

Abstract

The Importance of Symbols for National Identity Formation in Scotland

This diploma thesis deals with the importance of symbols for national identity formation in contemporary Scotland. Selected phenomena are explored from two points of view: the first one analyzes the symbols reproduced „from above“ by the official tourist agency and political representation and occurrence of these symbols in public space. The second examines the subjective perception of Scottish national identity and its symbols. A combination of mostly qualitative research methods has been used in the study, the analysis of virtual data (Hendl 2016) was complemented by findings from a field survey in Scotland, which included e.g. monitoring of the data concerning the occurrence of Scottish national symbols in the public space, and 10 standardized open interviews with residents of Edinburgh and Glasgow. The symbols presented by the tourist agency are predominantly ethno-historical, such as tartan, thistle or traditional Scottish music, whereas the political representation of Scottish national identity is dominated by the symbolism of a fair, just and pacifist community and a clear definition of the Scottish national identity towards the English one. The subjective perception of Scottish national identity combines both approaches. People interviewed had the Scottish national identity linked most often with specific location which they had an emotional connection to, or with typical Scottish landscape. Cultural symbols and personality traits such as openness, a specific sense of humor and the pursuit of a just society were mentioned as well.

Key words: Scotland, nationalism, national identity, regional identity, national symbols