

VOLÁK, Jiří. *“Acts of Resistance”: Productions by Belarus Free Theatre from 2005 to 2015 as an Alternative Articulation of Belarusian National Identity*. Praha, 2016. 74 s. Diplomová práce (Mgr.) Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta sociálních věd, Institut mezinárodních studií. Katedra ruských a východoevropských studií. Vedoucí diplomové práce Mgr. Daniela Kolenovská, Ph.D..

## **Abstract**

The study aims to make sense of contemporary conceptions of national identity in Belarus *via* their cultural manifestations. For that purpose, the case of Belarus Free Theatre (BFT) has been chosen as an example of alternative culture in 2005-2015. Five plays are analysed with respect to the employed verbatim technique, and conclusions concerning the alternative society and its relation to language and other national issues are drawn.

Key questions are: What are the major competing projects regarding the (supposedly weak) Belarusian national identity? Does Belarus Free Theatre use culture to promote a certain vision within the national identity debate? What language policy does Belarus Free Theatre employ and what does it say about the national development?

After setting theoretical background, the study follows attempts to characterise Belarus under the rule of president Aliaksandr Lukashenka, offering basic facts about how he came to power. Then, the opposition is elaborated on, dealing specifically with the national identity issues. Through work of independent intellectuals, discourse trends within the alternative society are exposed. Only then Belarus Free Theatre is deeply observed, so its role within the national identity debate could be assessed.

At the same time, the research is regarded as a general introduction to the question of alternative culture's role in formulation of national ideas, not uniquely concerning Belarus. Therefore, a substantive amount of text is dedicated to theories of nationalism as well as how they are interpreted.