Belarus and its Neighbors: Historical Perceptions and Political Constructs

Belarus and its Neighbors: Historical Perceptions and Political Constructs

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Foreword

An International conference on Belarusian issues with the participation of researchers from Belarus and other countries was held at the Łazarski University's Institute of Civic Space and Public Policy on December 9 to 11, 2011. The conference's title "Belarus and its Neighbors: Historical Perceptions and Political Constructs" reflects the interdisciplinary nature of this event, whose organizers sought to create opportunities to discuss both Belarus's historic past and the country's modern political reality. This conference's uniqueness is due to the fact that it has become a peculiar independent regional communication platform between historians, political analysts, economists, sociologists, and civil activists – everyone who is not indifferent to the fate of the country, and who wants to use one's knowledge to understand it better.

It is symbolic that the time of the conference has almost coincided with the 20th anniversary of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The twenty years that have passed from the date of establishment of Belarus's independence – despite the political regression and consolidation of the undemocratic regime – haven't been lost years for the development of Belarusian analytics, researchers, and civil society. Indeed, these years have been those of the processes of formation of independent scientific schools, establishment of national research traditions and approaches, development of all sorts of civic initiatives in the areas of culture, education, youth initiatives, etc. Social and humanities' sciences are emerging; their existence as academic disciplines or independent research fields was almost impossible in the Soviet Union, as was non-partisan, non-ideological research of society. Modern Belarusian historical, social, economic, and political sciences cover increasingly newer topics whose research wasn't even possible to imagine previously. When looking wider,

Belarus gradually ceases to be "an unexplored state object", because the circle of the country's researchers, experts, and analysts is expanding, and the number of high-quality texts analyzing various issues increases. Despite the absence of support (and often even despite obstacles) from the government, at least a part of Belarusian researchers and academics manage to work and communicate using current research categories, carry out joint projects, organize international conferences all over the world and participate in them.

Within the conference "Belarus and its Neighbors: Historical Perceptions and Political Constructs", the participants discussed what is today's Belarus. A post-Soviet, post-colonial state that drifts into Russia's orbit, a country that begins behind the Bug river and stretches further to the East? A country whose existence is conditioned by the dependent status between Russia and the European Union? Or is it a certain national building project that is happening at this very moment? As Alaksandr Ćvikievič wrote: "Belarus's revival can be understood as an evolutionary, cultural process that previously was suppressed by violent measures of the police-ridden state and that now, in the context of the free democratic statehood, should develop normally and should eventually form an independent Belarusian culture. In its nature, this process is calm and depends on the rise of the country's intellectual forces that cannot be created by the respective order of the state authority."[1]

The period of the organic work of nation and state building is still going on in Belarus. The independent Belarusian culture exists despite the present "refrigerator effect" created by the regime. Further development and expansion of an alternative narrative is still an immediate challenge for researchers, civic activists, and everyone who cares about the country's future.

The conference "Belarus and its Neighbors: Historical Perceptions and Political Constructs" aimed at considering the issues of Belarus's relations with its neighbors, including political and economic ties, cultural relations, historical stereotypes, as well as the interactions

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[1] Цьвікевіч А. Адраджэньне Беларусі і Польшча // Беларуская думка XX стагоддзя. Філасофія, рэлігія, культура. Анталогія. Укладанне, прадмова і апрацаванне Ю. Гарбінскага. Варшава, 1998. С. 61. [*Ćvikievič A. The revival of Belarus and Poland* in: *Garbiński J. (ed.), Belarusian thought of the 20th century. Philosophy, Religion, Culture. An Anthology. Warsaw, 1998, p. 61*].

between national communities, religious movements, culture, and NGOs that constitute the Belarusian civil society. This book is a collection of texts and papers from the following conference sections. Two historical sections: "**How do Belarusians view their neighbors: cultural and historic stereotypes**" and "**Alone or together? Conflicting nation-building on the territory of first *Rzeczpospolita* in the 20th century**". An economic section: "**Belarus' economy in a regional context: 'Assembly Line' or Europe's North Korea?**". A section on regional politics: "**Belarus and its neighbors: what is going wrong?**". As well as a special section dedicated to the memory of the prominent Belarusian researcher, first director of the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (BISS) Vital Silicki, titled: "**Belarus: any chances for Europeanization?**". There is also another section titled "**Is Belarus a failed state? Public Policy choices and civil society roles from a regional perspective**" which treats issues of public policy, an subject matter that is new to the Belarusian academic community.

Every text included in this book has its own original character, and offers interesting perspectives for further analysis. The conference organizers express their sincere gratitude to everyone who helped implement this ambitious project, and look forward to further fruitful cooperation.

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Quo Vadis, Belarus? Instead of an Introduction

"Whither goest thou, Peter?" asked Jesus Christ the apostle, when he was hastily leaving Rome during the harsh persecution of Christians. Peter returned and died a martyr's death, reminding us how dramatic the choice of path can be that we take either by our own will or because we are influenced by our parents or prophets or by the persons controlling parliaments, courts, mass media, universities, police, and security services. For several years after 1991, the Belarusian society, supporting various parties and programs that competed with each other, had been installing conflicting road signs. The discussion what is the right path to choose absorbed so much energy that the country was actually going round in circles, which increased the feeling of dissatisfaction and the yearning for the Soviet system's stability. Alaksandr Łukašenka became an embodiment of this nostalgia that was widely spread in Belarus. He won the presidential election and resolutely started building up his autocratic rule that helped him win the next elections.

Today, even if a genuinely democratic election takes place with equal access to mass media for every oppositional movement (which is a lost dream), Łukašenka would, nevertheless, get many votes (over 30%). He has installed road signs and leads the society along the path that arouses minor concerns and is perceived as "vernacular" and the least risky. He does not define any new paths, but is simply following his protector and ally. He links Belarus' future with that of Russia. Still worse, he demands from the Belarusian society to believe again – as

was the case in the Soviet times – that Russia and Belarus have always been as close as affectionate sisters, and that Russia was never perceived in Połack, Kryčaŭ, Viciebsk, Bieraście or Harodnia as a cruel enemy, a desecrator of shrines, or as a marauder. If Łukašenka succeeds in this – in which he is aided by the heads of many higher educational institutions, publishing houses, and mass media – nothing would hereafter prevent Belarusians from merging with the "brotherly" *Greater Russian* nation. Such self-integration into alien historic memory, foreign language, and religion, threatens national existence. If this process is not stopped, the fate of Yotvingians (Jaćviahi) awaits Belarusians – which would be very regrettable. Since Belarusians are however a nation of high culture that they were able to share with others thanks to their language that was the language of such monuments of legal thought as the Statutes II and III of the Great Duchy of Lithuania. They were able to fight against their enemies, defending their borders and their civil rights and freedoms. It is true, however, that unlike the Irish, they did not manage to defend their faith and their Church. This differentiated them from the Poles and Lithuanians, on the one side, and from Russians, on the other side. Destruction of the Uniate Church initiated by Peter the Great with his wild attacks against Połacak Basilians, and continued by Catherine II, was completed by Nicholas I. This defeat, though it was not instant, was an unwillingly accepted submission imposed by the oppressing tsarist regime as a result of a long struggle. Catherine began this campaign in the early 1770's. Nicholas finished it in the early 1840's. The damage inflicted by this defeat was emphasized by way of involving the defeated in the celebration of the victory of the imposed religion that was subordinated to the state and could not but leave traces in Belarusian consciousness. It could not but weaken the vitality and optimism of the once courageous nation. The direction of march chosen by Łukašenka and his electorate neither allows Belarusians recovering their self-confidence nor strengthens the feeling of dignity that their ancestors once possessed.

Though much has been written about it, I do not know in what direction Yeltsin, Kravchuk, and Šuškievič intended to go when they were leaving the path defined by Lenin and Stalin that was followed by Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and their successors. They might have been leaving the sinking ship for the sake of national interests or they might have wanted to break free from the power of the Soviet empire reformed

by Gorbachev. They might have dreamt of the forbidden fruit of the capitalist, rich democracy, civil society, and the rule of law. All of this might have been mixed – though in different proportions – with one another alongside personal, somewhat Napoleonic leadership ambitions at a crucial historical moment. Irrespective of where they were heading under the banner of freedom and democracy, they were not the only ones who defined the path for their societies and states. Freedom and democracy allows society to found new parties, bringing forth new leaders, and proposing and defining new directions of movement. In the first months and years, the voice of free media and new political elites seemed to foretell swift Europeanization of the post-Soviet Eurasia. However, this was the voice of an insignificant proportion of population. Economic crisis, great chaos of the transitional period, impossibility of agriculture's privatization, and general impoverishment made the political arena radical. The voices that were praising status quo and perceived the Soviet empire's collapse as the greatest disaster of the 20th century became powerful. Rearrangement in power elites took place in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, as well as in the territory of the entire former USSR and the Soviet bloc, which was accompanied by the change of road signs.

Russia abandoned the democratic liberal (Western) model rather soon, and began following "its own path", rooted in the centuries-long Tsarist imperial history and culture. The Orthodox Church returned to the historical arena – as the regime's ally. At the most solemn moments, such as the return of the Russian Orthodox Church in exile under the aegis of the Moscow Patriarchate, president Putin, sitting on the Tsar's throne behind the Tsar's gates, and though still an atheist, he crosses himself pompously. At the same time, he returned to the Soviet melody for the national anthem, and to the flag with the hammer, sickle and red star. He is not ashamed to express admiration for the Soviet empire's leaders. The presidential autocracy efficiently destroys the democratic dreams of the earlier period of Yeltsin's rule.

Over the last 20 years, the Ukrainian presidential-oligarchic regime seemed to have moved towards the West, but made no amendments to the law. Nevertheless, private, group, and party interests, as well as competition of all sorts resembled the 17th century's notorious period of "ruin" more than any other historical period. The great nation-wide

demonstration of the Orange Revolution managed neither to neutralize mutual elimination and selfish acquisitiveness or to start the process of fundamental reforms. The incumbent president and his supporters lead the nation to the East. Ukraine is entering the period of the Union of Pereyaslav, and its power elites want to strengthen the country and themselves with the Kremlin's powerful helping hand. Yanukovich seems to have forgotten that it was easier to invite Moscow to Kyiv than to ask it to leave.

Against the background of Russia and Ukraine, the Belarusian flirtation with freedom, democracy, and the European Union probably seems to be the briefest; it was devoid of the moments of elevation and was restrained by the feeling of uncertainty before the unknown. Moreover, unlike the Baltic states and the former Soviet bloc countries, Belarus does not have an inherent fear of Moscow – the fear that dominated the transformations (the route to the West) in Poland, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania, and was their driving force.

Alaksandr Łukašenka, who came to power through a democratic election, shared with the majority of his voters the uncovered nostalgia for the Soviet past. The direction of Belarus' movement is defined by Belarusian creative, intellectual, and political elites. This direction is also defined by the government and security services. It is also defined – in fact, to a great extent – by president Łukašenka: officially a president, *de facto* a dictator, surrounded by a circle of faithful advisors and courtiers.

Christ's question impressed Peter, and changed the direction of his path. Can the same question addressed to those residing in Belarus, to those who rule it, and to those who want to rule it persuade them to think as deeply as that? To define a road map? To describe the distance travelled and to attempt to perform a critical analysis thereof? The last item is especially important, because for the first time in several centuries the path is being chosen by the *independent* Belarusian *state*, Belarusian parliament, government, and society.

Independent existence of Belarus began in 1991. Belarus took the path comparable with the path that was destined for many states of the Eastern and Central Europe in the interwar period. Since the times of the Yalta Conference, this period is mentioned with nostalgic yearning; stressing the achievements and sovereignty. The fall of these independent states

as the result of Hitler's and Stalin's attacks is perceived as a major loss. The loss of home that, say what you will, was the common ownership of citizens. At the same time, we admit that neither we, nor the parliaments chosen by us, nor the subsequent autocratic regimes used optimally the gained(?) given(?) opportunity. From Belgrade through Sofia, Bucharest, Budapest, Prague, Warsaw, Kaunas, Riga to Tallinn no one foresaw the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and no one was creating the forces that would have been able to force back the previously announced Nazi march to the *Lebensraum*. No one was ready to confront the newly advancing Red Army and the NKVD troops following it. Hitler's dictatorship was replaced by the dictatorship of Stalin and his successors. Huge economic, social, political, and world-view changes that were taking place over several post-war years, such as nationalization, land reform that transformed into creation of collective farms, single-party government, Marxism as the basis for a "rational" world-view, were not the result of a social choice, but of the Communist dictatorship. Attempts to change the imposed path have always ended unsuccessfully (in 1956, 1968, and 1979/81). The Communist path was binding even in the countries that managed to break free from or weaken the Kremlin's control, as was the case in Yugoslavia and much later in Romania. Those who were expressing their doubts concerning the march's direction, those who wanted to look for another path or to adopt the experience of those who far from the "iron border" solved the problems of their states and societies differently, were destroyed mercilessly. Despite all this, the quantity of "revisionists", oppositionists, dissident skeptics, and rebels wasn't diminishing. Street demonstrations took place, and the dissatisfaction of workers of major industrial and transport enterprises was rising. The voices criticizing the march's direction and organization were heard from Zagreb to Gdansk. This resistance was most vividly and loudly expressed by the *Solidarność* movement that courageously announced the fundamental principle of any democracy: "Nothing about us without us". The march's purpose and direction was questioned, as was its leadership and organization. The martial law didn't manage to prolong the existence of the Communist status quo for a long time. Doubts concerning the march's organization shook the foundations of the Soviet empire. National centrifugal forces for a moment managed to prevail over the imperialist force of central government.

Yet at another point in time and with other temper or readiness, nearly each of these countries used the international situation, *Solidarność*, Reagan, and Gorbachev in order to break free from the Soviet dependency. Most of them joined NATO and the European Union. Only Belgrade and Tirana have not yet joined these organizations. They linger, like Belarus and Ukraine, between this old new West and the Russian empire that is gradually being restored.

Regrettable as it may be, Albania, Serbia, and other Balkan countries may have better chances of joining the European Union than Minsk and Kyiv. The authorities of the latter two are dragging to the East. These are spiritual successors of the collaborators with Tsarism and Bolshevism. It is hard to believe that descendants of Zaporizhzhya Cossacks and Sich Riflemen or heroic defendants of Połacak, Kryčaŭ, Viciebsk, and many other cities and towns would not manage to find inner forces to change the march's direction, and to consider carefully the course of their own history, not an alien one.

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Obstacles on the Way to Mutual Understanding: the Effects of National, Historical and Cultural Stereotypes on the Diplomatic Practice between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Muscovite State in the Mid-16th Century

Reflecting on diplomatic practice between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) and the Muscovite state (Muscovy) in the mid-16th century, we aim primarily to demonstrate the stereotypical norms and established conflicts that served as the barriers to improving dialogue and seeking compromise between the two countries, which, in their turn, led to the escalation of tension and, as a consequence, to recurrent warfare.

Let us remember that the two countries had different paths of civilizational development. While the GDL belonged, although with considerable specificity, to the area of Western-Catholic and Protestant civilization, Muscovy was a separate, peculiar 'world', based on the Orthodox world view and the cult of absolute submission to monarchical authority, with extremely poor rudiments of representative estate elements in the political system. These different civilizational and cultural orientations, reinforced by different directions in the development of political and legal culture, affected the nature of interstate relations and the specific character of diplomatic communications.

A brief description of the chronological scope of this research: on the one hand, the fifth Muscovite-Lithuanian War (the War for Starodub)

ended in 1537, showing that even under the conditions of a power vacuum of the Grand Prince's authority in the Moscow State (for reference – the Grand Prince Vasily III died in 1533, his position being passed to the juvenile Ivan IV), the GDL was unable to carry out a swift and efficient campaign to return the territories taken from it in the early 16th century.[1] After this attempt at military activities, Lithuania wanted to preserve peaceful relations with its eastern neighbor. On the other hand, we stop at the conclusion of the Union of Lublin and the end of the first round (in 1570) of the series of wars for Livonia, that had been waged since 1558, as a logical point to divide the history of international relations in Eastern Europe into periods, allowing us to sum up the results of our short research.

Of all the sources, ambassadorial records maintained by both sides,[2] are certainly of primary importance to this research. These are official

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[1] Fundamental research by the Russian scientist Mikhail Krom is dedicated to this event: Кром М.М. Стародубская война 1534–1537: Из истории русско-литовских отношений. Москва, 2008 [*Krom M. The Starodub War of 1534–1537: From the History of Russo-Lithuanian Relations. Moscow, 2008*]. Numerous works are dedicated to the Livonian War; the latest include: Янушкевіч А.М. Вялікае княства Літоўскае і Інфлянцкая вайна 1558–1570 гг. Мінск, 2007 [*Januškievič A.M. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Livonian War of 1558–1570. Minsk, 2007*]; Filiushkin A. Ivan the Terrible: A Military History. London, 2008. One of the latest comprehensive studies of the international relations of this period: Хорошкевич А.Л. Россия в системе международных отношений середины XVI века. Москва, 2003 [*Khoroshkevich A.L. Russia in the System of International Relations of the Mid-16th century. Moscow, 2003*].

[2] Ambassadorial records of the researched period were published as early as the 19th century: Книга посольская Метрики Великого княжества Литовского, содержащая в себе дипломатические сношения Литвы в государствование короля Сигизмунда Августа. 1545–1572 гг // Ред. М. Оболенский, И. Данилович. Москва, 1843 [*The Ambassadorial Book of the Metrica of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Containing Lithuania's Diplomatic Relations during the Reign of the King Sigismund II Augustus. 1545–1572 // Edited by Obolenskiy M., Danilovich I. Moscow, 1843*]; Сборник императорского Русского исторического общества (далей – СИРИО). Т. 35: Памятники дипломатических сношений Московского государства с Польско-Литовским. Т. I: 1487–1533 гг. // Под ред. Г.Ф. Карпова. СПб., 1882 [*The Compilation of the Imperial Russian Historical Society (hereinafter referred to as "The CIRHS"). Volume 35: Records of the Diplomatic Relations of the Moscow State with the Polish-Lithuanian State. Part I: Years 1487–1533 // Edited by Karpov G.F. St. Petersburg, 1882*]; Т. 59: Памятники дипломатических сношений Московского

materials dedicated primarily to the diplomatic activities of official state structures, exchange of diplomatic missions, reception of embassies, etc. They include documents categorizing foreign activities of the state: texts of armistice agreements and peace agreements, monarch's official charters (letters), instructions for embassies, etc. When characterizing the ambassadorial records as sources, it is worth paying attention to their diverse informational content. One can draw information from them that does not only concern the development of diplomatic process as such, but also characterizes – from the perspective of communication theory and cultural-anthropologic theory – the direct clash of the two world visions, policy, culture, ideological and moral principles. The process of diplomatic negotiations reflected in the ambassadorial records (importantly, they often touch upon their informal side) opens up an extremely wide field of communication between the two countries and their peoples. This communication field is filled with attempts to reach understanding, minor conflicts of a ceremonial nature, lengthy discussions with multi-colored reasons in favor of one's opinion, threats of war, and the search for peaceful, though temporary, solutions. These dispatches clearly demonstrate how strained relations of a political nature can offer the researcher a description of the intercultural dialogue with its obstacles and barriers.

What were the peculiarities of the international situation in those years? The GDL, as previously mentioned, had taken a pacifist stance in relations with the Muscovy state, trying to reconcile with it from the 1550s until Livonia was subdued. At the same time, Moscow, having reached a certain level of domestic stability, captured Kazan and Astrakhan, and began revising its relations with Livonia, which eventually led to the kindling of the Livonian War.

государства с Польско-Литовским. Т. II: 1533–1560 гг // Под ред. Г.Ф. Карпова. СПб., 1887 [*Volume 59: Records of the Diplomatic Relations of the Moscow State with the Polish-Lithuanian State. Part II: Years 1533–1560 // Edited by Karpov G.F. St. Petersburg, 1887*]; Т. 71: Памятники дипломатических сношений Московского государства с Польско-Литовским. Т. III: 1560–1571 гг // Под ред. Г.Ф. Карпова. СПб., 1892 [*Volume 71: Records of the Diplomatic Relations of the Moscow State with the Polish-Lithuanian State. Part III: Years 1560–1571 // Edited by Karpov G.F.. St. Petersburg, 1892*].

This expansionist policy also manifested itself in diplomatic practice. In this respect, it is worth paying attention to the problem of the title of Tsar that appeared in the relations between the two countries after 1547. The core of the problem was the crowning of Ivan the Terrible as Tsar. Poland and Lithuania strongly opposed the recognition of the new title of the Moscow ruler, since this would have downgraded the GDL's status and would have reduced its possibilities in diplomatic negotiations.[3] With the development of conflict around the Tsar's title, stereotypic barriers in diplomatic relations clearly emerged.

Firstly, we should mention barriers relating to conflicts of a ceremonial nature. It should be said at once that great importance was attached to diplomatic protocol and ceremonies during negotiations, and even minor violation could have done enormous harm and spoil the prospects of the successful completion of a diplomatic mission. They were seen neither more nor less than an insult to the majesty; in other words, to the monarch's dignity. The other side was often forced to observe diplomatic protocol and ceremonies in order to abase the embassy, demonstrate host's power and gain a minor victory in negotiations. Methods seeking to humiliate and abase were used. Below are some examples, with an attempt to divide them according to their typology:

1. *Non-conformance to the host party persons' rank.* At a reception dinner in Lublin in 1554, arranged by Sigismund II Augustus in honor of the Moscow mission, only bailiff Razmus Dowgird, who held a rather low office of the Troki Deputy Voivode (castle steward) at that time, was present on behalf of the Lithuanian ruling elite.[4] By the way, Moscow envoys didn't mention this 'abasement' in their report.

2. *Returning gifts.* In the same year, 1554, Poles and Lithuanians weren't satisfied with the type and conditions of gifts: these were *'goblets, gyrfalcons, and drums'*; moreover, the gyrfalcons turned out to be ill and none of them were red of color. Refusal to accept gifts demonstrated the impolite attitude of the host party towards the

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[3]   See on this matter: Филюшкин А.И. Титулы русских государей. Москва, 2006 [*Filiushkin A.I. Titles of the Russian Monarchs. Moscow, 2006*].

[4]   *"And on behalf of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, marshaller Lord Razmus Dovkhird was sitting beside the Grand Prince's chief clerk"* (Нацыянальны гістарычны архіў Беларусі ў Мінску. Ф. КМФ-18. Воп. 1. Спр. 602 [*National Historical Archives of Belarus in Minsk. File KMF-18. Question 1. Reference Book 602*]).

mission. Probably, this was a way to deliver the message that Poles and Lithuanians realized the disadvantage of Muscovites, their greater interest in armistice agreement. By the way, Muscovite sources merely state the fact of the return of the gifts.[5]

3. *Seating delegates lower on the bench than other missions during receptions.* Moscow authorities were especially worried by this problem: in their ambassadorial instructions, they especially stressed the requirement that Moscow ambassadors should not sit behind or below other ambassadorial delegations. This wouldn't only downgrade their status, but would also publicly demonstrate that the Moscow state didn't have the highest position among the region's countries.

4. *Quibbling at customs when greeting envoys or bailiffs.* On January 24 1556, Moscow bailiffs attempted to enforce their rules of ceremonial meeting, telling the prince Pavał Sakalinski that in the old days a scribe used to meet bailiffs in the anteroom, a junior envoy used to meet them in the doors, and the senior envoy used to meet them inside the house proper. The next day, the Lithuanians deliberately refused to perform such a ceremony, declaring that last time the Moscow envoys 'were not only willing to greet them [Lithuanian bailiffs – A. Januškievič's note], [...] but even didn't want to stand up to greet them'.[6] The Moscow bailiffs tried to sit down on the same bench as the ambassadors, but the latter seated them only on the 'banquette'. The reason for such behavior was the same – namely, an impolite treatment of Lithuanian bailiffs. Note that, despite the successful defense of their viewpoint, the Lithuanian envoys were holding a passive position regarding ceremonies, referring not to certain theoretic or ideological approaches, but to a rather unsophisticated reasoning – a sort of 'we treat you just the way you treated us'. A similar situation used to happen when Moscow bailiffs demanded that envoys step out of their sledge or dismount their horses during the very first greeting on behalf of their monarch.

An interesting fact in this respect is the incident of the arrival of the Lithuanian embassy to the tsar's palace in Moscow in 1556. Muscovites

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[5]   СИРИО. Т. 59. С. 441 [*The CIRHS, Volume 59, p. 441*].
[6]   Сборник князя Оболенского. Кн. 5. Москва, 1838. С. 8 [*Prince Obolenski's Compilation, Book 5. Moscow, 1838. p. 8*].

arranged a peculiar meeting at the entrance to the tsar's palace, preventing the ambassadorial sledge from coming close to the porch, simultaneously beating Lithuanian coachmen and servants. In return, the embassy personnel lifted the sledge with their hands and by force pulled them close to the porch, placing them almost on the entrance steps.[7] It should be noted that the Moscow embassy book doesn't tell about that incident, merely mentioning that 'they [the ambassadors – A. Januškievič's note] were not met properly, since His Majesty's ambassadors [...] were also not met properly by the King's people, but were only met by the King's people in front of the house at the door'.[8] We believe this omission occurred due to the Muscovites' unsuccessful attempt to stop the Lithuanians. The Lithuanian ambassador thereafter specifically noted in his diary that the passage to the porch wasn't obstructed during subsequent visits to the tsar's palace.

It is not hard to notice that the majority of ceremonial conflicts and cavils were based on abidance to traditional customs and stereotypes, that is, to the 'olden time'. References to the 'olden time' were very extensively in diplomacy. This was the foundation that allowed not to change the underlying principles of bilateral relations. Take for example the issue of the ownership of Smolensk and the territorial claims of both sides, in general. At first sight, statements made at every negotiation were a sort of formality, some kind of a tribute to the then diplomatic protocol. However, if we take a closer look at this matter, we see that this gesture was used to assert one's firm principles and interests, yielding even one iota of which would have meant a concession and a manifestation of weakness. This, in turn, restrained the flexibility of diplomatic positions at negotiations, and didn't allow the ambassadors to be more at ease.

For example, if we speak about the problem of the title of Tsar, it was natural for Lithuanians to refer to the 'olden time'. Moscow rulers simply didn't use this title before: *'None of his forefathers, Grand Princes of Moscow, used that title in correspondence with our forefathers. Likewise, he, our brother, didn't sign letters with that name formerly when sending them to us'.* Muscovites answered in different ways to this: they recalled the

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[7]   See the conflict's description: Юзефович Л.А. "Как в посольских обычаях ведется…". Москва, 1988. С. 91–92 [*Yuzefovich L.A. The Aforetime Customs of Embassies. Moscow, 1988. pp. 91–92*].

[8]   СИРИО. Т. 59. С. 491 [*The CIRHS. Volume 59, p. 491*].

times of Prince Vladimir of Kyiv, showed some letters of West European monarchs (who actually were not familiar with this problem), and pointed out that, having seized Kazan and Astrakhan, which were Tatar tsardoms, the Moscow prince had gained the full right to be called a tsar.[9] However, reasons of sacral content and, as a consequence, references to the elementary obviousness of Moscow envoys' rightness, were the most important ones during vain discussions. For example, on being reminded of the existence of the 'title' barrier to a successful outcome of his mission Moscow diplomat Roman Alferyev, visiting in 1558 to propose a union against the Crimean Tatars, evaded the discussion 'with style': "My talks would not increase my lord's dignity – it was given to him by God, and the entire universe will not take it away".[10] We can see that when there was a critical diplomatic need, Moscow used to forget its fundamental demands, bringing them out of the area of interpersonal relations and replacing them with the divine origin of the attributes of power.

The same concerned the problem of substantiation of the rights to Livonia, which arose at the beginning of the Livonian War. Although at the beginning of the escalation of the conflict, the Moscow side put forward legal and historical reasons, later,, having realized the hopelessness of attempts to convince the Lithuanians, they changed to the usual assertion of unconditional rightness. The following example demonstrates reasoning used in 1559 concerning the issue of the ownership of Livonia: *'You look in your king's armistice letters and peace letters: if they were written in the king's lands where our lord cannot enter, then they stated they belong to the king. But we know better that they have been age long tributaries of our lord'.[11]* Afterwards, from bad to worse (1560): *'It is known not only to God and to the neighboring lords, but also universally to the peoples of any land about the Livonian land that to the present day this has been a custom for this land and that it has been obliged to pay tribute to us',[12] 'If your old peace letters and armistice letters between*

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9 See in more detail: Янушкевіч А.М. Пасольства Стафана Збаражскага 1556 года ў Маскву // Беларускі гістарычны часопіс. 2011. № 11. С. 25 [*Januškievič A.M. Stafan Zbarażski's Embassy of 1556 to Moscow // Belarusian Historic Journal, 2011, No. 11, p. 25*].

10 СИРИО. Т. 59. С. 545 [*The CIRHS, Volume 59, p. 545*].

11 Ibidem, p. 584.

12 Ibidem, p. 609.

you and us disappeared from your treasury, and you had asked your old men about this, you would have found out, and would not have then dishonored yourself and your lord'.[13] Thus, Muscovites had complete confidence in their own rightness and the obviousness of their demands that could not be overcome by any documental, logical or sensible reasons.

A further barrier hindering frank dialogue was based on the religious factor, and can be shortly described as follows: 'It is easier for an Orthodox to understand an Orthodox. Moreover, only contacts with people of the same religion deserve a more or less full confidence'. This postulate is very characteristic of the nature of diplomatic intercourse between the GDL and Muscovy throughout the 16th century.

An especially characteristic example is the behavior of Astafi Valovič, at first a scribe, who went on to become the sovereign's Court Marshal, Court Treasurer, and Deputy Chancellor. Having begun a standard clerical career as a scribe in 1550, in several years he became the sovereign's authorized agent during negotiations (from 1554), and for the first time drew up reports that were later included in the ambassadorial books of the GDL's Metrica, sending secret messages to Moscow officials inducing them to view him as an 'inside man', etc.

The Orthodox confession of the sovereign's Court Marshal brought him a special confidence from the part of Muscovites. Yet, one of the mysteries of Vałovič's personality is hidden here. It is known that he became seriously interested in Protestant teachings at that time, and had probably become a Protestant. At least, we can judge so by his Testament.[14] When communicating with Moscow officials, however, he skillfully made use of the idea of an 'Orthodox servant' (statesman) under the sovereign – a sort of a peculiar defender of the Orthodox interests. The common faith seems to have served for Muscovites as a strong reason for the benefit of common values and interests in the context of diplomatic contacts. They saw Vałovič as a very congenial person and statesman.

This was particularly manifest during Roman Alferyev's mission in early 1559: *'And Astafi Vołovič secretly informed and complained to chief*

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[13] Ibidem, p. 609.

[14] Wasilewski T. Testament Ostafiego Wołłowicza // Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce. 1962. Volume VII, pp. 165–173.

clerk Ivan Mikhaylovich that in his lord's tsardom a vile thing had appeared – namely, the great Lutheranism. But he had a good support, which support is also very old, and he had no one else to rely on. And so, when they began speaking about this profane thing, the evil Lutheranism, he would at that time secretly pray for the Creator and the purest Holy Virgin, and would defend himself from those things with his tears. And things that are improper for the great lord, the orthodox tsar, would be told to Ivan Mikhaylovich, and therefore the great lord is asked to assist Astafi insofar as the God puts it in his heart'.[15] Vałovič's contacts with the influential Chief Clerk at the Embassy, Ivan Viskovatiy, were not interrupted thereafter.

In addition to the general tension in political relations, suspicions or, using the authentic terminology, 'anxiety' about treason or failure to keep one's word were always present. In fact, this was based on past precedents.

For example, in 1560, the envoys expressed their anxiety that conclusion of eternal peace and a union against the Crimean Tatars would provoke Turkey's aggression against the lands of Poland and the GDL, and that in this case Ivan the Terrible wouldn't march out with help: *'The ambassadors refused eternal peace because it cannot be without returning the old-time inherited lands. Moreover, they said during the negotiations that if they unite with us during eternal peace against the Crimean lord, the Crimean would ask for help from the Turkish lord, and the Turkish lord would attack their lord in revenge for the Crimean, but that our lord then would not help their lord, and therefore their lord would lose all his inherited lands. Aleksey with his companions were dissuading that anxiety of theirs, and were persuading them that we would be together in everything. But Vasil Tyškievič answered to those words: "We will believe in those things only that have no bad examples in the past, but here the examples are personified: both the father and the grandfather betrayed. And when we get rid of the Crimean, you would have no one to attack, so you would attack us'.*[16]

Earlier on, in 1558, Lithuanian ruling circles worried that the Moscow tsar wouldn't keep his word, using the potential Turkish aggression against the lands of the Polish Crown and the GDL in order to attack the 'Ruthenian' lands of the GDL: *'However, the noblemen and the whole*

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[15] СИРИО. Т. 59. С. 550–551 [*The CIRHS, Volume 59, pp. 550–551*].
[16] Ibidem, pp. 576–577.

Council are anxious that the honorable tsar and the Grand Prince would not keep his word: the Turkish would come to the defense of the Crimean, but tsar and the grand prince would seize towns at that time'.[17]

Another example is demonstrative. When seizing Połacak [now – Połack] in 1563, Ivan the Terrible gave his word that he would set the nobility free.[18] However, this did not happen. Later on, this problem became one of the most acute in Lithuanian-Muscovite relations. Muscovites stated that the tsar did not give any 'word', while Lithuanians accused the counterparty of perfidy.[19] It follows from the sources that such behavior was seen as the utmost sacrilege and treachery.

Conclusions

This research into diplomatic exchanges, especially those occurring behind-the-scenes, shows that political contradictions overlaid suspicion and distrust regarding the sincerity of the partner in conversation. This distrust was based both on historical experience and on confessional and cultural differences.

Muscovites compensated for certain complexes, caused by their detachment from the European world, by adhering to strict procedural norms and demonstrating an arrogant attitude towards the counterparty. In the absence of sensible or objective reasons, they relied on reasons of sacral content, referring to the divine origin of the Moscow authority and its claims, and observed ceremonial details very attentively, unfolding extensive, almost pedantic, discussions with intricate logic statements and

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[17] Ibidem, p. 545.

[18] Полное собрание русских летописей. Т. 29: Летописец начала царства царя и великого князя Ивана Васильевича. Александро-Невская летопись. Лебедевская летопись. Москва, 1965. С. 312 [*The Complete Collection of Ruthenian Chronicles. Volume 29: Chronicle of the Beginning of Tsar and Grand Prince Ivan Vasilyevich. Aleksandro-Nevskaya Chronicle. Lebedevskaya Chronicle. Moscow, 1965. p. 312*]; See on this matter: Янушкевіч А.М. Вялікае княства Літоўскае і Інфлянцкая вайна 1558–1570 гг. С. 66–68 [*Januškievič A.M. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Livonian War of 1558–1570, pp. 66–68*].

[19] СИРИО. Т. 71. С. 258–259, 286–287, 368–369 [*The CIRHS, Volume 71, pp. 258–259, 286–287, 368–369*].

elusive reasoning. Such approaches created barriers that broke many vain attempts of the GDL's diplomacy.

Moscow's imposition of such rules of the game deprived Lithuanians of initiative. Instead of flexible assertion, Lithuanian diplomats often had to conform to Moscow norms, ideas, and proposals, often holding a clearly conciliatory position. What is this: a betrayal of one's own interests for the sake of evasive peace; or weakness and a lack of firmness in defending them? In our opinion, it is rather the latter. However, it should be pointed out that such passivity nevertheless resulted in transition to war. This is a topic for further thorough research. One way or another, the different value systems and political ideals, the different cultural codes and political interests created insuperable barriers in relations that, as the history has shown, were eliminated only by force.

H I E N A D Ź   S A H A N O V I Č
EHU, Belarus–Lithuania

Attitude of Belarus' Population to the Russian Army in the 17th Century

The current Belarusian authorities' attempt to embed the notion of "eternal unity" and friendship between Belarusians and Russia in the historical consciousness of the society, which was so extensive in the USSR, revives the question about the real attitude of the Belarusian population towards the army of Muscovite tsars in the old days. I should remind you that according to the Soviet paradigm, which was finally formulated and used widely in historiography in the 1960–1970s, in the wars of 16–18th centuries the Belarusian people (represented, in the view of the Soviet historiographic doctrine, by peasants and lower class residents) sided openly with Russia and assisted it in all the possible ways: smashed local nobility, obtained information for Moscow about the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's army, controlled the abandoned towns and handed over the control to the authority of the tsar's voivodes.[1] It was said that the motivation rooted from the feeling of ethnic unity of the Russian and Belarusian "people" and also their religious unity: allegedly,

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[1] For example, see Абецедарский Л. Борьба белорусского народа за соединение с Россией (вторая половина XVI–XVII в.). Автореф. дисс. доктора ист. наук. Минск, 1965 [*Abecedarski L. Struggle of the Belarusian people for the unification with Russia (second half of the 16–17 centuries), Doctoral thesis, Minsk, 1965*]; Игнатенко А. Борьба белорусского народа за воссоединение с Россией (вторая половина XVII–XVIII в.). Минск, 1974 [*Ihnacienka, A. Struggle of the Belarusian people for the reunification with Russia (second half of the 17–18 centuries), Minsk, 1974*].

the majority of Orthodox Belarusians opposed the Catholic nobility and authority of *Rzeczpospolita*, their "oppressors".[2] In the recent decade, the suchlike schemes to interpret the Belarusian-Russian relations as a history of unfairly disrupted unity started to make their way back to the policies of history and education in Belarus.[3]

To find out whether the thesis about the assistance by the Belarusian inhabitants to the Russian army and their so called "urge towards reunification with the Russian people" is confirmed by historical sources (and to what degree, if yes), it is expedient to examine specific cases of attitudes of the Belarusian population to the Muscovite authorities and the tsar's army at the times when Belarus was made up of a theater of hostilities, i.e. first and foremost during the wars of 1632–1634 and 1654–1667.

After Ivan IV occupied Połacak, the Smolensk War of 1632–1634 was the first offensive campaign by Moscow when the regular tsar's army again made the eastern and northern Belarusian territories the object of attacks and aimed to occupy them. Because of the unexpected assault and significant superiority in forces, the voivodes of the Tsar Mikhail Fyodorovich occupied swiftly a considerable number of mid-size and small towns on the outskirts of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; however, they had to fight severely for most of them.[4] Residents of a number of eastern towns and villages, still prevailingly Orthodox, not only actively

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[2] Абецедарский Л. Борьба народных масс Белоруссии против феодально-крепостнического и национально-религиозного гнета в конце XVI – первой половине XVII в. // История Белорусской ССР: в 2 т. Т. 1. Ред. колл.: Л.С. Абецедарский, В.Н. Перцев, К.И. Шабуня. Минск, 1961 [*Abecedarski L. Struggle of the popular masses of Belarus against feudal-serfdom, national and religious oppression at the end of the 16 – first half of the 17th century* in *History of Byelorussian SSR, Minsk, 1961*]; Абэцэдарскі Л. У святле неабвержных фактаў. Мінск, 1969 [*Abecedarski L. In the light of irrefutable facts. Minsk, 1969*]; Мараш Я. Из истории борьбы народных масс Белоруссии против экспансии католической церкви. Минск, 1969 [*Maraš Ja. From the history of the struggle of popular masses in Belarus against the expansion of the Catholic church. Minsk, 1969*].

[3] See: Трещенок Я. История Беларуси. Ч. 1: Досоветский период. Учебное пособие. Могилев, 2003. С. 9–10 [*Traščanok Ja. History of Belarus. Part 1. Pre-soviet period, Mahiloŭ, 2003, pp. 9–10*]; Криштапович Л. Беларусь и Россия: историософское и цивилизационное единство. Минск, 2006. С. 20–21 [*Kryštapovič L. Belarus and Russia: historiosophic and civilizational unity. Minsk, 2006, pp. 20–21*] and other.

[4] Kupisz D. Smoleńsk 1632–1634. Warszawa, 2001. pp. 94–96.

protected their walls but also voluntarily helped the besieged Smolensk and their state's army. For example, for great services during the war, the residents of Viciebsk were granted back their former rights and privileges (except for Magdeburg Rights)[5] by King Władysław IV, which the town was deprived of for the murder of the Archbishop of Połacak, Jozafat Kuncewicz. In general, it can be summarized that in historical sources from the times of the Smolensk War researchers have not found cases where the residents of Belarus would demonstrate obvious sympathy for or especially support the neighboring state's army. A single episode from the Połacak theater of hostilities caused controversies, and it should be examined separately.

At the beginning of the war, the tsar's voivodes devoted special attention to Połacak as a strategic bastion on the Dźvina River that the military command of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania kept without proper protection. When the Deputy Voivode of Połacak (and also a cavalry captain) Jan Lisowski became aware of the real threat of assault, he urged the residents on June 11, 1633 to take on additional duties: to hire on their expense Alaksandr Wiskowski's Cossack company for another week as its service was to expire; to "build a tower on the corner of the Chamber in the Lower Castle for the protection of the town" or at least provide timber for it; and to allow the residents of Zapałoćcie to move to the Upper Castle.[6] However, as it could be inferred from the cited document, immediately after that "some dwellers from the Połacak community" came to the town hall, wrote a refusal to carry out anything

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[5] Макараў М. Ад пасада да магдэбургіі: прававое становішча насельніцтва местаў Беларускага Падзвіння ў XIV – першай палове XVII ст. Мінск, 2008. С. 200–202 [*Makaraŭ M. From trading quarters to Magdeburg rights: legal status of the towns dwellers in the Belarusian Dźvina basin in the 14th – first half of the 17th century, Minsk, 2008*].

