

Abstract

Once the Soviet Union ceased to exist, its subjects and dominions gained the ability to determine their course of political, cultural, and economic development. The never-ending transition to democracy, described by Boris Buden, is one of the key elements of post-communism. Yet, while the countries that had been the part of Eastern Bloc but not part of the Soviet Union itself were reasonably successful on their path to democratic capitalistic development, the former dominions struggled to incorporate the values that came with what Madina Tlostanova describes as a process of forced westernization. The following paper explores the problem of post-socialistic identity transformation in Central Europe in the case of the Czech Republic and post-soviet identity transformation in Eastern Europe in the case of Belarus. The qualitative research is built on the accessed collective memory of those who work within institutions of memory on the level permitted by the governing regimes in both countries, all born after 1989. The similarities and differences that clearly emerged during the comparative analysis of the findings suggest that being post-socialistic and post-soviet should no longer be interchangeable in the academic literature. Those were and continue to be homological yet different processes, as being post-soviet not only means acknowledging the Soviet past as real and impactful on the ongoing life of the nation but also defines the collective feeling of in-betweenness. Meanwhile being post-socialistic means denying communist inheritance on the level of official memory, still (possibly, thus) feeling more comfortable with their national identity and more welcomed within European countries.