

POLITICAL SPHERE

Independence, Ideas and Institutions №15(2)/2010

Abstracts and Key Words

Independence Institutes

Nicole Gallina. Ukraine: Nation-Building Revisited. The Ukrainian Presidents and their Understanding of Identity Politics

This paper argues that state- and nation-building in Ukraine are far from completion twenty years after the declaration of independence. It holds that the four Ukrainian presidents haven't done much for institutionalizing the Ukrainian nation-state. The paper focuses on the never ending struggles on the constitution as a model for state-building. For the area of nation-building three aspects of identity policies are: language, citizenship and historiography (emphasizing the Holodomor). The paper shows that policies haven't been designed to achieve, but mostly to prevent either the "Russian" or the "Ukrainian" side to institutionalize their view of nation and state.

Keywords: Ukraine, Nation-building, State-building, Language, Historiography, Citizenship

Andrei Kazakevich. Belarusian Parliament of Independence Period: MP's Body Evolution, 1990-2010

The article investigates the development of Belarusian parliament since 1990 until 2010 by analyzing the MP's body. In particular social and demographic composition, factions and political parties' activities, and future political carriers of parliament members are investigated. The main trends of parliamentary elites' evolution, factors that drive the pressures and their dependence on parliament political role are identified. The research reveals considerable changes in demographic composition of the parliament, critical fall of activity and decline of political mobility role.

Keywords: Parliament, Parliamentary, Belarusian Politics, Political Institutions, MPs

Irmina Matonytė, Victor Martinovich. Russia, Turkey and US as External Threats to the Cohesion of the EU: A Study of National Elites' Perceptions

In this study elites' perception of three potential external threats to the cohesion of the EU has been investigated: enlargement of the EU to include Turkey, close relationships

between some EU countries and the United States, and interference of Russia in European affairs. Analysis of the Belgian, German, Polish and Lithuanian elite survey data shows that on the most abstract level there is no common European identity constructed across the selected European states. It appeared that distinct European identities emerge along the new-old EU member-states divide. At the same time, individual level factors such as elite left-right self-identification, different visions of the role and future of the EU as well as type of the preferred national identity (achieved vs. ascribed) significantly shape perceptions of external threats and therefore constitute the grounds on which distinct European identities are formed.

Keywords: Elites, Identities, External Threats, Social Constructivism, Political Ideologies

Independence Idea

Aleh Dziarnovich. Social Thought in 1960th – 1970th 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 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 the Belarusian culture in late medieval and early modern times. In 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 Jermałovič formulated the concept of the independence of Belarus.

Keywords: Social Thought, Political Ideas, 'Samizdat', Independence Concept

Siarhei Bohdan. Foreign Policy Component in the National Democratic Project of Belarusian Politics in 1980s – 1995: Zianon Pazniak's Version

The article investigates foreign politics issues in the National Democratic project through ideas of the most prominent representative from this faction of Belarusian politics – Belarusian People's Front's leader Zianon Pazniak – in late 1980s and early 1990s, i.e. in the time of his most intensive political activities in the country. It attempts at outlining the structure of this part of the project, as well as identify main international contents and priorities of the project. The special focus is made on scarcely studied issues – the project of Baltic-Black Sea regional block and potential territorial claims by Belarus.

Keywords: Belarusian Politics, Zianon Pazniak, National Democratic Movement, Foreign Policy, Baltic-Black Sea Union

History of Ideas

***Iryna Mikheyeva.* «Russian Conservative Revolution» as an Ideological Project in Contemporary Russian Politics**

The article reveals the specificity of the phenomenon of the Centre for Conservative Research attached to the Faculty of Sociology, Lomonosov Moscow State University. Since 2008, the Centre has been working to accomplish one of its goals that is “to promote the development of conservative-oriented scientific and administrative elite”. It is argued that that conservative, radical right-wing and chauvinistic worldview and ideological trends are strengthened and achieve a partial legalization in modern Russia. The paper shows that the processes of institutionalization of intellectual-ideological spaces (organizations, associations, publishing houses, etc.) previously considered as latent, marginal and informal, allows them to lay a claim to the development of state strategic political programs.

Keywords: Geopolitics, Ideology, Conservatism, Nationalism, War, Russian Foreign Policy

Elections and Party System

***Aliaksandr Shamiakin.* Institutionalization of Inclusive Party System in Russia, 1999-2008**

This article considers the process of establishing an inclusive monoparty system in contemporary Russia. The essence of institutional reforms, which led to the monopoly of the party of ruling establishment “United Russia”, in particular, reveals the importance of electoral reform in 2005 and inconsistency of the official justification of the reform and systemic consequences of its use in accordance with Duverger’s sociological laws. It substantiates the misclassification of the Russian party system, as a system with the dominant party, given the nature of the changes, both formal and informal institutions.

