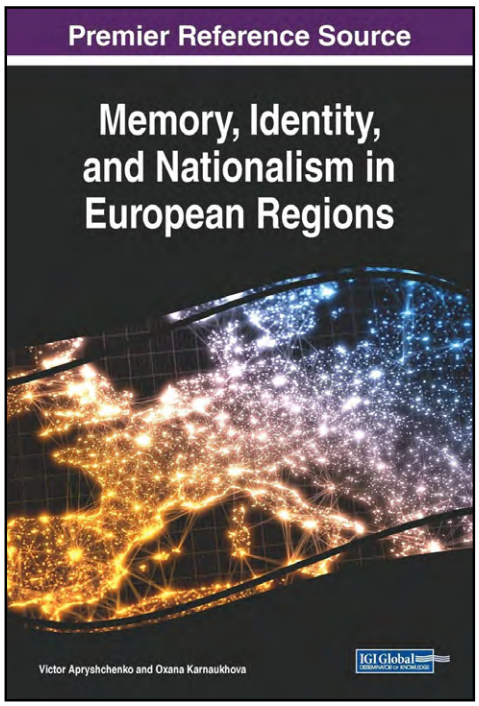
BOOK REVIEW



Memory, Identity, and Nationalism in European Regions

Edited by Oxana Karnaukhova and Victor Apryshchenko

IGI Global, 2019, 254 pp., eBook. £128.29 (PDF).
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Recently, there has been growing interest in memory studies. This multi-disciplinary field invites diverse social and political topics from different subjects under academic scrutiny. Particularly within the context of Eastern Europe and Eurasia, the proliferation of interest in memory studies might be related to several factors such as the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of new nation-states, bringing into the fore unresolved national and ethnic contradictions and identity issues. **Memory, Identity, and Nationalism in European Regions** is an impressive book providing insightful discussions and addresses critical questions on understanding and analysing the role of memory and ethnicity in the processes of creation and re-creation of identity. Co-edited by Apryshchenko and Karnaoukhoka, it touches upon several facets of identity-related issues, particularly in post-conflict societies, from the perspective of memory studies. The volume includes articles written by various scholars from across the field. As the editors (2019:xiii) declare in the Preface, the book offers a well-balanced combination of theory and empirical study.

As a scholar working on the topic of memory in diaspora societies, I have found this book appealing for one major reason: It is comprised of articles aspiring to derive data from various cases and aiming to process it with innovative theoretical schemes. Markus Breitweg's contribution is an impeccable exemplar of a study primarily resting upon a theoretical framework drawn from post-structuralist attempts by distinct figures in memory studies. Benefiting from the underlying premises of the post-structuralist approach, Breitweg offers a working device to better grasp the dynamics of the post-conflict settings with respect to collective memory. What makes Breitweg's contribution valuable is not the applicability or theoretical consistency of his model but rather his persistent call for a theoretical rethinking about collective memory in particular settings.

In the second chapter of the volume, Goran Ilik, while discussing the potentials of the EU as a model and an agent for reconciliation in the Balkans, provides insights for modes of regional cooperation amongst Balkan countries. Ilik's methodological framework has also been drawn from the key premises of post-structuralism, such that the author tends to define the EU as a perfect exemplar of a postmodern space operating within a postmodern world (Ilik, 2019:33). According to the author, for the Balkan countries, the ambition of full integration into the EU would be possible by the building of robust regional networking striving for true and institutionalised cooperation. It is through creating such institutional cooperation, Ilik argues, that the traumas and painful memories of the past, particularly the remnants of the atrocities of war among different ethnic groups, would be diminished and the common memory of peace and prosperity would be recreated.

The next chapter by Monika Gabriela Bartoszewicz is devoted to a thorough exploration of the interplay between memory and policies of history. The author applies ontological security theory (OST) and delineates the influential factors in ontological security behaviour with regards to the Polish context. The major problematic that informs the discussion of Bartoszewicz is the interwoven relationship between power and memory. This inherent relationship between remembrance and exercising political control profoundly shapes the quest for ontological security and the Polish case, according to the author, offers a well-documented example. Bartoszewicz's work especially stands out in this volume in the way that its theoretical framework communicates with Eric Hobsbawm's discussion on the 'invention of tradition'. While the book's apparent shortcoming is its lack of conversing with the field of nationalism studies, Bartoszewicz's article compensates for this weakness through a discussion of Hobsbawm.

In Chapter Four, having briefly outlined the history of public diplomacy in Slovakia after independence, Alexander Marchukov discusses how the Slovak government's efforts to reshape national identity have influenced public diplomacy activities within the country. The article introduces uncommon topics such as digital diplomacy, celebrity diplomacy and gastro-diplomacy and invites fruitful discussions over the issue of national identity.

Victor Apryshchenko, in Chapter Five, deals with the rhetoric of "Caucasian archaism", which epitomises the commonly shared attitude of Russian elites toward the North Caucasus. The author appears to recognise a "modern" vs "pre-modern" divide between Russia and the subjects of the North Caucasus while defining Europe as a postmodern actor. One chief claim of this article is that while cooperating with Russia, which is defined as a "modern society" by the author, the "postmodern"

Europe inevitably interacts with "pre-modern" North Caucasus subjects. Apryshchenko convincingly calls for the development of a new institutional framework and communication mechanisms in order to avoid serious social and political problems that are likely to arise as a result of incongruity between the parties.

In Chapter Six, Ekaterina Arkhipova's article provides one of the most impressive contributions of the volume, seeking to delineate the role assigned to memory in nationalistic approaches. Drawing upon Pierre Nora's innovative concept of "places of memory" (lieux de mémoire), Arkhipova discusses how geographical aspects have been redefined in the collective memory of the Armenian people. The author sheds light on the potentials of collective memory in defining and even inventing the geographical scope of a particular society. Primarily resting upon a rich empirical grounding, Arkhipova displays how the monuments, sculptures, and memorial places in general, reproduce not only the history but also the geography of a particular society and "reinvent" its national identity.

The next chapter is devoted to a brief discussion of the shadows of the Polish problem in Soviet-American and Russian-Ukrainian relations. The authors, Radmila Ayriyan and Alexander Egorov, attempt to show how memory and history inform geopolitical perspectives. The article argues that the Polish issue has long been a contentious topic between the former Soviet Union and the US. Fortunately, after the Cold War, this contentious episode diminished. As of 2014, with the re-emergence of multiple crises, the antagonisms once more appeared on the scene and fuelled the memories of wartime. The authors explore the question of how to rebuild a future from the remnants of a past that was contaminated by the memories of wars and conflicts.

The final chapter by Aijarkyn Kojobekova discusses the events of April 7, 2010, in Kyrgyzstan and derives certain insights from the Kyrgyz case and examines them in a broader framework. The article delineates how the monuments, memorials, statues, and their combinations contribute to the definition of the past. Kojobekova also resorts to Pierre Nora's concept of sites of memory and underlines the connection between the definition of the past and the attempts of creating a common future.

All in all, this volume deals with a range of questions that necessarily encompass history, sociology, politics, and international relations. A unique combination of theory and empirical data is what makes the book peculiar. Employing different research and analytical methods and feeding on rich empirical grounding, the authors invite the reader to critically engage with the issues related to memory studies. As such, the book could be of great interest to practitioners as well as scholars and students of sociology, politics and international relations.