[6] Пратэстацыя падваяводы Яна Лісоўскага 6.07.1633 // Акты Юго-Западной России. Т. 2. С.-Петербург, 1865. № 55. С. 90–91 [*Protest by the Deputy Voivode Jan Lisowski 6.07.1633 // Acts of South Western Russia. V. 2. Saint Petersburg, 1865. No 5, pp. 90–91*]; Археографический сборник документов, относящихся к истории Северо-Западной Руси (далей – АСД). Т. 1. Вильно, 1867. № 94. С. 271–272 [*Archeographical collection of documents about the history of North Western Russia (ACD hereinafter). V. 1. Vilno, 1867. No 94, pp. 271–272*]; Русско-белорусские связи. Сборник документов (1570–1667). Минск, 1963. № 91. С. 115–116 [*Russo-Belarusian relations. Collection of documents (1570–1667). Minsk, 1963. No 91, pp. 115–116*].

of what was listed, made noise, blatantly insulted the Deputy Voivode and promised to collect money to "take him down". The very fact of refusal by the residents to fulfill additional duties is an ordinary and understandable phenomenon but already a day after, on the night of June 12th (to June 13th) the town was attacked by the Muscovite army. The success was ensured by the unexpectedness of the assault and the deceptive activities of the former Nevel's burgomaster Hrysza Kaval (Hryhory Radziecki) who defected to the Russian army. He neutralized the guards by deception: "… lured the Lithuanian guards, two persons – talked in Lithuanian, and having lured them, killed those guards with a saber",[7] after that the gates were opened and the Muscovite army stormed into the fortified town, which "the entire settlement of Połacak and Zapałoćcie demolished and burned, and then killed on the spot the land Vogt, burgomaster and many other good colleagues, while others were captured alive…".[8] The defenders locked themselves in the Upper Castle, which the enemies were not able to seize. When the information that the detachments of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were approaching to relieve Połacak, the tsar's voivodes hurried back into their territory and took with them a large amount of loot and a lot of captives – residents and nobility.[9] It is important to notice that among other trophies captured in Połacak fortifications there was also the "residents' banner", which can be considered as evidence that the residents of Połacak participated in its defense. To stop residents from leaving the burning town of Połacak, the King issued a specific "universal" (decree) where he urged the inhabitants of Połacak to come back to the town, build their houses there again and ensure security.[10]

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[7] Малов А.В. Начальный период Смоленской войны на направлении Великие Луки – Невель – Полоцк (до 3 июня 1633 г.) // Памяти Лукичева. Сборник статей по истории и источниковедению. Редактор-составитель Ю.М. Эскин. Москва, 2006. С. 166 [*Malov A.V. Initial period of the Smolensk war along the line the direction Vielikiye Luki – Nevel – Polotsk (until June 3, 1633) // To the memory of Lukichev. Collection of articles on history and studies of sources. Compiling editor Eskin Y.M. Moscow, 2006, p. 166*].

[8] АСД. Т. 1. № 94. С. 272 [*ACD. V.1. No 94, p. 272*]

[9] Малов А.В. Начальный период... С. 167–168 [*Malov A.V. Initial period…, p. 167–168*].

[10] Каралеўская грамата жыхарам горада Полацка, Барысаў, 8.08.1633 // АСД. Т. 1. № 95. С. 273 [*Royal letter to the residents of Połacak, Barysau, 8.08.1633 // ACD. V. 1. No 94, p. 273*].

This episode from the history of Połacak had not raised any noticeable interest among historians until it was reinterpreted in a particular way by Marxist historiography. The first one to pay special attention to the event of June 1633 in Połacak was I.F. Lochmel, a Soviet historian of war, who sought for historical legitimization of the Red Army's September campaign and embedded even social conflicts into the context of national aspirations and "fraternal relations" of East Slavic peoples.[11] He saw in the conflict of some of the residents with Deputy Voivode Lisowski not only a refusal by Połacak residents to repair the town's fortifications but also non-participation in the defense and movement to the territory occupied by the Tsar's troops, which, according to the author, demonstrated the "desire of the Belarusian people to be liberated from Poland (controlled by landowners) and consolidation with the fraternal Russian people".[12] Although the cited historian referred to the events in Połacak as "disorders", in the Soviet Belarus, with the work of Laŭrent Abecedarski who undoubtedly followed Lochmel, the disorders in Połacak turned into an "insurrection". "The majority of Połacak inhabitants rose in rebellion in 1633 (during the Russo-Polish war) and fought together with the Russian troops against the army of *Rzeczpospolita* and then voluntary moved to Russian territory with their families" – that is how the main Soviet historian of Belarus of that time interpreted the concise information from the known documents.[13] Moreover, L. Abecedarski even stated that it could be inferred from the claim by Deputy Voivode of Połacak that "the Russian army seized Połacak due to the assistance of the residents", who then "sided with the Russian troops and besieged the Upper Castle".[14]

During the Brezhnev times L.Abecedarski's version became "canonic" and was made part of educational literature and encyclopedic publications

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[11] Лочмель И.Ф. Очерк истории борьбы белорусского народа против польских панов. Москва, 1940. С. 42–45 [*Lochmel I.F. Essay on the history of struggle of the Belarusian people against Polish landowners. Moscow, 1940, pp. 42–45*].

[12] Ibidem. p. 44.

[13] Абэцэдарскі Л.С. У святле неабвержных фактаў. Мінск, 1969. С. 68–69 [*Abecedarski L. In the light of irrefutable facts. Minsk, 1969, pp. 68–69*].

[14] Абецедарский Л.С. Белоруссия и Россия. Очерки русско-белорусских связей второй половины XVI–XVII в. Минск, 1978. С. 86 [*Abecedarski L. Belarus and Russia. Essays on the Russian-Belarusian relations in the second half of the 16–17 centuries, Minsk, 1978 p. 86*].

in Belarus. According to the academic "History of the Belarusian SSR", the residents of Połacak "looked forward to the arrival of Russian troops" and thus refused to follow the orders of the town's authorities, and when the tsar's infantry approached Połacak the "town's inhabitants rebelled and joined the Russian army", and when the Russian troops retreated to Russia allegedly "the majority of dwellers left with the Russian troops".[15] What is more, "some dwellers" mentioned by Lisowski turned into "a huge crowd of residents" which "joined the Muscovite army" during the seizure of Połacak and when they retreted to Russia, allegedly, "the majority of residents left together with the Russian army".[16] Some historians claim that the inhabitants of Połacak expressed their reluctance to repair the fortifications exactly "upon the arrival of Russian troops by the Połacak walls", and that it was them, the dwellers of Połacak, who on the night of June 12 (to June 13) 1633 "opened the town gates for the Russian troops",[17] or that it was the "crowd of city dwellers (that) impeded … the fortifications of the Lower Castle",[18] which was helpful for the tsar's infantry. This case is an articulate example of how the idolized Soviet historiography turned a regular conflict between part of society and the town's authorities into a demonstration about the "struggle of the population against national and religious oppression"[19]

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[15] История Белорусской ССР. Т. 1. Под ред. В.Н. Перцева, К.И. Шабуни, Л.С. Абецедарского. Минск, 1954. С. 138 [*History of the Belarusian SSR. V. 1 Edited by Piercaŭ U., Šabunia K., Abecedarski L. Minsk, 1954, p. 138*]. The same version in the next edition, see: История Белорусской ССР: в 2 т. Т. 1. Минск, 1961. С. 133 [*History of the Belarusian SSR in 2 v. V. 1. Minsk, 1961, p. 133*].

[16] Гісторыя Беларускай ССР: у 5 т. Т. 1. Гал. рэд. К.І. Шабуня. Мінск, 1972. С. 253 [*History of the Belarusian SSR: in 5 v. V. 1. Ed. Šabunia K.I. Minsk, 1972, p. 253*].

[17] Полоцк: Исторический очерк. Отв. ред. П.Т. Петриков. Минск 1987. С. 58 [*Połacak: Historical essay. Edited by Pietrykaŭ. Minsk 1987, p. 58*].

[18] Капыскі З.Ю. Полацкае паўстанне 1633 // Беларуская Савецкая Энцыклапедыя. Т. 8. Мінск, 1975. С. 487 [*Kapyski Z.Y. Połacak uprising in 1633 // Belarusian Soviet Encyclopedia. V. 8. Minsk, 1975, p. 487*].

[19] More information about the interpretation of the events in Połacak in 1633 in Belarusian historiography see гл.: Сагановіч Г. Вайна на полацка-віцебскім рубяжы ў 1632–1633 г. і "паўстанне" ў Полацку // Беларускі Гістарычны Агляд (далей – БГА). Т. 18 (2011). С. 21–41 [*Sahanovič H. War on the Połacak-Viciebsk line in 1632–1633 and "uprising" in Połacak // Belarusian Historical review (BHR hereinafter). V. 18 (2011), p. 21–41*].

and how the policy towards history of the current regime attempts to revive similar myths.[20]

During the 1654–1667 war, attitudes of the Belarusian population towards Moscow were considerably diverse. By that time, the internal contradictions in *Rzeczpospolita* had exacerbated, the fresh experience of life under Khmelnytsky definitely influenced the spirit of the lower classes. The attitude of the population to the enemy differed significantly depending on the region and town: from the unwillingness to go to war and the welcoming of the Muscovite army following the best traditions of hospitality to stubborn and lengthy defense. The most important factor that defined the attitude of the population was the current situation in the war, which instantly influenced the spirits of all social strata, from elites to the lowest classes.[21]

Initially, provincial nobility did not accept the tsar's authority and ran away from the occupied territories or stayed in the active troops of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL). However, by the end of the second year of the war its attitude started to change. A great factor contributing to the change was the near complete occupation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's territories by the tsar as well as Alexis Mikhaylovich's shift to liberal policies towards the population of the occupied territories. On the other hand, after Sweden had entered the war and through nice treatment had gained the loyalty of Polish nobility, Moscow had to try to win the

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[20] Unfortunately, this reality is not confined to the Soviet times. At the times of A.Łukašenka's presidency when the interpretation of the past started to be "adjusted" to the former standards the old legend about the "Połacak uprising" was adopted by many official publications again. See: Полацкае паўстанне 1633 // Энцыклапедыя гісторыі Беларусі: у 6 т. Т. 5. Мінск, 1999. С. 527 [*Połacak uprising in 1633// Encyclopedia of history of Belarus in 6 v. V. 5. Minsk, 1999, p. 527*]; Полацкае паўстанне 1633 // Беларуская энцыклапедыя: у 18 т. Т. 12. Мінск, 2001. С. 456 [*Połacak uprising in 1633 // Belarusian Encyclopedia in 18 v. V. 12. Minsk, 2001, p. 456*].

[21] Мальцев А.М. Россия и Белоруссия в середине XVII века. М., 1974. С. 141 [*Maltsev A.M. Russia and Belarus in the middle of the 17th century. M., 1974, p. 141*]; Бабятыньскі К. Адносіны жыхароў ВКЛ да маскоўскага войска ў 1654–1655 г. // БГА. Т. 14 (2007). С. 55–60 [*Bobiatyński K. Attitudes of the GDL's dwellers towards the Muscovite army in 1654–1655 // BHR. V. 14 (2007), pp.55-60*]; Касажэцкі К. Стаўленне шляхты ВКЛ да шведскага і маскоўскага панавання ў 1655–1656 г. // БГА. Т. 15 (2008). С. 175–208 [*Kasażecki K. Attitude of the GDL's nobility to the Swedish and Muscovite rule in 1655–1656 // BHR. V. 15 (2008), p. 175–208*].

support of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's nobility and for that the Tsar was lavish with promises to keep religious freedoms, rights and property. King John II Casimir fled Poland, Janusz Radziwiłł's initiative failed and the Swedes refused to wage war on Moscow because of the GDL. Hence, local nobility did not have any hope that the situation would change. Further resistance didn't make any sense. As Adam Sakowicz, district head (starasta) of Ašmiany, explained it, in the situation when "almost all the Poles voluntary surrendered to the Swedes" and they, the GDL residents, "didn't see any protection" and were ready to recognize the new authorities so that the tsar would agree to preserve their former rights and freedoms and return their manors.[22] It is not surprising that in response to the letters sent out in October–December 1655 to propose the tsar's favor, not only nobility but also military commanders in Western Belarus started to swear allegiance to Alexis Mikhaylovich.[23] Among more than two thousand noblemen adjured by boyar S. Urusau in October 1655 there were even two voivodes.[24] Apparently, for the majority of the knights it was acceptable and was not considered a crime to shift their allegiance to another monarch in a critical situation. Later, when the situation at the battlefront changed again and the number of regular troops of the GDL increased in Belarusian territories and especially after the peace agreement with Sweden (1660), even those who swore allegiance to Alexis Mikhaylovich sought to side with the King and *Rzeczpospolita* again. In that situation, another transfer of the local noblemen to the authority of the tsar was only possible under threat and duress.[25]

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[22] Заборовский Л.В. Великое княжество Литовское и Россия во время польского Потопа (1655–1656). Документы, исследования. Москва, 1994. С. 83–85 [*Zaborovski L.V. Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Russia at the time of the Polish Deluge (1655–1656). Documents, research. Moscow, 1994, pp. 83–85*].

[23] Касажэцкі К. Стаўленне шляхты ВКЛ… С. 189 [*Kasażecki K. Attitude of the GDL's nobility..., p. 189*].

[24] Крестоприводная книга шляхты Великого княжества Литовского 1655 г. // Памятники истории Восточной Европы. Ред. серии И. Граля. Сост. Е. Лыкова, М. Кулецкий. Т. IV. Москва–Варшава, 1999 [*The book of sworn allegiances of the nobility of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of 1655 // Monuments of history of Eastern Europe. Ed. Gral I. Compiled by Lykova E., Kulecki M. V. IV. Moscow–Warsaw, 1999*].

[25] Pamiętniki Samuela i Bogusława Kazimierza Maskiewiczów (XVII w.). Red. W. Czapliński. Wrocław, 1961, p. 280.

Attitudes of the inhabitants of Belarusian towns towards the tsar's authority and army were also not homogeneous as it depended on a number of factors. At the beginning of the war, with the huge disproportion in forces and without any chances that their army would help them, the towns in eastern Belarus were given a tough choice (to stay loyal to their legitimate sovereign and thereby go broke or try to save their life and property and therefore become the tsar's subjects). Most often they didn't dare stand up to the tsar's army. Even large and nationally strategically important locations, where, unfortunately, fortifications were usually neglected and garrisons weak, either immediately opened the gates or surrendered after brief defense. Whereas private towns (Old Bychaŭ, Słutsk, Niaśviž and Lachavičy), which were well-prepared for defense by their powerful owners, even after the utter defeat of the GDL, demonstrated a model of fortitude. To be fair, it should be acknowledged that small towns in the East of Belarus, such as Sapiegas' Hory or Hlabowiczs' Dubroŭna, with their military garrisons, displayed the efforts not to recognize the tsar's authority and obstinately defended themselves.[26] Here again, the residents' attitudes were mostly defined by their real possibilities. When they felt that the available forces were sufficient to repulse the enemy, neither orthodox nobility nor residents intended to capitulate, but participated very actively in the defense of these towns from the tsar of the "common faith".[27]

A particular, pro-Moscow attitude during that war was held by the residents of Mahiliou but this peculiarity was defined by a set of factors. Firstly, Mahiloŭ had traditionally been closely connected to Moscow through economic interests. Merchants from Mahiloŭ travelled to Moscow more often than merchants from any other town in Belarus at that time. They had great business, in particular, bringing furs from Moscow to Poland.[28] Middle income residents who held strong positions

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[26] Ткачоў М.А. Замкі і людзі. Мінск, 1991 [*Tkačoŭ M.A. Castles and people. Minsk, 1991*].

[27] It was accurately pointed out by K. Bobiatyński, see: Адносіны жыхароў ВКЛ да маскоўскага войска… С. 68–69 [*Attitudes of the GDL's dwellers... pp. 68–69*].

[28] Łowmiański H. Handel Mohylewa w XVI wieku, // Studia nad dziejami Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Poznań, 1983. S. 521–527; Мелешко В.И. Могилёв в XVI – середине XVII в. Минск, 1988. С. 109, 125. [*Mialeška V.I. Mahiloŭ in the 16 – mid-17 centuries. Minsk, 1988, p. 109, 125].*

there were also engaged in trade. Magistrate jurisdiction in Mahiloŭ was clearly dominant whereas the gentry owned only around 5 percent of land,[29] which could be considered an exception in the GDL. Thus, the residents of Mahiloŭ were interested in strengthening trade connections with Moscow, in receiving material and financial concessions from the tsar.[30] The strong position of the Orthodox church in this town was also important, as well as the authority of the orthodox clergy and traditionally close ties with Kyiv.

The residents' moods before the war – dissatisfaction with the official authorities of *Rzeczpospolita* – also inevitably influenced the position of the town. Already in the summer of 1638, residents complained directly to the King about the pressures from "the castle bailiffs and substitutors" who acted "as if under command" of the starasta of Mahiloŭ, Krzysztof Radziwiłł, therefore Władysław IV ordered that the latter strictly forbid the harassment of the residents of Mahiloŭ[31] but it seems that the problem was not resolved for a long while. And before the war in 1653 the residents of Mahiloŭ had had a grudge against hetman Janusz Radziwiłł for huge duties imposed on the economy and moreover against the *Rzeczpospolita* authorities who were bringing to justice the Mahiloŭ Orthodox brotherhood as it refused to cede their church to the Uniate Church.[32]

Given this context, it is not surprising that in the summer of 1654 the efforts of a nobleman K.Pakłonski to persuade the Mahiloŭ residents to surrender, were successful and Mahiloŭ capitulated quickly. The residents were also encouraged by the tsar's promises to let them keep their property and all their rights intact if they voluntarily surrendered the town.[33] Having confirmed the rights and privileges of Mahiloŭ residents, having given out money and land and having forbidden to plunder and move people out, Alexis Mikhaylovich strengthened their

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[29] Мелешко В.И. Могилёв в XVI – середине XVII в. Минск, 1988. С. 194–195 [*Mialeška V.I. Mahiloŭ in the 16 – mid-17 centuries. Minsk, 1988, p. 194–195*].

[30] Бабятыньскі К. Адносіны жыхароў ВКЛ да маскоўскага войска… С. 73–74 [*Bobiatyński K. Attitudes of the GDL's dwellers..., pp. 73–74*].

[31] НГАБ. Ф. 694. Воп. 4. Спр. 1302. Арк. 41.

[32] Бабятыньскі К. Адносіны жыхароў ВКЛ да маскоўскага войска… С. 65 [*Bobiatyński K. Attitudes of the GDL's dwellers..., p. 65*].

[33] Акты Юго-Западной России. Т. 14. С.-Петербург, 1889. С. 130 [*Acts of South Western Russia. V. 14. Saint Petersburg, 1889, p. 130*].

pro-Moscow attitude, a demonstration of which was active participation of the residents in the defense of the town against Janusz Radziwiłł's troops in the winter and spring 1655. However, the experience under the tsar changed the mood of Mahiloŭ residents. They were especially discontent with the subordination of the Mahiloŭ eparchy to the Moscow patriarch, deportation of part of the clergy to Russia, and the request to allocate profits from the treasury for the protection of the town, which caused impoverishment of the residents.[34] The culmination of the increasing antagonism of the disillusioned Mahiloŭ residents and the tsar's authorities was their insurrection against the Muscovite garrison in February 1661.[35]

The actual experience of living under the tsar was an important factor, which defined in due course the attitude of the residents towards tsar's troops everywhere in Belarus. Murders, repressions and taking people into serfdom were regular on the occupied territories, especially until the autumn of 1655. As a rule, consequently, even those people who first welcomed foreign troops, after a while looked forward to the return of King John II Casimir. This change was vividly attested at the end of the first year of war by the reaction of local residents to the appearance of the Janusz Radziwiłł banners in the Dnieper banks in Belarus, which were occupied by the Moscow army: they took sides with the GDL again.

Harsh plundering policies of the tsar's regime repulsed the peasantry, whose historiography attributed to "pro-Moscow" orientation most of all. Although some peasants indeed sympathized with Moscow, disorders among peasantry in Belarus, as in other countries, were driven at that time mostly by social motivation. But even "sworn" peasants were soon disillusioned with the new authorities who did not give them any relief, rather quite the opposite. Mass peasant movements for self-defense started immediately on the territories occupied by the tsar's army.[36] What

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[34] Мальцев А.М. Россия и Белоруссия в середине XVII века. С. 159, 173 [*Maltsev A.M. Russia and Belarus in the middle of the 17th century. M., 1974, pp. 159, 173*].

[35] АСД. Т. 2. Вильна 1867. С. XVIII [*ACD. V. 2. Vilna 1867, p. XVIII*]; Акты Московского государства (далей – АМГ). Под ред. Н.А. Попова, Д.Я. Самоквасова. Т. 3. СПб, 1901. С. 324 [*Acts of the Muscovite state (AMS hereinafter). Ed. Popova N.A., Samokvasova D.Y. V. 3. Saint Petersburg, 1901, p. 324*].

[36] Мальцев А.М. "Шиши" на Смоленщине и в Белоруссии в середине XVII века // Новое о прошлом нашей страны. Москва, 1967. С. 277–281 [*Maltsev A.M. "Shishi" in Smolensk region and in Belarus in the middle of the 17th century // New facts about*

tells a lot is that after several years of occupation the partisan movement in Belarus was ever stronger.

And how important was the feeling of shared religion and the alleged "ethnic unity"? Undoubtedly, the religious factor shaped the image of the Russian army and attitude towards it, especially at the very beginning of the war – influenced by the purposeful tsar propaganda. As a rule, pro-Moscow parties, big or small, in many Belarusian towns were formed by Orthodox residents. However, as documents reveal, one's Orthodox or Catholic religion did not define a simple line of divide between "ours" and "theirs" at all. For example, even in Smolensk in the autumn of 1654 when the defense seemed especially hard the Orthodox residents wanted to continue the struggle[37] whereas the nobility was ready to surrender the town to the tsar if their privileges and manors were confirmed; in Połacak, the first one to establish relations with the enemy and to start urging the residents to capitulate was the burgomaster, "better person" Ivan Michnowicz.[38] Understandably, Orthodox Belarusians were even fleeing from Moscow rule to as far as Prussia.[39] On the other hand, it also happened that Orthodox priests participated in the guerilla movement and were arrested by the tsar's army.[40]

And if we talk about "ethnic unity", the sources did not mention any specific evidence about people being moved by it. The opposition of ethnic "kinship"/"strangeness" could not be found in the texts of that time at all, which is not surprising. In the Early modern period of history, there were no deep connections between (proto)national identify and the shared language or religion yet, and the language then was not a criterion of national identity. This is also confirmed by special research

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the past of our country. Moscow, 1967, pp. 277–281]; Сагановіч Г. Невядомая вайна 1654–1667. Мінск, 1995. С. 70–83 [*Sahanovič H. The unknown war of 1654–1667 Minsk, 1995, pp. 70–83*].

[37] Бабятыньскі К. Адносіны жыхароў ВКЛ да маскоўскага войска… С. 62 [*Bobiatyński K. Attitudes of the GDL's dwellers..., p. 62*].

[38] Белоруссия в эпоху феодализма. Т. 2. С середины XVII до конца века XVIII века. Минск, 1960. № 34. С. 63 [*Belarus at the times of feudalism. V. 2. From the middle of the 17th till the end of the 18th centuries. Minsk, 1960. No 34, p. 63*].

[39] Sahanowicz H. Wychodźcy z Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w Prusach 1656 r. // Lituano-Slavica Poznaniensia. Studia Historica. T. IX. Poznań, 2003, p. 244.

[40] Мальцев А.М. Россия и Белоруссия в середине XVII века. С. 217 [*Maltsev A.M. Russia and Belarus in the middle of the 17th century, p. 217*].

made on the Western European materials.[41] Similarly, in Eastern Europe the perception of "others" was framed by the categories of political, religious or territorial "strangeness"/"kinship". In Russia at that time people identified themselves based on dynasty, religion or state-political principles but not on ethnicity.[42] Similar principles shaped collective identities at that time in the territories of the GDL.

To survive in the tough reality of war, the Belarusian population inevitably had to change sides. Changeability of their attitude towards the Moscow army was embodied in a small town on the Dnieper – Kopyś, which during the war changed sides many times. Although the town was owned by the Radziwiłłs, the Biržai line of this powerful family did not find it strategically significant; therefore it remained unfortified until 1654.[43] Moreover, before the war the administrator's pressure resulted in peasants feeling dissatisfaction and grievance, hence it is not surprising that on August 10 they opened the gates for the huge army led by the tsar's Voivode Ya.Cherkassky.[44] However, no later than early 1655 when Janusz Radziwiłł tried to win back the lost territories they let the GDL's troops in the town and delivered the Muscovite governor over.[45] Four months passed, and the Kopyś residents welcomed the new tsar's army with icons, however, in 1658 when the balance of forces in the region changed they took sides with Colonel Ivan Nieczaj. In spring 1659, the tsar's troops entered the town again but on July 25, 1660 when Colonel

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[41] Burke P. Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe. Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 160–163.

[42] Дмитриев М.В. Проблематика исследовательского проекта "Confessiones et nationes. Конфессиональные традиции и протонациональные дискурсы в истории Европы" // Религиозные и этнические традиции в формировании национальных идентичностей в Европе. Средние века – новое время. Москва, 2008. C. 41–42 [*Dmitiriev M.V. Problematique of the research project "Confessiones et nations. Confessional traditions and protonational discourses in the history of Europe" // Religious and ethnic traditions in the formation of national identities in Europe. Middle Ages – New modern period. Moscow, 2008, pp. 41–42*].

[43] Ткачоў М.А. Замкі і людзі. Мінск, 1991. C. 60 [*Tkačoŭ M.A. Castles and people. Minsk, 1991, p. 60*].

[44] АМГ. Т. 3. СПб., 1901. C. 468–469 [*AMS. V. 3. Saint Petersburg, 1901, pp. 468–469*]. Касажэцкі К. Фартэцыя ў Копысі пад час вайны Рэчы Паспалітай з Масквой (1654–1667) // БГА. Т. 19 (2012) [*Kasażecki K. Bastion in Kopyś during the war between Rzeczpospolita and Moscow // BHR. V. 19 (2012) (to be published)*].

[45] Ткачоў М.А. Замкі і людзі. Мінск, 1991. C. 61 [*Tkačoŭ M.A. Castles and people. Minsk, 1991, p. 61*].

A.Pałubinski troops approached the town, the residents opened the gates so quickly that the Muscovite garrison had to capitulate.[46] This time, GDL's garrison stayed in the town and the following year the residents persistently fought with it against the enemy. Thus, the position of the residents was defined by the sober evaluation of the situation, and when the chances of success in defense were too small, the spirit of resistance gave way to the rationality of capitulation.

The tactics of the Kopyś residence towards the tsar's army could be considered typical of the majority of the Belarusian population during that war. And if at the beginning of the hostilities in the Eastern territories of Belarus the decision of the locals to support Moscow was rather characteristic than exceptional, the reason lay not in the ethnic kinship or shared religion at all, as it was interpreted by Moscow-centered historiography. It was defined by the actual situation in the course of war: disproportion of forces and lack of hope to receive help forced the population to seek for other strategies to survive. It was the pragmatics of a specific situation that usually determined loyalty to the tsar and voluntary subordination to the new sovereign. In general, even the lower classes in Belarus predominantly perceived Russian military forces not as "related by kinship" or "protectors" at all but as a strange, hostile power.

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[46] Касажэцкі К. Фартэцыя ў Копысі… [*Kasażecki K. Bastion in Kopyś…*].

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Images of Neighboring Peoples
in the Traditional World Outlook of Belarusians

Images of neighboring countries and the peoples inhabiting them are quite frequent but also specific in the traditional worldview of Belarusians, as reflected in various genres of folklore, ideas and beliefs.

Categorization of space in the mythopoetic worldview distinguishes two main zones, which correspond, respectively, to 'this' and the 'other' world. In the reality of conservative and low mobility rural communities, the first category is virtually identical to the 'living space' – a set of cultural and natural loci included in the economic practice of the group and nominatively recorded at the level of mental space registry. The 'other' world, with all its variability (the world of the dead, divine or infernal sphere, far away and 'foreign' lands') and mythological or real distance, is characterized, above all, by its exclusion from the everyday life experiences of the community.

In the case of a distant country - 'foreign lands' - both geographical characteristics (forest land, steppe, location in the north or south, etc.), and ethnic and cultural images of people that inhabit this region are significant for the formation of its image in the mythopoetic worldview. Moreover, the ethnic characteristics of the country are a priority in the traditional language picture of the world. For example, when it is absolutely impossible to isolate the ethnonym from toponym, to identify what is primary and what is secondary and subordinate (either people called 'Poles' got their name from their home country, Poland, or the country got its name from the ethnonym).

Ethnic images are an important part in the worldview of any people. Those images allow people to not only compile and optimize their self-concept (intra-image), they also clearly define at the level of the collective consciousness the specific features of a different ethnic group (extra-image), which in turn, gives substantive description of the content and space the people lives in. The image of the 'foreign' is formed as a general knowledge about religion and way of life, rites and rituals, language and beliefs of ethnic neighbors. Notions of 'foreign' faith and 'foreign' people are reflected in folk legends and beliefs, in ritual practices and forms of everyday communication.

Factors by which specific countries are mythologized in the traditional worldview of Belarusians can differ. In the cases of Ukraine and Latvia, geographical location had great importance (in the lower reaches of the Dnieper and the Dźvina, respectively, and for Ukraine, also in the steppe zone, which in traditional beliefs was associated with hazardous infernal area symbols).

In the case of Belarusian raftmen, who rafted timber on the Dźvina to Riga, we have largely mythologized images of Latvians and Latvia, although based on real facts. One of the main factors of mythologizing actually was the river itself, the Dźvina-Daugava, the main and most ancient channel of communication in the region. Since the Dźvina is very clearly oriented along the East – West line, its upper (source) and downstream (mouth) in the traditional worldview of Belarusians were represented like two opposite poles of a mythological space. The source of the Dźvina correlated with the sunrise, the idea of light, life, beginnings. The lower reaches of the river and its estuary embodied the lower tier of the universe, the zone of danger, as well as the lower part of the body. Significantly, in Belarusian folk traditions, child birth can be symbolically described as a pregnant woman's journey to the mouth of the Dźvina, to Riga ('to go to Riga' – to give birth).[1]

For the raftmen, rapids and rocks in the lower reaches of the Dźvina present not only real, but mythological danger, as evidenced by their Belarusian names: *Varažeja* / *Seer* (near Jēkabpils), *Čortava Barada* / *Devil's Beard* (28 miles below Jēkabpils), *Balvancy* / *Blockheads* and stone

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[1] Никифоровский Н.Я. Очерки простонародного житья-бытья в Витебской Белоруссии и описание предметов обиходности. Витебск. Тип., 1895. С. LIX.

Blockhead (17 miles above Riga).[2] Accordingly, the Latvians, who knew the geomorphology of the Dźvina/Daugava in this segment of the river and floated wooden caravans through the rapids, were seen by Belarusian raftmen as extraordinary people. They were believed to possess some special magical knowledge with a secret character (they were using terms in an incomprehensible (Latvian) language). These circumstances of mythologizing the Latvians image in the nineteenth century were very aptly noted by Ramuald Padbiarezki: '*Belarusian peasants believe that Latvians are wizards… The supernatural power attributed to them roots in the intricacy of the language, their courage and skill to float their boats through the Dźvina's rapids, and lead loaded ships from Jēkabpils to Riga. Returning home from the water travels, a Belarusian peasant brings amazing stories about them, they even deliberately bring presents, so as not to annoy wizards.*'[3]

As for Ukraine, in its very title one can see a clear etymological connection with the word *kraj*, border or 'margin': 'The term Ukraine relatively early (late twelfth century) became attributed to the border area in Pereyaslav and Kyiv lands'.[4] To the archaic mind, the mythologem 'border' was of fundamental importance, since it divided the world into 'our' mastered, cultured area and 'alien', 'savage' and dangerous space.

In the Belarusian mythopoetic worldview, the border status of Ukraine was symbolically stressed by its landscape features (by the prevalence of forest steppe, and in particular, the steppe). Belarusian folklore clearly shows that 'in contrast to the "forest", treated as something close – part of "our" world, the «steppe»... almost certainly is correlated with the scope of the "foreign": It is situated in a "foreign land".[5] In Belarusian history and folklore texts, the steppe often appears as 'field', although not in the sense of having been cultivated and mastered by people -'our' land; but as 'open field', a wide treeless space, which strikes with its lack of order and structure, belonging to the sphere of chaos and destruction. This,

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2   Сапунов А.П. Река Западная Двина: Историко-географический обзор. Витебск, 1893. С. 177–181.

3   Падбярэскі Р. Лісты пра Беларусь // Шляхам гадоў: Гіст.-літ. зб // Уклад. Я.Янушкевіч. Мінск, 1994. С. 254.

4   Агеева Р.А. Страны и народы: происхождение названий. Москва, 1990. С. 166.

5   Санько С. Штудыі з кагнітыўнай і кантрастыўнай культуралогіі. Мінск, 1998. С. 113.

strictly speaking, is a 'Wild Field', which 'lays between the lands of Ruś (Ruthenia) and Tatar possessions (the territory of modern Kirovograd, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, Kherson, partially Odesa, Zaporizhzhya, Vinnytsia, Cherkasy regions)'.[6] The Belarusian fairy-tale epic represents 'open field' as the border between 'this' and the 'other' world, the point of final battle between the representatives of these areas (e.g. a fabulous hero and a dragon). The same formula is accurately recreated in Belarusian Chronicles which describe(s) actual historical events: 'when the Grand Duke of Lithuania Alhierd (Algirdas) was the owner of the Lithuanian land, he went to the Field with the Lithuanian army, and beat the Tatars on the Sinija Vody River'.[7]

For medieval inhabitants of Belarus, Ukraine was an unpredictable and unstable border. A border that pulsed very intensively. Every split in such a border with the 'other' world threatens to break peace and stability, to destroy the ordinary way of life. It is no coincidence that representatives of the 'open (wild) field', when moving from the periphery ('Ukraine') to the centre ('Lithuania'), are described using references to nature, not culture. In this way both the Crimean Tatars and Zaporizhzhya Cossacks, in accordance with the way they act in Belarus (robbery, rape, murder), are characterized as 'locusts', while Bohdan Khmelnytsky acts as a 'devastating wind' for *Rzeczpospolita* and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.[8] Ukraine's periphery character, marginality and correlation to the lower tier of the universe on the mythological level, identify it with the world of the dead and the idea of death in general. This other world in Belarusian folk songs acts as 'Ukraine is far away', a 'foreign country', where the actions of the hero going there, get the opposite meaning to the world of men: 'he took a wife from Volhynia – a grave in an open field', 'got married in Ukraine' – was killed.[9]

Frequently used evaluation characteristics applied to Cossacks ('*Chachły'),* representatives of Ukraine, include: *excessive stubbornness* ('there was a person… he was a *chachoł*, and like all Ukrainians, he was

[6]   Сагановіч Г. Казакі // Энцыкл. гісторыі Беларусі. Т. 4. Мінск, 1997. С. 7.

[7]   Арлоў У. Беларускія летапісы і хронікі: Пер. са стараэжытнарус., старабел. і польск // Уклад. У. Арлова; прадм. В.Чамярыцкага. Мінск, 1997. С. 60.

[8]   Цішчанка І.К.Сацыяльна-бытавыя песні // Уклад., сістэматызацыя, уступ. Арт. І камент. І.К. Цішчанкі; рэд. А.С. Фядосік. Мінск, 1987. С. 287, 290.

[9]   Ibidem, p. 178, 191.

so stubborn that no one could do any business with him.'[10]); *idleness* ('a Cossack is so round because he eats and lays down on his side'[11]); *thoughtless sociability* ('a Cossack hanged himself to keep somebody company'[12]); *rape and indecent behavior towards women* ('I will gasp, I will wave, / I will not yield to a *chachoł*. / *Chachoł* has no credit – / he pushes against the grain»[13]); and *drinking* in combination with anti-social behavior ('I am a Cossack, poor chap, / do not know girls; / drink vodka, beat Jews, / The whole day I have fun'.[14] Illustrative of the latter case is the fact that the custom of drinking a lot of vodka at funerals in Brest is perceived as being 'new', 'not local' and 'as Ukrainians do'.[15]

A special place is occupied by ideas about Ukrainians' untidiness, which to some extent was due to water scarcity. As noted by Ch. Piatkievič, *'A Ukrainian in relation to tidiness, not only does not differ from a person from Paleśsie (Prypiać Marshes), but sometimes is even below that level [...] It should be emphasized, however, that the majority of Ukrainians do not wash their necks, and then sweat mixed with dust for some time covers their necks with a two mm thick reddish shell, which cracks from the sun and looks like a crocodile or snake skin. This, apparently, was an occasion to call ... the Ukrainians, through the gentry, adder or viper...'.*[16]

When describing the perception of Russian lands and people there in attitudes of Belarusians in the nineteenth- early twentieth century, the actual ambiguity of the term 'Ruś' (Ruthenia) and 'Russian' (Ruski, Ruthenian), as reflected in folklore, must be taken into account. In written sources of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, ethno-confessionism, 'Ruski' meant the Orthodox population of the state, rather than ethnic Russians, who were

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[10] Сержпутоўскі. А.К. Казкі і апавяданні беларусаў Слуцкага павету. Мінск, 2000. С. 128.

[11] Добровольский В.Н. Смоленский этнографический сборник.Ч. 3 // Записки ИРГО по отделению этнографии. СПб., 1894. Т. XXIII. Вып. 2. С. 57.

[12] Касько У.К. Святло далёкай зоркі. Мінск, 1997. С. 273.

[13] Шейн П.В. Материалы для изучения быта и языка русского населения Северо-Западного края. СПб., 1893. Т. II. С. 211.

[14] Фальклор у запісах Яна Чачота і братоў Тышкевічаў // Уклад., сістэм. Тэкстаў і камент. В.І. Скідана і А.М. Хрушчовай, уступ. Арт. Т.В. Валодзінай. Мінск, 1997. С. 274.

[15] Седакова О.А. Поэтика обряда: Погребальная обрядность восточных и южных славян. Москва, 2004. С. 119.

[16] Пяткевіч Ч. Рэчыцкае Палессе. Мінск, 2004. С. 354.

called 'Moscow', 'Muscovites', 'Maskali»'.[17] A similar situation occurred even in the nineteenth century, as reported by correspondent Šein in the Harodnia province, 'our peasants call Great Russians Muscovites, Cossacks, rusaki».[18] Accordingly, the term '*Ruś'*, is rather frequently used in Belarusian fabulous epic to refer to 'our', 'baptized' world of people, as opposed to other world inhabited by dragons, monsters, evil spirits; however, it in no way indicates ethnic Russian lands.

'Ruś' (Ruthenian land) acquires a completely different meaning in the folklore dimension of real history. Thus, Belarusians of the nineteenth century perceived the expansion of the 'Russian land' directly linked to the political drama of the partitions of *Rzeczpospolita*, as the cause of violations of the existing world order and changes of a broader, even ontological and cosmological character. 'The old people say that when "Kaciarynuška" (Catherine II) took our land, winters were shorter, and as when she took it, summer became shorter'.[19] The destruction of 'their own' and start of adherence to a 'foreign' state, Russia was the end of the former 'good times': 'We always' were rich, we had thirty horses. Finally, the landowners from Moscow appeared, and out of thirty only three are left'.[20]

The image of Ruś as an 'alien', distant, potentially dangerous and destructive land is dramatically realized in the mythopoetic worldview of Belarusians in the late eighteenth century, after military recruitment was introduced. A person was called up for 25-year military service. In fact, in his native area he was considered dead. For example, a young recruit complains in a song: 'I'm going to Russia, to the war. / Everything is foreign there/ there is only sky and damp earth. / I'll cry following my cart, / Recollecting my father and mother, / and cursing my lot'.[21]

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[17] Бандарчык В.К. Этнаграфія беларусаў: гістарыяграфія, этнагенэз, этнічная гісторыя // В.К. Бандарчык, І.У. Чаквін і інш. Мінск, 1985. С. 78–79, 131.

[18] Шейн П.В. Материалы для изучения быта и языка русского населения Северо--Западного края. СПб.,1902. Т. 3. С. 98.

[19] Берман И. Календарь по народным преданиям в Воложинском приходе Виленской губернии Ошмянского уезда // Записки императорского Русского географического общества. СПб. 1873. Т. V. С. 41.

[20] Романов Е.Р. Белорусский сборник. Витебск, 1891. Вып. IV. С. 89.

[21] Цішчанка І.К.Сацыяльна-бытавыя песні / Уклад., сістэматызацыя, уступ. Арт. І камент. І.К. Цішчанкі; рэд. А.С. Фядосік. Мінск, 1987. С. 51.

