



Historical Tales and National Identity: An introduction to narrative social psychology

János László

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Social psychologists argue that people's past weighs on their present. Consistent with this view, *Historical Tales and National Identity* outlines a theory and a methodology which provide tools for better understanding the relation between the present psychological condition of a society and representations of its past. Author Janos Laszlo argues that various kinds of historical texts including historical textbooks, texts derived from public memory (e.g. media or oral history), novels, and folk narratives play a central part in constructing national identity. Consequently, with a proper methodology, it is possible to expose the characteristic features and contours of national identities.

In this book Laszlo enhances our understanding of narrative psychology and further elaborates his narrative theory of history and identity. He offers a conceptual model that draws on diverse areas of psychology - social, political, cognitive and psychodynamics - and integrates them into a coherent whole. In addition to this conceptual contribution, he also provides a major methodological innovation: a content analytic framework and software package that can be used to analyse various kinds of historical texts and shed new light on national identity. In the second part of the book, the potential of this approach is empirically illustrated, using Hungarian national identity as the focus. The author also extends his scope to consider the potential generalizations of the approach employed.

Historical Tales and National Identity will be of great interest to a broad range of student and academic readers across the social sciences and humanities: in psychology, history, cultural studies, literature, anthropology, political science, media studies, sociology and memory studies.

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