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New Regional Identities and Strategic Essentialism

Case studies from Poland, Italy and Germany

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Regional identity has become an important issue in debate on current changes in Europe. However, that has happened at a time when many scientists and some social movements adopt critical stances regarding the concept of identity. This paradox encourages the authors to explore current discourses on regions and regional identity.

Major questions are:

- What do current discourses on regional identity look like?
- Is there any relationship of current projects, institutionalisations and discussions of regional identity with the criticisms of the notion of collective identity?
- Do current projects and debates of regional identity pay attention to problems pointed out by such criticism (for example the relationship to the "other", i.e. those who are culturally different)?

Key features of the book include:

- Case studies on regions in Poland (Świętokrzyskie, Śląskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie), Italy (Trentino-South Tyrol, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto) and Germany (Brandenburg including its relation to the city-state Berlin).
- Accounts of nation state contexts and current developments in regionalisation, regionalism and federalisation debate.
- Thorough exploration of fields most important to the shaping of regional identity (school, regional media, representations of history, regional politics...).
- Demonstration of much variation in discourses and projects of regional identity.
- Reflections on strategic essentialism and heuristic use of that concept.

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New regional identities and strategic essentialism appeals to readers interested in current European regionalism and regionalisation as well as to those more inclined to examine general questions of collective identity coming especially from sociology, political science, social geography, regional sciences, contemporary history, social anthropology or cultural studies.

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