At the same time, in the national world-view, Russia is fraught with another danger: a long-term stay there can lead not only to physical death of the 'local people', but also to the loss of cultural (linguistic) identity, which makes the identification of a person in the traditional community indefinite. A domestic observation in Harodnia province in the end of the nineteenth century provides an eloquent example: *'if a person unfamiliar with the area asks a local in Russian: "what village are you from?" or "what is the name of this village?" The local person will answer, but before he will give the stranger a look of surprise and ask: "perhaps you are from Russia, who does not speak our language and says [in Russian] dziareunia?" And if the stranger says: "No, I'm local, from Vaŭkavysk, from Luniansk parish, I only speak in a slightly different way, as I was in Maskali for 10 years", than the native often noted: "Now it's clear! The face and outfit looks local, but the way he speaks is strange. Oh my Lord! Spent among Muscovites ten years and completely broke his tongue".*[22] It is significant that even in the 1970s and 80s, children and young people in villages near Lepiel made rash comments about using Russian words: 'Do not use Russian, or you'll be expelled from Belarus'.[23]

The historical conditions of the relationship between the two ethnic groups were crucial in forming the image of Russians in Belarusian folk culture. In particular, we have to keep in mind the dramatic events of devastating wars of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries and the behavior of Russian armies on the territory of Belarus. It became the basis for creating an image of the cruel, ruthless character of the Russian people. A Russian was regarded as a more terrible character than the mythological devil: 'A devil can be scared away by the sign of cross but not a Maskal'; '– Father! Father! The devil climbs in the house! – Do not worry; whoever, but a Maskal'.[24] It is no accident that one of the meanings of the word Maskal in Belarusian dialects is a 'naughty boy or

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[22] Шейн П.В. Материалы для изучения быта и языка русского населения Северо-Западного края. СПб. 1902. Т. 3. С. 98.

[23] Being grateful to T.V. Vałodzina for the access to the field materials.

[24] Максимов С.В. Белорусская Смоленщина с соседями // Живописная Россия: Отечество наше в его зем., ист., плем., экон. и быт. значении: Литовское и Белорусское Полесье: Репринт. воспроизв. изд. 1882 г. Мінск, 1993. С. 438, 457.

an empty ear of rye or wheat'.[25] The blind Muscovites' willingness to obey orders of the authorities is reflected in Belarusian fairy-tale prose. Thus, in the fairy tale 'Asiłak', by order of landlords, they kill a people's hero: 'The landlords hired Maskals and attacked Asiłak. No wonder, Maskal. If he gets an order he will even kill his own father and mother'.[26] Maskals are even used to 'intimidate' the disease in a spell: '...Zosia's valve, stand still, do not show. If you show I will call Cossacks, Maskals, they will cut you, they will chop'.[27]

Drunkenness is another negative trait of the Russian people[28] ('it is difficult to trace among local people the typical features of 'alcoholics', which are observed in full glory among the "petty Maskals", dispersed in the South-East of Viciebsk province[29]); *mendacity* ('it is well known, a Maskal is good at telling lies'[30]); *lack of responsibility* (the term, 'Russian traveling moon' means absolutely indefinite[31]); *thievery* ('a Maskal is beaten not because of stealing but because of failing to hide it properly'; 'that's the essence of a Maskal: to steal'[32]); and *low mental abilities* ('do not fool a Muscovy, it's stupid anyway'[33]). It is possible that the idea of Russians' mental inadequacy resulted from their awkward attempts to explain themselves in the local dialect: 'Once, Maskals stopped in a village, so one of them would ask some pepper to spice eggs, and he says to an old woman: "Hey! Baba, can you pepper my balls?" And she answers: "A murrain on you! I'm too old for balls!".[34]

In contrast to images of Russia and Ukraine, the image of Poland is mythologized to a lesser extent in the traditional worldview of Belarusians.

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[25] Станкевіч Я. Беларуска-Расійскі (Вялікалітоўска – расійскі) слоўнік. New-York 1990. С. 678

[26] Сержпутоўскі А.К. Казкі і апавяданні беларусаў-палешукоў. Мінск, 1999. С. 103.

[27] Recorded by the author in 1993 from S.S. Dobyš, born on 1923 in Kraśniki village (Dokšycy district).

[28] An exeption from this rule would be Russian Old Believers, who drank alcahol on very special occasions only.

[29] Никифоровский Н.Я. Простонародные приметы и поверья, суеверные обряды и обычаи... Витебской Белоруссии. Витебск, 1897. С. 82.

[30] Сержпутоўскі А.К. Казкі і апавяданні беларусаў-палешукоў. Мінск, 1999. С. 68.

[31] Federowski M. Lud białoruski na Rusi Litewskiej. Warszawa, 1935, T. IV, p. 267.

[32] Ibidem, p. 179.

[33] Насовіч І.І. Слоўнік беларускай мовы. Мінск, 1983. С. 291.

[34] Анталогія беларускага народнага анекдота і жарта / Уклад., прадм. А.С. Фядосіка. Мінск, 2001. С. 37.

It is interpreted through popular understanding of real history. This is because Belarus and Poland shared a single historical destiny for quite a long time and following the Union of Lublin of 1569 coexisted in a single federal state – *Rzeczpospolita*.

Nevertheless, Poland, like almost any foreign country, keeps expressive features of the other world, as opposed to 'our land', the 'motherland'. The correlation between Poland and the infernal, destructive sphere of the universe is particularly clearly reflected in the legend 'Eternal Frontier': 'Once upon the time there lived a prince of our land, Radar. First he was a blacksmith and later he was elected to be prince. And in Lach lands there lived King Lach, who had a snake Krahavej. The snake got into the habit of visiting our land: he would come, eat people or kill those whom he didn't eat.' The result of the duel between the mythological heroes was the victory of Radar. He harnessed the snake and ploughed a furrow with it, which became the bed of the Bug river, and at the same time, the border between Poland and Belarus.[35]

On the other hand, Poland, in the folk dimension, is a country whose people possess supernatural qualities and are endowed with the qualities of cultural heroes. Thus, the legendary Mieniesk, the founder of Minsk, is a native of Poland: 'This city was founded by some hero and magician Mieniesk, who came here from Poland'.[36] Significantly, the idea of the extraordinary ability of the Poles survived into the twentieth century in Paleśsie: 'we have had a Polish forester. He could turn clouds away. He could stop a cloud or tear it apart. He had a stick. In June vipers and grass snakes are playing, and who managed to divide them by a stick can then use this stick to stop clouds'.[37] At the same time, natives of Poland, as well as other 'outsiders', could be attributed harmful features: witchcraft, for example. It was reflected in spells: 'I will ask God, learn the lessons. From Polish eyes, from Russian eyes, from the female condition, from the male condition'.[38]

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[35] Легенды і паданні // Склад. М.Я. Грынблат і А.І. Гурскі; рэд.тома А.С. Фядосік. 2-е выд., дап.і дапрац. Мінск, 2005. С. 80–81.

[36] Ibidem, p. 288.

[37] Белова О.В. "Чужие" в Полесье // Живая старина. 2000. № 3. С. 10.

[38] Барташэвіч Г.А. Замовы // Уклад., сістэм. тэкстаў, уступ. арт. і камент. Г.А. Барташэвіч; Рэдкал.: А.С. Фядосік [і інш.]. Мінск, 1992. С. 265.

However, it should be noted that these characteristics apply only to 'foreigners' living among 'us'; they do not concern the neighboring people as a collective trait. On the contrary, at the household level in the traditional worldview, the population of the neighboring country was endowed with a number of features that put it closer to the world of nature, contrasting with the 'normal', 'local', and 'our' people. People from the traditional culture thought in local terms, which is why on the Mazury, the Belarusian-Polish borderlands, the inhabitants of the Polish Mazovia neighboring Belarus, were very often portrayed as the embodiment of all Poles. The idea that Poles belong to the world of 'anti-culture' is also conditioned by the distance between the languages. It is no coincidence that the Polish language is perceived as 'not ours' or incomprehensible and is correlated in riddles with natural categories: 'it would go to the field, puff up like a sack, neigh like a horse, weep like a Pole' (a goose); 'a horse is flying, in Polish neighing, and who would kill him, would have his own blood on his hands' (a mosquito).[39]

In the traditional world view of the Belarusians, Poles were also identified with a number of shortcomings of social, moral and ethical character. Short-sightedness and opportunism can be named among them ('a Pole becomes wise only after damage', 'Lach only looked around, but caught ague'), as well as idleness ('Mazur is only good at playing'), bulling and conflict ('fighting for a Mazur is like bread and butter for normal people'), haughtiness and conceit ('how can one tell a Poll from other people? – By a shiny buckle on the belly'), excessive lust ('Mazur is lustful, running after girls like a boor').[40] The latter characteristic made advances of Polish men on local girls especially dangerous: 'Oh, what have you done to me, Lach, / What's dancing in my belly? / Either a fish, or small fish, or a small human being?'[41]

According to the Belarusian world view, Mazury, like animals, are born blind ('Mazury are born blind', 'the Mazur is blind until the

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[39] Грынблат М.Я. Загадкі / НАН Беларусі, Ін-т мастацтвазнаўства, этнаграфіі і фальклору; Склад.М.Я. Грынблат, А.І. Гурскі. 2-е выд. Мінск, 2004. С. 131, 150.

[40] Federowski M. Lud białoruski na Rusi Litewskiej. Warszawa, 1935, T. IV, p. 181.

[41] Фядосік А.С. Жартоўныя песні / Рэд. А.С. Фядосік, Г.І. Цітовіч. Мінск, 1974. С. 108.

seventh day') and have a special physical mark ('every Mazur has a black palate').[42]

Lithuanians shared the same 'inhuman' marks, according to the beliefs of Belarusians. The expressive category 'hirhun/Litwin/Lithuanian with a black palate' meant 'bad, evil Lithuanian': *'They say that Lithuanians are evil. They say: "a Lithuanian woman with a black palate!" Well, that's evil. In the old times when choosing a dog or a small puppy we opened its mouth and looked at the palate. If it was black, the dog would be angry, if light, then… So ...they can say, You are a Lithuanian man or woman with a black palate." That means very evil.'* (Smarhoń district).[43]

The language feature of Lithuanians in the borderland area formed the basis of their collective nickname: hirhuny/hierhuny. This microethnonym reflects Lithuanian's peculiarities of speech ('they "hierhiet" something, difficult to understand'[44]). The microetnonym hirhuny, spread mainly in the Astraviec, Ašmiany, Smarhoń, Vilnia and Šalčyninkai areas had a mocking, dismissive, and sometimes abusive expressive character. One may also note that the name 'hirhuny' was frequently transferred from borderland residents to a broader group and representatives of the Lithuanian ethnic group in general (compare: '-And where do hirhuny live? -Hirhuny, well Lithuanians. Hirhun. -Where do they live? -Well, where do they live? In Lithuania, but there are some here. Two village councils over there'[45]).

The etymology of the term 'Hirhuny' is closely connected with the Lithuanian gergėti, 'to cackle' (of geese), and the Belarusian hierhać 'to cackle' (of geese), and 'hierhielić' (to chatter).[46] The words are of onomatopoeic origin. It is no coincidence that the Lithuanian language, perceived as 'foreign' and incomprehensible, is in this case correlated with

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[42] Federowski M. Lud białoruski na Rusi Litewskiej. Warszawa, 1935, T. IV, p. 181.

[43] Recorded by V.Vajtkiavičus, L. Sakalavajte, J. Unukovič in 2007 from Valdemar Fiedarovič, born in 1942, in Niestaniški village, Smarhoń district.

[44] Recorded by V. Vajtkiavičus, L. Sakalavajte, J. Unukovič in 2007 from Marjan Rohač, born in 1938, in Bujaki village, Smarhoń district.

[45] Recorded by V. Vajtkiavičus, L. Sakalavajte, J. Unukovič in 2007 from Ivan Sidarevič, born in 1940, in Bujaki village, Smarhoń district.

[46] Слоўнік беларускіх гаворак паўночна-заходняй Беларусі і яе пагранічча: у 5 т.: уклад. Мацкевіч Ю.Ф. [і інш.]; рэд.: Мацкевіч Ю.Ф. Мінск, 1980. Т. 1: А–Г. С. 400. Federowski M. Lud białoruski na Rusi Litewskiej. Warszawa, 1935, T. IV, p. 364.

the natural, non-human category - the cackling of geese. 'These hirhuny, they can be different... "Geese", we call them. - How? - Geese [laughs]. - Why? - Well, they talk like geese'[47]. (Compare this with an entry by M. Federowski, which probably has the same semantic meaning: 'in Samogitia, even chicken are people'[48]). Similar characteristics are related to the Latvian language: 'they never spoke our way. Among themselves I mean. They speak Latvian with their people and our language with us. Go to their house and you would hear: "Herr, herr, herr". They hierhiet, there is no way to understand anything.'[49] Accordingly, in domestic situations, the incomprehensible 'bird language' was the subject of ridicule and irony: 'The locals laugh a lot. Look, Latvians, look, they speak in a strange way.'[50]

However, contrasted with the image of local ('our') Lithuanians, who have always lived in the Belarusian border region and formed part of Belarusians' living space, one can clearly see the image of 'repulsive', 'inveterate', 'pure' Lithuanians ('there were Lithuanians here for ages. Hierhuns from Hierviaty who have been there as long as I can remember', Astraviec district[51]). Active acquaintance with Lithuanians from different ethnographic regions occurred mainly in the second half of the twentieth century, as a result of the increased mobility across the border region. The events of 1939–1940 can be regarded as the starting point for this image formation, when, under an agreement between the Republic of Lithuania and the Soviet Union, part of the Vilnius region became part of the Lithuanian state. As is well known, when establishing the state border between Lithuania and Belarus, only the interests of the political leadership of the USSR were taken into account; naturally formed ethnic boundaries were not considered. The newly – formed state border, which actually divided the living space of the local population into 'this' and the 'other' side had direct impact on people and definitely

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47 Recorded by J. Unukovič in 2008 from Zyhmund Biarozkin, born in 1934, in Jackany village, Šalčininkai district.

48 Federowski M. Lud białoruski na Rusi Litewskiej. Warszawa, 1935, T. IV, p. 364.

49 Recorded by the author in 2008 from Valancina Bumaha, born in 1933. in Vacłavova village, Ušačy district.

50 Recorded by the author in 2008 from Valancina Bumaha, born in 1933 in Vacłavova village, Ušačy district.

51 Recorded by V. Vajtkiavičus, L. Sakalavajte, J. Unukovič in 2007 from Maryja Vajciul, born in 1927, in Makruny village, Astraviec district.

influenced the image of the neighboring people.[52] Such a traumatic event for the local Slavic population could not go without proper evaluation and interpretation: '*Litvin ran, ran, ran, and set a striped pillar to have more beyond the border. He fell down and was about to die. A Belarusian went out, while making samahonka, lifted him, and that's all. Belarusians are good people, Lithuanians are bad. They are invaders? They want more and more. And they are evil, evil ... To have more land; he carried a stropped pillar on his back. Ran, ran, ran, ran to put a stake, then fell and died near this stake*'(Astraviec district).[53]

In Soviet times, the image of Lithuanians in the national perception of Belarusians in the border region acquired new peculiarities and characteristics. Socio-economic changes that took place in the Soviet Republics in the 1950–1980s led to intensive migration and urbanization processes. Vilnius became a centre for the active migration of people in the border region at that time. It was at this time that the Belarusian people started to attribute Lithuanians the characteristic of providing an incorrect destination or even refusing to show the way (in response to requests for directions). It is a clear indication of being 'different' or 'other'.[54] '*I often travelled to Vilnius during the communist times to buy some flour. And, you know, very few, if any, people there openly say where the store where one can buy flour is. They would hierhiet, and following their directions you would get so deep it would be difficult to get out. And that doesn't happen here. We ask in the Belarusian language. If someone does not know, then he does not know, but if he knows, he says*' (Ašmiany district).[55]

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[52] Внуковіч Ю.І., Лобач У.А. Вобраз літоўцаў у беларускай народнай культуры // Беларускае Падзвінне: вопыт, методыка і вынікі палявых і міждысцыплінарных даследаванняў: зб. навук. прац міжнар. навук.-практ. канф., Полацк, 21–23 красав. 2011 г.: у 2 ч. Ч. 1 / Полацкі дзярж. ун-т; пад агульн. рэд. Д.У. Дука, У.А. Лобача. Наваполацк, 2011. С. 171.

[53] Recorded by V. Vajtkiavičus, L. Sakalavajte, J. Unukovič in 2007 from Sofja Simanovič, born in 1941, in Małyja Sviranki village, Astraviec district.

[54] Мазько Э. Падарожжа па-за лакальнасць: «нашыя» людзі паміж «сваім» і «чужым» светам // Pogranicza Białorusi w perspektywie interdyscyplinarnej = Памежжы Беларусі ў міждысцыплінарнай перспектыве / red. E. Smułkowa i A. Engelking. Warszawa, 2007. С. 201.

[55] Традыцыйная мастацкая культура беларусаў. У 6 т. Т. 3. Гродзенскае Панямонне. У 2 кн. Кн. 2 // А.М. Боганева [і інш.]. Мінск, 2006.

Thus, a preliminary analysis and characterization of Belarusian's traditional concepts about their ethnic neighbors shows that their image in the mythopoetic world view was formed according to geographical, historical, social, political and ritual contexts. It relates mainly to infernal zone of the other world, marked as 'strange', a 'foreign land' and is opposed to 'our', the 'motherland'. The distance in languages between Belarusians and 'outsiders' played the greatest role in the formation of ethnic extra-images, as well as real-world experience of intercultural interaction, where even minor features in behavior and way of life, or ethnic character acquired symbolic, identification status within the traditional worldview. In its turn, it was a powerful factor of self-identity which is ethnocentric at its core.

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Gudas as a Historical Name of Belarusians in the Lithuanian Language: 'Goths' or 'Barbarians'?

In the contemporary Lithuanian language the archaic word *gudai* is again in active use to designate Belarusians. Yet in the XVI century one of the founders of the Lithuanian written language Mikalojus Daukša used this term to refer to the Slavic population of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.[1] This tradition continued in the XVII–XVIII centuries.[2] Also in the XIX century the term *gudai* could apply both to Russians and Eastern Slavs.[3]

Vasily Tatishchev was not hiding his surprise when referring to other authors he wrote: «What have we done to old Lithuanians that they name Russians as gudai? ... Why are they called the Goths?»[4] In the first case, the Russian historian referred to the source: *"Albert Molnár in Dictionarium ungaricum, entry Russija"* and in the second, to *Konstantinas Širvydas in Dictionarium lituanicae*, entry *Rus*. As we can see here, Tatishchev opted for an expanded understanding of the ethnonym "Ruthenian", by covering also the inhabitants of Muscovy Ruś, although in those cases it was meant to be Lithuanian Ruś (Ruthenia). In his next comments, Tatishchev further developed this topic: "Lithuanians

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[1] Zinkevičius Z. Lietuvių kalbos istorija. T.III: Senųjų raštų kalba. Vilnius, 1988. P. 194.

[2] Lebedys J. Lietuvių kalba XVII–XVIII a. viešajme gyvenime. Vilnius, 1976. P. 50.

[3] Baranauskas A. Kelionė Petaburkan // Baranauskas A. Rinktinė. Vilnius, 1994. P. 47, 50, 57.

[4] Татищев В.Н. История российская. Т. 1. Москва, Ленинград, 1962. С. 299.

name Ruthenians as gudai. I do not find this name either in Polish or Russian, but Sryjkowski indicates that they call Russians Krewe, i.e., those from upper reaches, also including the Smolensk region for its location at the upper reaches of main rivers in Rus, the Volga, the Dvina and the Dnieper, hence for Sarmatians, Russians are krevi, being in the Slavic upper reaches while Slavs were called krevichi, Part II, n/ 21, 22 and 191".[5] On the territory of the Lithuanian Republic there are 115 registered names related to the form *Gudeliai* (in Mažeikiai, Raseiniai, Kelmė and Pagėgiai district counties). In this relation, considering that the Lithuanian form of *Gudeliai* was used to designate "Ruthenian" (Eastern Slavic) settlements, Jerzy Ochmiański noted, that they can hardly by attributed to the extra-territorial names – that is those that emerge at a distance from one's own ethnic territory in a completely alien environment.[6] Names like *Gudeliai* were a manifestation of Eastern Slavs' penetration through the Baltic ethnic territories. Sporadically names like *Gudeliai* are found in Samogitia where they already have a clearly extraterritorial nature (there are 16 of this kind). At least, part of the settlements with names like Gudeliai, as evidenced by historical sources, exist since the XV century: "gaium dictum Gudow" (grove called Gudow) near Bijuciški (1478),[7] "field or oak forest" near "*Gwdoyczow*"[8] in Vilnia region (1480).[9]

Here are some of many names derived from "gudai" in Belarusian toponymy:

In the Harodnia region: Hudahaj (Astraviec district), Hudałaŭka (Ašmiany district), Hudali, Hudališki (Astraviec district), Hudy (Lida district), Hudzievičy (Masty district), Hudzianiki (Astraviec district), Hudzianiata (Ašmiany district), Hudzieli (Voranava district), Hudziniški

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5   Татищев В.Н. История российская. Т. 1. С. 309, спас. 24.

6   Охманьский Е. Иноземные поселения в Литве в XIII–XIV вв. в свете этнонимических местных названий // Балто-славянские исследования, 1980. Москва, 1981. С. 113, 115—116.

7   Fijalek J., Semkowicz W. Kodeks diplomatyczny katedry i diecezji Wileńskiej, T. I, Kraków, 1948. Nr. 311, s. 367.

8   Such name in mentioned in the source. It meant Gvdoyczow/Gudoyczow.

9   Fijalek J., Semkowicz W. Kodeks diplomatyczny... Nr. 347. S. 404.

(Voranava district), Hudziški (Ščučyn district), Hudzianiaty (Iŭje district), Hudeli (Voranava district);[10]

In the Minsk region: Hudy (Vałožyn district), Hudovičy (Červień district);

In the Viciebsk region: Hudava (Vierchniadźvinsk and Dubroŭna districts), Hudzieliški (Pastavy district).[11]

Gudai as "Others"

A comprehensive analysis, including ethnographic material, allowed researchers of the «gudai issue» already in the XIX century to underline that the name «gudai» was not only used to refer to the Belarusian population of Belarusian-Lithuanian border region. The Polish anthropologist Jan Karol Sembrzycki (1856-1919) observed that "the Prussian Lithuanian calls residents of neighborhoods that are located in the south of him, by the name *gudai*, regardless of whether they are Poles, Lithuanians or Belarusians".[12] Similar observations were also made by Aleksander Brückner (1856-1939), a Polish scholar of Slavic philology: "Lithuanians call their neighbors to the east, *gudai*, there is an interesting pattern: a Prussian Lithuanian calls *gudai* Samogitians while Samogitians call *gudai* Belarusians, i.e. each of these groups uses the ethnonym *gudai* for their eastern neighbors".[13] Estonian anthropologist Yuri (Georgyi) Trusman (born 1857) noted that *gudai* could be a name for Polish Lithuanians, but also Belarusians.[14] The Belarusian ethnographer Michaił (Moses) Hrynbłat (1905-1983) brought another similar example

[10] Жучкевич В.А. Краткий топонимический словарь Белоруссии. Мн., 1974. С. 88–89; Назвы населеных пунктаў Рэспублікі Беларусь: Гродзенская вобласць: Нарматыўны даведнік // Пад рэд. В.П. Лемцюговай. Мн., 2004. С. 64, 66, 78, 87, 103, 107, 147, 149, 220, 267, 278, 363.

[11] See also: Рогалев А.Ф. Этноним гуды на географической карте: поиски исторической мотивации // Советская этнография. 1989. № 6. С. 118–122.

[12] Sembrzycki J. Ziemie północne i zachodnie kraju zudwińskiego i ich granice // Wisła (Warszawa). 1891. T. V, № 4. S. 852.

[13] Brückner A. Starożytna Litwa. Ludy i bogi. Szkice historyczne i mitologiczne. Olsztyn, 1985. S. 17.

[14] Трусман Ю.Ю. Этимология местных названий Витебской губернии. Ревель, 1897. С. 82.

– Lithuanians living on the left bank of the Nioman (Nemunas) near Druskininkai also called Lithuanians living on the right bank of the river *gudai*.[15]

Perhaps, it is the difference between communities that results in certain groups being listed as "*gudai*", and very often the distance in language, this has led to contextually skeptical connotations about the name "*gudai*". For example, Lithuanian wildings (wild apples) are called *gudobelė*, and their fruits gudobelės vasius (-iai) or gudobelės uoga (-os). This pejorative qualification of "inferior" fruit trees, probably, was transferred from the term *gudų*. In this regard, we can recall the words of Yuri Trusman, who once remarked that "[traditional] names of people usually derive from indecent nicknames".[16]

Discussions about the Etymology

Thus, it can be argued that the ethnonym *gudai* was not historically associated with a particular ethnic group. This is an example of a »wandering« ethnonym. But it is possible to define the region where the ethnonym »traveled«: the Belarusian-Lithuanian border area, and the former Prussian ethnic territory.

Already in Polish historiography, there was an idea of the relationship of the ethnonym *gudai* with Yotvingians. The word *gudai* derives from the Old Prussian name Gudwa, which, in turn, is related to the form *Żudwa*, which is a distorted version of *Sudwa*, *Sudovia*.[17] *Sudovia*, in its turn, is one of the names of Yotvingians. The area covered by the ethnonym *gudai* partly coincides with the territory of Yatvingians, as emphasized by the Belarusian philologist Alaksandr Rohaleŭ[18] (born in 1956).

Yet already in the XIX century Aleksander Brückner argued for a link between the ethnonym *gudai* and the Lithuanian *gŭdas*,-jis and Prussian *gudde* (timber, wood), which literally means "people living in the

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[15] Гринблат М.Я. Белорусы. Очерки происхождения и этнической истории. Мн., 1968. С. 162.

[16] Трусман Ю.Ю. Этимология местных названий Витебской губернии. С. 82.

[17] Kamiński A. Jaćwież. Terytorium, ludność, stosunki gospodarcze i społeczne. Łódź, 1953. S. 31–32.

[18] Рогалев А.Ф. Этноним гуды на географической карте... С. 119.

woods".[19] And this interestingly is connected to the Latin designation of Yatvingians in the old Polish tradition as *Pollexiani*, which is interpreted as *Polesianie*, «the inhabitants of forests and woodlands».[20]

Michaił Hrynbłat was also inclined to the «Yatvingian» version of the *gudai* name origin. He raised the question whether the ethnonym *gudai* could not belong to a local group of ancient Balts. And, further continuing his thought, he noted that some of the data suggest that the ethnonym *gudai* was one of the ancient names of Yatvingians, as some of them converge with *gudai* and *gudas*. Ruthenian chronicles call Yatvingians *jatviezie*, Polish written sources – *jacwezi* and *jacwing*, German – *Jetwesen*. But also in Polish and German sources of Yatvingians are mentioned under the names of *sudwy* and *sydziny* (Polish), *Sudovita*, *Sudus*, *Sudiny* (German). In Polish tradition, the north-west Harodnia region is called Sudowija or Żudwa while popes in their bullas designated Yatvingians as *gotveziani*. Grynblat concludes that one can not ignore the proximity between the names «sudawy» – «sudus» – «żudwa» – «gotveziani» and «gudai» – «gudas».[21]

But Lithuanian *gudai* has meanings, an invariant of which is «the one who does not know our common language».[22] Moreover, the root *-gud* could be used to describe an ethnically other, socially lower layer.[23] The same root has to do with the designation of forest, bush and swamp.

Furthermore, some linguists share the view that originally the Lithuanian *gudai* comes from the ethnonym *Goths* (*gutani*). This version reveals the most archaic layers of popular consciousness.

Trajectory of the Goths

It is worth recalling that Goth is the Latin name (*Gothi*) which comes from self-naming as *Gutans* and *Gytos*. German lithuanist Fraenkel argues

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[19] Brückner A. Starożytna Litwa. S. 197.

[20] Kamiński A. Jaćwież. S. 19–22.

[21] Гринблат М.Я. Белорусы. Очерки происхождения и этнической истории. Мн., 1968. С. 163.

[22] Иванов В.В., Топоров В.Н. О древних славянских этнонимах (основные проблемы и перспективы) // Славянские древности. Киев, 1980. С. 18–19.

[23] Топоров В.Н. Прусский язык. Словарь. [Вып. 2:] E–H. М., 1979. С. 327.

that the word "*gudai*" comes from the name of the Goths: "The word originally referred to Goths and later to the Belarusians".[24] This same version was supported by the Lithuanian linguist Zigmas Zinkevičius.[25] However, Mirra Guchman believes that it is very difficult to prove the relationship between the "*Goths*" and "*Gudai*" because the word *gudas* is only recorded from the XVI century.[26] But this is a Germanic point of view which studies the ancient monuments of the Gothic language and is not specifically dealing with Baltic languages studies. Although Guchman's remark about the time of the word's written fixation is true.

For the ancient Baltic tribes, the Goths were neighbors from the South.[27] Rather, as noted by Oleg Trubachev, we are dealing with re-appropriation by Lithuanians of a ready name for the Goths to other neighbors to the south, the Slavs. For the Russian linguist, this example seemed «to be scholarly under-valued as an indicator of secondary areal background of the Balto-Slavic contacts».[28]

Trubachev also proposed a reconstruction of the name "the Goths" in Slavic Languages: **gъdъ*. Similar forms are absent across the contemporary Belarusian territory, but its derivatives surround Belarus and Polesie by a semicircle – the Polish *Gdzew* (a forest's name in Mozovia, early XV century),[29] Ukrainian Gdov (*Гдов*, a name in the Lviv region), Russian Gdov and Ruthenian (*Гдов* and *Гдовъ*, a town on the

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[24] Fraenkel E. Litauisches etimologisches Wörterbuch. Bd. 1. Heidelberg; Göttingen, 1962. S. 174; Frenkelis E. Baltų kalbos // Vertė S. Karaliūnas. Vilnius, 1969. P. 26.

[25] See also: Зинкявичюс З. Восточная Литва в прошлом и настоящем // Пер. с лит. О. Дундайте. Vilnius, 1996. С. 78; Zinkevičius Z. Krikščionybės ištakos Lietuvoje: Rytų krikščionybė vardyno duomenimis. Vilnius, 2005; Дзярновіч А. Да разнастайнасьці імёнаў [Рэцэнзія:] Zinkevičius, Zigmas. Krikščionybės ištakos Lietuvoje: Rytų krikš-čionybė vardyno duomenimis. Vilnius: Katalikų akademijos leidykla, 2005. 112 p., 7 іл. [Зінкявічус, Зігмас. Вытокі хрысьціянства ў Літве: Хрысьціянства ўсходняга абраду паводле зьвестак анамастыкі. Вільня: Выдавецтва Каталіцкай Акадэміі, 2005. 112 с., 7 іл.] // Наша Ніва. 2006, 3 сакавіка, № 9. С. 44–45.

[26] Гухман М.М. Готский язык. С. 7.

[27] In archaeological terms, Goths tribes are associated with Wielbark culture. See the latest publication: Белявец В. Насельніцтва вельбарскай культуры на тэрыторыі Беларусі // Беларускі гістарычны часопіс. 2009. № 5. С. 25–32.

[28] Трубачев О.Н. В поисках единства. Взгляд филолога на проблему истоков Руси. Москва, 2005. С. 77.

[29] Wolff A., Rzetelska-Feleszko E. Mazowieckie nazwy terenowe do końca XVI wieku. Warszawa, 1982. S. 50.

Eastern shore of Chudskoye Lake).[30] Thus, the Lithuanian name *gudas* emerged at a stable ethnic frontier, «where peoples have changed, and the border remained».[31]

Trubachev believes that these names» reflect the Belarusian ethnic boundary as it were from the Lithuanian side.» One can rather say that these toponyms are scattered across the ancient Baltic territory and located in a long strip of the old border between Balts and Slavs in the late Middle Ages.

Such etymology claims intrigued the imagination of researchers.

For example, Fraenkel saw in the Lithuanian *gudas* a reflection of the times when "Belarusians, along with the Baltic Prussians were under the domination of the lower reaches of the Vistula".[32] Obviously, this view looks very modernistic.

As noted by Alaksandr Rohaleŭ, here we come across a feature of ancient ethnic names – the original ethnic content of the name became irrelevant, forgotten, but ethnonym derived meaning comes to the fore being fixed in the minds of the ethnonym bearers in relation to those peoples with whom this ethnic group is in the immediate neighborhood, and perceives them through the features of language, religion and culture which are not «ours», but «others».[33] When reassessing an ethnonym there is also a certain phonetic re-appropriation of the name, which may be done on the basis of its conscious or unconscious comparison as for its sounding with an *appellative* (common name) already exiting in the language. One version of how the ethnonym Goths changed in *Gudai* assumes the impact of the appellative *gŭdas -jis* («sylvan»). The use of the ethnonym *Gudai* in the region from Prussia to the Belarusian-Lithuanian borderlands and the main direction of the ethnonym's localization to the south-east can be explained by the movement of the Goths from the Vistula banks to the south-east and their long stay in the region. Baltic tribes from the outlined area felt the strong impact of the Goths tribal alliance. This can explain the why the Lithuanian language preserved the form *gudai* as a kind of conservation of the Goths' ethnonym.

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[30] Фасмер М. Этимологический словарь русского языка. Т. 1. С. 400.
[31] Трубачев О.Н. В поисках единства. С. 78.
[32] Fraenkel E. Litauisches etimologisches Wörterbuch. Bd. 1. S. 174.
[33] Рогалев А.Ф. Этноним гуды на географической карте... С. 120.

The Term's Adventures in the XX Century

It is worth noting that the Belarusians have never used the name *gudai* vis-à-vis themselves. Belarusian literature, which was published in the first half of the XX century in the interwar Kaunas – «temporary capital» of the newly born Lithuanian Republic, had subtitles in Lithuanian where the term *Gudija* was used referring to Belarus.[34] To denote the Belarusians the term *Baltġudžiai* could be used, as in a school atlas of 1923.[35]

Map of Lithuania with the name "Baltġudžiai" as a name for a people (Debės E. Mažasis mokyklos atlasas. Mastelis 1 : 2000000. Kaunas-Vilnius: Švyturys, 1923. Nr. 4)

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[34] The Belarusian flag = Gudų Veliava: Штомесячнік (Коўна). 1922. № 1-4; Voronko J. Gudų klausimas. Kaunas, 1919.

[35] Debės E. Mažasis mokyklos atlasas. Mastelis 1 : 2000000. Kaunas-Vilnius: Švyturys, 1923. Nr. 4 (Lietuva). [online]. Available at: http://www.maps4u.lt/lt/includes/siuntiniai/Z/Debe_Atlasas_1923.htm (Accessed 15 January 2012).

In Soviet Lithuania in 1941 the term *Gudija* was also officially used to refer to Belarus, as evidenced, inter alia, by a book on Belarus as one of the Soviet republics published by the state publishing house of the Lithuanian SSR.[36] After the end of World War II, *Baltarusija* (exactly White Ruthenia/Russia) became the country's normative name in the Lithuanian language while, the term *Gudija* disappeared from Lithuania's geographical maps.[37] The return of the word occurred in the late 1980s and 1990s.
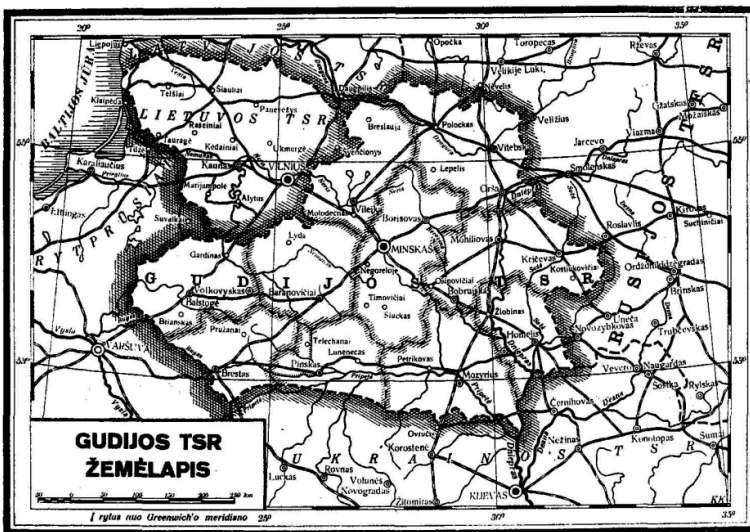
Map of the Belarusian SSR from the publication: Gudija. Kaunas, 1941

But the use of this word raised some ambiguity among the Belarusian public. In the early 1990s, Zianon Paźniak expressed his negative opinion to naming Belarusians as gudai in the Lithuanian language because this term can be a synonym for the word «retarded.» This statement of the Belarusian politician and artist has its own background.

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[36] Gudija. Kaune: LTSR Valstybinė leidykla, 1941.

[37] There is another terminology problem: in Lithuanian *Rusija* stands for both Ruthenia and Russia. It means, *Baltarusija* can be apprehended as White Russia.

On October 22, 1991 during a visit to Minsk of Vytautas Ladsbergis, the chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania, a number of arrangements were made for preparing documents that had to regulate the whole set of relations between the Lithuanian Republic and the Republic of Belarus.[38]

During this no doubt important visit one remarkable incident took place. Landsbergis addressed the Supreme Soviet of Belarus, starting his speech in Belarusian, and then continuing in Russian. In his address, the Lithuanian leader qualified the proclamation of the state status of the Belarusian language as an «essential step of the Belarusian national revival.» Further the distinguished guest suddenly said: «Since we also care for the authenticity and purity of the Lithuanian language it is more and more often that your nation is called in Lithuanian by ancient the Lithuanian name "gudai". Do not be surprised if perhaps we start using this name: *Gudijos* Respublikos, officially and again as in 1918 and 1940. Then we will be even more aware of our proximity. Since Lithuania is itself abundant with names of people: Gudas, Gudaitis, Gudinas, Gudavičius, Gudinskas, Gudžiūnas; and names of places: Gudeliai, Gudgalys, Gudakiemis; all of them testify to be signs of ancient life, common history and adjacent geography of our countries and people."[39] Belarusian intellectuals did not like the idea and they strongly favored the option *Baltarusija.*[40]

In contemporary Lithuanian society, the issue of using *Gudija* or *Baltarusija* is a matter of interest for certain circles. For example, answering readers' questions, the online school of the Lithuanian language "*Debesėlis*" explained the correlation between these two words in the following way:

"We also have nouns for the names baltarusis and gudas. Baltarusis is surely a Belarusian, but gudas has a wider meaning: it is a Belarusian, but it is also a native speaker of one of the Eastern Slavic languages (Russian, Ukrainian, etc, I suppose). As for the countries, I notice that Baltarusija

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[38] Пасланцы янтарнага краю (Белта) // Звязда. 1991, 23 кастр. С. 1.

[39] Прамова Старшыні Вярхоўнага Савета Літоўскай рэспублікі Вітаўтаса Ландсбергіса ў парламенце Рэспублікі Беларусь 22 кастрычніка 1991 года // Народная газета. 1991, 29 кастр. С. 1.

[40] Новікаў, Алег. Незалежнасць: пачатак // Новы час. 2011, 10 кастр., № 39. С. 14. Available at: http://novychas.org/sites/default/files/NCH-39-2011.pdf Accessed 14.01.2012.

is a more common word for saying Belarus. I guess that Gudija might mean the old historical territories of the Grand Duchy inhabited by the Slavs, but I'm not sure".[41]

Cultural printed outlets, such as the famous magazine »Kultūros barai«, make rather a frequent use of the word *Gudija* to denote the present-day Belarus. For example, the original title of Stasys Katauskas' article is "Gudija: Demokratijos lūkesčiai ir dvejonės dėl tautinės tapatybės".[42] The English version translation is "Belarus: Hopes for democracy and doubts about national identity".[43] Also in the Lithuanian version of Wikipedia the term *Gudija* is quoted as a synonym to *Baltarusija* though *Baltarusija* remains the primary term: "Baltarusijos Respublika (Baltarusija arba Gudija) yra žemyninė valstybė Rytų Europoje, tarp Lenkijos, Ukrainos, Rusijos, Latvijos ir Lietuvos".[44]

An example of using the term Gudija on contemporary Lithuanian maps

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[41] 'Gudija ar Baltarusija'. Debesėlis Online Lithuanian School. Available at: http://debeselis.net//forum//viewtopic.php?t=169 (Accessed 15.01.2012).

[42] Katauskas, Stasys. Gudija: Demokratijos lūkesčiai ir dvejonės dėl tautinės tapatybės // Kultūros barai. 2006. № 2.

[43] Katauskas S. (2006) 'Belarus: Hopes for democracy and doubts about national identity.' Eurozine: European Cultural Journals Network [online]. Available at: http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2006-03-16-katauskas-en.html (Accessed 15.01.2012).

[44] 'Baltarusija'. Vikipedija: Laisvoji enciklopedija. Available at: http://lt.wikipedia.org/wiki//Baltarusija (Accessed 15.01.2012).

