

ABSTRACTS

Political Ideas

Aliaksiej Lastoŭski. Russo-Centrism as an Ideological Project of Belarusian Identity

The article analyses the main features and ideas of russo-centrism as an intellectual project of Belarusian identity since establishing an independent state. It deals with genesis, intellectual and political sources, evolution and main proponents, relations with other projects, representations of the past, present and future of the Belarusian nation which are offered by this project.

Keywords: Russo-Centrism, West-Rusism, Nationalism, Belarusian Identity, Intellectual History.

Andrej Kazakievič. Concepts (Ideas) of the Belarusian Nation since Gaining Independence (1990-2009)

The article investigates the main concepts of the Belarusian nation that have been shaped and articulated in Belarusian intellectual and political domains in 1990–2009 in the context of history of political ideas. The publication resulted from the study of several hundred books, articles and political documents. The differences and main trends in understanding of the Belarusian nation and public institutions that should shape it are demonstrated. Brief history, intellectual background and general characteristics of each trend are described.

Keywords: History of Ideas, Belarusian Nation, Nation-Building, Intellectual History, Identity.

Alih Dziarnovič. Social Thought in 1960s – 1970s' Belarus: History, Nation and Independence

The article draws attention to the fact that it is impossible to understand the evolution of the Belarusian society during the second half of the 20th century merely from the standpoint of political history. As it turns out, in the stability times of the Soviet regime, in the 1960s – 1970s, a vibrant public discourse existed in Belarus. In the mid-1960s, there was a previously (and later) unprecedented public historiographical debate on history of culture and on genesis of Belarusian culture in late medieval and early modern times. In the 1970s, these discussions will no longer be possible. Therefore, the polemical public opinion has to flee to the “samizdat”. In 1975-1976, in samizdat publication

“Hutarki” (“Conversations”), Mikola Jermalovič formulated the concept of independence of Belarus.

Keywords: Social Thought, Political Ideas, “Samizdat”, Independence Concept.

Siarhiej Bohdan. The National Democratic Project in Belarusian Politics in 1980s–1990s: Zianon Pažniak’s Version

The article investigates internal politics issues in the National Democratic project through the ideas of the most prominent representative from this faction of Belarusian politics – Belarusian People’s Front’s leader Zianon Pažniak – in the late 1980s and early 1990s, i. e. in the time of his most intensive political activities in the country. It attempts to outline the structure of this part of the project, as well as identifies main contents and priorities of the project. The special focus is made on the key concept of “National Revival” and its content ambiguity.

Keywords: Belarusian Politics, Zianon Pažniak, Belarusian People’s Front, National Democratic Movement, Nationalism.

Iryna Michiejeva. “Kryviya” and “Zadruga” as Cultural and Political Horizons of National Rebirth Projects of Belarus and Poland: Experience of Comparative Analysis

The article deals with a comparative analysis of philosophical and political projects of Belarusian (Vaclaŭ Lastoŭski) and Polish (Jan Stachniuk) national renaissance. Based on theoretical reconstruction of problem and content fields of both concepts – “Kryvič Renaissance” and “Slavic Pan-Humanism” – the article reveals similarities and differences in the authors’ interpretations of the essence of national culture, specifics of its development stages, and prospects for realization of historic mission of the Belarusian and Polish peoples.

Keywords: National and Cultural Renaissance, Ethnonational Identity, Belarusian Nationalism, Panslavism, Neopaganism.

Institutions and Communities

Natallia Vasilievič. Study of Belarusian Elites: between Algebra and Geography

The article analyses the situation with studying Belarusian political elite since the late 1980s. Main authors and texts, logic, methodology and strategy of analysing the elite as an element of Belarusian political system are being considered. Special attention is paid to consideration of conclusions made by particular authors as well as genre variety of the texts.

Keywords: Political Elite, Belarusian Political Elite, Belarusian Politics, Belarusian Political Science.

Iryna Lašuk and Aksana Šeliest. The Symbolic and Communicative Dimensions of the Linguistic Practices of the Belarusian Poles

The article considers the role of the Polish language as one of the basics for constructing ethnic identity of the Belarusian Poles, the factors of choosing the native language as a specific symbolic act and the influence of this choice on other aspects of the contents of the group identity. A special attention is paid to the analysis of the use of Polish, Belarusian and Russian in the real communicative practices of the Belarusian Poles, orientations for preservation and translation of the Polish language as one of the mechanisms for saving identity and cultural peculiarity of the given community.

Keywords: Belarusian Poles, Ethnic Identity, Language, Language Practices, Diglossia.

