

## Legal Culture and Identity in Central and Eastern Europe

Bibó István College for Advanced Studies  
Eötvös Loránd University

Legal culture has in recent years become the fulcrum of research for socio-legally minded scholars. From theoretical attempts to conceptualise and categorise legal cultures, to empirical research efforts to measure it, legal culture has generated a lively discourse. At the same time, this heightened interest brought with it a multiplicity of debates which warrant further discussion.

This is especially so in Central and Eastern Europe: fraught with historical, geological, sociological, and political ties that make this region an excellent case study of legal cultures. The countries in the region share deep historical ties, both through the empires of old with their Austrian and German influence on the legal systems, as well as the shared experience of a socialist past. In addition, since the regime changes of 1989, the countries in the region have all been influenced by the emerging body of EU law and the vision of a *Ius Commune Europaeum*.

What we also share is the experience of life on the periphery. One might think of this as a curse, being chained to a hegemonic discourse by means of symbolic violence. This is apparent in the experience of the legal family of 'Socialist law', the problematic residues of which remain ever present in our legal systems. But one might also look at it as a blessing. For this experience of both belonging and distance gave rise to such influential theoretical contributions as Eugen Ehrlich's living law, fuelled by the experience of the reception of imperial law. Some have also argued that this experience of periphery is key to understanding and conceptualising a Central European Legal Family.

Thus, there is much that ties the countries of Central and Eastern Europe together. At the same time, we are seeing a resurgence of the concepts of national legal and constitutional identities. These are increasingly used as argumentative tools for emphasising national characteristics and interests in the face of an ever-closer integration. What exactly one might mean by constitutional identity and what are its characteristics remain largely underdeveloped. Consequently, scholarly discourse from multiple countries in the region might be illuminating not only on what we mean by constitutional identity, but also what might the constitutional identities of different countries entail, as well as how they might influence each other.

The topic of the 2022 Forum thus invites scholars to think about what binds Central and Eastern European legal systems together, and what divides them. How does the experience of periphery influence our legal systems and legal theory? How should we characterise our legal cultures? What implications does this have on comparative analysis? What do we make of the increasingly popular notion of national constitutional identity?

**We welcome contributions that engage these topics from a complex socio-legal perspective:**

*Theories of legal culture in Central and Eastern Europe*

*Characteristics of Central and Eastern European legal cultures*

*Experiences of periphery and its impact on social theory*

*Central and Eastern Legal Family: myth or reality*

*Experiences of Empire and Socialist law in Central and Eastern Europe*

*Central and Eastern European constitutional identities*

We also welcome papers sharing a similar methodological focus on related topics for an open panel.

The conference language is English. **Please submit an abstract of 500-700 words via EasyChair at <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=14thceeforumconferen> no later than 10 July 2022.** We will communicate acceptance of papers by 30 July 2022. If you would like to participate without submitting a paper (but with meals and conference materials included), please contact us directly at the address below.

The conference fee for all participants is 100 EUR, which covers conference material, drinks and snacks during the breaks, as well as lunch meals. We kindly ask participants to make arrangements and pay for their travel and accommodation individually. We will distribute information on lodging and directions as well as payment instructions for the accepted participants via email and through the conference website.

After the conference, selected participants will be invited to submit their papers for publication in a volume of the conference proceedings, our Central and Eastern European Forum for Legal, Political, and Social Theory Yearbook.

The conference is organised by the Bibó István College for Advanced Studies of Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. The conference venue is the newly refurbished building of the College, located in the centre of Budapest.

All questions about submissions should be emailed to the conveners, Márton Matyasovszky-Németh and Áron Fábrián, to [konferencia@bibokoll.elte.hu](mailto:konferencia@bibokoll.elte.hu).