Yet the negative connotations of the term *gudai* in modern Lithuanian language have contextual character. This word may sound neutral, but may indeed have old critical and skeptical content. There may be some grotesque meaning, as reflected on the pages of a satirico-anecdotal version of the Lithuanian Wikipedia, *Pipedija*. The article about Belarus, generally friendly, is written in a humorous manner. Below is the beginning of this article which reveals a rather sarcastic definition: "Baltarusija, o išties – Gudija – Sovietinės nostalgijos ~~slaviškoji~~ baltiškųjų gudų žemė su lietuviškomis priemaišomis (pvz. Gervėčiuose), kurioje valdo Aleksandras Lukašenka" (Baltarusija, indeed Gudija, is a nostalgic vis-à-vis the Soviet times ~~Slavic~~ Baltic land of Baltic gudai blended with Lithuanians (for example, Hierviaty) under the rule of Alaksandr Łukašenka.[45]

There is also a related terminology problem in humanities. In particular, problems have risen before the Lithuanian publishers of the GDL Metrica and Statutes. At some stage, in the academic community in Lithuania there was a tendency to designate the language of these written monuments as »bookkeeping« or »bookkeeping Slavonic«. One can take the example of changing trends of the GDL Metrics Trial books which are published by the Group of Lithuanian Statutes and Metrica of the Vilnius University. While in 1990s the publishers managed with the euphemism "the original language of the sources" ("Šaltinių tekstas originalo kalba"),[46] in the 2000s they began adding the word *gudų* ("Šaltinių tekstas originalo (gudų) kalba").[47] Recently, an expression 'old

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[45] 'Gudija'. Pipedija: Laisvoji enciklopedija. Available at: http://www.pipedija.com/index.php/Gudija (Accessed 15.01.2012).

[46] Lietuvos Metrika. Knyga Nr. 225 (1528–1547): 6-oji Teismų bylų knyga (XVI a. pabaigos kopija) // Spaudai parengė S. Lazutka, I. Valikonytė ir kt. Vilnius, 1995. P. 338; Lietuvos Metrika. Knyga Nr. 224 (1522–1530): 4-oji Teismų bylų knyga (XVI a. pabaigos kopija) // Spaudai parengė S. Lazutka, I. Valikonytė ir kt. Vilnius, 1997. P. 514; Lietuvos Metrika. Knyga Nr. 227 (1533–1535): 8-oji Teismų bylų knyga (XVI a. pabaigos kopija) // Spaudai parengė I. Valikonytė, S. Lazutka, N. Šlimienė ir kt. Vilnius, 1999. P. 305.

[47] Lietuvos Metrika. Knyga Nr. 230 (1542): 11-oji Teismų bylų knyga (XVI a. pabaigos kopia) // Spaudai parengė I. Valikonytė, S. Viskantaitė, L. Steponavičienė. Vilnius, 2001. P. 120; Lietuvos Metrika. Knyga Nr. 229 (1540–1541): 10-oji Teismų bylų knyga (XVI a. pabajgos kopija) // Parengė S. Lazutka, I. Valikonytė, S. Viskantaitė-Savščevienė, J. Karpavičienė. Vilnius, 2003. P. 264; Lietuvos Metrika. Knyga Nr. 231 (1540–1543): 12-oji Teismų bylų knyga (XVI a. pabaigos kopia) // Parengė

gudų language' has appeared ("Tekstas senaja gudų kalba"),[48] which is in fact a translation of the expression »old Belarusian language«. Stanislovas Lazutka, who argued for the justification of the expression »gudų kalba« and supported the very use of the term »Old Belarusian language,« noted, however, some grotesque character of the word »gudų«.[49] It is hard to think of examples of other words from other languages that would adequately illustrate a similar situation in the relationship between various shades of meaning of the ethnonym.

Can we make some practical recommendations from this ethnonym analysis? Given all the awkwardness of the calque construction, the term *Baltarusija* performs its official functions. The term *Gudija* is more original and archaic, but not without its negative connotations. It is true that the importance of these additional values gradually decreased in the modern Lithuanian consciousness and language. It may be worthwhile to discuss the Belarusian-Lithuanian dialogue of legitimizing the term *Gudija* at the official level. But here the arguments should be expressed by linguists and historians as well as politicians and diplomats from both countries.

I. Valikonytė, N. Šlimienė, S. Viskantaitė-Saviščevienė, L. Steponavičienė. Vilnius, 2007. P. 395.

[48] Lietuvos Metrika = Lithuanian Metrica = Литовская Метрика. Knyga Nr. 234 (1546–1548): 19-oji Teismų bylų knyga (XVI a. pabaigos – XVII a. pradžios kopia) // Parengė I. Valikonytė, S. Viskantaitė-Saviščevienė, L. Steponavičienė. Vilnius, 2009. P. 291; Lietuvos Metrika = Lithuanian Metrica = Metryka Litewska = Литовская Метрика. [Knyga Nr. 251]: (1555–1558): 37-oji Teismų bylų knyga (XVI a. pabaigos kopia) // Vilniaus universitetas; parengė Irena Valikonytė, Lirija Steponavičienė. Vilnius, 2010. P. 314.

[49] Лазутка С., Валиконите И., Гудавичюс Э. Первый Литовский Статут (1529 г.). Вильнюс, 2004. С. 65.

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Krajovaść vis-à-vis Belarusian and Lithuanian National Movements in the Early 20ᵗʰ Century

Over the past two decades, academic and public interest in the idea of 'krajovaść' has noticeably increased. The topic has a rich historiography, including Polish historians, such as Juliusz Bardach, Jan Jurkiewicz, Zbigniew Solak and Dariusz Szpoper, as well as Lithuanian historians, such as Rimantas Miknys and Jan Sawicki.[1] I also analyzed this issue in my research into the Polish national movement on Belarusian and Lithuanian territories during the final 50 years of the Russian Empire, as well as in research on the evolution of the Belarusian national idea. Alaksiej Unučak conducted a comparative analysis of the ideological phenomena of *krajovaść* and *westernrussism*.[2] In recent years, the idea

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[1] Bardach J. O dawniej i nie dawniej Litwie. Poznań, 1988; Krajowość – tradycje zgody narodów w dobie nacjonalizmu: Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji naukowej w Instytucie Historii UAM w Poznaniu (11–12 maja 1998). Pod redakcją Jana Jurkiewicza. Poznań, 1999; Zbigniew Solak, Między Polską a Litwą. Zycie i działalność Michała Romera. 1880–1920. Kraków, 2004; Dariusz Szpoper, Gente Lithuana, Natione Lithuana. Myśl polityczna i działalność Konstancji Skirmuntt (1851–1934). Gdańsk, 2009; Rimantas Miknys, Problem kształtowania się nowoczesnego narodu Polaków litewskich w pierwszej połowie XX w // Biuletyn historii pogranicza. 2000. Nr 1; Jan Sawicki, Michał Römer a problemy narodowościowe na ziemiach byłego Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego. Toruń, 1998.

[2] Смалянчук А. Паміж краёвасцю і нацыянальнай ідэяй. Польскі рух на беларускіх і літоўскіх землях. 1864 – люты 1917 г. 2-е выд., дапрац. Спб.: Неўскі прасцяг, 2004; Смалянчук А. Беларускі нацыянальны рух і краёвая ідэя // Białoruskie zeszyty historyczne. 2000, Nr 14. C. 45–53; Смалянчук А. Краёвасць у беларускай

of *krajovaść* has also been covered in the work of Belarusian scholars; it is worth mentioning studies by Ihar Babkoŭ, Alaksiej Dziermant and Andrej Kazakievič.

Historians focused primarily on well-known *krajovaść* leaders, in particular Michał Romer (1880–1945), Kanstancyja Skirmunt (1851–1934), Raman Skirmunt (1868–1939), Edvard Vajniłovič (1847–1928), Tadeuš Urubleŭski (1857–1925), Ludvig Abramovič (1879–1939) and others. The idea of *krajovaść* was examined primarily through the prism of these people's lives and activities; however, a more thorough study is still needed to understand the full range of issues associated with the phenomenon. Among them is the question of the relevance of *krajovaść* to the ideologies of the Lithuanian and Belarusian national movements, which were based on the concept of the ethno-linguistic nation. To what extent did members of these movements accept the *krajovaść* idea? This issue will be central to this article.

Development of the *Krajovaść* Idea

It is difficult to precisely define *krajovaść*. Consequently, historians tend to use a number of synonymous terms – *krajovaść*, 'the idea of *krajovaść*', 'the *krajovaść* movement', or 'the *krajovaść* ideology. While the complexity of the '*krajovaść*' idea, and its interpretation by ideologues and supporters, is apparent, it is often treated as a certain type of ideology of a political nation.

The idea of *krajovaść* was formulated in Belarus and Lithuania in the early twentieth century. Supporters claimed that all natives of historical Lithuania, irrespective of their ethnic and cultural affiliation, were 'citizens of the region/*kraj*' and thus belonged to a single nation. A sense of patriotism and self-identification as 'local' or a '*kraj* citizen' is the main criterion of such national identity.

Krajovaść ideology emerged within the social environs of the Lithuanian nobility, who often had to change their allegiance to different

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і літоўскай гісторыі // Беларускі гістарычны агляд. Т. 4, сшытак 1-2(6-7). 1997. С. 56–67; Унучак А. Беларуская нацыянальна-дзяржаўная ідэя ў канцы XIX – 1917 г. // На шляху станаўлення беларускай нацыі. Гістарыяграфічныя здабыткі і праблемы // Яноўская В. ды інш. Мінск: Беларуская навука, 2011.

identities. Juliusz Bardach described the *kraj* inhabitants mind-set as follows: "By their cultural orientation they were Polish; however, in determining their nationality, the sense of having particular *kraj* features prevailed, which led to the subordination of the Polish public interest to the interest of the whole region (*Kraj*) [...] They were old Lithuanians in a historical sense. It determined their position in political life".[3]

Krajovaść was based on the historical memory that Belarusian and Lithuanian lands were part of the Great Duchy of Lithuania. By asserting a shared historical destiny of all peoples of the former Duchy of Lithuania, *krajovaść* supporters sought to preserve the territorial integrity of 'historic' Lithuania.

One of the main goals of *krajovaść* was the reconciliation of particular local or national interests to common interests – i.e. to the good of the Fatherland: historic Lithuania. The latter required cooperation between nations based on civil equality. Moreover, as Jan Jurkiewicz correctly noted, this cooperation was not only a precondition on the way to the common goal, but also the goal in itself.[4] *Krajovaść* supporters hoped that the *krajovaść* identity could be combined with the modern national identity.

Krajovaść can also be viewed as a feature with which a section of society on Belarusian-Lithuanian lands identified itself. There is reason to believe that the spread of the *krajovaść* idea was facilitated by the so-called '*tutejšaść*' of local people. Researchers often treat it as a lower degree of ethnic self-identification, but such an opinion is superficial. It is no accident that at the beginning of the twentieth century Kanstancyja Skirmunt defended the notion of *tutejšaść* from the ridicule of the Polish National Democrats: "*tutejšaść* is allegiance to the native land, it is patriotism".[5]

J. Bardach rightly observed: "In the countryside, especially in Belarus, where there are clashes between different languages and religions and influences from different cultures, *tutejšaść* constituted a form of denial- the reluctance to admit affiliation to one or another ethnic group. There

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[3] Bardach J. O dawnej i niedawnej Litwie. S. 217–218.
[4] Jurkiewicz J. Koncepcja krajowa a przemiany stosunków narodowościowych na Litwie i Białorusi w początkach XX w. (do 1918 r.) // Krajowość – tradycje zgody narodów w dobie nacjonalizmu… S. 119.
[5] Kurier Litewski. 1906. № 214.

was a fear that such a choice could disrupt traditional forms of living and lead to conflict».[6] And indeed, in some sense *tutejšaść*, was identical to the *krajovaść* of the so-called 'silent majority' of the population of historic Lithuania.

Aleh Łatyžonak quite aptly defined *krajovaść* as 'ideological *tutejšaść*'. In his opinion, *tutejšaść* can be considered as self-consciousness, while *krajovaść* constitutes a worldview.[7] Of course, this ideological *tutejšaść* contributed to the strengthening of national identification processes. It was an explosion of nationalism that spawned the *krajovaść* idea, and, looking ahead, we can say that the same factor turned *krajovaść* into a marginal phenomenon.

At the end of the 19th century, the Lithuanian movement was the most powerful national movement across the Belarusian-Lithuanian region. It proposed a new (modern) understanding of the nation, based on defining elements such as the language, folklore, customs, folk culture and historical memory. The understanding of the nation as a political category that brought together representatives of the nobility remained in the past. Allegiance to an ethnic and cultural (ethno-linguistic) community, rather than a historical or political community, played an essential role in developing identity. This is the Lithuanian national movement that formulated in the early XX century the objective of ethno-political division of the historic Lithuania and Poland.

Analyzing the life of the main ideologue of the liberal-democratic version of *krajovaść* by M. Romer, Zbigniew Solak paid attention to his contacts with Lithuanian national organizations. In particular, when studying in Paris, M. Romer attended meetings of the Lithuanian society "Želmuo", and later the Association of Lithuanian students "Lithuania", founded by Juozas Petrulis (1877–1958).[8]

The Lithuanian movement, of course, also influenced representatives of the conservative *krajovaść* wing. Here we speak about Kanstancyja

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[6] Bardach J. Polacy litewscy a inne narody Litwy historycznej. Próba analizy systemo-wej // Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine. The foundations of historical and cultural traditions in East Central Europe. Internacional Conference Rome, 28 April – 6 May. Lublin–Rome, 1990. S. 366.

[7] Łatyszonek O. Krajowość i „zapadno-russizm". Tutejszość zideologizowana // Krajo-wość – tradycje zgody narodów w dobie nacjonalizmu... S. 35.

[8] Solak Z. Między Polską a Litwą… S. 44–53.

Skirmunt, whose national consciousness was defined by Dariusz Szpoper as *gente Lithuane, natione Lithuane*, and Raman Skirmunt, whose first book *Nowe hasła w sprawie odrodzenia narodowości litewskiej (New slogans in the case of the Lithuanian nation revival)* (Lwów, 1904) was inspired by Lithuanian nationalism.

The development of the Polish national movement also played an important role. During the early twentieth century, the Polish movement took two forms in the public life of the Belarusian-Lithuanian region. While the Polish national democrats proclaimed the absolute supremacy of the Polish national idea in its ethnic and cultural understanding, the Socialists tried to combine it with an attractive social program. As a result of the rise in Polish nationalism, the majority of Poles on historical Lithuanian lands gradually began to identify themselves with modern Poland in cultural and ethno-political terms. However, identification with the historical Lithuania remained fairly strong. A proportion of local Poles perceived it as a true homeland. Analyzing the activity of *krajovaść* ideologues and the extent of its expansion, R. Miknys developed the idea about a new nation rising, namely the nation of 'Lithuanian Poles'.[9]

In every case, at the beginning of the twentieth century both the worsening of Polish-Lithuanian relations and the lack of unity among the local Polish community was evident.

Versions of *Krajovaść* Idea

Scholars agree that there were two versions of the *krajovaść* idea in the early twentieth century: liberal-democratic and conservative. The first developed in the newspaper «Gazeta Wileńska» (1906). Its de facto leader was Michał Romer. The leading conservative ideologues were Raman and Kanstancyja Skirmunt and Balasłaŭ Jałaviecki.

How did the two strands differ? Rimantas Miknys argues that the main difference lay in attitudes to how national movements should be treated.[10] The Lithuanian historian believes that the liberal *krajovaść* supporters accepted the national emancipation of the Lithuanians and

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[9] Miknys R. Problem kształtowania się nowoczesnego narodu Polaków litewskich...
[10] Ibidem, s. 27.

Belarusians (except the most radical demands in the cultural field). Representatives of the conservative wing did not support this kind of emancipation. They seemed to not recognize the concept of the ethno-cultural nation, supported the idea of a common political history and the nation ('nation of historic Lithuanians' or Litvins) as a democratized version of the old political (nobility) nation.

Such claim can only be partially shared. Michał Romer and his colleagues in the "Gazeta Wileńska" really tried to reconcile the peoples of *Kraj* on the basis of a politically defined democratic nation. Romer saw national democratic movements (Belarusian and Lithuanian) as factors of civil society development. He treated the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a common homeland of several peoples and did not see the possibility of their separation in a civilized way. Territorial conflicts in this case seemed inevitable.

The situation was more complex within the conservative wing. The example of Raman Skirmunt, who in 1907 tried to create a Regional (*Krajovaja*) party by uniting Polish, Lithuanian and Belarusian party organizations, demonstrates that at least some representatives of this trend accepted the idea of ethno-cultural (ethno-linguistic) nations and national movements. It seems that R. Skirmunt himself was confident in the possibility of combining *krajovaść* consciousness with the modern nationalism.

The latter is also proved by R. Skirmunt's attitude to the Belarusian national movement. Its development during the first Russian Revolution greatly affected the political activity of this native of Paleśsie. In particular, Skirmunt no longer used the terms 'Lithuania' and 'Ruthenia', and began to apply the concept of 'Belarus', describing himself as 'Belarusian' in an interview with a correspondent of the Polish national democratic newspaper "Dzieńnik Kijowski". In late 1916, he headed the Belarusian Society of War Victims, a role which went far beyond charity. In fact, Skirmunt openly joined the Belarusian movement and began to act as one of its leaders.

Krajovaść representatives of both wings demonstrated commitment and support to the requirements of the Lithuanian and Belarusian national movements. There were a number of reasons behind such commitment, but even in declarative form, it contributed to an increase in tolerance. The problem was how to reconcile the Belarusian and Lithuanian national

revivals with the preservation of traditional neighborly relations between the peoples of historical Lithuania and the political neutralization of linguistic and religious issues.

All *krajovasć* supporters sought to limit the political ambitions of the Polish community, and emphasized the necessity of considering the interests of Belarusians and Lithuanians. This was the main reason for their decisive opposition to the Polish national democrats. The Polish *endecja*[11], rather than the leaders of the Lithuanian or Belarusian national movements, were seen as the main opponents of *krajovasć*.

Representatives of the democratic *krajovasć* wing supported the social and national emancipation of Lithuanians and Belarusians. They also emphasized their own allegiance to Poland and the right to develop Polish culture. They considered the concepts of nationality and citizenship to be complementary. One of the editorials in "Gazeta Wileńska" declared, that "we are the sons of the Polish people in the cultural and national sense, but our social, political and economic actions are guided by the interests of historic Lithuania". *Kraj* community, which was believed to have certain attributes of the political nation, had to subordinate the interests of own national groups to the interests of *Kraj* in general. At the same time, 'Lithuanian Poles' were seen as one of the *Kraj* nations.[12]

It should be noted that leaders of the Lithuanian and Belarusian movements had more contacts with the democratic than the conservative *krajovasć* wing, which was critical of the social programs of the Lithuanian and Belarusian movements. This was the case despite the fact that the princess Maria Magdalena Radziwiłł, Raman Skirmunt, Edvard Vajniłovič and others financially supported many cultural programs. Landowners were suspected of trying to preserve their dominant social position. The decisive factor was the commitment of the democratic wing to take into account the social ambitions of Lithuanians and Belarusians.

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[11] National Democracy (Polish: *Narodowa Demokracja*, also known from its abbreviation *ND* as "**Endecja**") was a Polish right-wing nationalist political movement active from the late 19th century to the end of the Second Polish Republic in 1939.

12 Jurkiewicz J. Koncepcja krajowa a przemiany stosunków narodowościowych na Litwie i Białorusi w początkach XX w. (do 1918 r.) // Krajowość – tradycje zgody narodów w dobie nacjonalizmu... S. 122-123.

Aleksandr Smalančuk

Contacts between *Krajovaść* Representatives and Leaders of the Lithuanian and Belarusian National Movements

One of the most interesting manifestations of these contacts were the Polish-Lithuanian-Belarusian-Jewish meetings, which began even before the Revolution in 1905–1907. In April and May 1905, they turned into international congresses. Participants at the meetings discussed the autonomy of the Belarusian-Lithuanian territory. The idea of autonomy was in principle accepted, but understood in different ways. Ethnic Lithuanians insisted on the autonomy of 'ethnographic Lithuania' with 'surrounding territories'. Belarusians, Lithuanian Poles and Jews associated the future autonomy with the borders of the historic Lithuania. Consensus was not achieved in this regard. But all sides agreed on the need to guarantee equal rights for all nations in the future autonomous Lithuania.[13]

In May 1905, this unique club of autonomists ceased to exist. One of the key reasons was the deterioration of the Polish-Lithuanian relations. Nevertheless, contacts between democratic elements in the national movements and *krajovaść* supporters were not totally severed. This is evidenced, for example, by the participation of representatives of the democratic *krajovaść* wing, the Jewish Bund, the Polish Socialist Party in Lithuania and the Belarusian Social Hramada in the Great Lithuanian Sejm (November 1905).[14]

The press of the city of Vilnia also provided a platform for cooperation. Thus, there was a so-called 'Lithuanian department' in the editorial team of "Gazeta Wileńska", consisting of Mykolas Biržyška, Jurgis Šaŭlys and Pavilas Višynskas. Cooperation was also developed through publication of the newspaper "Kurier Krajowy" (1912–1914). It was an extraordinary project: a Belarusian newspaper publication in Polish. The ideological leaders and active members of this newspaper were the Łuckievič brothers, who were actively supported by Michał Romer. In November 1913, as the newspaper went through a strong financial crisis, Lithuanians

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[13] Michał Römer, Litwa. Studium odrodzenia narodu litewskiego. Lwów, 1908. S. 348–352.

[14] Motieka E. Didysis Vilniaus sejmas // Lietuvių atgimimo istorijos studijos. T. 11. Vilnius: Saulabrolis, 1996. S. 322.

Jonas Vilejšis, Jurgis Šaŭlys and Sciaponas Kajrys joinedits editorial board, , as along with democratic *krajovaść* representatives, J. Sumarok, J. Bukoŭski and M. Romer.[15]

It should be noted that at the same time, the Łuckievič brothers, maintaining a certain level of secrecy, began to publish a liberal-democratic newspaper in Russian. "Večierniaja Gazeta" (1911–1915) positioned itself as an outlet for 'Russian progressives', while in fact it was another Belarusian publishing initiative.

"Kurier Krajowy" was also a Masonic project. The Vilnia Masonic lodge became the most important cooperation platform between democratic *krajovaść* supporters and Lithuanian and Belarusian leaders. One of the key ideas of Vilnia Freemasonry was the search for international understanding.

Vilnia Freemasonry was revived in the spring of 1911. Before the First World War there were already four lodges – "Unity", "Lithuania", "Belarus" and "Diligent Litvin". The first three, in fact, brought together *krajovaść* supporters and the Łuckievič brothers, V. Łastoŭski, Lithuanian leaders Mykolas Sleževičius, brothers Mykolas and Vaclovas Biržyškas, Feliksas Bugajliškis, Jurgis Šaŭlys, Jonas Vilejšis, Andrius Bulota and others.

M. Romer noted in his diary: "We do not act as a proper Masonic organisation, but in many cases it is among us that directives are produced and initiatives are launched. Our lodges have a great impact on strengthening the *krajovaść* position in the minds of our brethren".[16] According to Zbigniew Solak, the decision to nominate Bronisław Krzyžanowski as a candidate to the IV Russian Duma was taken at Masonic meetings.[17] The lodge also contributed to the publication if the previously-mention mentioned Belarusian "Kurjer Krajowy" and the Polish "Przegląd Wileński" (1911–1915).

In 1915, Jurgis Šaŭlys, trying to save Freemasonry from decay, initiated the creation of the lodge the "Grand Orient of Lithuania", which is directly connected with one of the most recent attempts to define the future of *Kraj* in the accordance with *krajovaść* idea. On December 19

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[15] Смалянчук А. Паміж краёвасцю і нацыянальнай ідэяй… С. 283.

[16] Аддзел рукапісаў Бібліятэкі Акадэміі навук Літвы. Дзённік Міхала Ромэра. Том IV. S. 404.

[17] Solak Z. Między Polską a Litwą…. S. 190.

1915, the 'Universal' of the Provisional Council of the Confederation of the Great Duchy of Lithuania was published in the Belarusian, Polish, Lithuanian and Yiddish languages. The document reported on the establishment of the Belarusian-Lithuanian-Polish-Jewish Provisional Council, which would sought that "Lithuanian and Belarusian lands that have long belonged to the Great Duchy of Lithuania, and are now occupied by German troops, under the new historical conditions would constitute an inseparable body based on the independence of Lithuania and Belarus, as an integral state, guaranteeing equal rights to all nations within its territory".[18]

In February 1916, the Universal was amended by a decree in which the Council of the Confederation proclaimed the establishment of an independent state on Lithuanian-Belarusian lands with the Diet in Vilnia, elected by universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage, and with its main goal as the guarantee of full rights to all peoples of the. The territory of this independent state was to include Koŭna and Vilnia provinces, the Belarusian and Lithuanian part of Harodnia and Suvałki provinces, the Lithuanian part of Courland and the part of Minsk province, "connected to the Vilnia center". The Vilnia Diet was to determine and adopt the form of government and Constitution of the "future free Lithuanian-Belarusian state unit". In conclusion, the decree urged people to work together for the future of *Kraj*: "Let's stop quarrels and conflicts, which affect the whole region. Think together and be honest about the future of this land, because we all, except for a handful of strangers, are the sons of our land – our Lithuania and Belarus".[19]

Clearly, the ideological platform for cooperation between the democratic *krajovaść* wing leaders and the Lithuanian and Belarusian movement was the already well-known thesis of the joint ('*kraj*') of citizenship in the form of harmonious inter-ethnic cohabitation. This was interpreted as a prerequisite for optimal development of all peoples of the historic Lithuania. *Krajovaść* supporters still accepted the national emancipation of the Lithuanians and Belarusians, which was not seen as contradictory, but complementary to *krajovaść* consciousness.

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[18] Смалянчук А. Паміж краёвасцю і нацыянальнай ідэяй... С. 312–313.
[19] Ibidem, p. 313.

The *Krajovaść* Idea and National Movements

Activists in the Belarusian national movement collaborated very actively with proponents of *krajovaść*. Moreover, the *krajovaść* idea was widely presented in such Belarusian newspapers as "Viečierniaja Gazeta" (1911–1915) and "Kurjer Krajowy" (1912–1914). Belarusian *krajovaść* supporters (the Łuckievič brothers and V. Łastoŭski) even opposed the Belarusian nationalism while promoting the *krajovaść* idea; however, they used pseudonyms or cryptonyms to sign their articles.

Why did the *krajovaść* idea find such strong support among Belarusians? There is no clear answer to this question yet. One might assume that the Belarusians used *krajovaść* to expand the social base of the Belarusian movement. The publication of newspapers with *krajovaść* and Belarusian national ideas both in Polish ("Kurjer Krajowy") and Russian («Viečierniaja Gazeta») was a definite attempt to 'convert' the russified and polonized population to the Belarusian idea. *Krajovaść* also meant increased contacts with the Lithuanian Poles and the representatives of the democratic part of the Lithuanian national movement. In this way, they tried to strengthen the Belarusian national Renaissance.

It could be argued that the Łuckievič brothers turned to the *krajovaść* idea via the Belarusian movement, while Raman Skirmunt, on the contrary, turned to the Belarusian idea from *krajovaść*. Both cases are a bit mysterious. Obviously, one of the ideologists of the conservative *krajovaść* wing used this idea as a platform to reconcile various social interests within the Belarusian movement. It is an established fact that Skirmunt held meetings with Belarusian Socialists at the house of Maria Magdalena Radziwiłł. In March 1917, he even became the head of the Belarusian National Committee, which was socialist by nature. However, *krajovaść* did not help overcome socialist's distrust towards the landlord Skirmunt. Accordingly, Ściapan Niekraševič referred to Skirmunt in an article as 'a mysterious Sphinx'. Skirmunt did not fit into the traditional mentality of proponents of the Belarusian renaissance movement of the early 20th century.

One can also assume that Belarusians' "commitment to *krajovaść*" was conditioned by the need to define the national idea. The ethno-cultural version of nationalism, successfully used by Lithuanians and Poles, did not find popular support among Belarusians. For inhabitants

of the Belarusian village, the main object of the national renaissance endeavors, attempts to promote both the native language and culture, were not sufficiently attractive as they lacked social prestige. The leaders of the Belarusian movement could not fail to see this. Probably the promotion of *krajovaść* was a careful attempt to alter the *Naša Niva*[20] canon by those who actually had created it.

The leaders of the Lithuanian national movement leaders were less active in what was *krajovaść* activity. They also tried to use contacts with Belarusians and 'Lithuanian Poles' in order to strengthen their positions in a multinational *Kraj*. But the Lithuanian idea, unlike the Belarusian one, already enjoyed mass support at the beginning of the 20th century. As such, active use of the *krajovaść* ideology could only weaken the influence of the Lithuanian idea.

In conclusion, it should be noted that *krajovaść* neither theoretically nor in practical politics opposed the Belarusian and Lithuanian national movements. This concept of a new type of political nation, where the main criterion for national identity was to be a 'citizen of the *Kraj*', contributed to the quest for ethnic harmony. It clearly opposed any aggressive nationalism. It can be argued that in the era of nationalism, it was a noble utopia, but it should be acknowledged that in an extremely difficult period in the histories of Belarus, Lithuania and Poland, it essentially contributed to the normalization of inter-community relations.

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[20] *Naša Niva* is one of the oldest Belarusian weekly newspapers It was founded in 1906 by members of the Belarusian Socialist Union (Hramada) an was a center of the Belarusian national movement at that time.

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The Four Governments of the Belarusian Democratic Republic in the International Arena in 1918–1920

From the day after the Belarusian Democratic Republic (BNR) was declared on March 25 1918, its creators' main goal was to assure the recognition of its independence in the international arena. This aim was equally important as obtaining the legitimacy of the BNR's government inside the country.

The chronological scope of this paper comprises the period from the BNR's Declaration Day on March 25, 1918 to the official resignation of Prime Minister Anton Łuckievič on February 28, 1920. This event, in my opinion, completes the first period of the Belarusian Democratic Republic; the period when it had a chance to obtain independent statehood. From this point on, the BNR existed rather like an idea, and the government of Vacłaŭ Łastoŭski was a government in exile in Koŭna. My research covers the four governments of the period from March 1918 to February 1919, run by Jazep Varonka, Raman Skirmunt, Ivan Sierada and Anton Łuckievič.[1]

The BNR's governments had extremely little room for maneuver. It is difficult to say if these governments were able to meet the requirements necessary for *de facto* recognition, not to mention *de jure* recognition.

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[1] Michaluk D. Białoruska Republika Ludowa 1918–1920. U podstaw białoruskiej państwowości. Toruń 2010.

De facto recognition, allows a wide variety of exceptions and references to different circumstances;[2] making it debatable whether the BNR was able to satisfy the criteria for the *de facto* recognition. These criteria were, however, settled following the 'Convention on the Rights and Duties of States', signed in Montevideo in 1933. This stated that the emergence of a new state is based on the emergence of a new government in a particular area, which is equivalent to the disappearance of the previous government. The existence of a new sovereignty is proved first of all by the formation of new government agencies. However, a state wishing to gain international recognition must meet certain conditions. The major conditions are: control of the territory, support of the population, and of higher authorities (i.e. government with an effective power). However, the interpretation of these elements is ambiguous; it was at this time that a new political map of Europe was in the making, following the First World War.

The alignment of political forces at that time was extremely unfavorable for Belarusian politicians. Almost no one admitted the existence of a separate Belarusian people. The territory of Belarus was considered part of Russia by the majority of politicians. The exceptions were the Lithuanian and Polish points of view, which considered part of the BNR's territory (Harodnia and Vilnia provinces, part of Minsk province) as the territory of the newly created Polish and Lithuanian states. The Federal concept of Józef Piłsudski was related exclusively to Eastern Belarus. All Russian authorities had aspirations for Belarusian lands: from Lenin's to Kolchak's government. They wanted to restore Russia's former territories (probably with no claim on Polish lands). Paleśsie and the southern part of Harodnia region were attractive to Ukraine; Vilnia, and the northern part of Harodnia region – to Lithuania.

BNR's declaration of independence was made too late. Latvians, Ukrainians and Lithuanians had proclaimed independence well before. This was an immediate cause of the behavior of the government of Soviet Russia: the Belarusian delegation was not invited to join the peace conference in Brest. It was a vivid demonstration that the government of the Soviet Russia did not intend to support the BNR, and only wanted to take Belarusian lands, previously having divided them. In addition to

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2   Dynia E. Uznanie rządu w prawie międzynarodowym. Lublin 1997. S. 25–27, 30–33.

external problems, there also were some internal problems, such as the debate over the direction for the country's development and a political actor to ally with (Russia, Poland, Lithuania or Ukraine). The views of politicians were influenced by personal experience, education and civilizational environment associated with the Catholic or Orthodox Church (although neither church was interested in the Belarusian national idea).

The policies of successive BNR governments changed regarding the political situation. They acted according to circumstances. Belarusian lands were under the control of the German, Bolshevik, and later Polish army. The BNR failed to create a Belarusian armed force under its command; there were only Belarusian units in Lithuanian and Polish armies.[3]

The Government of Jazep Varonka

The government of Jazep Varonka was in place from March to April 1918. During this period, part of the territory on which the BNR was proclaimed was occupied by German troops. The western part was already occupied in 1915; the central part, together with Minsk, was occupied later, in February 1918. At the same time, Babrujsk and the surround area were controlled by the Polish Corps of General Józef Dowbor-Muśnicki under the authority of the regency council in Warsaw, which also meant German authorities. Eastern Belarus (Mahiloŭ and Viciebsk) was occupied by the Red Army.

All efforts of Varonka's cabinet were aimed at gaining political support from the German administration of Ober-Ost in Berlin. They believed that Germany, which supported the emergence of the Ukrainian Democratic Republic (UDR) and the Republic of Lithuania, would also recognize the BNR. Meanwhile, Germany did not consider the BNR as a partner. Berlin signed an agreement with the Lenin's government on non-recognition of new state entities that would be created on the territory of the former Russian Empire after March 3, 1918. In reply to the notes of J. Varonka's government, the Reich Chancellor Georg

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3   Łatyszonek O. Białoruskie formacje wojskowe 1917–1923. Białystok 1996.

von Hertling said that Berlin would treat Belarus as part of Soviet Russia.[4] The policy carried out by the German military authorities on the occupied territories was slightly different. They allowed the BNR People's Secretariat to act, but, and I want to strongly emphasize this fact, only as a Belarusian national representation, and not as an independent state government. The government of the BNR wanted to gain recognition by Germany and Austria-Hungary through the intermediary of the UDR. Visits by BNR delegations to the Kyiv-based German ambassador, Alfons Mumm von Schwarzenstein and the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, Johann von Vorgach, in spring 1918, did not bring the expected results.[5] Intending to change the unfriendly attitude of Germany to the existence of the Belarusian statehood in the form of the BNR, on April 27, 1918 a telegram was sent to the German emperor Wilhelm II. It was a letter of gratitude for the liberation of Belarus from the Russian domination, followed by the request for recognition of the BNR as a state allied with the German Reich.[6] This decision was taken at a time when, since the end of March, there had been a strong German offensive in the West. It seemed that Germany would win the war and that it would hold a casting vote at the post-war peace conference. Therefore, this step seemed quite reasonable from a political point of view. However, the letter was interpreted in a very negative way by the left wing of the Belarusian Socialist Hramada and led to the split of the party.[7] The telegram was signed by Raman Skirmunt, Jazep Varonka and members of the BNR Council, however, 'historical' responsibility for the letter is attributed mainly to Raman Skirmunt. Representatives of the Socialist-Revolutionary movement (SR) accused him of promoting German and Polish interests.

The second focus of Varonka's government was cooperation with the UDR, which had a similar political profile. In the spring of 1918, the UDR government was the only government to, at least verbally, declare

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[4] Варонка Я. Беларускі рух ад 1917 да 1920 года. Коўна 1920. С. 11.

[5] Архівы Беларускай Народнай Рэспублікі (АБНР), рэд. С. Шупа. Вільня-Нью Ёрк-Менск-Прага 1998. т. 1. ч. 1. № 395, с. 155: Пратакол № 13 за 20.05.1918.

[6] АБНР. Т. 1. Ч. 1. № 295. С. 129–130: Тэлеграма Рады БНР Импэратару Нямеччыны Вільгельму за 26.04.1918.

[7] Біч М., Рудовіч С. Беларуская Сацыялістычная Грамада // ЭГБ. т. 1. Мінск 1993. С. 410–413.

support for the BNR. Contact with the UDR government and informal meetings with Mikhail Hrushevsky, chairman of the UDR's Central Rada, Oleksandr Zhukovsky, Minister of Military Affairs and Mykola Lyubynsky, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, did not lead to *de jure* recognition of the BNR, as the government of the UDR could not make such a step without German consent.[8] While in Kyiv, the BNR delegation started to negotiate the demarcation of the Belarusian-Ukrainian border.[9] Negotiations were stopped by Pavlo Skoropadsky's coup on April 29 1918. The BNR delegation developed closer contacts with hetman Skoropadsky. The Ukrainian government provided financial support for the Belarusian Committee for Refugees and the Government of the BNR; it gave consent for the establishment of Belarusian concentration points in Kyiv for those returning from Russia – the so-called 'refugees' from territories of Belarus; a Belarusian Chamber of Commerce was opened in Kyiv; and two consuls were appointed: A. Kvasnitski in Minsk and Pavel Trempovič in Kyiv.[10] At the same time, BNR diplomatic representations were established in Moldova and Romania.

In the spring of 1918 some efforts were made to find out Soviet Russia's attitude towards the BNR, taking advantage of the Bolshevik representative Kristian Rakovsky's stay in Kyiv. However, notes providing information about the creation of the BNR remained without any reaction.[11]

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[8] АБНР. № 191. С. 85–86: Пратакол по 3 паседжаньня Дэлегацыі НС БНР у справе перамоваў за 06.04.1918.

[9] For more on this topic read: Michaluk D. Przebieg granicy między Białoruską Republiką Ludową a Ukraińską Republiką Ludową w koncepcjach ukraińskich i białoruskich działaczy narodowych w latach 1918–1919 – przedstawienia kartograficzne // Białoruś w XX stuleciu. W kręgu kultury i polityki, red. D. Michaluk. Toruń 2007. C. 247–280; Michaluk D. Rozmowy o przebiegu granicy państwowej pomiędzy Białoruską Republiką Ludową a Ukraińską Republiką Ludową wiosną 1918 roku // Nad Bałtykiem. W kręgu polityki, gospodarki, problemów narodowościowych i społecznych w XIX i XX wieku, red. Z. Karpus, J. Kłaczkow, M. Wołos. Toruń 2005. S. 891–911.

[10] Центральний державний архів вищих органів влади і управліня України, ф. 3766, оп. 1, сп. 33, л. 1–2, Sprawozdanie z pracy konsula Ukrainy z 30.05.1918; ф. 3766, оп. 1, сп. 139, л. 14–14 v, Sprawozdanie Białoruskiej Izby Handlowej z obrotu towarami z Ukrainą z 17.08.1918.

[11] Турук Ф. Белорусское движение. Очерк истории национального и революционного движення белоруссов, Москва, 1921. C. 118–119.

In April 1918, apparently with the consent of the government of the BNR, the Belarusian Council of Vilnia, led by A. Łuckievič, rejected a proposal from the Lithuanian Taryba, looking for support among the Belarusian population of Vilnia and Harodnia regions to bring those territories under the Lithuanian state.[12]

The Government of Raman Skirmunt

From May 14 to July 21 1918, the government of the BNR was headed by Raman Skirmunt. At that time, most Belarusian lands were still occupied by the German army, apart from the eastern part, which was occupied by the Red Army. Skirmunt considered strengthening the BNR and improving relations with the German occupation authorities as his most important activities.[13] He considered Lithuania and Ukraine as his main foreign partners. Skirmunt did not perceive any border problems with Poland. He believed that the border between the BNR and Poland would be the western border that had until then existed with the Kingdom of Poland. He treated Poland, not Russia, as a political partner, which was negatively interpreted by the Belarusian Social-Revolutionaries and Social-Federalists.[14] His social program also provoked discontent, as it did not go far in terms of radical agrarian reform with landowners' property dispossession. The fact that Skirmunt was a rich landowner himself only aggravated negative attitudes. This discontent has made the existence of the new cabinet impossible.

The Government of Ivan Sierada

The next prime minister, from July 22 until October 12, 1918, was Ivan Sierada, a social-federalist. The change within the National Secretariat

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[12] Gimžauskas E., Kai kurios 1918 m. laipkričio 27 d. Lietuvių ir gudų politinio susita-rimo aplinkybės (lietuvuių ig gudų santykių raida 1917–1918 m.) // Lituanistica. 1999. T. 4. C. 7.

[13] Нацыянальны Архіў Рэспублікі Беларусь (further: НАРБ), ф. 325, оп. 1, сп. 15, л. 53–53 адв.: Дэкларацыя Народнага Сакратарыята БНР.

[14] НАРБ, ф. 325, оп. 1, сп. 21, л. 222–222v; сп. 8, л. 85–87.

came at a time when the advantage in balance of military power in Western Europe had a week earlier passed to the Allied nations. In August and September 1918, French, British and American troops retook German positions. In this situation, on August 27, Germany signed an additional treaty of Brest with Soviet Russia, deciding to retreat from Eastern territories and transfer power from the east of the Bierazina to the Bolsheviks. Ivan Sierada tried to change this decision, to get recognition from Germany of the independence and integrity of the BNR territory and sought to organize the defense of Belarusian lands against the Bolsheviks.[15]

Sierada's government sent another delegation to Kyiv in September 1918. This time it was headed by Anton Łuckievič. The delegation sought to achieve recognition of the BNR by the Ukrainian state. The exchange of consuls took place – they were effectively operating – which for the Belarusians was an argument in favor of a *de facto* recognition of Belarusian independence. However, it was not more than an expression of support, not a *de facto* recognition. For the latter, official recognition was lacking.

Łuckievič managed to meet Kristian Rakovsky in Kyiv, who was explicitly against the political independence of Belarus.[16] The Bolsheviks would only recognize the independence of the BNR on the condition of a simultaneous declaration of a federation with Soviet Russia. Anton Łuckievič did not agree. He suggested a different sequence: first Lenin's government should recognize the BNR, and only then the next step would be made (i.e. federation with the Soviet Russia).

