

## BRANDS OF THE NATIONAL IDENTITY IN BELARUS

Each culture starts with the decomposition of the world into the inner (*the own*) and the outer (*the other*). The realization of the *otherness* of a different culture allows one to become aware of one's own identity in a more complete way.

In modern Belarus there are several versions of "own" identities.

For example, Lukashenko's version (*Brand-1*) is based on the Soviet past and an ideological upbringing of the youth where the main issues are statehood (Lenin and Stalin are good guys), internationalism with everyday xenophobia, and the idea that everyone around is the enemy. At the same time Lukashenko often invokes morality (everything is fair, we didn't sell our country to the West, etc.).

The nationalistic opposition parties (such as the Belarusian Popular Front) (*Brand-2*) build their identity discourse as a reaction to the Soviet past as well, but denying it as something destructive and negative for the "real" Belarusian identity, invoking the times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (16<sup>th</sup> c., the Belarusian Renaissance).

At the same time, if we were to compare these two Brands, it becomes clear that they do not allow us to go beyond this scheme (*the own – the Other*) and do not allow us to see the Other in us, thus hindering tolerance and willingness for dialogue with the others.

But the question is whether there are other types of identities in Belarus...

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