

Identity, memory and neighbourhood: perceptions of Russia in the post-Soviet space

The presentation is based on the results of more than twenty-year's experience of the study of neighbourhood, borderlands and relations of Russia with the post-Soviet states. The author starts by considering the milestones and the problems affecting the attitude to Russia in neighbouring post-Soviet states since the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Then he switches to the correlation between official discourse, the coverage of the events in Russia on national TV and the content of school textbooks on history and geography as part of new generations' socialization. The author also interprets the changes of the symbolic landscape along Russian borders as an important element of identity and state-building. The role of "circulation", in terms of Jean Gottmann, i.e. all kinds of interactions (foreign trade, investments, migrations, transport communications, everyday contacts and exchange of information) in shaping mutual perceptions is emphasized. A particular attention is paid to Russian-Ukrainian neighbourhood and the perceptions of Russia and of the key concepts of Russian foreign policy in the south-eastern regions of Ukraine. Finally, the author tries to analyze the impact of complicated political and cultural processes in the post-Soviet space on the perceptions of Russia in the mirror of available sociological polls.