On October 7, the Rada Chairman, Jazep Losik, and Prime Minister Ivan Sierada handed an official protest to Chancellor Maximilian, Prince of Baden. They expressed their concern about Poland's claims on Białystok, Bielsk and Harodnia districts, which were gradually taken by Polish army units.

The Government of Anton Łuckievič

Anton Łuckievič served the longest term in office, from November 22, 1918, to March 1920. This period saw a revolution in Germany in November

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[15] АБНР. Т. 1. Ч. 1. № 897. С. 242.
[16] Луцкевіч А. Дзённік. ч. 2 // Полымя. 1991. № 5. С. 174–175.

1918, the abdication of Emperor Wilhelm II and the appointment of Social Democrat representative, Friedrich Ebert, as German Chancellor. On November 11, the Armistice ending the First World War was signed. In early November, under a treaty signed on August 27, 1918 between Soviet Russia and Germany, the Red Army occupied the eastern regions of Belarus and, after the retreat of the German army in December, Minsk and Vilnia. In January, the Peace Conference in Paris started. In late February, under the Białystok treaty, German solders left Harodnia region, giving consent to the troops of the Polish Army to take control of the region. In April, the Polish army occupied Vilnia, and in August – Minsk. The structures of the Civil Administration of the Eastern Lands were built on the occupied territories.

After the revolution in Germany on November 22, 1918, A. Łuckievič announced his government's program.[17] In the foreign policy field, the Prime Minister set out the following aim: to achieve recognition of the independence of Belarus and the unification of all the lands that were claimed to be part of the BNR; to ensure the participation of the Belarusian delegation in the Peace Conference; to show solidarity and form a federation with newly established states such as Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine. Anton Łuckievič was the acknowledged leader of the Belarusian national movement, but his views on foreign policy were affected primarily by the *krajovaść* idea and unwillingness to break the union of Lithuania and Belarus, whose history dated back several hundred years. As a matter of fact, I suppose that Anton Łuckievič could not imagine that Belarus would function as a nation-state. It also explains his long-term adherence to the idea of dualistic Polish-Lithuanian state.

One can define the following landmarks in his government's work:
a. failed agreement by the Vilnia Belarusian Council with the Lithuanian government;
b. a BNR delegation sent to the Peace Conference in Paris;
c. efforts to establish cooperation with Prague;
d. efforts to ensuring political recognition by Warsaw;
e. organization of a network of diplomatic missions;
f. attempts to include Belarus in the sphere of influence of Great Britain;

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[17] АБНР. Т. 1. Ч. 1. № 1142. С. 300–302.

g. establishing relations with the Civil Administration of the Eastern
    Lands.

a. Agreement with the Lithuanian government.

In November 1918, the Vilnia Belarusian Council, formally headed
by Anton Łuckievič (by that time the BNR prime minister), signed
an agreement with the Lithuanian government.[18] According to this
agreement, the Council was hoping for the joint representation of
the Belarusian and Lithuanian delegations at international forums.
The Belarusian side also reckoned upon support and joint efforts for
the recognition of BNR's independence and, at the same time, the
formation of the Lithuanian-Belarusian dual state (in the Belarusian part
according to the borders, which were claimed by the BNR). However, the
Lithuanian government, or Taryba, treated the Vilnia Belarusian Council
as a body independent from the BNR government. The Lithuanian
side considered that the Council represented only Vilnia and Harodnia
regions. According to the Taryba, the Vilnia Belarusian Council, having
concluded an agreement, agreed to the inclusion of both provinces
into Lithuania while local Belarusians as a national minority supported
the Lithuanian government and accepted being part of the Lithuanian
state. In the Lithuanian understanding, the latter was confirmed by
the following: a Belarusian representative joined the Taryba, while the
Lithuanian Government created a Ministry of Belarusian Affairs with the
participation of Belarusians.[19] The Federation of Lithuania and Belarus
in the ethnic boundaries was out of the question. One should add that
the Lithuanian government did not recognize the BNR government, did
not cooperate with it, and even discredited the activities of Belarusian
politicians at international forums.

b. The BNR delegation could not join the conference in Paris until
the spring of 1919, as only then did the receive money, borrowed from
Ukraine.[20] On the way to Paris, Łuckievič made a stop in Prague. There

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[18] Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas, f. 582, ap. 2, b. 5, l.5; АБНР. Т. 1. Ч. 1.
№ 1139. С. 296–297: Беларуска-літоўскія ўмовы ў Вільні, 15.11–08.12.1918.

[19] Міністэрства Беларускіх Спраў за 10 месяцаў існаванья 01.12.1918–01.10.1919.
Кароткі нарыс. Коўна 1919.

[20] АБНР. Т. 1. Ч. 1. № 1187: Пратакол паседжаньня Рады Народных Міністраў
Беларускай Народнай Рэспублікі за 21.03.1919. С. 336.

he had a meeting with Tomáš Masaryk, but the meeting was not fruitful in terms of recognition of the BNR.[21] As for the Peace Conference, the Belarusian delegation did not directly participate in the meetings. It could only act based on paragraph 12 of the Conference, which claimed mandatory collection and classification of all memoranda and petitions. However, the Belarusian delegation failed to convince the chief designers of Europe's postwar map to recognize independent Belarus. Belarus was considered to belong to France's sphere of interest, but France viewed it as a part of Russia.

c. In Paris, Łuckievič had a meeting with Sergei Sazonov, the Foreign Minister in the government of Alexander Kolchak, who was promoting the idea of autonomy for the peoples of Russia. He would name the Belarusians as a separate people. However, Łuckievič could not accept such an offer; he did not support federation with Russia. However, theoretically he considered such an option. It would be possible if Russia were a democratic state, if its attitude to Belarus (and other members) was equal and cooperative. Again, the condition *sine qua non* was to be the accession of Lithuania to the federation.[22]

d. In Paris in late July, Łuckievič had a meeting with Ignacy Paderewski, the Prime Minister of the Polish government, who was going to propose a federation of Poland and Belarus. Łuckievič reluctantly considered such a project. He believed that this could happen only if the following conditions were met: the principle of equality between Belarus and Poland was preserved; and Eastern Belarus, and Vilnia and Harodnia regions, became part of the BNR.[23] One should also keep in mind that, at that time, it was not the Prime Minister who really decided on Poland's Eastern policy – it was Józef Piłsudski himself, the commander–in–chief of the Polish state. However, the latter, during a meeting with A. Łuckievič, made it clear that the Belarusian issue was not at the top of his agenda; he was more interested in

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[21] [List A. Łuckiewicza z 04.05.1919, Berlin do członków delegacji w Paryżu] // Лісты Антона Луцкевіча з часу Парыжскай мірнай канферэнцыі, рэд. Р. Лазько // Arche–Пачатак. 2006. № 10, C. 63–64.

[22] АБНР. Т. 1. Ч. 1. № 1228. С. 356–358: Мэмарыял аб стаўленьні беларусаў да магчымае фэдэрацыі на Ўсходзе Эўропы.

[23] Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie, Archiwum I. Paderewskiego, sygn. 948.

Ukraine.[24] Piłsudski was convinced that the Belarusian state could occur only on the territory of eastern Belarus, and therefore it was necessary to fight the Bolsheviks first. Both Polish concepts relating to the eastern border of Poland, incorporation or federalism, presupposed the annexation of Harodnia and Vilnia regions. It is clear that this scenario was not acceptable for any Belarusian politician.

e. Despite all efforts, the BNR did not gain recognition from the Polish side. The only concession was the opening of BNR's diplomatic mission in Warsaw. BNR diplomatic missions were also established in Ukraine, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Germany and a consulate in Odesa.

f. The failure of the BNR government in getting support from France, due to their support for the integrity of the Russian state, made Belarusian politicians shift their attention to Great Britain. London supported the democratic aspirations of Latvians and Estonians. It aimed to strengthen its position in the Baltic area after the fall of Russia. BNR officials, especially Jezavitaŭ, head of the diplomatic mission to Riga and Revel, urged to seek bringing the BNR into the sphere of British interests.[25] Some attempts were made at a conference of Baltic States; however, London was not interested in the BNR, and soon left even the Baltic area.

g. The government of the BNR achieved its biggest successes among the new governments of the Baltic States. The Finnish government went further than the others. In December, 1919, it recognized the BNR government *de facto*.[26] The positive attitude and possible recognition from the side of Latvia changed when this country signed a military and political agreement with Poland. In exchange for renunciation of Poland's historic rights to the Latgale and the recognition of Latvia *de jure*, the

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[24] Łatyszonek O., Rozmowy Józefa Piłsudskiego z Antonem Łuckiewiczem. Przyczynek do dziejów stosunków polsko-białoruskich // Europa Orientalis. Polska i jej wschodni sąsiedzi od średniowiecza po współczesność, red. Karpus Z., Kempa T., Michaluk D. Toruń 1996. S. 447 –453; Jędrzejwicz W., Cisek J.. Kalendarium życia Józefa Piłsudskiego. C. 106; Łuckiewicz A. Polska okupacja na Białorusi. Wilno 1920. S. 17–18.

[25] АБНР. Т. 1. Ч. 1. № 1613. С. 564: Рапарт шэфа Вайскова- Дыпламатычнай Місіі БНР К. Езавітава А. Луцкевічу за 27.12.1919.

[26] Francisk Skoryna's Bielarussian Library and Muzeum in London, Kopia notatki Lorda Actona z Helsinek do Foreign Office z dnia 17.12.1919 r.

Latvian government agreed to *désintéressement* in the affairs of Poland's relations with Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Estonia, Finland, Romania and Western countries.[27]

The unfavorable political environment for the BNR during the Versailles Conference, the lack of support from key deciding states and the harmful diplomatic efforts of Lithuania, Poland, and Soviet Russia had a negative impact on the work of the BNR government, provoking claims that the chosen political action plan was not right. Belarusian Socialist-Revolutionaries and Social-Federalists, who had quite negative attitudes to cooperation with Poland, treated A. Łuckievič's negotiations with Ignacy Paderewski and Józef Piłsudski as a betrayal of Belarus' national interests. They were also unable to give priority to state goals over social affairs, nor become united around the idea of independence. The split of the government led to the greater influence of the governments of Lithuania, Poland and Soviet Russia. In November 1919, without the consent of Prime Minister Łuckievič, the SRs P. Badunova and J. Mamońka, ministers in previous governments, signed a secret agreement in Smolensk on cooperation with the Russian Bolsheviks, which guaranteed them a cabinet post in the new government.[28] This was the so-called *third way*, which required giving up the idea of possible cooperation with Poland and the government of Kolchak. For the BNR, it was the worst option. The *third way* was the one that led, later, to Kurapaty. This is why the policy choices of A. Łuckievič were negatively treated and criticized. At the December session of the BNR Council in Minsk, it came to a breaking point. The opposition had created a rival government led by Vacłaŭ Łastoŭski, as well as another BNR Council.[29] But soon this government was forced to move to Kaunas in Lithuania. A. Łuckievič was still trying to work as Prime Minister, but in March 1920 he resigned. I am convinced that his resignation is the turning point that marks the end of the first period of the BNR. This period was the most effective because it was associated with an attempt to build the Belarusian statehood. Although the government of Vacłaŭ Łastoŭski was still functioning, and there was a Belarusian delegation in Paris, it was

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[27] Paluszyński T. Walka o niepodległość Łotwy 1914–1921. Warszawa 1999. S. 348.

[28] Łatyszonek O. Białoruskie formacje... S. 130.

[29] АБНР. Т. 1. Ч. 1. № 1700. С. 599: Ліст А. Луцкевіча К. Езавітаму за 13.01.1920.

only an idea of government; it had no possibility of real political action. Further activity of BNR politicians was episodic, in contrast to that of Lithuanian, Polish and Soviet Russia representatives. The governments of these countries in the interwar period were engaged in an active political game, eagerly holding out for the Belarusian card. In 1921, according to the Riga Treaty, Belarusian lands were divided between Poland and the Soviet Russia, that is, between the two forces, which the Belarusian national camp feared the most.

Conclusions

1. Although A. Łuckievič believed that the governments of Ukraine, Germany, Latvia and Czechoslovakia recognized the Belarusian Democratic Republic *de facto*, in fact none of these governments made the appropriate formal and written notes. The intervention of the governments of Ukraine in Belarusian affairs, especially P. Skoropadsky, who orally confirmed the recognition of the BNR and agreed to the exchange the consuls, can be considered as a clear recognition.

2. The actions of other governments that agreed to organize diplomatic representations of the BNR in Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Estonia, Czechoslovakia, according to international law may be considered as a planned recognition.

3. BNR diplomatic representation also functioned in Warsaw. At the beginning, Polish politicians tried to talk with A. Łuckievič as BNR's prime minister, but these attempts were not consistent. In this case, we can assume that the BNR's government was recognized conditionally. However, official *de facto* recognition, not to mention *de jure* recognition was denied.

4. Georgia, Azerbaijan, the Republic of Don and Latvia during the period under study concluded political alliance with the BNR, which also can be considered as a conditional recognition of the BNR Government and of the state itself.

5. The only state that in the period under study *de facto* recognized the BNR was Finland.

6. The BNR was not recognized by the wining coalition, who made the decision on a new alignment of forces in Europe: Britain, France, the United States and Soviet Russia.

7. In conclusion, it must be said about a positive, though in fact a very bitter result of the proclamation of the BNR and the aspirations of the Belarusian politicians to gain the statehood. The result was the emergence of the Belarusian Socialist Soviet Republic (BSSR) on January 1 1919 and its new proclamation in July 1920, just before the attack of the Red Army on Warsaw. This structure was formed on the initiative of the members of Lenin's government. It was accepted very reluctantly after long debate, as a counterweight to the BNR, as well as to the Polish eastern policy.[30] The basis for the Soviet state called Belarusian Republic was formed and functioned due to the support from the outside, which was not the case for the BNR. The proclamation of the BSSR was not the result of the Belarusian national movement. However, after the Riga Treaty a large number of Belarusian politicians, former founders of the BNR, were ready to work in the Soviet state structures. They considered the BSSR their state, their Belarus, but in fact, it was just Moscow's political decision.

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[30] 1 января 1919 года. Временное рабоче-крестьянское советское правительство Белоруссии. Документы и материалы, сост. В.Д. Селеменев и др. Минск, 2005.

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The Bolshevik Repressions against the Belarusian National-Democratic Movement in 1920–1930ies

The Belarusian national movement was greatly undermined by devastating wars and the Bolshevik Red Terror. A significant proportion of delegates at the Belarusian Congress and those involved in creating the independent People's Republic were forced to emigrate. Only a few remained in Belarus. They were joined by others returning from the battlefront or from Tsarist exile.

Intellectuals maintaining national-democratic positions were able to correctly assess the political situation in the country. Given conditions in the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR), Belarusian national leaders chose a lengthy and demanding path demanding hard work, focusing on strengthening the consciousness of the masses and educating young activists.

Nation-building work in Belarus achieved significant results within a relatively short period, making the national revival a reality. A certain "indigenization" (korennizatsiya) took place: more Belarusians were holding posts in the state apparatus. New initiatives were launched. The Belarusian people showed unequivocal support for national building and related work. However, the successes and achievements of the national revival in 1920s were largely shattered over the following decade. One of the ways to destroy the Belarusian nation-building was the repression of national intelligentsia.

At the beginning of the year 1930, the academician Usievaład Ihnatoŭski, leader of the Belarusian nationalists, became the first victim

of the State Political Directorate (GPU, Soviet political police agency). He was interrogated in the GPU office, then, on returning to his apartment, shot himself.

The arrest of People's Commissar for Agriculture of the BSSR, Dźmitry Pryščepaŭ, delivered a second significant blow to the movement. Pryščepaŭ was labeled an enemy of the people, saboteur, defender of kulak interests and promoter of hamlets and isolated farmsteads hostile to socialist land use. Despite his disgrace, the Commissar was fondly remembered by the inhabitants of Belarusian villages for his activities.

The death of Ihniatoŭski and the arrest of Pryščepaŭ were not unique cases. Almost simultaneously, a large group of prominent cultural and scientific figures were arrested, including: the very popular linguist Jazep Losik; a well-known geographer, Arkadź Smolič; secretary of the Belarusian Academy of Sciences, academician Vacłaŭ Łastoŭski; and university rector, Professor Uładzimir Pičeta.

The GPU's next victim was People's Commissar for Education of the BSSR, Anton Balicki. In the first half of year 1930, Balicki was removed from his post as People's Commissar of Education, but was not arrested following his dismissal. Perhaps, even then, the GPU was developing a plan for large-scale arrests. They needed evidence to stitch up Balicki as part of a conspiracy plot. To be able to do this, the GPU intended to gather an evidence base for the prosecution, based on the testimonies provided by people arrested at a later date.

At that time the arrest of high national officials was a sensation–the public was not yet used to the mass arrests of top figures. On removing Balicki from his post in the Commissariat for Education, the Bureau of the Communist Party decided to assign him to so-called grassroots agitator-propagandist work in the railway repair shop in Homiel.

It should be noted that Balicki had great organizational skills, was efficient and able to choose the right employees. During his tenure as People's Commissar for Education, he oversaw the largely successful development and implementation of a master plan for the introduction of universal compulsory education in the Belarusian national education system.. The renowned teacher D. Ściapura contributed a lot of work and practical knowledge.

During the first half of the year 1930, the GPU carried out mass arrests in Minsk, but other regions in Belarus were barely affected. Well-

known cultural figures, representatives from the Belarusian Academy of Sciences, the University, and some from the People's Commissariat for Agriculture were taken into custody. Pryščepaǐ's deputy to the People's Commissar for Agriculture, Aleś Adamovič, was among the arrested. According to witnesses, while in Minsk prison, he was not suppressed by the arrest, and would even have been upset if he had, by some miracle, been released from prison. Adamovič was sent to serve a sentence in exile at the Solovki camp; no further trace of him can be found.

The majority of cultural figures arrested in 1930 and 1931 developed their political views before the revolution. Many wrote academic works. Mitrafan Doǔnar-Zapolski, a professor of history, published his first work "Essays on the History of Kryvičy and Dryhavičy Land until the end of the XII Century" in 1891 in Kyiv. A short selection of his other works include: "Lithuanian Metrica" (St. Petersburg, 1903); "Research and Articles. Volume 1. Ethnography and Sociology, Customary Law, Statistics, Security and Belarusian Writing Language" (Kyiv, 1900); "Fundamentals of the Statehood of Belarus" (Vilnia, 1919, in Belarusian). He carried out his fruitful scientific work from 1891. He was arrested in 1930 and exiled to Siberia, where he died at an elderly age.

Professor Maksim Harecki was also arrested in 1930 and exiled to Siberia, where he died in 1937. He wrote: "A History of Belarusian Culture" (Vilnia, 1921), "A History of Belarusian Literature" (Minsk, 1926), "Reader of Belarusian Literature XI–1905".[1] All works were written in Belarusian.

Professor Pičeta, Rector of the Belarusian University for a relatively long period, authored many historical works. He wrote "A History of Belarus" (Part 1, Minsk, 1924), "Issues of Higher Education in Belarus in the Past" (Minsk, 1923). These works were written in Belarusian. Professor Pičeta was arrested in 1930. After he was accidentally released from exile, he wrote another scientific work, "The Turning Points of Historical Development of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus" (Moscow, 1940).

A peculiarity of the arrests in 1930 and 1931 was the fact that some of those arrested were sent into exile with the right of 'free settlement'. An insufficient number of concentration camps meant that some of the

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[1]   Кандыбовіч С. Разгром нацыянальнага руху у Беларусі. Мінск, 2000. С. 7.

convicted were sent to Siberia and settled in special villages. However, this should not be considered a softer form of exile. To make surveillance easier, the GPU usually concentrated the convicted in sparsely-populated settlements in the Northern provinces, where they were unable to find work to support themselves. Given that the majority of exiles were used to intellectual work and that many were already elderly and unable to work physically, their position was very difficult. Their intellectual work was of no use any more. Not all had relatives who could systematically help them. The 1930s were the most difficult years in terms of food shortages. The population had to survive on meager food rations, meaning that a significant number of exiles were doomed to die of starvation.

The top leadership of the national movement in Belarus was decimated during 1930–1931. The GPU completed its task. Propaganda was needed to justify such a steep and unexpected turn of policy. Trials of the arrested were not held in public–people disappeared to later end up in Siberia, Solovki, in the construction of the White Sea Canal or in exile. Those arrested were accused of establishing and/or membership of the Union for the Revival of Belarus and the Union for the Liberation of Belarus (ULB).[2]

The intelligentsia, the intellectual potential of the nation, suffered particularly from the repressive policies of the totalitarian system of the 1920s and 1930s. As early as 1929, a substantial number of Belarusian intellectuals were accused of commitment to national democratic principles and dismissed from their posts. Newspapers and magazines launched a campaign of persecution against those accused by the GPU as being part of the alleged ULB. In 1930, arrests of its "members" began.

Despite moral and, in some cases physical, pressure, during the preliminary investigation only 25 people pleaded guilty, more than 40 completely denied their guilt, and about 25 confessed partially. During the investigation, 18 people were found innocent and released from prison. In fact 89 Belarusians and one Russian were convicted on the falsified ULB case. They were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. It was an irreparable blow to Belarus, its science, culture and economy. Top representatives of the Belarusian intelligentsia were not only prevented from engaging in creative work to benefit their country, but also from

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[2] Касцюк М.П. Бальшавіцкая сістэма улады на Беларусі. Мінск, 2000. С. 141.

leading normal lives in general. Over the years, only a few were able to return to Belarus; after serving their sentences, the rest received new charges and were sentenced to capital punishment, or to another term in prison or concentration camps.

The ULB case was the first wave of mass terror against Belarusian intellectuals. It preceded a large list of different cases throughout the 1930s, representing a terrible purge of the country's intelligentsia.

In May 1931, the GPU falsified and "detected" the "Working Peasant Party" case. The 59 people convicted were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment and exile. 30 people were convicted of being involved in the Belarusian branch of the "Industrial party", according to a resolution of the GPU of September 12, 1931.[3]

1931–1932 saw a wave of arrests of agricultural workers, as well as officials engaged in development of the sector. The following cases were brought the "Working Peasant Party" case; the "Beltraktarcenter case"; and the "Veterinarians case". More than 800 people were arrested and accused in these cases. Many workers at the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of the BSSR, the Scientific Research Institute of Agriculture and the Viciebsk Veterinary Institute were put in prison. The Beltraktarcenter case saw the greatest number of arrests, with more than 546 people subjected to repression. Almost all qualified staff employed in the central governing bodies of agriculture, as well as those working in the field, were destroyed. "Enemies of the people" were sought out both in the center and in the regions.

In September 1932, in the Mazyr district, the GPU "uncovered" an alleged counter-revolutionary organization, the "Peasant Associations". Agricultural experts educated prior to 1917 were accused of providing its leadership. More than 70 people were arrested in one administrative unit alone.[4]

This did not signify the end of the repression against the intelligentsia. In 1933 the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) of the BSSR instituted legal proceedings against the activities of the "Belarusian National Centre".[5]

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[3] Нацыянальны архіў Рэспублікі Беларусь, ф. 4, воп. 21, справа 365, арк. 331.

[4] Нацыянальны архіў Рэспублікі Беларусь, ф. 4, воп.21, справа 365, арк. 172.

[5] Адамушка У.І. Палітычныя рэпрэсіі 20–50-ых гадоў на Беларусі. Мінск, 1994. С. 61.

Table 1

Anti-Soviet political parties and organizations revealed by the GPU–NKVD in the 1920s and 1930s

Organization / Party	Time of action
The Union for the Liberation of Belarus (The Union for the Revival of Belarus)	1923–1930
The Belarusian Bureau of Mensheviks	1928–1931
The Belarusian Bureau of the Industrial Party	1926–1931
The Belarusian Bureau of the Working Peasant Party	1924–1931
The Party for Peasant Liberation	1930-1933
Belarusian People's Hramada	1920-1933
Belarusian National Centre	1932-1933
The People's Union of Sound Motherland (the Peasant Party)	1933
Belarusian-Lithuanian Peasant Party	1933
Russian Fascist Party	1934–January 1935
The National Fascist terrorist espionage and sabotage organization	1925–1936
United anti-Soviet underground organizations: – Organization of the Right – Bundist-Zionist organizations – National Fascist Organization – Trotsky Terrorist Organization – Socialist Revolutionaries Organization	1930–1938

In August 1933, the plenipotentiary representative office of the GPU in BSSR "uncovered" and "liquidated" a "large-ranging counterrevolutionary espionage and sabotage organization", the Belarusian National Center (BNC), and its offices in Horki and Bierazino. This file was 55-volumes long. It was highly falsified and had wide geographical coverage, which extended to "a large part of the BSSR, with offices in Moscow and Leningrad."

An excerpt from the indictment:

"...Most of the organizational staff was drawn from deserters from Poland. The social base of the counterrevolutionary organization was represented by kulaks, anti-Soviet intellectuals, former officers and

employees of public institutions, representatives of marginal social strata".[6]

97 defendants were prosecuted for involvement in BNC activities. It should be emphasized that almost all of them had played a significant role in the Belarusian national revival in Western Belarus. Nevertheless, on January 9 1934, by the decision of the Judicial College of the GPU, 26 of the prosecuted were sentenced to capital punishment; 16 to capital punishment, replaced by 10 years of corrective labor; (after a second conviction they were all shot in 1937); 17 were sentenced to 10 years in labor camps, 5 to 8 years in labor camps, and the remaining were accorded various penalties.

At that times, the GPU used to publish in its printing house tendentiously selected "quotes" from "testimonies", obtained under torture. This material was transferred to the most devoted Communists in the form of a special, top-secret booklet. Communist newspapers, magazines and special revelatory "works" referred to excerpts from testimonies, without naming the source from which the testimony of prisoners was obtained. Extracts could also be used by the secretary of the Communist Party Central Committee or members of the Committee in their speeches at party congresses. Propaganda sought to portray the national movement in Belarus as counter-revolutionary–the sabotage and espionage work of Belarusian nationalists–aimed at separating the BSSR from the Soviet Union and establishing a bourgeois national-democratic republic.

Best representatives of the Belarusian intelligentsia, the brain of the national movement, its theorists and practitioners were subject of arrests. Propaganda had to compromise them, to show them in a shocking light not only regarding their professional activities, but also in their private life. Social background was also taken into account. Every effort was made to disgrace the arrested. The National Movement was derogatively referred to as "*nacdemaŭščyna*" (national democrats). Accordingly those who participated in nationalist activities, or sympathized with the nationalists were called "*nacdemy*". The Soviet press and speakers at formal and informal meetings used these terms with negative connotations.

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[6] Адамушка У.І. Палітычныя рэпрэсіі 20–50-ых гадоў на Беларусі. Мінск, 1994. С. 61–62.

Ihar Kuźniacoŭ

The Secretary of the Communist Party, K.Hiej, ordered the creation of special "brigades" within the Academy of Science, that searched for *nacdemaŭščyna* elements in printed works, reports, and transcripts of speeches. They scrutinized poetry and prose by suspected writers, analyzed newspaper articles, etc. They were looking for new *nacdemy* in addition to those arrested. The attack turned into a witch-hunt. As a result, the famous Belarusian poet Janka Kupała was driven to despair and attempted suicide.

Textbooks were carefully revised. Most textbooks were withdrawn from use, especially readers, grammar and dictation collections. Some were automatically banned after the arrest of the author, regardless of content. Others were removed because they did not comply with the era of collectivization of agriculture and of Stalin's Five Year Plans. In literary anthologies, it was forbidden to mention the model individual farms or farmers from hamlets; in problem books, problems related to individual farms were also prohibited. Teachers had to make up mathematics problems showing the life of collective farms or trade of co-operative stores. Moreover the collective farm products mentioned were to be of the highest quality and livestock should be healthy.

Following the arrest of a supporter of the national movement, works by the detained were withdrawn from libraries and reading rooms, regardless of their relevance to the given charge. Several years" worth of research on history, ethnography, geography, literature, art, and the poetry of new and old generations, produced by talented poets and writers were dismissed as harmful national-democratic rubbish.

Every Soviet citizen, especially if he had any connection with literature was considered a candidate for arrest. To avoid trouble in case of arrest, every intellectual very carefully revised his home library and destroyed newspapers, photographs, pictures of those already arrested. Typically, each arrest was accompanied by a thorough search. Photos, even of those who had passed away long before or had no relation to the arrested person, were collected, together with private correspondence, documents and books by arrested authors. The GPU then sorted all the evidence and searched the material for the prosecution. The most valuable works, photos of dear people, friends and relatives and family correspondence were then burnt.

It was no longer possible to exhibit and advertise books by Belarusian writers in bookshops. Shopkeepers were afraid of the unexpected troubles that a Belarusian book and its author could bring. All sorts of posters with the Belarusian national ornaments disappeared from public places: clubs, reading rooms, foyers of theatres and cinemas. The most servile officials renovated offices previously, and without much sense, decorated with ornaments and emblems of Belarus.

I cannot state that this "cleansing" of anything related to Belarusian nationalism, often absurd, was carried out under specific directives. Following the massive wave of arrests of the first half of the year 1930, it was already clear that this was merely the beginning of a well-planned campaign to stamp out the national movement in Belarus. Arrests only took place in Minsk, and almost did not affect the regions. The Academy of Sciences, the University, the People's Commissariat for Education, the People's Commissariat for Agriculture, the Research Institute of Agriculture, and the State Publishing House of Belarus suffered most. The GPU concentrated its efforts on the center, still studying the situation in the regions. It was important to cut off the head of the national movement; as was achieved by the arrests in Minsk.

A special team of academics worked feverishly to identify national democratic deviations in works written in the period of the New Economic Policy (NEP). Once discovered, alleged deviations were carefully systemized, studied and adapted to scientific conclusions favored by the GPU, and then published on behalf of the Academy of Sciences as the work of the socialistically-updated Academy of Sciences.

When the wave of terror decreased, a few of those arrested were released. However, they all had health problems: loosened teeth; broken ribs or eardrums; a damaged rectum from being forced to sitting on a sharp chair or stool leg.

The remaining part of the Belarusian intelligentsia, who were not actively involved in any "criminal" action but allegedly could hold independent opinions, were also arrested. They included teachers, agronomists, engineers, economists, etc. Almost no Belarusian writers survived. All those who were arrested in 1930, served their punishment and were released, were re-arrested and punished even more severely. Belarusian officials who, in 1930, were convicted for holding national democratic principles, were then accused of fascism during the Yezhov

era and sentenced to increased years in concentration camps or were shot. Some of those arrested and convicted in 1930 were flown from the camps back to Minsk, to the NKVD. They served as witnesses for the prosecution, through interrogations and confrontations. In turn, the evidence of the newly arrested was used to increased sentences or shoot the ones arrested before.

From well-known Belarusian writers very few managed to escape: national poets, Janka Kupała and Jakub Kołas, as well as Kandrat Krapiva and former chairman of the Union of Belarusian Writers, communist Michaił Klimkovič. The latter cut his throat with a blade for fear of being arrested, but doctors managed to save his life. Perhaps this helped him to avoid arrest. Źmitrok Biadula and the less-known authors Piatruś Broŭka and Piatro Hlebka also avoided arrest.

The so-called "Bierman folders"[7] show that the practice of picking the "right evidence" and other "incriminating materials" against poets was carried out for a long period of time. Evidence was also accumulated against the chairman of the BSSR Union of Soviet Writers, Michaś Łyńkoŭ, and a number of other artists, "clandestine nationalist counter-revolutionaries", as mentioned in one of the NKVD reports.

One of the most tragic features of the period was unjustified political repression. In this case, it was not punitive action against those hostile to the Soviet government or those struggling against it. Political repression was directed against the people of the country in general; the people, for whom the Soviet system was supposed to create a new better life. Accordingly, the repressions were identified as unjustified as early as the mid-1950s by the highest party and state institutions.

Stalin and his team worked to strengthen the despotic totalitarian regime. It could not function effectively without keeping society in a state of constant labor mobilization, military and defense preparedness, political vigilance to the machinations of internal and external class enemies and the permanent purification of all sectors of society, in order to get rid of socio-hazardous elements and not just the potential anti-Stalinist opposition.

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[7] Cases investigated by Barys Bierman, People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (NKVD) for the BSSR in March 1937–May 1938.

Table 2
Mass repressions in Belarus (1918–1953)

Years	Category of the repressed	Approximate number of the repressed (thousands)
1918–1920	Representatives of "non-proletarian" social classes	At least 30
1929–1932	Peasants	420–500
1933–1934	National intelligentsia	At least 20
1934–1936	National intelligentsia, representatives of "non-proletarian" social classes	48–50
1937–1938	Nomenclature, all categories	550–600
1939–1941	Western Belarus inhabitants	240–300
1941–1944	Inhabitants of occupied territories	At least 50
1945–1953	Inhabitants of occupied territories	72–75
Total number		1430–1625

People had to get used to simplistic formulas: the revolutionary vs. counter-revolutionary; the worker vs. pest; the party is the highest wisdom, the leader is always right, etc. Enemies, pests, double-dealers were quite useful. They could be used in propaganda to justify failures and errors in large-scale social transformations, which were often conducted without the required organizational training and material support, based on subjective and discretionary decisions. Socio-hazardous elements were also used to explain gaps in economic development, the failure of economic plans and etc.

The ideological and political mechanism of creating "enemies of the people" from the creative and scientific intelligentsia at first led to putting them under arrest, and then to the death penalty. However, none of them was an "enemy".

A study conducted after 1950 showed that there was no justification for the political persecution, arrests, and especially not for sentences of capital punishment. The repressed were politically rehabilitated, mostly posthumously.

Building a new Belarus, we have no right to forget this tragic lesson of our recent history.

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Treasures of Small Towns of Belarus: Common Heritage of the *Rzeczpospolita*

Tourism presents the culture of the past, the national tradition. It is an important source of investments, primarily in the economy of cities and towns, promoting their modernization. This is especially important for the survival of small towns. And vice versa. The historic and cultural heritage of small towns is equally important for the development of tourism but it has been neither properly studied nor valued yet. Therefore, we will attempt to evaluate the role of former Belarusian small towns in the development of tourism, to show their historic and cultural potential, and to define certain measures that would promote the demand for this potential.

There is sufficiently large factual material on every small town;[1] however, it should be further summarized and understood. Not until this is done can the second stage of research begin – the search of new, less accessible sources, as well as new, more efficient methods of use of the cultural heritage of small towns.

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[1] Slownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów slowiańskich // wyd. pod red. Filipa Sulimierskiego. T. 1–15. Warszawa, 1880–1902; Еврейская энциклопедия Брокгауза–Ефрона. Т. 1–16. СПб., 1906–1913; Rąkowski Grzegorz. Ilustrowany przewodnik po zabytkach kultury na Białorusi. Warszawa, 1997; Князева Вольга. Падарожжа па Беларусі: Гарады і гарадскія пасёлкі. Мінск, 2005; Гарады і вёскі Беларусі. Т. 1–8. Мінск: Беларуская энцыклапедыя, 2004–2011. Глобус Беларусі. Available at: http://globus.tut.by/ etc.

Treasures' fate is typical: they are created, destroyed, and then restored. All this happens, so to say, in correspondence with the Christian tradition – first, the original paradise is lost, and then efforts are made to return it. In keeping with the Christian perceptions, we will distinguish between three topics in this text. 1. The original "paradise". This means the history of small towns and the evaluation of their cultural heritage. 2. The lost "paradise". This means the summary of the destroyed architecture monuments. 3. The preserved and restored "paradise". This means several examples of architecture, history, and culture monuments that "have lived through" till our times, as well as the characteristics of the public policy of memory (restoration, museumization, memorialization, and restitution).

What are the Belarusian small towns of the times of *Rzeczpospolita*? a. This is something that united the Belarusian lands with Poland and Western Europe. They existed neither in the Muscovy nor, later, in Russia. b. These were small agrarian towns for servicing the needs of the agrarian economy, the most necessary links of the country's trade network in the context of traditional communications. c. These were peculiar capitals of estates that sometimes were as large by territory as counties or principalities. In the 16th century, small towns could be founded not only by Grand Dukes, but also by landowners. As a rule, landlords' manors were becoming parts of new settlements. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania was to a certain degree similar to the fragmented German Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages. d. These were typical urban-type settlements of the "timber civilization": small, single-storied, and stretched in space. e. These were the settlements of free dwellers – entrepreneurs (farmers, craftsmen, merchants). Many small towns had the right to self-government (the Magdeburg Rights). f. Finally, the Belarusian small town is a phenomenon of multiculturalism, a peculiar concert made of the songs of peoples who lived in it: Belarusians, Jews, Tatars, Poles, Germans, etc.[2]

After Belarus' annexation by Russia, the operation of small towns as economic and cultural centers became complicated but did not cease. They remained the places preserving the GDL's treasures. They preserved

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[2] Шыбека З. Гарадская цывілізацыя: Беларусь і свет. Курс лекцый. Вільня, 2009. С. 62, 89–91.

their economic importance until the 1880's when railway stations began to dominate.[3] For example, the summer fair in Zelva town was as large as the Leipzig fair in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Merchants from all over Russia were coming to Zelva, as well as from Poland, Prussia, Austria, Italy, Denmark, and Sweden.[4] The small towns were turned into town settlements, worker settlements or villages in 1938. The same transformations took place in Western Belarus after it was taken from the Polish state and joined to Soviet Belarus in 1939.[5] The new authorities did not need market type settlements that were preserving the GDL's traditions.

Four groups of treasures can be distinguished in the cultural heritage of small towns. The first group includes architectural monuments or immovable valuables of the material culture. The second group includes movable valuables of the material culture, such as private collections, museums, art galleries, libraries, archives (primarily landlords' archives), as well as everyday objects of various layers of population. The third group includes the valuables of intellectual culture, or skills and knowledge accumulated in small towns, such as education, folklore, traditions, scientific knowledge, literature, art, and manufacturing skills. The fourth group of valuables includes the greatest treasure of small towns – namely, the prominent natives and residents of these settlements. We shall consider these four groups one by one. For the purposes of economy of space, this can only be done shortly and laconically.

The first group. Immovable material culture. Western European Renaissance building development model prevailed in small towns. The largest small towns had two centers: landlord's manor and marketplace. There were no Jewish ghettos, though Jews and Christians settled separately. The Jewish part was called "shtetl". Those small towns that evaded the Soviet industrialization preserved their old-time planning till our time. More than half of the 116 Belarusian castles between the 14th

[3] Шыбека З. Гарады Беларусі (60-я гады XIX – пачатак XX стагоддзяў). Мінск, 1997. С. 78–87; Соркіна І. Мястэчкі Беларусі ў канцы XVIII – першай палове XIX ст. Вільня, 2010.

[4] Швед В. Торговля в Белоруссии в период кризиса феодализма. Гродно, 1995. С.24.

[5] Шыбека З. Гарадская цывілізацыя: Беларусь і свет. Курс лекцый. Вільня, 2009. С. 132–133.

and 17th centuries were located in small towns.[6] The Kreva castle was built in the architectural style of the Teutonic Order castles.[7] According to the German researcher Brandt Berg, the Mir castle towers copied the entrance towers of Northern Germany's town fortifications.[8] The palaces of magnates, such as Sapiehas and others, were sometimes called the "small Versailles". Baroque Catholic churches stood out among other temples due to their grandeur. After the 1863 uprising against the Russian Empire was suppressed, numerous brick churches in pseudo-Russian style were built in small towns. There were several synagogues in every small town. The Jews were not allowed to work on Sabbath (Saturday) or even travel by horse or cart. Therefore, synagogues were located on the geographic principle, so that one could get to them on foot. Town halls were built in small towns possessing the Magdeburg right. They were saying formerly that no small town could exist without a tavern. The world's first monument to the Russian Bolshevik leader Lenin was erected in Krasnapolle, in the Mahiloŭ region, in 1922. It is true, though, that this monument was made of clay.[9] The Lenin statues stand in every administrative center in today's Belarus.

The second group. Movable material culture. The treasures of palaces began to form in the 16th century in the epoch of late Renaissance. In the West, one could already buy many things at that time; what's more, people had money to buy these things. The prices on the Belarusian grain that was sold by local landowners rocketed. Andrej Hiecevič calculated that some 400 manors (within the present-day Belarus) had large museum collections, family archives, picture galleries, and libraries. 54 of these manors were located directly in small towns, and still more were located in their vicinity.[10] Landlord Michał Valicki from Aziory

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[6] Вікіпедыя. Спіс замкаў ВКЛ. Available at: http://be-x-old.wikipedia.org/wiki/Сьпіс_замкаў_ВКЛ

[7] DSHI (Dokumentesammlung Herder-Instituts in Marburg) 150 Nachloss Reklaitis 563, s. 75.

[8] Geographischer Bilderatlas des polnisch-weißrussischen Grenzgebietes mit 100 photographischen Aufnahmen und 1 Übersichtskärtchen von Oberarzt Dr. B.Brandt. Berlin, 1918. S. 120.