Michail Niadzieiecki. The Level of Web Activism of the Candidates during the Local Elections 2010 (Minsk City)

The article analyses the web activity of registered candidates in Minsk during local elections in 2010. In particular, it focuses on the level of representation of candidates via social networking. It also investigates the age structure differences, differences in the Internet activity and distribution of organizational affiliation. In addition, the summary of content analysis of social networks accounts of the candidates is included.

Keywords: Local Elections, Local Elections in 2010, Minsk, Web Activity, Web Campaigns, Internet, Social Networks.

Foreign Policy and Security Studies

Dzianis Mieljancoŭ. Defence Systems in Lithuania and Belarus: Comparative Perspective

The article compares the evolutions of the defence systems of Lithuania and Belarus after both countries became independent. While Lithuania switched to the concept of expeditionary forces, the Belarusian authorities still resort to the old concept of deterrence and complete territorial defence. Despite the Military Forces' modernization, in the near future Belarus will inevitably face the need in changing its attitude towards security and Military Forces' structure. Here, Lithuania's experience will be quite helpful.

Keywords: Security, Military Forces, Military Reform, Defence Concept, Lithuania, Belarus.

Andrej Jahoraŭ. Who Has Benefited from the Implementation of the Neighbourhood Policy in Belarus?

The article represents the analysis of European Union foreign policy in relation to Belarus from the time it gained independence. The author considers the formal frameworks and genetic changes of EU policy, its main challenges and contradictions, as well as the effects and the results of such foreign policy approaches. The Belarusian issue in EU Eastern policy is formulated as a contradiction between the aims to achieve stability and prosperity of the neighbouring countries and the issues of their democratization. Ineffectiveness of the democratization policy is also explained by the absence of corresponding, matching the situation strategies of EU towards Belarus. A paradoxical conclusion of such situation is that the main beneficiary of the European assistance is the Belarusian authorities rather than the democratic community.

Keywords: European Union, EU Eastern Policy, Eastern Partnership, Democratization, Belarus.

Reviews

Aliaksiej Lastoŭski. Crisis of Belarusian Studies.

Bekus, Nelly (2010). Struggle Over Identity. The Official and the Alternative "Belarusianness". Budapest, Central European University

The article reviews the monograph by the Polish-Belarusian sociologist Nelly Bekus on social, political and cultural changes in independent Belarus in the context of nation-state building and national identity formation.

Keywords: Post-Communist Transformation, Democratization, Nationalism, National Identity, Politics of Identity.

Uladzislau Ivanou. Belarus, Mechanics of a Dictatorship.

Lallemand, J.-C., Symaniec, V. (2007). Biélorussie, mécanique d'une dictature. Paris, L'Harmattan

In the book by J.-C. Lallemand and V. Symaniec, Belarus is described as a classical dictatorship which allegedly preserves the socialist and Soviet order, loyalty to the Soviet idea of building an egalitarian society, but which has long ago been penetrated by tough mechanisms of capitalism. These mechanisms are destroying not only the economy but also national and linguistic specificity of Belarus. The authors describe the foundations of modern dictatorship within Belarus, consistently giving an important role to geopolitical

component and domestic processes caused by the absence of civil society. The book combines both analytical and publicist texts, which makes it accessible to all readers.

Keywords: Belarusian Politics, Dictatorship, Lukashenka (Lukašenka), Authoritarianism, Democracy.

Siarhiej Liubimaŭ. Urban Studies and the Issue of Innovations.

Постсоветские столицы: Минск, Вильнюс, Баку (2009). Под общей редакцией Й. Терборна. Минск, Издательский центр БГУ

The article reviews the book on post-Soviet capitals – Minsk, Vilnius, and Baku, focused on comparative research of three former Soviet capitals. It analyses the authors' goals and tasks, and their success in conducting a consistent analysis of social and political phenomenon of the capital in the post-Soviet conditions.

Keywords: Urban Studies, Post-Soviet Capitals, Minsk, Vilnius, Baku.

Andžej Pukšto. Gente Lithuana, Nazione Lithuana

Dariusz, Szpoper (2009). Gente Lithuana, nazione Lithuana. Myśl polityczna i działalność Konstancji Skirmuntt (1851–1934). Arche. Gdańsk.

Review of the book on life, political and cultural activities of Konstancja Skirmuntt authored by the famous Polish scholar D. Szpoper.

Keywords: Konstancja Skirmuntt, “Krajoŭcy”, Lithuanian National Movement, Belarusian National Movement.