

Abstract

The thesis presents an analysis of the discourse of Transylvanian regional identity in Romanian newspaper from 1989 to 2014, opposing the hegemonic political and societal discourse promoting nationalism. In doing so, it emphasized inter-ethnic tolerance as a key principle that distinguished regional discourse from its centralist counterpart. The fact that the most important historical peoples of Transylvania were understood by the regional discourse as carriers of regional identity in the spheres of daily and political life not only confirmed the trans-ethnic inclusiveness of this construct, but also became its diversification factor. In addition to tolerance and acceptance of multiethnicity, regional discourse in the examined media relied predominantly on ideas of the region's essential democratic character, its cultural, social or economic specificities, as well as considerations of possible autonomy. These narratives, whether abstract or more pragmatic, represented the content of a discursively constructed regional identity, conveyed its sharing by different ethnic groups, and defined Transylvania in the context of an era within Romania as a whole. The internal thematic composition of Transylvanian regional identity discourse was not entirely constant during the period under review, its shape in the analysed sources depended to some extent on the circumstances of contemporary social and political developments, which had an impact on the content of the discourse as well as its outreach to the political sphere. Similarly, the way the region and its associated identity intervened in political debates underwent substantial changes, pointing to the normalization of regional discourse over time. Yet Transylvania's regional identity has not remained a fringe phenomenon, finding its protagonists among only a few local political figures. Over the years it was connected to important actors, including those active on a national level. The regional discourse has not, however, resulted in more pronounced separatist tendencies. Its central motif was the maintainance of peaceful coexistence of different ethnicities, along with consolidation of consciousness of regional specificities. In this respect, Transylvanian regional identity represents a special case lying beyond the usual typologies of regional studies and represents a model of a culturally-exclusive multi-ethnic region.