[9] Дым М. Тут гукні — адгукнецца Расія! // Народная газета. 2009, 9 снежня. Available at: http://www.ng.by/ru/issues?art_id=41453

[10] Бібліятэкі – Образование в Беларуси – XIX век. Available at: http://groedu.narod.ru/land6.htm

had 2820 books. He managed to buy books in Paris from the collection of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.[11] The farewell letter of emperor Napoléon to his adjutant general Józef Kasakowski was preserved in Bierastavica Vialikaja in the rich family archives of counts Kasakowskis.[12] Alaksandra Ciechanavieckaja's correspondence with Honoré de Balzac was carefully kept in the Bačejkava palace.[13] Small towns surpassed towns and cities by their cultural valuables. The cultural traditions of the GDL were preserved at the landlords' palaces even in the times of the Russian Empire. Museum collections gathered there were not transferred to urban centers. The border of cultural opposition existed between the city of Russian culture and the small town of old Lithuanian culture.

The third group. Intellectual culture valuables. Elementary schools in small towns were accessible both for town residents and for peasants. In the 18th century, small towns even had colleges and county schools attributed to voivodeship center cities. Small towns also had gymnasiums in the first half of the 19th century when the GDL was a part of the Russian Empire. Back then, small towns of Harodnia governorate even surpassed towns and cities by the number of students of their secondary schools.[14] Small towns were the centers of religious education of Jews. Yeshivas in Vałožyn, Mir, and Lubaviči became known world-wide in the 19th century. Counts Tyzienhauzes had in Pastavy their own zoo where they were carrying out scientific research. Their anthropologic collection included about 3 thousand stuffed birds.[15] Thanks to small towns, European specimens of urban valuables were appreciated by the rural population. The intellectual life of Belarusian provinces was richer when compared to the Russian lands. The first Belarusian manufactories and factories appeared in small towns. Only rich landlords had such possibilities. Unlike towns and cities, small towns were not affected by

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[11] Kowkiel L. Prywatne księgozbiory na Grodzieńszczyźnie w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku. Kraków, 2005. S. 44.

[12] Aftanazy R. Materiały do dziejów Rezydencji. T. IIIa. Warszawa, 1987. S. 23–26.

[13] Aftanazy R. Materiały do dziejów Rezydencji. T. Ia. Część 1. Warszawa, 1986. S. 13–23.

[14] Соркіна І. Мястэчкі Беларусі ў канцы XVIII – першай палове XIX ст. Вільня, 2010. С. 265.

[15] Aftanazy R. Materiały do dziejów Rezydencji. T. IVa. Warszawa, 1987. S. 354–361.

the Tsarist russification, while the Soviet russification was leaving space for local color.

The fourth group of valuables means people. Ethnographers and tourist guides like to boast of monarchs' visits to small towns. However, national heroes who fought against invaders deserve more serious attention. Dziatłava, a small town belonged to the renowned Grand Hetman Kanstancin Astrožski.[16] However, this fact is not marked in any way. This might be explained by the fact that in 1514 he crushed the Muscovy army that was three times as large as the GDL hetman's forces. Symon Rak-Michajłoŭski and Jazep Losik, figures of the Belarusian cultural revival in the early 20th century, studied in Maładečna Teachers' Seminary. Many political leaders of Israel come from Belarusian small towns, including the creator of the modern version of Hebrew Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the country's ex-president Shimon Peres (Łužki and Višnieva small towns, correspondingly). The famous Jewish painter Mark Chagall was born in Lozna near Viciebsk.[17] The activity of famous Catholic residents of Belarusian small towns has been researched poorly – sometimes only because in Belarus they are considered to be Poles.

Belarusian small towns at the times of *Rzeczpospolita* were equal to Polish ones and even to Prussian small towns by their wealth. But if Belarusians are so rich, why do they not have a Belarusian Hermitage, a Belarusian Louvre or a Belarusian Dresden Gallery? The point is that Belarusians did not manage to adequately preserve their treasures.

And now we enter the lost "paradise". So, where are the Belarusian small towns' treasures now? As a rule, the best things, including treasures, are taken to the capital. And where is the former capital of Belarusians, Vilnia? Today, Vilnia (Vilnius) is the capital of Lithuania. As a rule, treasures are protected by the state. And where is the former state of Belarusians, the GDL? It was ruined by Russia, Prussia, and Austria in the late 18th century. As a rule, treasures are accumulated by landlords, bankers, factory owners, and merchants. And where are the rich people

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[16] Князева В. Падарожжа па Беларусі: Гарады і гарадскія пасёлкі. Мінск, 2005. С.155.

[17] Иоффе Э.Г. Страницы истории евреев Беларуси. Краткий научно-популярный очерк. Минск, 1996. С. 215, 216, 241.

of the Belarusian land? They were robbed, destroyed, and ousted by the Bolshevists.

There were other factors in addition to the evident political ones. 1. Timber temples, palaces, and other buildings made of timber were periodically destroyed by fires or ruined by time. 2. The Belarusian climate is not the same as Italian. Even granite did not endure the Belarusian humidity, and marble simply turned into lime. 3. Many religious buildings were destroyed or rebuilt due to religious transformations. 4. Culture monuments were perishing as the result of numerous and especially destructive wars in Belarus. 5. Movable valuables were taken to St. Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, Kraków, Kyiv, Berlin, etc. during the period of absence of the Belarusian statehood. According to professor Maldzis, 90% of Belarusian treasures are out of Belarusian territory as of today. 6. Not only material valuables were taken away, but also craftsmen, qualified workmen, and cultural workers. Talented people went to Kraków, Warsaw, St. Petersburg, Moscow, etc. themselves, as well, because better opportunities existed there to reveal their abilities. Many Soviet intellectuals of Leningrad were Jews that came from small towns in Eastern Belarus.[18] 7. The small towns' cultural potential was destroyed during the times of Soviet rule, and wasn't restored. Small towns lost their rich investors.

The majority of architectural monuments are mere ruins today. According to the Belarusian minister of culture Pavał Łatuška, out of the 116 castles that existed in the Belarusian lands a hundred (96) castles were lost.[19] Of the 2 thousand synagogues in Belarusian cities and small towns, only 106 have been preserved.[20] Only 9 of the 60 pre-war mosques are functioning now.[21]

Belarus suffered at least 7 cultural disasters during the 19th and 20th centuries. 1-2. Museum valuables of local nobles who took part in the

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[18] Бейзер М. Евреи Ленинграда. 1917–1939. Национальная жизнь и советизация. Москва–Иерусалим, 1999. С. 80–81.

[19] БЕЛТА. Available at: http://news.tut.by/culture/208589.html

[20] Інтэрв'ю Г. Лабадзенкі з І. Герасімавай // Звязда. 2011, 15 сакавіка. Available at: http://news.tut.by/society/218414.html

[21] Гарошка Л. Сучаснае рэлігійнае становішча ў Беларусі // Беларускі зборнік. Кніга 4. Мюнхен, 1956. С. 136; Мечети Беларуси. Историческая справка. Available at: http://muslimby.info/?p=549

uprisings of 1831 and 1863 were taken to Russia in carts and railway carriages in great volumes. 3. Treasures were being taken deep into Russia for preservation during World War I. However, they were never returned afterwards. Three carriages of valuables were sent to Russia from the Bačejkava manor of princes Ciechanavieckis alone.[22] 4. Many treasures were taken away by Poles in the course of the Russo-Polish war of 1919–1920. The Monuments Protection Society's Minsk Circle took away 600 chests with 36,000 exhibits.[23] 5. The Russian Bolshevists were selling Belarusian treasures in great volumes abroad in 1930's in order to find money for industrialization. 6. Over 11 thousand various valuables were taken to Russia and Germany during the last war.[24] These valuables were partly returned from Germany after the war – but to Moscow, not to Minsk. 7. Every buried treasure of gold, silver, and precious gem found in Belarusian lands was sent for preservation to Moscow until February 18, 1991. 2,088 items of various valuables were sent to Moscow from Belarus between 1964 and 1991.[25] In total, professor Maldzis counted over 20 large private and public collections taken away from Belarus.[26] Thus, the Belarusian peculiarity is a hyper-excessive nature of destroying and ruining cultural valuables.[27]

After the Republic of Belarus was established, the opportunity to restore the lost "paradise" seemed to have appeared. However, incredible as it may seem, architectural monuments of the present-day Belarus are still being ruined during the modernization of towns. It is simply phenomenal that something has been preserved even until today, though mostly in Western Belarus. And, in fact, something is being done to preserve and restore the history and cultural heritage of small towns.

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[22] Мальдис А. «Три вагона ценностей, вывезенных а Москву» // Беларусь сегодня. 09.10.2010.

[23] Мальдзіс А. Скарбы продкаў // Выбранае. Мінск, 2007. С. 337.

[24] Рошчына Т. Лекцыя 1. Рэстытуцыя культурных каштоўнасцяў. Available at: http://bk.baj.by/lekcyji/historyja/roszczyna_01.htm

[25] Мальдис А. Трофеи военные и мирные // Беларусь сегодня. 2008, 16 апреля.

[26] Мальдзіс А. Скарбы продкаў // Выбранае. Мінск, 2007. С. 337.

[27] See: Габрусь Т.В., Кулагін А.М., Ткачоў М.А., Чантурыя Ю.У. Страчаная спадчына. Мінск: Беларусь, 2003.

And now we Finally Turn to the Last Subject: the Preserved and Restored "Paradise"

4,911 heritage assets (of which 4,779 are immovable, 73 are movable, and 59 are non-material) have been registered in the National Register of Historical and Cultural Valuables of Belarus. All of these assets are protected by the state. However, no efficient mechanisms of their protection have been created. The policy of support for towns and medium-size cities exists in Belarus since 1999. However, the restoration of their cultural heritage is not sought. This is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture. Too little has been done. Only the largest castles are restored in former small towns, such as Mir, Halšany, and Kosava. The quality of restoration is very low. Restoration is often turned into ruins. There is a lack of knowledge and specialists. Restoration requires big money. The state cannot manage to satisfy every demand. Therefore, the revival of the cultural heritage is impossible without privatization. The public commission headed by Maldzis has done much to discover what valuables were taken away. However, no one at the government level has been concerned with restitution. The registry of valuables taken away from Belarus has not been made until now. The history of former small towns has been studied poorly. And the level of development of educational tourism in Belarus has been very low.[28]

Thus, the former "paradise" of small towns and other Belarusian towns has not been restored yet. And this affects the lives of Belarusians. Cultural ruins are one of the important reasons of many problems of the present-day Belarus. In fact, both the return to paradise and the restoration of the lost heritage are a major illusion. But this illusion brings hope and moral courage to people. One should try to achieve this. We should be creating the lost paradise at least in our heads.

There is no doubt that the former small towns will finally restore their historic name and some of their treasures. 1. Their mediating role will be in demand as the commercial ties with the West develop. 2. Modest life in small towns will also be in demand, because the current economic crisis is

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[28] Шыбека З. Гісторыка-культурная спадчына гарадоў Беларусі ў турыстычным менеджменце // Этносоциальные и конфессиональные процессы в современном обществе: сб. научн. ст // ГрГУ им. Я.Купалы. Гродно, 2010. С. 360–364.

also the crisis of urban civilization, the crisis of the excessive consumption society. 3. There are great prospects for cooperation, primarily, with Poland for the revival of former small towns of Belarus. The majority of small towns' treasures were created by representatives of the Polish culture. There are reasons for joint projects on restoration, restitution, museumization, and memorialization in Belarusian small towns. Creation of copies and dummies of valuables taken away from Belarus is desirable. Local and national level scientific programs on the research of small towns' history are desirable. All has not been done in order to jointly honor the renowned Belarusian persons who made their contributions to the cultures of various nations. The same concerns the prospects of cooperation with Israel, Lithuania, Ukraine, and even Germany. Former Belarusian small towns are the song of several European nations.

Belarusians should follow the international principles in what concerns their cultural heritage. Every treasure created in the Belarusian lands, including small towns, belongs to Belarus. Every talented person, both of local and non-local origin, who worked on Belarusian lands, belongs to the Belarusian culture. At the same time, we should admit that the various riches of Belarusian small towns do not belong only to the cultural heritage of the Belarusian nation but to the cultural heritage of various peoples that were and are still living on Belarusian lands.

Serious work on the restoration of the lost "paradise", the cultural heritage of former Belarusian small towns is only beginning. In this regard, it makes sense to return to their former name "miastečka(s)".

SIARHIEJ ČAŁY
Economic analyst, Belarus

What are the Economic Niches of Belarus in the Region?

I have the answer to the question: »What is future Belarus's niche?« It is very short. To make this answer clear for you, I have to make an introduction. Let us try to answer the question: »What was it that happened in 2011 with the Belarusian economy?« It is difficult to find a more interesting country and a more interesting year in terms of economic change. Political scientists and economists will keep writing theses, studying, analyzing what happened, and what is happening. The main conclusion to be drawn is that the model of economic growth that existed in Belarus until last year ceased to exist.

This is quite a unique situation because indeed many years before the crisis, there had been average economic growth of more than 8% annually over the last ten years prior to 2008 until the first year of the crisis. This is an extremely high rate of economic growth, but this was achieved by a special mechanism, which actually meant the artificial stimulation of domestic demand (both consumer and investment demand). In fact, the main mechanism that was driving the Belarusian economy was the artificial stimulating of economic growth through government programs funding or through so-called quasi-budget mechanisms. It especially concerns the year 2010, when one could observe all the imbalances. In this sense, the year was the most radical. If you know at least the basics of macroeconomics, you will understand, that the excess of domestic investment over domestic savings means the gap between domestic

savings and domestic investment. This is the problem of negative current account balance. As long as other countries, especially Russia, were ready to support this economic model, it was viable. At the end of 2010, the external financing deficit (gap) was already as big as 17% of GDP. In the first quarter of 2011, GDP grew by 12.5% while 25% of this GDP was the deficit of external financing. Later it became clear that this state is unstable, eventually the imbalances must be eliminated in a controlled manner, or by a disaster.

The authorities of Belarus chose the second option. The beginning of the crisis can be with no doubt dated March 16, when in fact, there was a paralysis of the monetary system of the country and the foreign exchange market virtually disappeared. The banks had one-way adjustment on the purchase of foreign currency. The crisis ended only on September 14 with the opening of an additional session on Currency and Stock Exchange. During the six months of the crisis the authorities did nothing. Why did it last so long? Because the authorities were trying to resist the inevitable.

It was clear that the current account deficit means that one macroeconomic parameter is set incorrectly, that is, the relative rate of the Belarusian ruble. Then there was a catastrophic devaluation conducted in a way that was contrary to the wishes of the authorities. The introduction of an additional session on Currency and Stock Exchange was a legal recognition of the *de facto* state of affairs. By analyzing this situation one can answer the question: «Where are we now?»

The macroeconomic imbalances, with regard to the external sector, are eliminated. In May 2011, the foreign trade balance in goods and services could be characterized as "slight surplus". There was a deficit during a couple of months in the early summer when cars were actively imported because of the introduction of the Customs Union. A surplus was predicted, but a slightly lower one. In September it was 1.5%, the year 2011 probably will end with less than 1%. Nevertheless, this is a budget surplus. Clearly, this is the effect of devaluation and inflation, but the budget is balanced. In real terms, adjusted for the inflation, as of October 2011, companies' revenues grew by 60%. This is a pure result of the fact that incomes have fallen significantly and the proportion of production costs of companies on wages decreased as a result of devaluation. Such an indicator of living standards as the average salary was about $ 240 at current exchange rate.

These facts prove that the country returned to the period of 2005–2006. It speaks for itself that the economic growth that was observed, and therefore the growth of living standards were external special effects of the desire of the whole world to fund the Belarusian economic miracle. Moreover, we can say that not so long ago the Russian statistics agency introduced a two-sided balance of payments, which was published in Belarus and Russia separately. This document shows that our trade deficit with Russia clearly correlates with the actual changes in the terms of trade with Russia since 2006; it clearly coincides with the deterioration of our potential in the external sector of the economy. The point is that the negative effects that have accumulated in the economy of the Republic of Belarus over the past five years are an economic price to pay for 2006. What is the year 2006? This is the year of the presidential election in Belarus. For the current president it was an extra term, even taking into account the referendum in 1996, assuming the referendum was more or less legitimate.

The prospects for the year 2012 and in general for the coming years are not very good. The crisis is over, but there are no domestic investment sources. External demand, taking into account the global recession, is not likely to become the driver of economic growth, rather the contrary. Judging by the year 2009, we know that the Belarusian economy very slowly adapts to external shocks, and it is quite a painful process. Fall in exports, if this notorious second wave of the global crisis happens, would be counted in two-digit numbers – 30–40%. This forecast may well come true. I emphasize again that there are no domestic sources of economic growth. What was the way out from the paralysis of the monetary system of the country? What happened? It was a restoration of the external competitiveness through devaluation. However, contrary to the Russian devaluation in 1998, for example, we did not have such a large amount of unloaded manufacturing capacity. Actually, the balance was restored due to a sharp reduction in domestic demand and domestic expenditure. What happened? Domestic demand seriously shrank.

The government's plans for next year, due to political reasons (this is openly stated), had to be made assuming 5.2% GDP growth. Most likely it will be, at best, about 1.5%. This is not my assessment. This calculation is done using the economic model of the Institute for Privatization and Management. Even before the gas agreements with

Russia, the government planned a downturn in the economy about 1.5%. And the grant of foreign trade, which we got through changing conditions in the pricing of Russian gas, it is roughly equivalent to 3% GDP growth annually.

In other words, we are talking about the fact that there are no domestic sources of economic growth, which means that such stagnation would occur during the next several years. There will be no disaster, because the balance will be consolidated even taking into account the soaring cost of servicing external debt, when next year we will have to pay 1.6 billion of debt, then 2 billion, then a little more than 2 billion. The years 2012–2014 are the peak of foreign debt repayment. The resources can be found.

The crisis, in general, is over, but the difficulty is how to avoid the present trap, i.e. devaluation and inflation, and not get into another one, i.e. underinvestment and low economic growth. It actually is a very dangerous problem, because if for several years there is no economic growth, there would be no real growth and real income growth. This gap in the level of income, which we have now between Belarus and our neighboring countries, in particular with Russia, would negatively affect the situation in some sectors of the Belarusian economy. Some industries have already felt the negative impact. It is easy to guess that this is the construction industry. Capital construction suffers first during crisis. The skilled labor massively leaves to work in other countries, primarily in Russia. Estimates are very different. There are no firm figures available, but in the long term, it can be about 1.5 million workers.

Now I come to the answer of the question: «What will be the niche of the Republic of Belarus in the coming years?» Is is to become a supplier of cheap skilled construction labor for the neighboring countries. Unfortunately, one of the two possible risks for Belarus that I have predicted a few years ago, is the scenario of a «Bigger Moldova". It is inevitable de-industrialization, with a large proportion of working-age population working in neighboring countries. The part of the population that remains will be composed of people who are unable or unwilling to leave, and would survive with food from their dachas and thanks to remittances sent by relatives from abroad. It is a trap, which is difficult to escape. Having lost labor force once, it is very difficult to regain it.

There is, of course, a way to avoid this, but it implies a very, very serious and radical structural change in the economy. I emphasize again that by analyzing what happened in the Republic of Belarus in 2011, it became clear: the unique Belarusian economic model is in fact capable of giving only the income that it gives now, that it is ineffective, that 200 dollars of working-age population average salary is the value of its real effectiveness. Of course, we have a huge potential for efficiency improvement. Officially, 70% of the GDP is created in the public sector. In fact, the public sector creates much more of the GDP, because a great number of private firms in the remaining 30% are mostly not private. These companies are, so to say, linked to the authorities or the local authorities. The real private sector is even smaller.

Here is a classic trap, many times described in the economic science. We got into it for the next 3–4 years. If the economy continues to operate in this mode the coming decade will be lost. Unfortunately, the authorities have few incentives to follow the path of radical structural reform. The present economic situation makes it possible to make both ends meet. They managed to avoid the collapse, everything seemed to be normal. Unfortunately, I am pessimistic about the mid-term perspective. I am an optimist in the sense that the crisis is over. I was one of the first who said that the crisis ended on September 14, with the opening of an additional session on Currency and Stock Exchange. We still had not known the results of these trades, but it was clear that the trades ended the crisis, and also ended the hope that the deep economic crisis would frighten our government. So here we are in such a trap, obviously, and will stay there for several coming years.

SERGE NAŬRODSKI
CASE-Belarus, Poland

Economic Relations between Belarus and Poland Before and After the Crisis

P oland is, no doubt, an important international partner for Belarus. This is proved by more than 300 years of common history, 400 kilometers of common border, as well as deep family and cultural ties. Political barriers can limit, but cannot stop relationships and trade from occurring between the people and firms of both neighboring countries.

In this context, it seems unfair and biased that critical comments of political nature on Belarus and on Polish-Belarusian relations dominate in the Polish daily and analytical press.[1] Therefore, the following analysis aims at a wider view on the economic ties between Poland and Belarus before and after the financial crisis of 2008–2009.

1. The History of Relations between Poland and Belarus Since 2004

The economic ties between Poland – a member state of the European Union since 2004 – and Belarus are currently following the same pattern as economic relations between the EU and Belarus, both in the political and economic context.

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[1]   Based on the author's own analysis.

The Political Context

Unfortunately, the official political relations between the European Union and Belarus have been deteriorating since 1996, and were almost frozen in the 2000's. Such state of relations contributed to the reduced quantity and quality of contacts at the level of governments and presidents of Poland and Belarus.

In 2007, the European Union had even introduced certain sanctions against Belarus, excluding it from the General System of Preferences (GSP). That decision did not have a direct influence on the volume of trade turnover between Poland and Belarus; however, the positive balance of the bilateral trade has shifted to Poland (Chart 1) since 2008 largely as a result of that decision.

In 2009, the European Commission supported the initiative by Poland and Sweden, and initiated the Eastern Partnership. The Belarusian government would be able to begin a rapprochement with the European Union within the framework of the Eastern Partnership after signing the Association Agreement. The Eastern Partnership initiative offers opportunities for deep economic integration, labor market integration, power generation sector integration, and developing the Belarusian regions.

Until 2004, or prior to Poland joining the EU, the economic cooperation between Poland and Belarus was regulated by the Trade Agreement between the EU and the USSR of 1989.

On April 30, 2004, the Polish government and the Belarusian government signed the new Agreement on Economic Cooperation whose provisions did not contradict the EU's competences. Under this agreement, a new Polish-Belarusian Joint Economic Cooperation Commission was founded whose main purposes were cooperation in the power generation sector, access of Polish goods to the Belarusian market, legal framework in the form of agreements on mutual economic relations, removal of barriers that impede the development of trade and investing in the markets of both countries, especially in the context of the growing Polish investments in Belarus, as well as the development of small and medium-sized business.[2]

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[2] Based on the information of Poland's Ministry of Economy.

The Economic Context

The following chart shows the mutual trade relations between Poland and Belarus after Poland joined the EU.

Chart 1. Turnover and Trade Balance between Poland and Belarus in 2004–2010

Source: Poland's Ministry of Economy.

The consequences of the crisis for trade between Poland and Belarus are obvious. In 2009, the total turnover decreased by $1 billion compared to 2008. The total turnover was $2.5 billion in 2010, while commodity trade reached $3 billion per year before the crisis.

Poland had 3.5% of exports from Belarus in 2010, ranking sixth among all trade partners of Belarus. Belarus finds itself in the third dozen among all Polish trade partners and has third place among Poland's trade partners in the CIS (following Russia and Ukraine).

The Balance of trade turnover is becoming increasingly more beneficial for Poland: the imports of Belarusian goods to Poland (34.3% of turnover, or $837.5 million) were two times less than the exports of goods from Poland to Belarus (65.7% of turnover, or $1605.2 million) in 2010. Poland had a positive trade balance of $767.7 million (31.4% of turnover) in 2010.[3]

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[3]   Source: Poland's Ministry of Economy.

The trade pattern[4] in 2010 was as follows:

i) The pattern of exports from Poland to Belarus (major positions):
  – Mechanical and electrical devices,
  – Meat,
  – Metallurgical industry products,
  – Products made of plastic.
ii) The pattern of imports from Belarus to Poland:
  – Mineral products,
  – Chemical industry products,
  – Wood and products made of wood.

Poland's Investments in Belarus

According to the data of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Poland, a total of 533 companies with the participation of Polish capital have been registered in Belarus (507 companies in 2009), of which 206 have 100% of the Polish capital. The total amount of Polish firms' investments involved in Belarus from 1991 is considered to be $300 million.

The following chart shows Polish investments divided by years:

Chart 2. Polish Investments in 2003–2010

Source: Poland's Ministry of Economy.

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4 Source: Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The data of this chart indicates the absence of a clear direction of development of Polish investments in Belarus. The reason for wavering is probably associated with the investments (or their absence) by Polish individual medium and large firms.

The geographical pattern of Polish investments in Belarus is as follows: 43% in the Brest region, 25% in Minsk city, 16% in the Harodnia region, with only 6% in the Minsk region.[5]

Speaking about the sectoral pattern of Polish companies' investments, their capital is engaged primarily in the production of consumer goods (29%), furniture (16%), packaging (15%), and products made of plastics and rubber (12%).[6] Smaller investments are concentrated in the sectors of wholesale trade, road transport activities, wood processing, and manufacturing of woodwork.

The following Polish investment projects in Belarus have been announced: modernization of the Roś-Białystok power supply line; construction of a new factory of the Polish company called Atlas has been announced (€200 million of investments have been announced); and the intention of the Polish PZU Group to take control of one of the largest Belarusian insurance companies. Construction of a coal-fired power plant in Zelva town, Harodnia region working on the Polish coal could have become the largest foreign investment in the history of Belarus (negotiations on this topic were held by the Belarusian Ministry of Economy and Kulczyk Holding). However, this investment of about $1.5 – $2 billion wasn't implemented due to several reasons.

In their turn, Belarusian investments in Poland look very modest: according to the data of the National Bank of Poland, the influx of the Belarusian capital was at the level of just €1.5 – €2 million prior to 2008.

2. Scenarios of Development of the Polish-Belarusian Economic Relations After the Crisis

The data for the year 2009 will be used to analyze the scenarios.[7]
i) The trade turnover between Poland and Belarus: $2.15 billion,

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[5] Source: Poland's Ministry of Economy.
[6] Source: Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
[7] Data of Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was used.

ii) The trade pattern: Belarusian imports are 55.8%, while Belarusian exports are 44.2%;

iii) The amount of Polish investments in Belarus in 2009: $22.1 million.

Probable changes of the resulting data for the chosen scenarios will be calculated in this section.

Scenarios

The following three scenarios were chosen in assessing the opportunities of economic cooperation:[8]

A. **"The WTO + the FTA":** The maximum economic integration of Belarus and the EU through Belarus's accession to the World Trade Organization and signing of the Free Trade Agreement.

Although the signing of the Free Trade Agreement is now possible for Belarus through participation in the Eastern Partnership, we assume that the Belarusian government could speed up the negotiations on Belarus' accession to the World Trade Organization and the introduction of free trade with the EU that occupies the main place in the export of Belarusian companies' products. We think this scenario would be possible in the case of a significant "cooling" or even a beach of integration relations between Minsk and Moscow.

However, the negotiations and accession to the WTO with subsequent negotiations on and signing of the FTA with the EU would last for about 3 years according to the optimistic forecast. Thus, the expected changes in the case of such a scenario would come no earlier than the negotiation process finishes, or, most likely, 3 years from when the negotiations' start.

The Belarusian government would need strategic partners in the EU during the negotiations on the FTA. Being Belarus's neighbor and the strongest state among the new members of the European Union, Poland could play the key mediating role in the economic integration of Belarus and the EU.

According to our calculations, the signing of the FTA between Belarus and the European Union would provide the opportunity for a substantial development of trade and capital turnover between Poland and Belarus.

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[8] The chosen scenarios present authors' personal viewpoints, and rely on the estimates by experts and authors' own calculations.

The trade could rise up to $6–$7 billion per year, or up to the amount of Poland's turnover with Slovakia (some $6 billion in 2009). The turnover pattern would level off to the 50/50 proportion of the turnover.

Polish investments in Belarus would increase manifold to the level above $50 million, without taking into account individual investments of large Polish companies. In addition, we predict a significant increase of participation of the Polish capital in the services sector (trade, transport, infrastructure maintenance, etc.).

B. **"The Eastern Partnership"**: A Step-by-step rapprochement of Belarus with the EU within the framework of the Eastern Partnership initiative.

The Belarusian government announced its commitment to liberalize economy and diversify foreign trade in 2010. In this case, convergence of Belarus's trade terms in the eastern (Russia) and the western border (the EU, including Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia) is required. Currently, there is a huge difference in trade terms in these two areas:

– On the one hand, there is duty-free trade within the Customs Union of Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan (introduced on July 6, 2010),
– On the other hand, there is a mean tariff rate of 10.34% as of the end of 2010 for goods imported to Belarus, and exclusion of Belarusian goods from the European General System of Preferences (GSP).

As part of the Eastern Partnership, the Belarusian government would have the opportunity to begin a rapprochement with the European Union after signing the Association Agreement that provides the start for negotiations on creating the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) between Belarus and the EU. Yet, the term of the DCFTA's introduction isn't specified. The document states that this would be possible "as soon as the country is sufficiently involved in introducing and benefitting from the far-reaching effect of liberalization, as well as in fulfilling the related duties."[9]

According to our estimates, provided political will existed, if the Belarusian government and the European Commission began negotiations in December 2011, the signing of the Association Agreement between the EU and Belarus would have been possible in 2 years at best. The

[9] The Eastern Partnership. Communication form the Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, November, 2008

negotiations and preparations for the DCFTA's introduction would take at least the next 3-4 years, provided Belarus simultaneously actively pursues the procedure for the country's accession to the WTO. Thus, Belarus may join the European Free Trade Area no sooner than in 6 years.

The effect on trade between Poland and Belarus within the framework of the Eastern Partnership would develop over time in concordance with the Eastern Partnership's progress. We calculated that the final effect would be close to the previous scenario, or there could be a rise in turnover even up to the level of $6-$7 billion. In view of the slow pace of obtaining such a result, the trade pattern (the ratio of Polish exports to Belarusian imports) wouldn't change fundamentally or would remain positive for Poland at the level of 55/45.

The influx of the Polish capital in Belarus would be growing, creating a clear trend of growth, and reaching the level of $50 million annually after the DCFTA's introduction.

We believe that the rise in trade turnover and capital creates an opportunity for Poland for a deeper integration with Belarus (including in the area of transfer of technology, knowledge, education, and European values), increasing the geopolitical and economic role of Poland as a key state of the Central Eastern Europe.

C. **"The Customs Union"**: The maximum integration of Belarus with Russia through the Customs Union of Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan, as well as through the Common Economic Space (CES) of these states.

This scenario is reminiscent of the situation of 2004–2008, when the Belarusian authorities directed the trade potential solely to the East. One of the main reasons for this behavior, as we assume in this scenario, was the lowest possible prices for natural energy resources, i.e. oil and gas that Belarus was buying in Russia at a price below market value.

The Customs Union of Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan was launched on July 6, 2010. The Customs Union has the mandatory system of the common customs rate for goods imported to the territory of any of the three states.

The Customs Union is seen as the first step for the introduction of the Common Economic Space of Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan. The CES is meant to be launched in 2012, provided that the member countries retain the direction and progress of the economic integration.

In this scenario, we assume that Belarus's participation in the Eastern Partnership would be minimal (entirely formal participation in some joint regional initiatives), or Belarus would be completely excluded from the Eastern Partnership. We also assume that the process of Belarus's accession to the WTO would depend on the joint decision of the CES member states.

We think that the creation of the Customs Union and the CES would have a positive but limited effect on the development of the Polish-Belarusian trade and capital investment from Poland. This effect primarily results from the consolidation of markets of Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan that are the most important positions in the pattern of the bilateral trade between Poland and Belarus. In other words, Polish exports, imports, as well as Polish investments in Belarus would have their source and consequences not only in Belarus but also in the common space of this three CIS states.[10]

According to our estimates, the level of bilateral trade between Poland and Belarus under this scenario would reach the pre-crisis levels ($3 billion) in the course of two years, and would subsequently develop at a pace of about 10–20% annually.

The flow of Polish capital in the Belarusian economy would also increase – however, we don't expect a stable trend of growth of investments from Poland. The direction of development would be determined by certain major investments of Polish firms depending on the "investment climate" in Belarus and on the economic environment in the newly created Common Economic Space.

There is a theoretical possibility of a combination of two presented scenarios: B+C. With due regard to the external[11] and internal[12] reasons, president Lukashenka could take a position on bilateral co-operation with both the European Union and Russia.

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[10] Tochitskaya I. The Custom Union Between Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia: an Overview of Economic Implications for Belarus. *CASE Network Studies and Analyses, no 405/2010*.

[11] For example, the unstable relations of the Belarusian president with the Russian president.

[12] Among other things, the growing negative balance of foreign trade of Belarus (11,1% in 2010), the growing internal debt (52% as of January 1, 2011), etc.

We don't, however, see a possibility to assess the effect of a mixed scenario on the trade between Poland and Belarus, as it depends on the depth of integration in each of the directions (with plenty of various options). The main thing is that under such scenario the economic relations between Belarus and Poland would depend on the outcome of discussions at the "European Union – Russia" level.

Conclusions

This work aimed at analyzing the economic relations between Poland and Belarus through the assessment of the effect of the three chosen scenarios on the size and pattern of the bilateral trade and Polish investments in Belarus. The results show that each of the three options has the potential to increase trade turnover and capital flows.

The largest (by 2–3 times) and the fastest (about 3 years) growth of the analyzed factors is possible in a situation where the Belarusian authorities choose to speed up the integration with the European Union and to create the Free Trade Area (FTA).

A similar effect would be achieved under the second scenario of Belarus's active participation in the Eastern Partnership. However, the period of time would increase at least to 6 years in this case.

The scenario when Belarus favors the Eastern integration within the framework of the Customs Union of Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan with subsequent creation of the Common Economic Space of these states is marked by the slowest pace of development of economic relations between Poland and Belarus. The bilateral trade would primarily reach the pre-crisis level, and would be growing by 10–20% annually, while the investments would vary each year without a clear direction for growth.

A L A K S I E J Ł A S T O Ŭ S K I
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Russocentrism among the Projects of Belarusian Identity: the Role and Prospects in the Modern Belarusian State

There is a long and very rich tradition of recognition of the land that is now defined as the Republic of Belarus, as part of a wider space of the "Russian" world. Understanding of the notion of "Russian world" and the place our land occupied in it has changed over time. The ideas, concepts and suggestions gradually evolved. This paper covers the revival and development of this ideological complex in the independent Republic of Belarus. We suggest calling the new notion »russocentrism«.

The ideological core of this project is the consideration of the Belarusians as an integral part of the Russian people. The Russian people are understood as super-ethnos, combining Great Russians, Little Russians and Belarusians. Super ethnos is determined by the unity of language and culture, common values and mentality. Briefly this main position of Russocentrism can be formulated as follows: »*A Belarusian, like a Great Russian and a Ukrainian, according to his theoretical and practical life is Russian, and Belarus, as Great Russia and Ukraine, are part of the All-Russian United Civilization*«.[1] Hence the focus of an alliance with Russia is the major geopolitical objective for Belarus. To some extent peripheral to the project are references to Slavic brotherhood and Slavic

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[1] Криштапович Л. Белоруссия и русская цивилизация. Минск, 1999. С. 134–135.

civilization. In addition to the core idea there are the following central categories of the descriptions of the Belarusian nation:

1) Community criteria (the people of Belarus were always perceived as an integral part of Russian civilization, hence the strong emphasis on the cultural identity factors: culture, spirit, mentality).

2) The attitude to the language issue: the Russian language is perceived as native for Belarus. At the same time the existence of a separate Belarusian language is recognized, but its value is reduced to regional or ethnographic status.

3) The past of the Belarusians has always been seen in the aspect of all-Russian history. It formed a special historiography, where the most essential parts are the unity periods (Kievan Ruś, the Russian Empire, Soviet Union), whereas periods of rupture and lack of common nationhood are always perceived as painful and traumatic, they believed to happen mostly due to hostile intrigues.

4) This conspirological vision of the past corresponds to the providential vision of the present, where current events are evaluated in the scheme of global confrontation to conspiratorial organization and the Messianic community (of Belarusians / Russian people).[2]

I emphasize that we are talking about the range of ideas, which require appropriate subjects for their manifestation: the authors and speakers, various institutions: publications, Internet sites, etc. I will have to devote a few words to explain the choice of this term «Russocentrism». In our opinion, the term «Westernrussism», although often used to describe this complex of ideas, most adequately corresponds to the stage in the evolution of the intellectual current that occurred during the second half of the XIX century. In today's Belarus there appears to be an obvious problem when using this nomination. A great deal of symbolic continuity remains (it's not just the use of certain theoretical postulates, referring to the classics of Westernrussism, but even to self-nomination "Western Russians", that has recently entered into active use). It is obvious that apologists for the Russian world in the independent Republic of Belarus have to deal with other fundamental issues. In addition, a modern version of this ideological trend uses the works of Westernrussism representatives

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[2] For more details see: Ластоўскі А. Русацэнтрызм як ідэалагічны праект беларускай ідэнтычнасці // Палітычная сфера. 2010. № 14. С. 58–79.

of the XIX century only as one of the sources for the formation of its own ideology and legitimating. Another equally important source is modern Russian national patriotism, which provides a lot of basic explanatory diagrams for the world vision. Therefore, researchers have a possibility to choose, either to emphasize the ideological continuity and linearity (then we can talk about reincarnation of «Westernrussism»), or to determine emphasis on innovation and relevance as a priority (then the best option for nomination is just exactly «Russocentrism"). Again, in our opinion, «Westernrussism» deserves attention and study as an extremely interesting historical phenomenon of confusing and complicated Belarusian intellectual history, while for the consideration of modern ideological bifurcation and shifts in cultural policy the use of the term «Russocentrism» looks more rational.

In the beginning of the 1990s the supporters of the idea of a unified Russian world could be featured by an acute painful reaction to the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was accompanied by rejection of the newly created Belarusian State and acute aversion to the authorities, regarded as the implementer of the BPF's interests. Since the beginning of Łukašenka's presidency there has been a gradual transition to full loyalty of Russocentrism representatives to the government, even though before 1995 they looked closely at the new president. Łukašenka practically implemented the main requirements vital to Russocentrism: providing the Russian language with a status of the state one, creating a union with Russia (though not in the radical form, desired by Russocentrists), a symbolic constant appeal to the Russian culture and Russian people. It naturally attracted the supporters of this intellectual project to the head of the country. Henceforth Russocentrists became active supporters of the new president of Belarus. He even had a special role for the interpretation of the historical process. They created an idealized image of President Alaksandr Łukašenka as the embodiment of people's personalized interests, a charismatic leader who intuitively understood and implemented the most effective national policies. The current situation in Belarus started to be perceived as a confrontation between two forces – the Belarusian people (the spirit and values which embodied Alaksandr Łukašenka) and the secret world government, which, through its agents (the opposition) was trying to establish control over the country. Moreover, this confrontation took a global perspective. Belarus (and its

president) started to be regarded as the last bastion of the Russian world, which stood for the values of the Slavic civilization against the aggressive approach of a secret world government. Accordingly, Łukašenka was also seen as a long-term »savior of the world«, which predetermines hyper loyalty to the policy, carried out by the him.

In the second half of the 1990s, the most prominent representatives of Russocentrism (eg. L. Kryštapovič and E. Skobeleŭ) successfully integrated into the state elite and began to have a significant influence on the public policy as well as many important aspects of cultural policy (in the first place, historical education). This led to an analytical association of Belarusian state ideology with Russocentrism ideas, so there appears to be a need to separate these two projects. There are some similarities in the ideas, values and rhetoric of Russocentrism and the Belarusian state project: accentuation of proximity of the Belarusian and Russian people, focus on a priority union with Russia, sympathies toward Orthodoxy. But for Russocentrism the coordinate system is set (the salvation is in alliance with Russia, the West brings spiritual and physical death for Belarus). The state project leaves the possibility of situational changes and political games. Russocentrism as a concept is stable and concentrated around an outlined circle of ideas, it is idealistic in nature. The state concept of the Belarusian nation is pragmatic; it can change depending on fluctuations in the socio-political situation.

Such close alliance was temporary and had a chance only in a specific political situation (the struggle with national-democratic opposition during Alaksandr Łukašenka's first term and the serious stake on integration with Russia at the same time). In the early 2000s, it became apparent that those intentions and wishes, which the leadership of Belarus associated with the Union State, were not implemented, and the state strategy changed dramatically. Like the Bolsheviks after the military defeat of Poland were forced to abandon maximalist course on the world revolution and began to build socialism in one separate country, Łukašenka rejected his expansionist dreams and began to consolidate his power in Belarus. »As soon as the process of integration began to threaten the unlimited power of President Łukašenka in Belarus, he quickly changed direction and began to emphasize the Belarusian sovereignty and independence. Almost overnight President Łukašenka

has evolved from »Slavic integrator« to the principal defender of the Belarusian national independence.«[3] A request for the creation of the Belarusian state ideology was a peculiar manifestation of reorientation, it was meant to fund and legitimize the project. Clearly, this quite pragmatic and rational policy change did not correspond to those idealistic notions, which were built in the dreams of Russocentrism publicists. Again, some Russocentrism ideologues started to serve in the state apparatus and on these grounds have already been forced to maintain the previous course of extreme loyalty, and yet, the institutional capacity for development and dissemination of Russocentrism ideas outside the state system have been lost. Thus, in 1997–1998, there were several periodicals that either openly advocated Russocentrism ideas («Slavianskij nabat», «Lichnost'»), or clearly were sympathetic to those ideas («Znamia Yunosti», «My i Vremia»), in the 2000s, these resources were irretrievably lost. The aggravation of interstate relations between Belarus and Russia, which sometimes took the form of trading and information warfare, actualized the need for the reconfiguration of the Russocentrism idea set.

