scepticism about the EU creating a supra-national identity and nationalism. Citing Anthony D. Smith, who asserts that it is based on a mistaken assumption, namely the end of the nation-states. Smith sustains that one cannot ignore the perseverance of the nation-states and the roots of the national identity, such as common ethnic base, myths, symbols, values, which Europe lacks. Thus, according to Karolewski, what Europe needs is to develop a nation-like nationalism based on diversity and heterogeneity in order to develop collective identity and not just suppress the existing national identities.

Janet Laible presents a different point of view. In her ‘Back to the future with Vlaams Belang?’ chapter, she asserts that the multi-level governance approach to the European integration is a smart approach to reduce regional nationalism and pressure for independence. Within the EU, this approach involves a reconceptualization of the role of the national, sovereign westphalian-weberian state in favour of integration. However, the Belgium-Flemish right-wing party Vlaams Belang has in its agenda the independence of Flanders. Laible supports the argument that this agenda is ‘old fashioned’ because the nation-state is no longer an agenda for the different local ethnic-nationalist groups in the present state of integration in the EU, whereas ‘the states share authority over the policies that are implemented on their territories and

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populations with European, regional and local actors, a transformation that directly challenges the traditional role of central state government’ (p. 138). This is characterized as a post-modern statehood having globalization played a role all over the world, but it was in the EU that this form of state and government has gone the furthest. Laible also asserts that the EU multi-level form of government is as much post-modern (being beyond the modern westphalian-weberian ideal-type of state) as well as ‘pre-modern’, having ‘similarities with medieval Europe, in which individuals were subject to multiple and often overlapping and non-territorially based forms of authority’ (p. 139).

The general view the book puts forward is that the EU is working to build a ‘post-modern’ nationalism which is not exclusively based in the nation-state ideology but rather on ethnic-regional groups, all sharing a common European sense of belonging and uniqueness.

The book successfully introduces and captures a new perspective in the study of nationalism. The authors propose a multiple, multi-layered nationalism in contemporary, integrating Europe, including supranationalism, nation-building and regionalism, and these leading to three perspectives:

(i) Collective identity built on integrative logic, attempting to ‘generate a nation-like sense of belonging in a non-nation-state environment’ (p. 263).
(ii) Boundary-building is a simple form to separate ‘us’ from the ‘others’ and to construct a sense of distinctiveness.
(iii) Regionalism or regional ideologies. Olsson is her chapter refers to it as sub-state regionalism, which seeks to ‘sidestep their central government to achieve their policy goals at the EU level by forging direct links with the EU’ (p. 267). The Committee of the Regions, having its politics in seeking inclusiveness and cohesion, offer and supply the regions with new political opportunity structure. As a result, the pressures of separatist movements have reduced.

José Ricardo Martins
Universidade Federal do Paraná


In the world of 24 hour news cycles it is often the case that we becomes fixated on certain events and then as quickly as they enter the public consciousness they are replaced by the next big event. What is often forgotten, however, is the long-term ramifications of those momentous events. In Europe, no event captured the world’s attention more in the past 25 years than the fall of communism in 1989. This incredible event restructured the world system and led to a massive restructuring of the post-communist societies, and with their inclusion in the European Union (EU) starting in 2004, Europe as a whole. It is the issues of this restructuring, long forgotten by many, which Barbara Einhorn addresses in her updated paperback version of her 2006 book.

Specifically, Einhorn examines the development of East European societies since the revolutions and their policies and practices concerning gender. Her overlying argument is that the development of liberal, market-driven societies has created gendered societies in which women have not enjoyed the same level of economic or political prosperity as men. She argues that at its worse, the post-1989 political environment has put woman at

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