

WHERE DO WE BELONG AND WHERE DO THEY BELONG TO? A RESEARCH ON MACROREGIONAL IDENTITIES IN EIGHT NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

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Between 2012 and 2015 the students' macroregional identities and its formative factors were analysed in Hungary and eight neighbouring countries (Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia) . An empirical (non-representative) survey constituted the backbone of the study, during which 1300 young people were surveyed by a questionnaire. The questionnaire was principally based on the methodology of mental map.

The purpose of the survey was to research the followings:

1. How do the respondents see the location of their own country and the neighbours in the political geographic space (Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Balkans)?
2. Which relations of countries do they consider?

The presentation is based mainly on the results of this survey. It demonstrates the differences between the answers in certain states regarding the formation of the concepts of Central Europe, Eastern Europe and Balkans, and reveals how these concepts are related to each other and what kind of new spaces, relationships are visible. Owing to our own standardisation, we can see the idea of the "excluding" and the "fugitive-enlarging" Central Europe, the "secluding, rejective" reactions, and the extremely strong territorial identities (often having political roots). Comparing the answers, the old and new relationships of the studied countries can be detected, which reveal particular internal grouping, respectively external orientations. These only partially refer to historical determinations, several new directions can also be observed among them.

WHITHER REGIONAL PLANNING?

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Since Regional Studies was founded in 1967, planning and planners have been central to understanding cities and regions. In the first ever issue of the journal the opening four papers all had "regional plan" or "regional planning" in their title. Yet as Regional Studies celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2017 planning is facing powerful challenges – professionally, intellectually, practically – in ways arguably not seen before. Recent developments and trends are therefore raising fundamental questions about the 'p' word (planning) in academic and policy circles. We can point to how planning is no longer solely the domain of professional planners but has been opened up to a diverse group of actors who are involved in place-making and place-shaping. We can observe how the study of cities and regions traditionally had a disciplinary home in planning schools (geography departments, and the like) but this link with place and space disciplines is being steadily eroded as research increasingly takes place in and through interdisciplinary research institutes. We can point to the advent of real-time modelling of cities and regions, and the challenges this poses for the type of long-term perspective that planning has traditionally afforded at a time, and in a society, where immediacy and short-termism are the watchwords. We can reflect on 'regional planning' and its mixed record of achievement. And we can also recognise how the link between 'region' and 'planning' has been decoupled as alternative regional (and other spatial) approaches to planning have emerged in conjunction with more networked and relational forms of place-making, and the re-imagination of the urban and the region in the current period. In this paper we move beyond the narrow confines of existing debate to outline a new agenda and provide a forum for debating what planning is, and should be, for in regional studies.