It took place during the last three years.

At this time the presence and activation of Russocentrism can be seen on the internet. The few sites that are beginning to aggressively and intensively gain Internet space are the following:

1) The information-analytical portal «Empire»,[4] dedicated to the geopolitical changes in the post-Soviet space, the site already existed, but was not really active.
2) The Research and Educational Project «Western Russia»,[5] consisting mainly of historical articles and periodicals.
3) The Belarusian branch of the news agency «Regnum» – «Regnum – Belarus».[6]

It is worth noting some important features.

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[3] Leshchenko, N. (2008) The National Ideology and the Basis of the Lukashenka Regime in Belarus, *Europe-Asia Studies*. Vol. 60, No. 8, pp. 1419–1433.

[4] Информационно-аналитический портал "Империя". Available: http://www.imperiya.by/ (Accessed 15.01.2012).

[5] Научно-просветительский проект "Западная Русь". Available at: http://zapadrus.su/ (Accessed 15.01.2012).

[6] Информационное агенство "Regnum – Беларусь". Available: http://www.belarus.regnum.ru/ (Accessed 15.01.2012).

These three sites are regularly updated, well-designed, carry out coordinated campaigns and repost the most important materials from partner resources. This means that Russocentrism, which for several years had disappeared into the shadows of Belarusian public space, now has come back quite successfully. But have any conceptual changes occurred to the approach?

First of all it is striking that there is a gradual separation of modern Russocentrism from the Belarusian state, which was previously regarded as a natural agent for restoring Russian lost unity. There is growing criticism of various aspects of the Belarusian state policy, which is so far going in the vein of identifying the secret conspiracy forces in the higher ranks of the administrative apparatus. Direct attacks against the president are difficult to find in the articles, even though he has lost his sacred status of the Messiah, but his inviolability remains. Today's Belarus is described using such traits as «*belarusization*» and «*polonization*», which again shows an increase in the understanding of cultural policy differences between the apologists of Russocentrism and Belarusian officials. Another topic that has been actively developed in the Russocentrism periodical press in recent times is the inevitable economic dependence of Belarus on Russia, which is constantly emphasized and hyperbolized.

There is some evidence that suggests that the rise of a new wave of Russocentrism is largely related to the activities of the Russian state, which begins to rapidly promote its own interests through these circles. Let us see the most symptomatic. For example, the creator of the portal «Empire» Jury Barančyk placed a message saying that he participated in a roundtable «For the Union» in the State Duma as the main news on the site. It is not surprising that on January 5, 2011 in the same place there appeared a column by the author with a very symptomatic title «President Putin – the guarantor of the Belarusian statehood.» The fact that the news agency «Regnum» took over our country and opened its branch here is also symptomatic: the Latvian journalist Inara Murniece argued that Regnum actively defended the Kremlin policy during the Russo-Georgian war, it gives one-sided information about the processes in Moldova, Ukraine and other places, it uses the «compatriots» question as a cover for promoting political interests of Russia.»[7] Another very

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[7]   Мурниеце И. На страже интересов Кремля // ИноСМИ. Available at: http://www. inosmi.ru/sngbaltia/20091026/156425908.html (Accessed 15.01.2012).

symbolic fact is that when controversial official and famous Viciebsk Russocenturist Andrej Hieraščanka was fired from his job at the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee he received a certificate of membership in the Russian Union of Writers the same day. Of course, after that he actively began to be published on the »Regnum« website. The same happened to Belarusian political analyst Mikałaj Mališeŭski, dismissed from the Academy of Management of the President of the Republic of Belarus. The latter argues that Western countries are funding the Belarusian regime, which wastes Russian resources and uses Russian subsidies to carry out violent Belarusization. Change in the course of Russian policy towards Belarus is obvious: previously it was thought that Łukašenka anyway implements pro-Russian interests, and therefore there is no need to create their own interest groups and to promote in the Belarusian information space. The slowdown in integration projects and the trade and fuel wars forced The Kremlin to actively engage in the creation of its office in Belarus.

There occurs parallel transformation with respect to the attitude to the modern Russian state among the supporters of an idealized Russian world. In the 1990's, Russocentrism treated the Russian federal state as subjugated by the Judeo-Masonic clan, while Łukašenka as the savior of the Slavic world. For example, in 1999 the members of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus Valery Drako and Siarhiej Kaścian described the state of authorities in the Russian Federation in the following way: »At this stage in the Russian Federation there exists quite formed ziono-fascism. It appeared after the Second World War in capitalist countries, but in the present situation Russia has fallen into "zionization of public authorities« and the temporary subjugation of its peoples ... In the Russian Federation, having zionized the state power, ziono-fascists already captured key positions in the economy, politics and culture.«[8] Modern Russocentrism in Belarus is becoming more and more directed at Russia. It is Russia that is in the center of attention that contains an active pole, which will save the Russian civilization. President Łukašenka failed this important mission.

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[8]   Драко В., Костян С. Неофашизм: вымыслы и реальность // Славянский набат. 1999. № 10 (91).

Thus, the Russocentrism circle is intentionally used by Russian political technologists as a means of pressure on the Belarusian authorities, which are already looked at with suspicion; conduct some repressions against the most ardent Russocentrism activists (for instance, the dismissal of Hieraščanka and Mališeŭski).

We can predict further divergence of interests of the Russocentrism circles and the sovereign project of the Belarusian nation, which leads to the creation of another ideological vacuum in Belarus. The increasing destruction of the alliance since the early 2000s creates opportunities to capture the strategic initiative to determine the nature and content of the Belarusian identity in our country.

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Current Challenges of EU–Belarus Relations: Can the Eastern Partnership Support the Europeanization of Belarus?

Introduction: Breaking the Deadlock

Developments in Belarus since 19 December 2010 seemed to shatter the last hopes of drawing the country closer to the EU's 'ring of friends'. Belarus' relations with the EU being but a 'by-product' of the changes in Minsk's relations with Moscow, as the late Vitali Silitski argued (Jarábik and Silitski, 2008), the recent signing of a new gas deal with Russia and Łukašenka's enthusiastic support for Putin's Eurasian Union project leave few room for optimism in Brussels. In helping the regime find a way out of diplomatic isolation, Moscow's support implies that official Minsk could turn its back on Europe for good.

One should not conclude that, however, Belarus will remain hermetic to the siren call of Europeanization and democratization until the end of Łukašenka's reign. The riddle of how to topple the long-lasting dictator being beyond the scope of this paper, the focus will be instead on the long term challenges awaiting the EU in its relations with Belarus.

Challenging the idea that Belarus is 'self-isolated' from Europe, it argues that a paradigm shift in Brussels' stance could break the current deadlock and 'reset' the process of Belarus' *rapprochement* with Europe. The Eastern Partnership (EaP) currently offers the most suitable framework for resuming cooperation with the country, provided that

the policy's most efficient ingredient, namely 'partnership-building', is prioritized.

The paper is divided into three sections. The first recaps the various definitions of Europeanization, and subsequent misinterpretations related to the use of the notion. The second recalls the diplomatic deadlock characteristic of EU-Belarus relations throughout 2011, highlighting that the EU bears its share of responsibility for the failure of its policy of 'critical engagement' launched in 2008. Paraphrasing a Russian aphorism (*Kto vinovat? Chto delat'?*), the paper examines 'who's to blame?' before suggesting 'what to do?', providing in the final section recommendations for drawing Belarus back into the EaP.

1. Conceptualizing Europeanization

There is no unanimous definition of 'Europeanization', yet the notion should be 'defined' prior to asking whether Belarus is or should be part of this process, and how. The historical approach (Gerner 1999, Zielonka 2006), which equates Europeanization with imperialism, identifying control and coercion as the main operational tools for expanding Europe's sphere of influence, is deliberately left aside, being all too well-known in Belarus, where it is the main line of argumentation of anti-Western State propaganda. This leaves two main lenses through which to look at Europeanization in non-EU countries such as Belarus.

According to an institutionalist perspective, Europeanization amounts to an approximation process whereby the structures (polities) and actions (policies) of EU member countries, and potentially countries candidate to accession, gradually integrate the *acquis communautaire* (Grabbe 2001). The term also applies to outsiders with no perspectives or ambitions to join the EU, some of which voluntarily incorporate parts of the 80 000 pages-long legislative package for the sake of gaining easier access to EU markets. In the framework of the EaP, the government of Belarus proved ready to adopt some EU norms, for example in the sectors of border control, veterinary/sanitary and environmental standards. Yet such selective compliance denotes a pragmatic interest on the part of official Minsk rather than a genuine willingness to comply with EU norms. Given that Belarus is not candidate to accession, the institutional and

normative attractiveness of the EU model is almost nil for the Belarusian leadership.

An alternative approach, through a wider, Constructivist lens, stresses the ideational dimension of the diffusion mechanisms encompassed by Europeanization. It claims that European beliefs, values and 'ways of doing things' can be diffused 'softly' well beyond the EU's borders (Radaelli & Pasquier 2007). In Eastern Europe the CSCE kicked off this process in 1975 and it has since then gone hand in hand with democratic transition. Although the two are not synonymous, the CSCE Paris Charter (1990) sanctified democracy as the main founding stone of common European values. This is also the understanding shared by a majority of pro-EU (but not all pro-democratic) forces in Belarus proper (Усов 2011). Added to the most universal criteria of democracy – respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms – ideals such as the renouncement to death penalty, a preference for good governance, civilian control over the military and conflict settlement by peaceful means can be seen as the truly European democratic values disseminated by way of Europeanization.

In this perspective, Europeanization is a bottom-up phenomenon illustrating the attraction that such values exert on societies in which humanistic and liberal ideas have some historical and cultural resonance, irrespective of whether EU norms penetrate their national institutions – the outside-in (and bottom-up) vector of the process – or whether the compliance with European norms is decorative only, as is currently the case in several post-Soviet countries.

To what extent would Belarusians wish to live by European values is an open question. Their impact on people's mental maps and the degree of the latter's 'Europeanness' are hard to evaluate due to the 'veto role' played by the regime. Sociological surveys nonetheless provide evidence of Belarusian public interest in the Western European development model (Biss & Novak 2010). Yet the persisting veil of ignorance in wider society as to what internalizing democratic rules actually means limits the chances of Belarus becoming eligible for joining the EU any time soon anyway. Polls also illustrate that no geopolitical or civilizational move towards the EU could be done by Belarusians at the expense of the Russian vector of their country's foreign policy interests.

Łukašenka's geopolitical game, which consists of balancing Russia against the EU and vice versa in order to maximize the situation rents it can get from each of them, has hit a wall. The EU, divided by its own weaknesses, might well admit that it is futile to try and take the country away from Russia's sphere of influence. Yet since 2007 (and up until November 2011) a continuous decline in pro-Russian feeling has been observed in a growing number of social layers in Belarus. This has led experts to argue that, by way of ripple effect, chances for Europeanization 'from the bottom-up' could increase (Власкин & Круглашов 2011: 40). Seizing this chance, however, requires a paradigm shift in the way the EU relates to Belarus.

Coercion, contagion and consent are the three major tools at the disposal of EU countries to try and foster Europeanization. As we know, EU conditionality, whether negative ('sticks') or positive ('carrots'), has thus far failed to trigger democratic change in Belarus. The third mode of influence (values-diffusion via socialization) is still prevented from operating due to the limited number of people-to-people contacts between Belarus and its EU neighbors.

The EU actually bears part of the responsibility for this state of affairs. Overconfident in the attractiveness of its own model, the EU has enduringly tarnished its own image by maintaining the 'Schengen fortress', closed to Belarusian citizens. A negative side-effect of Belarus' alleged 'self-isolation', the restrictive visa policy is but one of the many challenges currently on the agenda and that should be addressed in Brussels. A unilateral easing of the visa regime for *bona fide* travelers would send Belarusians the right message: that the EU's partnership with Belarus as a country is 'decoupled' from bilateral relations with official Minsk, which for their part should be reduced to a strict minimum, with more regime cronies to be added on the EU's visa ban list to make it clear that Brussels does not deal with human rights offenders.

To solve the dilemma of 'how to relate' with Belarus, the EU needs to break the deadlock inherent in its incoherent implementation of its otherwise rational 'two-track' policy. As we shall see, the EaP is currently the only remaining operational framework for opening the 'third' track – that of *real* partnership – which can revive the Europeanization of Belarus.

2. Back to Square One Dilemmas: Who's to Blame?

As a first step, the EU should get out of the impasse within which is has entrapped itself. Arguing that 'the ball is now in Łukašenka's court' is not a viable solution given that the worst case scenario – when dialogue is reduced to a minimum and the geopolitical balance shifts back to a Cold War situation – has already come true. The West would violate its own values if it dropped its claim that the renewal of relations with official Minsk is conditional upon the release and rehabilitation of political prisoners. Yet, with his regime back under the protection of Russia's embrace, Łukašenka can confidently ignore such requests for as long as it is not in his own interest to start 'trading' the liberation of Sańnikaŭ, Bialacki and other regime opponents currently behind bars.

Instead of adding new, ever more unrealistic conditions – such as the holding of democratic parliamentary elections next September 2012 – on its list of preconditions for resuming dialogue with the regime, Brussels should soberly assess its own mistakes and wrongdoings with regards to Belarus. Since 2004, EU policies have oscillated between isolation and engagement, rather than comprehensively combining the two in an offensive move meant to fully isolate the regime (through effective targeted sanctions, including economic ones) and to fully engage with the rest of the country (through an ambitious plan for socializing Belarus in Europe).

However critical, engagement with the acting regime in mid-2008 was a premature step, especially in the absence of a clairvoyant overall strategy for securing the sustainable inclusion of the country in EU-led cooperation dynamics. However principled, Brussels' return to its sanctions rhetoric from December 2010 has been inefficient due to the incoherent implementation of coercive measures. As long as double-thought dominates the national diplomacy of individual member states towards Belarus, and double standards determine the application of values-promotion conditionality to the EU's various Eastern neighbors, Brussels' message will remain blurred in the ears of Belarusians, thereby indirectly serving the interests of official Minsk.

Finding the right balance is not an easy task, given the limits of the EU as a foreign policy actor, but also considering Łukašenka's persistent ability to outsmart Western democracy lesson-givers, both at home

and abroad. The EU should acknowledge that its 'normative power' is minimal compared to Russia's own soft power in this part of the post-Soviet space (Wilson and Popescu 2009). Based on an analysis of the institutional rules underpinning the EU's 'external governance' toolbox and of Moscow's rules within the CIS, Antoaneta Dimitrova and Rilka Dragneva demonstrated that the effectiveness of Europeanization varies with patterns of interdependence (Dimitrova and Dragnaeva 2009) – which in the case of Belarus are clearly dominated by a privileged relationship with Russia.

Reverting this trend would require a commitment and material investment that the EU is currently neither able nor willing to make. More importantly, the EU is failing in Belarus for a number of other reasons intrinsic to its common foreign policy decision-making mechanisms (or lack thereof).

Firstly, Brussels has always lacked an appropriate expertise and an ambitious *strategy* on Belarus (Klinke 2007). Ironically, Eurocrats and diplomats of the newly established European External Action Service (EEAS) are among the first to acknowledge it. Unfortunately no improvements should be expected any time soon: a majority of EU leaders are currently so preoccupied by domestic problems (the Euro currency crisis) and by new challenges in the Southern neighborhood that Belarus could hardly become a priority for them. Denmark has clearly stated that it has no ambitions to uphold the Polish agenda in the EU's Eastern neighborhood in the coming 6 months, and the region will probably not be prioritized under the following Council presidencies of Cyprus and Ireland either.

Secondly, the reactivity of the EU in the face of 'dictaplomacy' moves is too mild. Due to its proverbial bureaucratic red tape, the EU seldom manages to adopt sufficiently strong and timely measure in response to dictators' wrongdoings. Sanctions against the Belarusian regime are no exception: they have so far failed to have an impact on the regime, mainly because they were not implemented early enough. Whereas a tough reaction to the post-19 December crackdown should have been expressed immediately, it was not until late January that the EU Council adopted (limited) 'restrictive measures', and until June that targeted economic sanctions were added to the panoply. Yet experts have shown that Łukašenka's regime eventually complies with

outside demands only if motivated by economic incentives or constraints (Portela 2011).

Thirdly, the EU's response to Łukašenka's undemocratic behavior lacks coherence because EU member states too often choose 'free riding' strategies (Marin 2011a). Many EU countries actually go it alone with official Minsk so as to defend their own business interests in Belarus, or their respective 'strategic' partnership with Russia. The foreign policy stances of Lithuania, Italy, Austria or France are symptomatic of this preference for bilateral relations. Moreover, most of the 'old' EU member states, such as France and Germany, refrain from taking any strategic decision on Belarus which they think might be interpreted as hostile in Moscow. This 'Russia first' syndrome even prevents national public opinions from envisaging Belarus outside of the sphere of influence of Russia, a situation which reproduces the very dependence of Belarus on its Eastern neighbor.

Whereas a majority of influential EU countries are comfortable with the idea that Belarus will remain a buffer state separating them from Russia, only a few, starting with Poland, nonetheless wish to see Belarus remain an independent buffer country.

The fact that Belarus' sovereignty is now jeopardized by the economic crisis and the 'savior' role played by Russia (in the absence of an alternative), is actually the most pressing challenge that should guide agenda-setting in Brussels regarding Belarus. EU leaders should ask themselves what is more important in their eyes: Belarus as a well-governed (read: democratic) neighbor or as an independent partner? The two objectives – democratization and independence – are compatible, but for the 'policy mix' to be efficient, a couple of ingredients that are currently missing in the EU's policy toolbox on Belarus should be developed. Many experts believe that 'engaging' Belarus requires a new policy framework – that of an extended partnership, more technical and less political, 'based on horizontal networks of cooperation rather than on hitherto hierarchical governance by conditionality that has found little appeal' in Belarus (Korosteleva 2009). When it was launched, many believed that the Eastern Partnership, in opening a long-awaited 'third' (regional) track in the ENP, would be such a framework. Despite its shortcomings, the EaP could indeed still help the EU meet the challenge of re-engaging with Belarus as a country.

3. What Could the Eastern Partnership Still Bring to EU-Belarus Relations?

The Eastern Partnership was initiated precisely to bypass the dilemma between inclusion and exclusion entailed by the 'double track' strategy. Although the bilateral (intergovernmental) dimension of the EaP – towards the signing of an Association Agreement and DCFTA – was closed for Belarus from the onset, the EaP contains another, innovative yet underfunded 'track' for cooperation, which many in Belarus wished to participate in: the multilateral (regional) track. Apart from technical cooperation conducted in the four 'thematic platforms' and on issues pertaining to the 'flagship initiatives', Belarus was entitled to take part in several multilateral caucuses established by the EaP: the inter-parliamentary assembly (EURONEST), the Civil Society Forum (CSF), the Business Forum, and the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities (CORLEAP).

However EURONEST first convened in May 2011 in the absence of Belarusian parliamentarians, whose election European deputies consider as illegitimate. In Belarus the authorities gradually lost interest in the EaP as it appeared that the conditionality principle prevailed over the other founding principle of the policy, 'joint ownership'. They felt the EU was discriminating against their country by limiting opportunities for cooperation on issues which they saw as mutually beneficial. From their viewpoint, the EaP is thus a 'partnership' in name only: EU rules and interests dominate the relationship, whereas initiatives and proposals submitted by the Belarusian government in 2009–2010 were not taken into consideration in Brussels (Marin 2011b).

Admitting that the ball is now in the EU's court and examining and eventually building on these proposals would send Belarus a constructive signal that with*in the EaP multilateral framework* the EU is ready to return to the spirit of a *real*, depoliticized partnership, with no preconditions or double standards. Dialogue should resume as soon as possible on the most technical issues that indeed interest both parties as well as Belarus' neighbors (Ukraine, Lithuania), for example in the field of transport infrastructure projects.

The fact that relations are at their lowest actually gives the EU some room for maneuver: the Commission should use the prospects of a reset

or progress in selected pragmatic fields to motivate the Belarusian bureaucracy to launch liberal reforms – at least in the economic sphere for a start. Both administrative and economic elites would be interested in trading more with the West, especially to import the technology transfers which Belarus needs to modernize its industry. A vector of Europeanization of the Belarusian business culture, enhanced economic cooperation could help consolidate Belarus' resistance to the appeal and impact of Russian economic governance methods. The EaP Business Forum could be a catalyst for this pragmatic move, initiated by business lobbies from EU countries (Germany, Lithuania, Bulgaria) that already deal with Belarusian specialized ministries and big companies.

A growing number of Belarusian bureaucrats now admit that structural reforms can no longer be delayed. Enhanced pressure from Russian business circles interested in the privatization of Belarusian assets contributes to this understanding. The gradual liberalization of the Belarusian economy could have a spillover effect, leading to a situation when claims for good governance (read: more transparent, decentralized and accountable public management) also become mainstream demands in public opinion and even the bureaucracy. The establishment of democratic institutions will eventually follow.

This, however, will take time, since it requires first the *maturation* of an autonomous, self-sufficient civil society in Belarus. The EU readily offers Belarusian civil society some platforms (the EaP CSF) and financial tools (the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument – ENPI, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights – EIDHR and soon the European Endowment for Democracy – EED) to develop. An instrument of mindset change, the EaP provides an ideational framework for this process: 'flagships', 'roadmaps' and the 'open coordination method' are EaP catchwords that civil society activists are already effectively using in their daily dealings with both the authorities and the wider public in Belarus. The EU should now focus its efforts on empowering civil society organizations (CSOs), in order to turn them into channels for the diffusion of European values at home – including within State structures.

Taking Łukašenka to his word, the EU should encourage official Minsk to invite 'all those sane-minded in the country' to 'sit down at a table, whether round or square, and assess what they can do' to help

the Belarusian economy out of the crisis. The EU can help by widely publicizing roadmaps drafted by competent CSOs for each EaP sector, so that the message and methods used in the EU reach relevant elite groups within the system.

In other words, the EU can break the current deadlock by proposing a new 'algorithm' for its relationship with Belarus as a country, with clear benchmarks and fair roadmaps (Власкин & Круглашов 2011: 43). The EU should make a sufficiently attractive offer of returning to a real partnership aimed at modernizing Belarus (to make its economy more competitive) and consolidating its sovereignty as a nation-State (independent of Russia). Brussels has missed several opportunities already: the EaP could have been used for example to reduce Belarus' dependence on Russian energy resources (Łahviniec & Papko 2010). Since the current 'honeymoon' between Minsk and Moscow will probably end after the Russian presidential elections next March – Putin never hid the annoyance that Lukashenka's behavior causes him, so he might step up pressure once back in office – new opportunities for a shift of Belarus' geopolitical pendulum back towards the West could actually emerge soon.

Anticipating this possible scenario, Brussels urgently needs to articulate and advocate its own development model in Belarus (and elsewhere in the Eastern neighborhood actually). Instead of adding new sanctions to condemn the regime's non-compliance with unrealistic democratic demands, the EU should unilaterally offer to re-open avenues for pragmatic cooperation in selective fields that can indeed be depoliticized. In others, the conditionality rhetoric should be expressed in a less arrogant way, for example by readily announcing that EURONEST will accept Belarusian MPs if the latter proceed from fairer elections next September.

Differentiating between countries ready for 'deep and comprehensive democracy' and others should not lead to ostracizing Belarus from the EU, as this is perceived by Belarusians as a double punishment. The West's sanctions rhetoric has negatively impacted on them, and regaining their trust will not be an easy task for the EU. This is why efforts should be invested in socializing Belarusians more closely into the EU, which can readily be done in two complementary ways.

Firstly, a long-awaited concession would be to unilaterally ease the visa regime for *bona fide* Belarusians. Adding names on the black list

may at some point bring discomfort to human rights violators, but this 'coercive' policy will be comprehensive only if it is balanced with a radical move towards opening borders for all other citizens. This would improve the EU's profile in public opinion, while leaving Łukašenka's supporters abashed. The EU-Belarus visa facilitation negotiations launched one year ago are stalled, but this should not prevent the EU from following the example of some member states and waive visa fees or instruct consular offices to be less picky with visa applicants. The Schengen code leaves room for such maneuvers, which could positively be turned into a symbolic policy offensive for giving the EU some credit again.

Secondly, far from segregating the bureaucracy, the renewed partnership offer should be extended to all Belarusians apart from those, among the ruling elites who have blood on their hands. Although Łukašenka indeed decides and controls almost everything, he needs the plethoric bureaucracy to implement his will and fulfill the dirty work. These people are but mechanisms of bigger State machinery, yet they are humans, endowed with reason, and can become critical if the regime fails to reward their loyalty properly. Assessing the extraordinary character of the short-lived 'revolution through social networks', which took thousands to the streets last summer, the West should look beyond the political opposition and identify who, among the 'disappointed' administrative and business elites (May 2011), could 'defect'. This is a *sine qua non* condition for envisaging structural reforms, given that only regime insiders would have the necessary knowledge of public affairs to launch them in Belarus, whereas outsiders (namely, the opposition) would probably not be capable of implementing radical reforms against the will of acting civil servants.

Anticipating and accompanying these defections, the EU should therefore focus its efforts on 'Europeanizing' the Belarusian bureaucracy. Catalyzing change can be done by opening some institutional capacity-building (ICB) programs to interested civil servants, in particular from regional administrations – something which can be conducted through CORLEAP. Furthermore, Brussels should encourage European and national bureaucracies to engage in 'mentoring' activities, exchange of best practices with Belarusian civil servants and by using existing cooperation networks (e.g. sister city agreements, Northern Dimension and ENPI CBC programs) within which they can be 'socialized' in Europe.

Conclusion

Far from being formal and constraining, Europeanization by socialization is an inclusive process fuelling democratic transformation through the exercise of democracy *in practice*, on a daily basis. The consolidation of this practical learning process is an achievement that will manifest itself in Belarus when an enlightened civil society is ready to mobilize and defend democratic values against the threat of an authoritarian regression. This is the main challenge awaiting the EU in the coming decade, and one which the EaP can help meet.

For Belarusians to adhere to European democratic values, the most important factor is not that political structures and actors comply with procedural norms of democracy (free and fair elections according to OSCE standards), but that the rule of law wins over the reign of arbitrariness. Concern for an orderly, peaceful transition in Belarus is what will make the transformation of the current political system desirable for the average Belarusian.

A key notion to build upon is that of 'adequacy': Belarusians lose faith in their leadership when they consider that the government's response to the current challenges, whether economic or political, is inadequate. Their condemnation of the disproportionate use of force against civilians by the police and KGB since 19 December is also expressed using the *неадекватно* (*inadequate*) adverb. The EU's normative discourse must be tampered by an 'adequate' amount of respect for recipients' understanding of what their own interests and values are.

Respect for universally recognized human rights, including the rights of minorities, as well as fundamental freedoms (of conscience, expression, assembly, etc.), will only become praised values for a majority of Belarusians, and potentially a crowd-mobilizing slogan, as a result of a lengthy maturation of civil society. This, in turn, requires the emancipation of CSOs from the stranglehold of state-control and state-backed structures. The EU could accelerate this decentralization process by multiplying platforms for socializing Belarusians, by opening its borders to *bona fide* individuals, including reform-minded bureaucrats who should be eligible to benefit from existing institutional capacity-building (ICB) instruments, as well as exchange and mentoring programs.

Ensuring the renewed partnership with Belarus requires that the EU learns to communicate better, that it enlarges the spectrum of the beneficiaries of its aid policies, which implies targeting also the ruling elites – be it in the administrative or the economic bureaucracy – and, last but not least, that it steps up its efforts to 'empower' Belarusian civil society as an independent player in domestic affairs. Alongside the opposition, CSOs should enter into talks with the authorities in order to address the problems lying ahead of the road to modernization for Belarus. The best the EU can do to help is to relay their initiatives under the heading of the EaP 'roadmaps', thus stepping in as a constructive 'broker' in the dialogue between state institutions and the embryonic Belarusian civil society.

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Recent Trends of the Europeanization Discourse in Belarus

This short article is based on the results of the collective research project "The ways to Europeanize Belarus: between politics and identity construction (1991–2010)".[1] It shows research aimed at examining the notion of Europeanization in the Belarusian context. It was finalized and presented at the beginning of the year 2011 in Minsk.

Historical Reconstruction of the European Idea in Belarus

Before presenting the practical results of the research, it is worth covering briefly the history of the European idea in Belarus from the late 1980s–early 1990s. The late 1980s with the policy of perestroika, and especially the time after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991 marked the beginning of the reconsideration of the place where Belarus stands in the world and in the history of the world, including the history of Europe. This reconsideration touched upon a number of issues: Belarusian identity, geopolitical orientation, arguments about democratic and other values.

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[1] Пути европеизации Беларуси: между политикой и конструированием идентичности (1991–2010). Под ред. О. Шпараги. Минск, 2011. 278 с. The ways to Europeanize Belarus: between politics and identity construction (1991–2010). Ed. O. Shparaha. Minsk, 2011. 278 p.

European agenda was also part of those discussions. In the early 1990s, there were two main standpoints on the "European idea" in Belarus. Firstly, the "image of Europe" was the one of the environment without all those negative features that were tangible in the domestic (ex-Soviet) reality. Secondly, in the Belarusian history and culture some "institutional forms" were revealed, which arose from the context of the European history and culture: Christianity in its Orthodox and Catholic versions, Magdeburg rights, the elements of the Reformation, the Renaissance, etc. At that time, it was believed that the European tradition (the "European heritage") was abruptly "terminated" when Belarusian territories were annexed to the Russian Empire and that the separation from this heritage remained strong when Belarus functioned as an administrative unit of the "Soviet project". Then, it was necessary to refresh the "European" historical and cultural heritage in order to incorporate Belarusians into the European context and to enable the "comeback to Europe". Thus, the early 1990s were the time of illusions that emerged because the reflections about the image of "Europe" and "Belarus in Europe" were caused (and limited) by the crisis of the Belarusian society itself and by the hopes for a prompt escape from this crisis, including by means of joining "Europe". Meanwhile, the Belarusian society was a "post-soviet" one where certain values had already been formed and where the "new" elite placed different emphases in its aspirations.

In the mid-1990s, after Alaksandr Łukašenka came to power, it became clear that the "European idea" in Belarus is weak and not well-established (not in the past but in the present). Geopolitical situation together with other factors including the Belarusian history of the recent two hundred years sets a different vector – pro-Russian. The pro-Russian orientation was chosen right when in Europe the Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1992 and it finally defined politically the European integration idea, which transformed the "economic community" of the European countries into something larger – a political community based on democratic values, among other factors. The late 1990s and early 2000s witnessed the simultaneous evolution of the European integration idea in Europe and "pro-Russian" vector in Belarus. In Europe, the successful development of political and economic integration was hindered by "cultural factors": domestic problems of the EU countries unmasked during the integration manifested themselves in the growing "local

separatism" and a turn towards nationalism. It was necessary then to complete political and economic unity of the European Union (EU) as a "cultural unity" but the one based on diversity and multiculturalism rather than on unification. There might be various standpoints regarding multiculturalism, nevertheless this idea is undoubtedly democratic: the idea was that everyone's interests were to be taken into consideration and not that a single model of European identity would be imposed on all the EU citizens.

Meanwhile in Belarus, firstly, the authoritarian regime strengthened its positions, and secondly, the pro-Russian vector lost its original meaning: now it meant not a close alliance between Russia and Belarus inspired by the Soviet "friendship of nations" notion but a specific "consumption" of Russia, its economic resources, which would help those who came to power in Belarus in the mid-1990s to retain this power. In the early 2000s, the current political regime embraced the idea of the Belarusian "sovereignty" and changed its view on the relations with Russia (by that time, Łukašenka had lost his political ambitions to acquire a certain position in Russia). Alongside the "consumption" of Russia idea, the idea of the "consumption" of Europe emerges. The authorities started to claim that the situation in Belarus is in line with the situation in Europe – "the same roads, the same shops", but in fact they denied European democratic values.[2] The new image of Europe, albeit less illusive (because of understanding of the economic and political differences between the EU countries and Belarus), nevertheless preserved its attractiveness, and Belarusians were not an exception.

The Belarusian society also changed. According to the public opinion polls, in the 2000s there was already a group of people oriented to "European values" – the "Belarusian Europeans". This group's values included both what the authorities meant, i.e. an urge towards the "European level" of consumption of goods and services, and what the authorities denied, i.e. the desire to have in Belarus democratic institutions "that they have in Europe". It's hard to define the proportions in the combination of these two components, though. And yet, it might

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[2] For an example of an interpretation of the "European values" in the style of the authorities, see: Expertize with Yury Ziser. Lidzija Jarmošyna: "I don't think that power means a lot of happiness". Available at: http://news.tut.by/politics/163529.html (Accessed 12.01.2012).

be the case that when the Belarusians started to consume "as Europeans" did many of them faced the situation where their opportunities and desires could not be fulfilled as the other component, the democratic institutions, was missing. It's also worth mentioning that various "images of Europe" started to spread in the Belarusian society: from "liberal Europe" to "conservative Europe", Europe "without Muslims", "without homosexuals" and so on.

In other words, before the mid-2000s the "European idea" just started to get actually implanted into the Belarusian reality. At the same time, several versions of the "European idea" emerged: a well-defined interpretation proposed by the authorities, and other, not consolidated, interpretations put forward by the society (various "images" of Europe).

And the point is not that in Belarus we see a conflict between anti-European authorities and pro-European society. The Belarusian society is rather structured in an interesting way by the debates about the European issue: denying democratic values, the authorities can rely not only on the obvious opponents of the "European ideas" but also on those adherents that choose the "image of Europe" as the one deprived of the democratic features to the highest degree possible, the conservative and traditional one.

Today, at the end of the first decade of the XXI century, the discussions about the "European idea" in Belarus reached a certain limit, the one that could be defined by a value choice. The opponents and adherents of the "image of Europe" look at it not from the standpoint of consumption (although it is important) but from the point of view of value debates. The opponents of the "European idea" do not focus on the critic of the consumption, they criticize European "double standards" or "liberal values", and the adherents of the "European idea" stress that the consumption à la in Europe is definitely not the only thing that Belarusians need but at the same time, they often fail to realize what values exactly they mean. The Belarusian political reality found itself in a "new" situation: illusions about "liberalization" of the political regime disappeared and the problem of "democratic values" got exposed after the illusion of economic "stability" had been dispelled (a striking example is what happened on December 19, 2010 when the demonstration at the Independence Square in Minsk was violently dispersed and repressions of civic activists started).

In the background of this "problem of the value choice" situation stands the EU crisis. Some people consider it an "economic" crisis but in our opinion, it also has a value dimension. The events in Greece, for instance, reveal not so much its "economic groundlessness" but rather the specific character of the market economy institutions when they function in the framework of the Greek "cultural tradition": problems with democratic institutions, specific understanding of what is a "fair" distribution of economic resources, etc. This Greek "cultural tradition" clashed against other "cultures" that emerged when Greece joined the EU integration process. And today's "crisis of Europe", as the example with Greece demonstrates, is to a large degree a reflection of the process of value harmonization between the EU countries, which is to result in a new meaning for the European unity. In Belarus, however, this "crisis of Europe" is treated not as a transformation with unclear ends but as a failure of the "European project". Against the background of this superficial "failure", they begin to promote and implement the idea of EurAsEC integration. Hence, it causes (and so does any movement of the authorities towards Russia and farther away from Europe) a feeling that the idea of the "Europeanization" of Belarus is exhausted.

However, it is a totally premature feeling because, as it has been described above, the "European idea" in Belarus has transformed from a "historical and cultural" notion into an issue of today: if compared to the early 1990s, it exists today in the Belarusian society not only as historical and cultural heritage but also as part of political, intellectual, everyday and other practices. Today, much fewer illusions than before penetrate the definition of this idea, and it becomes instrumental: people indeed started to analyze it and try to apply it in this form to the Belarusian reality.

Besides, an understanding has been gradually formed in the Belarusian context that "Europe" may remain an unattainable goal for a long time yet, but a number of values implemented in Europe are extremely desirable in the Belarusian context, regardless of how the political and economic "Europeanization" of Belarus proceeds. These values include, first of all, those that deal with the functioning of the democratic institutions in Belarus, and not just the values of consumption.

"Europeanization" of Belarus as a Theoretical Problem and its Practical Aspects

Theoretical comprehension of the Europeanization in the Belarusian context started not such a long time ago. The issue was addressed mainly by intellectuals, independent research centers and academic institutions. In 2007, a collection of articles "European perspective of Belarus: intellectual models" edited by Volha Šparaha was published.[3] The book covered, first and foremost, such issues as problematization of the European identity and its dimensions in the Belarusian context (Ryhor Miniankoŭ), a new situation that emerged in Eastern Europe after a number of countries joined the EU and reconsideration of the attitude towards the European agenda in Belarus following the enlargement (Almira Usmanava), processes of the post-Soviet transformation in Belarus against the background of the European integration processes (Alaksiej Pikulik) and so on. The publication showed that the book's theoretical approach is important but the research should be continued and acquire practical aspects. Thus, the collective work mentioned at the beginning of the article, "The ways to Europeanize Belarus: between politics and identity construction (1991–2010)" was designed to address a wider spectrum of issues.

One of the aims is the attempt to define the notion of Europeanization in the Belarusian context based on the practical goals of its implementation. The author of the collection followed the idea of "Europeanization from below" developed by German political scientist Stefan Garsztecki. In his article, which is part of the collective book, Garsztecki describes European integration in the framework of the European Union not only as spreading of some institutions "from the top" but also as a process that takes into consideration multiple initiatives "from below". The author believes that these levels of Europeanization should be taken into account when we talk about cultural and historical, political, civic, and economic aspects of the European integration in the EU.[4] Hence, we can define a certain

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[3] Европейская перспектива Беларуси: интеллектуальные модели. Сост. О. Шпарага. Вильнюс, 2007. 280 с. European perspective of Belarus: intellectual models. Compiled by O.Shparaha. Vilnius, 2007. 280 p.

[4] Гарштэцкі Ш. Актуальныя вымярэнні Еўропы ў Цэнтральнай і Усходняй Еўропе – еўрапеізацыя знізу? // Пути европеизации Беларуси: между политикой

theoretical framework to look at the processes of Europeanization in Belarus: in the country, the process is blocked "from the top" but there are indications that the process is developing from below. Regarding this statement, there is a need to mention several notions of Europeanization that the authors of the book used: "Europeanization from below and from the top", "passive Europeanization", Europeanization of the politics and social practices, of everyday life, etc.

A short summery of the research would demonstrate how the Europeanization discourse develops in Belarus. In the discourse produced by the authorities, the image of Europe is ambivalent: on the one hand, it is the "image of an enemy"; it implies certain social, economic, and even political standards that should show that the political regime maintains them. For the Belarusian opposition, the image of Europe is in absolute contrast to the current Belarusian authorities (Paveł Usaŭ).[5] With regard to the construction of the image of Europe in the Belarusian mass media, Alaksandr Sarna, who researched this issue, says that the state-owned mass media follow the political speeches by the authorities and the content of the information about Europe depends on the political order received, and that the independent mass media have more freedom in their publications. The mass media help construct the model of national identity proposed by the authorities, which presents Belarus as the "center of Europe", as a European country. Consequently, since we are already in Europe, there is no need to pursue any Europeanization.[6] At the level of everyday life and social practices, we could observe a "consumption

и конструированием идентичности (1991–2010). Под ред. О. Шпараги. Минск, 2011. С. 108–130. Garsztecki S. Actual dimension of Europe in Central and Eastern Europe – Europeanization from below? // *The ways to Europeanize Belarus: between politics and identity construction (1991–2010)*. Ed. O. Shparaha. Minsk, 2011. P. 108–130

5   Усов П. Европейский вектор и евроинтеграция во властном и оппозиционном дискурсе // Пути европеизации Беларуси: между политикой и конструированием идентичности (1991–2010). Под ред. О. Шпараги. Минск, 2011. С. 84–108. Usov P. European vector and European integration in the discourse of authorities and opposition // *The ways to Europeanize Belarus: between politics and identity construction (1991–2010)*. Ed. O. Shparaha. Minsk, 2001. P. 84–108.

6   Сарна А. Европейская идентичность беларусов и имидж Европы в белорусских СМИ // Пути европеизации Беларуси: между политикой и конструированием идентичности (1991–2010). Под ред. О. Шпараги. Минск, 2011. С. 225–257. Sarna A. European identity of Belarusians and image of Europe in the Belarusian mass

of Europe" in Belarus: the notion of the "European quality" has become the crucial factor for Belarusian consumerism, which could be noticed from the billboards and signboards, names of hotels and shops. In this sense, for many Belarusians Europe is a "profane Other", they do not separate consumption of Europe from what liberal intellectuals think about European democratic and other values (Dźmitry Kaladaŭ).[7]

It is hard to claim that the construction of the national Belarusian identity develops in line with the contemporary "post-national" forms and is oriented towards Europe. The obstacles are set by the "historical policies" of the state and other problems related to the manipulation of the historical memory of Belarusians (Alaksiej Bratačkin).[8] One of the aims that the Belarusian society faces is to comprehend itself as a European society but in such a way that it would not cause the relativization of the European democratic values. This issue is raised by Volha Šparaha who analyzed the place that the values popular in Belarus occupy in the value spectrum of contemporary Europe, she merged in her research philosophical and sociological approaches.[9]

The collective book also includes research results that deal with Europeanization of the foreign and regional policies of Belarus (Jula

media // *The ways to Europeanize Belarus: between politics and identity construction (1991–2010)*. Ed. O. Shparaha. Minsk, 2001. P. 225–257.

