

Abstract

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**Public Creativity and Cultural
Identity in Modern-day Belarus**

Contemporary Belarusian culture is understudied in the existing English-language literature. This paper begins to fill that gap by providing an in-depth cultural discourse analysis of terms and symbolic forms being used by current Belarusians when discussing creative public events. The analyses reveal a Belarusian way of speaking about cultural identities as members of six groups. These identities are within a larger cultural meta-commentary that exists in relation to the public creative practices and related forms of collective action that has attained a high degree of popularity today. The identities are analyzed further along four dimensions which represent current social dynamics in Belarus. The study is conceived and executed by using the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the Ethnography of Communication, the theory of Cultural Communication, and Cultural Discourse Theory (CuDA), which were used to analyze 11 months of field observations and 10 in-depth ethnographic interviews. CuDA's analytical procedures were applied to describe, interpret, compare, and critically assess the discourse. Specifically, the analyses focus on the discursive hub of identity which is expressed and characterized by the informants through the semantic radiants of acting and relating. Additional cultural and historical background on the issues of Belarusian language, relationship between the "State" and the "People", issues of the traditional local identity, and the attitudes toward action among the various groups of Belarusian population is provided.