Keywords: Party System, Electoral System, Duverger’s Sociological Laws, “United Russia”, Inclusive (Authoritarian) Party System

***Mikhail Niadzvietski.* The Level of Web-activism of the Candidates during the Local Elections 2010 (Minsk City)**

The article analyzes 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. Also it investigates the age structure differences; differences in Internet activity and distribution of organizational affiliation. In addition, the summary of content analysis of social networks accounts of candidates is included.

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

Reviews (Politics and Political Science)

Aliaksei Lastouski. Crisis of Belarusian Studies. *Bekus, Nelly (2010). Struggle Over Identity. The Official and the Alternative «Belarusianness».*

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

Viktar Kavaliou. Theory and Methodology of a Department. *Решетников, С.В. (2009). Политическая наука в БГУ: теоретико-методологические и прикладные аспекты.*

The article reviews the book on development of political science at the Belarus State University (*Political Science in Belarus State University – Theoretical, Methodological and Applied Perspectives*). It analyzes development of Belarusian political science community, the directions and level of research activity, academic statuses and relations. The review points out widespread problems of political science in Belarus

Keywords: Political Science, Political Science in Belarus, Academic Community, Research Activities

Tatsiana Chyzhova. On Some MPs of Independence... *Сяргей Навумчык, Зянон Пазьняк (2010). Дэпутаты незалежнасьці.*

This review analyzes Zianon Pazniak and Siargei Navumchyk's book (MPs of Independence), on the MPs of the Belarusian Popular Front parliamentary group in the Supreme Council of Belarus (1990-1995). It critically considers the author's interpretation of early 1990s and their role in proclaiming Belarusian independence.

Keywords: Parliament, Parliament of Belarus, Belarusian Popular Front, Independence, Memories

Uladzislau Ivanou. Belarus, the Mechanism of a Dictatorship. *Lallemand, J.-C., Symaniec, V. (2007). Biélorussie, mécanique d'une dictature*

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 and it makes it accessible to all readers.

Keywords: Belarusian Politics, Dictatorship, Lukashenko, Authoritarianism, Democracy

Review (International Relations)

Siarhei Bohdan. In the Fog of the Belarusian Foreign Policy. Улахович, В.Е. (2010). *Формирование основ внешней политики Республики Беларусь (1991–2005)*

The article reviews the book by U. Ulakhovich (*Forming of Belarusian Foreign Policy Foundations, 1991-2005*) on Belarusian foreign policy from early 1990s until mid-2000s. The review considers the author's interpretation of the main stages in the establishment of the independent foreign policy of Belarus and its conception and strategies. It also analyzes authors' evaluation of the successes and problems faced by Belarusian foreign policy.

Keywords: Foreign policy, Belarusian Foreign Policy, Foreign Policy Concept, Political Science

Dzianis Melyantsou. The Ukrainian-Belarusian Relations: Non-Systemic Approach. Вдовенко, С.М. (2010). *Україна-Білорусь: взаємовідносини на перехрестях перемін*

The review analyzes the first attempt to undertake a comprehensive study of relations between Ukraine and Belarus, which was done by the Ukrainian scholar S. Vdovenko (*Ukraine-Belarus relationships: At the Crossroads of Changes*). It analyzes the text and notes its role for understanding the development of the foreign policy of Belarus and Ukraine.

Keywords: Ukraine and Belarus, Foreign Policy, Bilateral Relations, Regional Cooperation, International Relations

Review (Sociology and Urban Studies)

Siarhei Liubimau. Urban Studies and the Problem of Innovation. *Постсоветские столицы: Минск, Вильнюс, Баку (2009). Под общей редакцией Й.Терборна*

The article reviews the book *Post-Soviet capitals – Minsk, Vilnius, Baku*, focused on comparative research of three former Soviet capitals. It analyzes 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

Natallia Vasilevich. Youth: a Study of Faith. Юдин, В.В. (2009). *Особенности религиозности молодежи восточных регионов Беларуси*

The article reviews the book by sociologist V. Yudin's on peculiarities of the religious behavior of young people in Belarus (*Characteristics of Youth Religious Behavior in Eastern Regions of Belarus*). It overview the issue briefly and analyzes the author's approach to its solution.

Keywords: Religion, Church, Youth, Congregation, Sociology of Religion

Siarhei Liubimau. Spatial Imagination and the Rules of a Game. *Игра в города: по материалам экспедиций в малые города Беларуси (2009). Сост., науч. ред. Т. Водолажская*

The article reviews the book *Game of the city: materials of expeditions in small towns of Belarus*. It considers the tasks and methods of the research conducted by the Agency of Humanitarian Technologies and raises the conceptual problems of urban studies in Belarus.

Keywords: Urban Studies, Towns, Towns of Belarus, Methodology, Local Communities