[7] Колядов Д. Повседневные практики в Беларуси: от идеализации Европы к ее потреблению // Пути европеизации Беларуси: между политикой и конструированием идентичности (1991–2010). Под ред. О. Шпараги. Минск, 2011. С. 257–269. Koliadov D. Everyday practices in Belarus: from idealization of Europe towards its consumption // *The ways to Europeanize Belarus: between politics and identity construction (1991–2010)*. Ed. O.Shparaha. Minsk, 2001. P. 257–269.

[8] Браточкин А. Генезис, основные проблемы и европейское измерение "исторической политики" в Беларуси // Пути европеизации Беларуси: между политикой и конструированием идентичности (1991–2010). Под ред. О. Шпараги. Минск, 2011. С. 155–198. Bratochkin A. Genesis, the main problems and European dimension of the "historical policy" in Belarus // *The ways to Europeanize Belarus: between politics and identity construction (1991–2010)*. Ed. O. Shparaha. Minsk, 2001. P. 155–198

[9] Шпарага О. Место Беларуси в пространстве европейского социолиберализма // Пути европеизации Беларуси: между политикой и конструированием идентичности (1991–2010). Под ред. О. Шпараги. Минск, 2011. С. 130–155. Shparaha O. The place of Belarus in the continuum of the European social liberalism // *The ways to Europeanize Belarus: between politics and identity construction (1991–2010)*. Ed. O. Shparaha. Minsk, 2001. P. 130–155

Kockaja, Anatol Kruhlašoŭ, and Alaksandr Ułaskin), and the issues of how people resort to the historical heritage in the form of the "Middle Europe" idea during the discussions about Europeanization (Alaksiej Łastoŭski).

Perspectives and Conclusions

Thus, based on the research results published in the book, it is possible to claim that Europeanization of Belarus is to some extent happening today but it has not acquired institutional forms and faces a lot of obstacles, generally, we see the signs of the "Europeanization from below". In a longer run, we could witness the conversion of the two dimensions of the European idea in Belarus: the "consumer" and democratic ones. But for that, political and other forces and groups should emerge, which would promote a new "ideology" in Belarus that would be based on such a combination. And the necessary condition is that the agreement would be about the need to promote these specific values and that the idea of the agreement would arise in society itself. It should also be mentioned that today research is greatly needed, which would define the precise structure and place that European values hold among various social groups in Belarusian society so that it would be possible to plan more reasonable and well-ground activities that would promote the idea of Europeanization in Belarus.

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BISS, Belarus

Regionalization of EU–Belarus Relations: First Step Towards Europeanization or a Possibility to Bypass the Crisis?

Introduction

The position of the European Union regarding Belarus is based **on political conditionality of dialogue**: political freedoms and respect to human rights are conditions sine qua non. If they are not met, it is inadmissible to unfreeze the relations.

The Belarusian authorities, in turn, refute accusations of human rights violations and non-observance of democratic principles. They argue that they act in favor of state security and defense of the citizens from external enemies and internal threats.

However, political prisoners, a number of newly-adopted norms that limit civil liberties, as well as persecution of human rights activism, limitation of the activities of democratically oriented political parties form the reason for the EU to continue **the political conditionality** approach towards Belarus. This approach has already proved to be ineffective, the EU followed this policy in quite an inconsistent and reactive way. Political conditionality if needed is used by the Belarusian authorities as a window of opportunity for **political bargaining** (as it was before the 2010 presidential election).

As a result, the political conditionality narrows the potential cooperation tool kit, not only at the high level. It has negative impact

on the dynamics of contacts and cooperation at the middle level. It is evident that the relations at the high level, which still have no legal basis, are cyclic (The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement has never been ratified, the attempts to create its legal substitute were stopped by another change of trend in December 2010): from the dialogue to the conflict escalation.

As a result, political conditionality and cyclic character of EU–Belarus relations have negative impact on cooperation which does not need to be always politically conditioned. In some fields, cooperation should rely on the existing institutional and legal framework and promote Belarusian partners' participation in a number of trans-European initiatives, such as national programs of technical aid, regional cooperation program, and territorial programs in the framework of instruments of the European Neigbourhood Policy (ENP).

Regional, or territorial, dimension of integration does not have such a strong dependence on general political context of EU–Belarus relations. Regionalization, as a strategy of inclusion of partners into European cooperation instruments, creates a good basis for institutional convergence. Convergence for a long time has been a priority inside the European Union and is aimed at regional cohesion of territories with different levels of social and economic development (*territorial cohesion*).[1]

In this way, the resort to the regional dimensions of integration can help identify new common points for overcoming foreign policy crises and to find out if the regionalization strategy can become efficient for gradual inclusion of Belarusian territories into the European partnership framework both at the level of separate organizations (governmental and non-governmental) and at the inter-state level.

Thereby, this article sets the aim to answer the question whether **the regionalization of EU–Belarus relations can be a way to overcome tensions and political crises in the future**.

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[1] Fifth Report on Territorial Cohesion in EU // European Commission, autumn 2011. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion5/pdf/5cr_en.pdf; M. Heidenreich, C. Wunder. Patterns of Regional Inequality in the Enlarged Europe, European Sociological Review, VOLUME 24 № 1, 2008, p. 19–36. Available at: www.esr.oxfordjournals.org.

Regionalization-Europeanization:
Correlation, Measurements and Instruments

Europeanization is a process of gradual convergence of European territories that covered energy, economic and later political, social, educational and other dimensions. The idea of a pan European supranational entity was initially based on receiving mutual economic benefits and creating a free trade area, which would ensure welfare growth in "Old Europe" and make this union of European countries a strong geopolitical player. The readiness assessment of a country to join the EU and to conduct common policies (energy, economic, foreign and security policy, etc.) is carried out in accordance with the so-called Copenhagen criteria. The existence of these criteria for becoming part of a «common Europe» gives the grounds to talk about the **traditional conditionality for Europeanization**.[2]

Europeanization is primarily manifested in supranational institutionalization, as **well** as in policy unification of **all EU members**. From this perspective, the Europeanization is called "interdependent European governance".[3] A similar approach can be applied to "third countries": to join the EU, countries must demonstrate their readiness for technical negotiations on separate policies, prior to the accession, and the adoption of common European policies (*acquis communautaire*)[4]. The conditionality of Europeanization sometimes includes the **values component** (eg, Turkey, the existence of two separate state entities on the island of Cyprus). The EU requirements concerning human rights respect, minority rights, democracy and transparency, "good governance" are value-based.[5]

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[2] Frank Schimmelfennig. EU Political Accession Conditionality after the 2004 Enlargement: Consistency and Effectiveness, Journal of European Public Policy, 2008, Vol. 15, No. 6, p. 918–937.

[3] Linking EU and National Governance, edited by Beate Kohler-Hoch. Oxford University Press, 2003; p. 10–24.

[4] Frank Schimmelfennig. Europeanization beyond Europe, Living Reviews in European Governance, 2009, vol. 4, no. 3, p. 15. Available at: http://www.livingreviews.org/lreg-2009-3.

[5] European Union. White Paper: European Governance, July 2001. EUROPA, Documentation centre, Official documents, White Papers. Available at: http://europa.eu/documentation/official-docs/white-papers/index_en.htm

From the point of view of the potential EU accession, the Europeanization of Belarus is not possible, because the European perspective for the country was announced even during the "warming" of relations at the highest level. In 2009, a new instrument of multilateral cooperation in Eastern dimension, "Eastern Partnership", was established where Belarus was represented by the National platform of the civil society. However, it was not represented in the Inter-Parliamentary Euronest assembly. That is why one cannot talk about a new phase of relations: They have the same cyclic nature – from warming to the escalation of the conflict. Such is the **political dimension of the Europeanization** of Belarus.

The economic dimension of Europeanization could occur, for example, in establishing a preferential trade regime (parallel with the Belarus accession to the WTO), by increasing the number of national programs supported by the European Commission, signing trade agreements, etc. However, the economic relations between Belarus and the EU are regulated today by the Cooperation Agreement ratified in Soviet times; the majority of technical issues are conditioned by the political ones. For example, in the issue of visa facilitation and reduction of Schengen visa fees for Belarusian citizens, the Belarusian government has the final word. All the necessary documents for the readmission and visa facilitation were sent to Minsk over a year ago. Another manifestation of the relationship is the political bargaining that the Belarusian side repeatedly uses by promising to release political prisoners in exchange for the removal of the existing visa sanctions against the Belarusian government officials, as well as targeted economic sanctions against a number of Belarusian enterprises. The escalation of the conflict and the extension of sanctions, however, took place, and the EU has once again demonstrated its inability and even the lack of coherent policy towards Belarus.

The political conditionality becomes characteristic for the relations between the European Union and Ukraine following human rights violations and numerous political prosecutions (for example, the case of Yulia Tymoshenko). This trend may slow down the process of deepening relations with Ukraine and the establishment of a free trade zone with the EU; it also puts under question the Association Agreement with Ukraine.

Thus, the Europeanization of Belarus in terms of stable intergovernmental relations, which would be reflected in the legal framework and the expansion of bilateral agreements, seems unlikely in the context of political conditionality of the relations between the two sides. Basic requirements of the European Union have not changed, whereas the Belarusian authorities, in turn, demonstrate unwillingness to meet these requirements by democratic institutions building, creating favorable environment for the civil society, putting an end to persecuting individuals for their professional and civic activities.

Meanings of Regionalization

Regionalization is a set of measures, a policy, implemented in respect to a particular area by a state, several states or supranational entity. Regionalization has a number of interpretations developed in different fields: economics, political science and international relations. So that Regionalization could mean current processes of regional integration, such as political and economic initiatives within the Višegrad Group, European Economic Area (EEA), EurAsEC in the case of the post-soviet area.[6] Regionalization is also a way to build "center-regions" relationships within a state. It is public policy, which is closely linked to decentralization[7]. Finally, it can be considered as territorial integration in the political, economic, cultural and educational relations (e.g. OPEC countries on the economic principle, Common European education area – Bologna Process – in education, etc.).[8]

Within the EU, regionalization as a policy of territorial integration is represented by several policies: Regional Policy, Cohesion Policy, partly in Structural Policy, as well as in the policy regarding "third" countries, the European Neighbourhood Policy, which is based both on national instruments of cooperation and multilateral initiatives such

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[6] Г.К. Широков. Регионализация: новые тенденции мирового развития на рубеже 20–21 вв. Новая и новейшая история, 2004, № 4. С. 55–66.

[7] Linking EU and National Governance, edited by Beate Kohler-Hoch. Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 10–24.

[8] Климович А., Широканова А. Беларусь и ЕС: европеизация или регионализация? // Современная Европа. 2011. № 03. С. 32–44.

as the Eastern Partnership, Northern Dimension, and Mediterranean dimension. The European Neighborhood Policy also provides a number of cross-border and transnational initiatives in the framework of The European Neighborhood Partnership Instrument (*ENPI*), aimed at achieving territorial cohesion ("Poland-Belarus-Ukraine", "Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus", "The Baltic Sea Region", etc.).

Regionalization is based on **territorial vision**.[9] A particular region, country or several countries are not considered as political entities or states, but as territorial entities, or even complexes, with their characteristic features and relevant processes. These entities are treated as actors with whom to cooperate while addressing local issues and regional threats. The territorial approach is at the heart of EU development and integration of initiatives aimed at the gradual "tightening" of the space, the inclusion of new areas in different dimensions of cooperation. Among these programs, there is INTERREG, Seventh Framework Program in the field of science, programs of the European Neighborhood Partnership Instrument. Significantly, the term "territorial" is viewed as the central and starting to explain Europeanization by researchers,[10] as well as by European development policies and strategies.[11]

Note, that regionalization in its decentralized meaning will not be an applicable strategy for Belarus. It is a unitary state, and the regions (vobłaść) do not have significant autonomy in decision-making. The majority of issues and policies, significant for regional development are dealt with from the center. Therefore, it is more appropriate to speak about regionalization in terms of sectoral convergence of Belarusian border regions with neighboring regions in the adjacent countries. This strategy can be effective for both EU and Eastern (Russia and Ukraine) vectors of the Belarusian foreign policy.

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[9] М. Китинг. Новый регионализм в Западной Европе. Проект «Ruthenia». Available at: http://www.ruthenia.ru/logos/number/40/07.pdf.

[10] Frank Schimmelfennig, Ulrich Sedelmeier. Introduction: Conceptualizing the Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe. In: Schimmelfennig, F.; and Sedelmeier, U. The Europeanization of Eastern and Central Europe, 2005, Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press.

[11] Fifth Report on Territorial Cohesion in EU // European Commission, autumn 2011. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion5/pdf/5cr_en.pdf.

Regionalization strategy has not yet been considered by the European Union as a rapprochement instrument for Belarus, regardless of the political circumstances. However, the territorial approach can become a good opportunity to overcome tensions in the political dimension. It can also have positive impact on other dimensions of cooperation with the EU. The strategy of regionalization here is a *gradual involvement of mid-level players, as well as local players in cooperation with European partners*.

The success of the implementation of this strategy depends on the lobbying of the necessary changes to the institutional and legal fields of the EU and Belarus cooperation. The following Belarusian state policies require adjustments to the needs of regionalization: the policy of international development (receiving international aid and participation in international projects); creating favorable conditions for the Euroregions, which include Belarusian territories; the acceleration of visa facilitation and readmission agreement negotiation; ratification of local border traffic agreements; involvement of international organizations in the development of educational programs and formulation of national education policy within the common European educational space, etc.).

Therefore, considering regionalization as a more technical concept, associated with sectoral cooperation in the framework of different dimensions, it can be argued that this approach is an alternative to purely politically motivated dialogue. Territorial and sectoral cooperation on the grounds of regionalization strategy can become a platform for gradual Europeanization of Belarus in the political sense: closer relations with the European Union at the high level and overcoming existing differences. A similar strategy works in the integration processes within the former Soviet Union, for example, in the Customs Union, where negotiations are held in specific areas, and regulatory mechanisms common to the customs area are produced.

Dimensions of Regionalization

Let us refer to the possible ways of regionalization of Belarus in four dimensions: *political (public administration)*, *economic*, *socio-cultural*, *informational and educational*.

First (1) dimension of regionalization, which sets all the other areas of the paradigm, is the **political dimension**, to be exact, the public administration dimension.

Despite the centralized government system, the regionalization may be found in the state programs and projects directed to the regions, as well as in a number of government policies and their implementation in the regions. In such cases, regionalization is an implementation tool of the governmental policy. For example, the institution of the special presidential advisers in the regions. In this case, regionalization works in favor of the power vertical.

However, the deepening of regionalization in Belarus can only be possible with expanding the powers of local representative governments and promoting their initiative in cooperation with local authorities of the adjacent territorial units from neighboring countries. Promotion of cross border co-operation with the support of international development agencies and European institutions on the public policy level can increase the intensity of territorial cohesion in other dimensions (economic, social and cultural, informational and educational). The obvious contradiction of regionalization in the public administration dimension is a strong vertical of power, when the regional and local authorities are limited in their actions and are subjects to supreme institutions in accordance with the system of subordination. Thus, local communities, represented by their legislative bodies, have no direct influence on determining the priorities for the region.

The second dimension is the **economic** regionalization **(2)**, which has such tools as creation of free economic zones, free trade zones, local investment funds, and instruments to promote joint ventures with businesses of the adjacent region from the other side of the border. Another tool is the creation of regional centers of economic development, which can include research, industrial and commercial complexes, supporting local industries and developing new types of production and economic models. In general, wider economic regionalization means creating regional (trans-national, local) markets (labor, product), industrial clusters[12] and other systems to achieve economic growth of

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[12] Klaus H. Goetz. The New Member States and the EU // Simon Bulmer and Christian Lequesne Member States and the European Union, Oxford: Oxford University Press,

a given territory. Free economic zones in the regional centers (Brest, Harodnia) can be considered as examples of regionalization of Belarus in the economic dimension. They are the centers for attracting capital, labor and intellectual resources, including those from neighboring countries. Support and common development of traditional (folk) artisan industry and trades is also an example of regionalization in the economic dimension. However, the obvious contradiction may be the globalization process, which leads to change in economic centers of gravity, and not in favor of local markets and small businesses. They may gradually be absorbed by larger players or just die out, not being able to compete.

Regionalization in **sociocultural dimension (3)** means primarily the emergence of cross-border communities with regional identity (referring to themselves as to a certain cross-border group, such as Podlasie on the border between Belarus and Poland) and awareness of existing links with residents of adjacent areas from neighboring states. Among possible tools in this dimension of regionalization, we can identify cross-border cultural initiatives and events, research and reconstruction of the common cultural and historical heritage, a chronicle of the region. Personal contacts between people in the region in a barrier-free environment, including visa-free, is also essential for this dimension. Regional tourism, eco-tourism and agro-tourism, resulting in an increase of visitors from the bordering areas, etc. can become a manifestation of regionalization. Cross-border and common region information channels play a significant role in the socio-cultural construction of the territorial community. A cohesive idea that has the potential to become a constitutive element is a joint response to sustainable development challenges of a territory.[13] This approach is used by the European Union to implement their regional policies and, as a consequence, in «region-building», which is regarded as the basis of regional competitiveness.[14]

2004. Available at: http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/projekte/typo3/site/fileadmin/research%20groups/1/teamB-reader/Goetz_The%20new%20member%20states%20and%20the%20EU.pdf.

[13] М. Китинг. Новый регионализм в Западной Европе. Проект «Ruthenia». Available at: http://www.ruthenia.ru/logos/number/40/07.pdf.

[14] See, for instance: European Union strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the role of macro-regions in the future cohesion policy 2009/2230 (INI). Committee on Regional Development. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?lang=en&reference=2009/2230(INI)

The fourth dimension of regionalization is the **educational and informational dimension (4)**, which is based on common discursive space built through trans-border mass media, research and University cooperation, etc. Creating an academic and University community, common for the cross-border area, could be a good basis for greater contacts in other areas. Even if the regional academic communities can not be able to compete with the traditional centers of gravity in the area of science and education, they will give an impetus to the development of knowledge in certain areas, which will have a positive impact on the competitiveness of the region. It can be quite feasible for such academic communities to update the discussion in academic subjects and issues specific to the region or territory, as well as to facilitate the creation of common and unique discourse for a particular region. Regionalization tools in this dimension may be regional information channels, portals, interactive online services, as well as academic and University platforms for developing a regional discourse, publishing initiatives, etc.

Thus, we have identified possible dimensions of regionalization of Belarus. We also mentioned some of its instruments that can be applied or extended in order to make the cooperation of Belarusian regions and neighboring EU territories more intense.

Conclusions

On the one hand, the Europeanization of Belarus, taking into account the underlying political conditionality of the official relationship, is unlikely. On the other hand, there are instruments open for Belarus in the mentioned above dimensions of regionalization with the EU. The success of joint regional partnerships with EU countries can be achieved regardless of political circumstances.

Regionalization is a tool of Europeanization through which the European Union has been implementing territorial cohesion policies in many regions and territories with differences in socio-economic development. Through participation in such programs as INTERREG, the regions at the level of local government and at the level of individual organizations progressively built a European network of partners, which

became the basis for bringing together areas within the EU.[15] Provided that the regionalization is an element of Europeanization, it can be argued that such EU strategy towards Belarus could become a viable alternative to today's existing approach, for instance, through intensification of relations between Belarusian mid-level public administration representatives and their European partners. This will help establish a non-cyclic and non politically conditioned relationship (even taking into account the rotation of regional and district officials).

However, such a strategy can only be successful if a number of consecutive steps are taken. This implies, for example, not only the revision of EU policy towards Belarus, but also substantial changes in Belarus' policies in order to improve the institutional and legal environment for organizations involved in European initiatives development in Belarus. In addition, there is a need for the highest possible decentralization of relations between Belarus and the EU, the substitution of political conditionality by negotiations at sectoral level with the obligatory involvement of local self-government and executive authorities.

Thus, the Europeanization of Belarus, even lacking favorable conditions, legal basis or political will, can be launched involving Belarusian organizations, public institutions, and local authorities, in cooperation with the respective European institutions on the territorial principle. Through the development and implementation of the strategy of Belarus' Europeanization through regionalization, the European Union can have a qualitatively new policy towards Belarus and avoid politically inconsistent steps in relations with the country in the future.

Next, there is an obvious contradiction when Belarus is mainly turned into the direction of Russia through participation in Moscow's geopolitical projects of the Customs Union and the Eurasian economic space. These initiatives have a strong economic component, where regionalization is used as a tool for deepening integration processes in the post-soviet area. The EU concerns about these integration processes, including the gradual involvement of Belarus in a number of projects presupposing deeper integration with Russia, make it necessary to further revise the

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[15] Karl Peter Schon. Concepts, Strategies and Guiding Principles for Europe's Territorial Development. Guiding Principles for Spatial Development in Germany, German Annual of Spatial Research and Policy, 2009, p. 1–16.

EU neighborhood policy towards Belarus. An attempt to formulate a new vision of this policy was the extension of support for the civil society and a new *«more for more»* approach to the European Neighborhood Policy, which presupposes bigger aid to those countries that demonstrate a willingness to cooperate in the structural and political reforms.[16]

Thus, the success of the regionalization strategy depends on collaborative and incremental steps in creating good conditions for territorial involvement of Belarusian partners in common European initiatives.

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[16] Patryk Pawlak and Xymena Kurowska. EU foreign policy: More for more, or more of the same? Available at: http://euobserver.com/7/113818.

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Possible Directions for Public Administration Reform in Belarus[1]

The need for public administration reform in Belarus is widely recognized by political leaders, top administrators and independent experts alike. Criticism of the national government administration can be summarized by saying that the current concept and practices simply do not correspond to the challenges that Belarus will have to face in the nearest future. The government has already recognized the absence of adequate mechanisms to facilitate accountability, responsiveness to citizens' needs and willingness to assume responsibility among civil servants. A lengthy struggle to make public administrators, especially in local government, a primary vehicle for attracting and effectively using foreign investments in the economy has also failed.

Initial hopes for modest reform efforts, primarily addressing structural inefficiencies in the central government, associated with the program laid out by the newly appointed Prime Minister Miaśnikovič, quickly faded as the reform agenda was put on the backburner.[2] The financial and economic crisis of 2011again highlighted old institutional problems within the Belarusian public administration, which would need to be tackled very quickly in order to make the government even remotely capable

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[1] The opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not reflect positions of any organization with which the author is associated.

[2] «Michaił Miaśnikovič: in January we plan to submit our suggestions on the reform of public administration» (in Russian). Available at: http://belapan.by/archive/2010/12/30/439217/ (Accessed 01.12.2011).

of implementing a package of much-needed economic and financial reforms, even if such reform is limited to those undertaken as obligations to external creditors and economic partners.

While political will for reform remains absent and the government seems confident that the crisis is mostly over (thanks to massive Russian oil and gas subsidies and the sale of Beltransgaz), it is obvious that the situation is far from stable and that changes, however reluctant, are inevitable. This inevitability is determined, in our opinion, by three main factors:

- Significant shrinking of available public (budgetary) resources;
- A significant increase in external debt payment obligations
- Obligations undertaken by Belarus as part of the EurAsEC and Single Economic Space agreements

While at this point it remains mostly a theoretical possibility, a series of policy papers on possible directions of public administration reform has been produced by a non-profit organization, the School of Young Managers of Public Administration (SYMPA). The premise for this research was the conviction that while political will is important to initiate reform, it is no less important to realistically assess the capacity of the state apparatus to develop detailed, rational and realistic reform plans and implement these plans in reality. Against the background given above, the initial set of research questions were based on the assumption that the main goal of such reform would be to make the national public administration more effective in the development and implementation of public policy.

Accordingly, the primary focus was on strengthening the central government's policy development capabilities (currently completely overtaken – incompetently, in our opinion – by the presidential administration), adopting new approaches to financial (budgetary) management and on recruitment of civil servants.

The expert community in Belarus does not have a shared opinion on how effective the public administration is in Belarus. First of all, there are no clear criteria for assessing effectiveness (besides reaching target macroeconomic indicators and utilizing allocated budgetary resources, which can be illustrated by any public program).[3] Secondly,

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[3] For example, "The National Program for Demographic Security for 2011–1015" (in Russian). Available at: http://mintrud.gov.by/ru/new_url_1751033009/new_url_1383761826/new_url_1312348330.

there is no widely shared understanding of what the results of effective public administration should look like. In this situation, experts often come to diametrically opposite conclusions regarding the state of public administration in Belarus.

The range of opinions can be grouped into the following two viewpoints. According to the first, the majority of Belarusian bureaucrats are capable of working effectively under consistent and systematic political leadership. According to another, the ability of the national bureaucracy to effectively develop and implement government policies is very limited even in low-politicized spheres.

From an administrative point of view, it can be argued that Belarusian bureaucrats are more effective in areas where desired outcomes are clear, simple and can be quantified (for example, construction and renovation). In the areas where an administrative problem requires research, analysis and selection from several available options, which is then implemented and evaluated, the Belarusian bureaucratic machinery either freezes in hesitation or picks the most superficial solution, which it then attempts to implement using command-administrative tools (as an example, a chair of the local government suggested to de-dollarize the economy by prohibiting public officials from mentioning prices in dollar equivalents in their public statements).[4] In the increasingly unpredictable economic environment (both internal and external) it is obvious that the government will soon have to deal predominantly with administrative problems of the second kind.

The research has outlined some of the key obstacles for developing effective public policy faced by the Belarusian central government. These can be summarized in the following way:

• Lack of a rational foundation for public policy;
• Lack of criteria for evaluation of effectiveness, including in financial management;
• Lack of policy capacity in the government (connected with specific human resource management practices).

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[4] Jacobson suggests to avoid dollarization of Belarusian economy (in Russian), BelTA, 26.10.2011. Available at: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Jakobson-predlagaet-otkazatsja-ot-dollarizatsii-belorusskoj-ekonomiki_i_579334.html.

Apart from a few isolated examples where the government publicly presented several possible policy options and backed its recommendations with rational arguments,[5] public policy processes in Belarus are best summarized with a quote from Nadzieja Jermakova, Governor of the National Bank of Belarus. When asked by journalists whether she thought the National Bank was justified in stating that the official exchange rate was 'economically viable' almost immediately before the devaluation, she responded: "I think they believed so, but it turned out to be different".

Public policy processes in Belarus are marked by a limited understanding of society by the authorities. For example, despite the Belarusian government's focus on economic growth, knowledge about one of the key growth factors – labor – is almost absent. Only in late November 2011, under pressure from the World Bank, did the authorities launch research into the real state of unemployment through household surveys. The government does not have real data on how many Belarusians work abroad, on either a temporary or permanent basis. There is therefore no base for understanding of, or prognosis for, future labor movements. This problem is partially related to the fact that there is no independent sociology in Belarus, and also because public policy analysis is based on the personal opinions of both politicians and administrators.

This is why, as stated above, the government tends to use the most superficial administrative policy tools when it faces an ambiguous policy problem. In the case of labor movement (e.g. entire categories of workers reportedly leaving to work in Russia), we have observed such responses[6] as denial of the problem, attempts to make it impossible or very difficult for workers to terminate their contracts, ordering local governments to start providing subsidized housing to workers etc.

Many experts agree that in the rare situations when the government possesses (or could obtain) enough information to come up with rational policy options, many powerful factors prevent them from doing so – primarily political loyalty and subsequent reluctance to inform decision-makers about unpopular choices. Combined with a lack of competence to

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[5] Belarusian government backs the "relatively favorable" scenario of social and economic development in 2012. Available at: http://belapan.by/archive/2011/09/21/498082/ (Accessed 01.012011).

[6] 'Half a million workers are lost in Belarus' (in Russian). Available at: http://naviny.by/rubrics/society/2011/11/04/ic_articles_116_175709/ (Accessed 01.012011).

analyze this information or, if the analysis is provided by an independent policy research institution, mistrust of such institutions, this leads to ignoring of difficult policy choices.

An exhaustive description of the situation was given in May 2011 by Financial Times blogger Joseph Cotterill: 'Whoever ends up bailing Belarus out, they've got the mother of all policy adjustments on their hands.'[7] It can only be added that in order to be effective, these policy adjustments would have to be preceded by research efforts on an overwhelming scale.

Policy research of budgetary management practices[8] identified several key problems in the sphere of financial management of publicly-funded state programs. In 2011, 9.7 trillion rubles were allocated to cover the costs of 66 state programs and 83 sub-programs, of which 11 (4%) are classified (run by the KGB, Border Control Committee, and Ministry of Defense):

1. There are no clear criteria for effectiveness of state programs – and therefore no objectives against which progress can be measured, apart from 'gross' quantitative indicators, such as number of items procured, amount of funds spent, etc., with no clear description of desired social outcomes or explanations why outcomes are most effectively produced by a particular program;

2. A low level of transparency of publicly funded programs – most statistical and analytical data is classified and not accessible to independent experts or even international financial organizations;

3. No accountability of public managers (including ministers) for effective use of funds and accomplishing objectives – their remuneration is in no way linked to the results of the programs they supervise;

4. No links between plans for publicly funded programs and availability of public resources – many programs, along with other budgetary expenses are financed by quasi-fiscal activities (i.e. financed by the National Bank and state-owned banks – predominantly by Belarusbank and Belagroprombank) through emission of money.

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[7] Cotterill Joseph. 'Autocracy risk, Belarus edition.' Available at: http://ftalphaville. ft.com/blog/2011/05/17/570936/autocracy-risk-belarus-edition/.

[8] 'Evaluation of options for modernisation of the budgetary system of Belarus at the present stage' (2011) Mukha, Migutskaya. Available at: http://www.businessforecast. by/files/booklet_muha_ENG.pdf.

Efforts to improve the financial management of state-funded programs are becoming especially important since the current situation (emission funding leading to inflation and negative trade balance) has been identified as a primary obstacle to economic stability by a number of international financial institutions.

Another way to improve the Belarusian central government's policy capacity would be through comprehensive human resource management, including transparent recruitment procedures based on professional qualifications. Several recommendations were made in a research paper, where an initial attempt was made to study the recruitment practices within the Belarusian civil service.[9] Through interviews with both recently recruited civil servants and human resource managers, the authors came to the conclusion that the recruitment system has remained largely unchanged from Soviet times, where the head of an organization has the final say in the recruitment of subordinates. While in theory recruitment is regulated by numerous laws and rules, in practice there is no way to enforce formal and impartial recruitment procedures. As a result, the primary criteria for appointment of civil servants seem to be good connections and political loyalty rather than professionalism.

The authors suggest various improvements to the existing legislation and regulations in order to make the recruitment process more transparent and increase the responsibility and accountability of hiring managers. Another important recommendation is that key appointments should be overseen by an impartial public body which includes representatives of trade unions, academia and civil society. At the same time, the authors recognize that all major stakeholders have very little incentive to change or improve the existing system, therefore it is crucially important to initiate and maintain public discussion in order to increase public awareness of the issue.

Several main problems have been identified that undermine the policy capacity of the Belarusian central government:

1. Policy development in Belarus is not based on rational knowledge about how society works, but mostly on value judgments by politicians

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9   Kavalkin, Yudzitski, 'Recommendations to improve the system for recruitment to the civil service in Belarus' (2011) (in Russian) Available at: http://www.businessforecast. by/files/booklet_kovalkin.pdf

and administrators alike (related to the fact that there is almost no independent sociological research in specific policy areas);
2. There are a lack of criteria for accessing the effectiveness of government organizations and programs (effective in straightforward measurable tasks, ineffective in ambiguous situations with multiple policy options), including inefficient financial management;
3. There is no competence-based recruitment within the national civil service and consequently no impartial and professional civil service.

Identification of these problems provide possible directions for future public administration reform in Belarus
1. Building capacity of the central government for policy research and analysis;
2. Introduction of contemporary public management practices, including financial management (program-oriented and results-based budget management);
3. Facilitating the creation of an impartial, professional civil service through the introduction and enforcement of transparent and impartial recruitment practices with public oversight.

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E-Government in Belarus:
to Overcome the Inertia of Informatization

The completion of the state program of informatization of Belarus for 2003–2005 and follow-up till 2010, "E-Belarus", was an important step in the establishment of e-government components in the country:
– telecommunication infrastructure was developed;
– important state information systems and resources were created;
– legislative acts and other normative documents were developed and adopted.

Table 1
E-government index for Belarus (difference of the average rate in Europe)[1]

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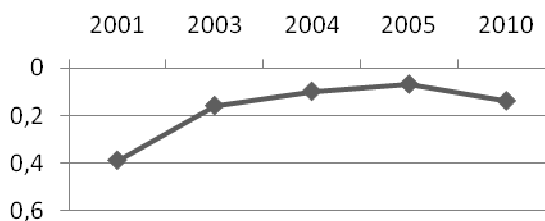
[1]   UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the Civic Resource Group (CRG). (2003) *UN Global e-government survey*. Available at: http://unpan1. un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan016066.pdf003   (Accessed 25.09.2011); UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), UN Division for Public Administration and Development Management. (2004). *UN Global*

The results of the program implementation demonstrate that the introduction of information society technologies into the spheres of functioning state structures is progressing successfully. As a result, not only has the e-readiness index of Belarus increased, but the difference in average rates in Europe has decreased.

Table 2
Aggregate e-government index for Belarus
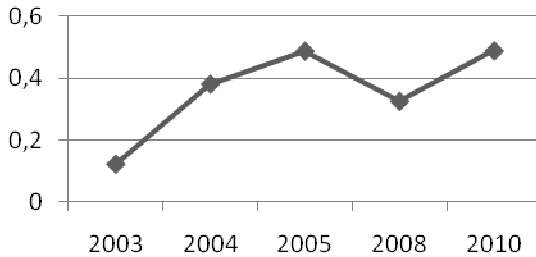
The internet penetration level in Belarus has almost reached 50%, which means that it becomes more and more vital to organize effective electronic communication between citizens and state institutions.

Nevertheless, according to the analysis of the state e-services development carried out by the Belarusian experts who used the taxonomy *a leader country, a follower country, a catching-up country, and*

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e-government readiness report 2004 towards access for opportunity. Available at: http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan019207.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011); UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), UN Division for Public Administration and Development Management. (2005). *UN Global e-government readiness report 2005 from e-government to e-inclusion* (UNPAN/2005/14). Available at: http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan021888.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011); UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), UN Division for Public Administration and Development Management. (2008). *United Nations e-government survey 2008. From e-government to connected governance* (ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/112). Available at: http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan028607.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011); UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). (2010). *United Nations e-government survey 2010. Leveraging e-government at a time of financial and economic crisis* (ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/131). Available at: http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan038851.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011).

a lagging-behind country, the Republic of Belarus has moved from the *follower* position in 2008 to the *catching-up* position in 2010.[2]

The main problems here are not technological ones but the issues of creating an adequate conceptual and legal basis for organizing electronic cooperation between citizens and state institutions. Thereby, it is necessary to identify the directions of strategic planning that would help Belarus pass the "no-return point" in the implementation of the complex e-government project – optimization of the governing process, provision of services and guarantees for political participation of citizens by the means of information and communication technologies (ICT).

E-government: models and concepts. The term *e-government* entered the political discourse in the 1990s. The basis for e-government projects was formed by the model of cooperation of state, business and the customer (citizen) in the e-space, the concept of "inter-network state sector",[3] and the concept of good governance. The latter includes the rule of law, equality, focus on consensus, participation of citizens in political decision making, responsiveness (administration guarantees in due time the inclusion and creates the possibilities to participate for all those interested), and efficiency (authorities produce the outcomes that satisfy the expectations of citizens and at the same time use the resources at their disposal in the most efficient way and take care of the renewal of these resources), transparency, and accountability.[4]

Despite continuous discussions about the meaning and interconnection of the notions of *e-government* and *e-governance*, in political practice they are often used interchangeably as they have common main elements: more efficient functioning of the government, provision of services to citizens and enhancement of the democratic process by means of information and communication technologies. As a rule, the e-government projects are considered part of the systemic transformations of state governance,

[2] Забродская К., Кононов А., Секлицкий О. (2010) Анализ развития государственных е-услуг. *Вестник связи* (1) Available at: http://www.mpt.gov.by/File/2010_1/IO-Kononov%281%29.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011).

[3] Heeks R.(2002). Reiventing government in the information age. International practice in IT enabled public sector reform. New York: Routledge.

[4] UN Development Program (UNDP). (1997) *Governance for Sustainable Human Development*, *A UNDP policy paper. Available at:* http://www.pogar.org/publications/other/undp/governance/undppolicydoc97-e.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2010).

UN e-Government survey, 2010
www.unpan.org/egovkb/global_reports/08report.htm
E-government refers to the government that uses ICT to transform their external and internal relations.

European Commission
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/tl/soccul/egov/index_en.htm
E-Government is the use of Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs) to make public administrations more efficient and effective

World Bank
http://tinyurl.com/2zst8z
"E-Government" refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government servi-ces to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions

OECD
"The e-Government Imperative" (OECD, 2003)
http://tinyurl.com/84sshev
The use of information and communication technologies, particularly the Internet, as an instrument to improve governance

which include administration reform, reform of state service and reorientation of the state towards the provision of services to citizens and businesses.[5]

Thus, the main qualitative characteristics of the e-government are:
– accessibility and individualization of the services provided by the state to citizens, organizations, and enterprises;
– accountability and transparency of the activities of the state bodies;
– provision of information and the resulting participation of citizens in political processes;
– empowerment of representative institutions;
– free exchange of information.[6]

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[5] Кулик А. (2011) *Создание «Электронного правительства»: в чем ключевые факторы успеха?* Available at: http://tinyurl.com/84mz4vb (Accessed: 25.09.2011).

[6] Иванова Г. Электронные правительства: потенциал и практическое использование. Москва, 2008. [*Ivanova G. E-governments: potential and utilization. Moskva: Znanie, 2008*].

Taking into account various combinations of the characteristics mentioned above, a number of models for implementation of e-government projects have been developed, the main goal of which is to monitor the transformation of state governance by means of ICT on the global level. The monitoring resulted in publication of reports about the state of the e-government projects prepared by international organizations and think tanks.[7]

The analysis of achievements in various countries, preparation of new programs of development of information society and e-government, enhancement of academic research in this field determined both the shift of emphases in traditional areas of e-government projects and the introduction of a number of major conceptual innovations (Table 3).

Thus, the basis of strategic planning in most countries is determined by the "focus on citizens" ('customer-centeredness'), i.e.
– orientation towards the needs of citizens and organizations;
– training and education of citizens in order to stimulate the demand for electronic interaction;
– ensuring a high degree of trust from citizens and organizations.

In other words, from the point of view of the user (a citizen or organization) the state is a "black box", which provides the opportunity to "individualize" services or products; the consumers of state services request them according to "life episodes", i.e. situations where there is a need for the participation of the state bodies (for example, marriage, building a house, receiving social benefits). The most important aims in this context are media education of citizens, elimination of technological inequalities, and propaganda about the advantages of electronic transactions. The third necessary element of this approach – trust – is determined by transparency in governmental activities and protection of personal information, which is processed automatically.

The need to maximize the return on the enormous expenses on e-government projects determined the introduction of new conceptual

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[7] Al-Hashmi, A., Darem A. (2008) Understanding Phases of E-government *Project*. Available at: http://www.csi-sigegov.org/emerging_pdf/17_152-157.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011).

Maryna Sakałova

Table 3
Two e-government models[8]

The old model: e-government 1.0: high expenses, limited results	New model: e-government 2.0: maximization of transformation effect (capacity) of ICT
The methods to provide information and a set of state services, which was formed earlier with the help of ICT.	Transformation of state governance (with the help ICT) into a well-integrated governance with participation of the citizens
– automatization of the obsolete model of state governance with limited re-engineering of processes where ICT are not exploited at their full capacity; – limited integration of systems and joint use of databases and data-centers; – integration or consolidation of department barriers; – limited control over changes; – limited participation of the citizens.	– overall re-engineering of the process where the ICT potential is fully taken into account (reconceptualization of the state governance in the information age); – destruction of department barriers, formation of horizontal inter-department structures, communities and theme groups; – comprehensive integration of data bases and joint use of basic information systems and infrastructures; – comprehensive control over change; – active participation of citizens in policy making, identification of priorities and provision of services (*open government* paradigm); – broad use of Web 2.0 technologies and mobile telephones.

elements: open data and use of different internet services, which are not state-owned resources.[9]

Open data is governmental data in machine-readable format, which can be used for commercial and non-commercial purposes. Experts claim

8   Петров О. *Gov 2.0*: Новый этап развития электронного правительства и роль Всемирного банка 2010. Available at: http://www.gosman.ru/content/o12.pdf (Accessed: 25.09.2011).

9   Traunmüller R. (2009) *E-Governance – Some Challenges Ahead: Social Media Spurring Participatio*n. Available at: http://edem2009.ocg.at/files/traunmueller.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011).

that the establishment of openness of state data has recently become a stable tendency. For example, the British government in cooperation with civic organizations (Open Knowledge Foundation i MySociety) supports the resource of generally accessible state data http://data.gov. uk. In the U.S. in December 2009 an act was issued with an order for all state bodies to publish at least three sets of data in 45 days, which might be useful for citizens, businesses or organizations.[10]

Thus, e-government supports the new paradigm of citizen-centered governance, which emerged as a result of reconsideration of approaches to the modernization of state sectors in the internet age.[11] Despite the differences in national contexts, a series of generally accepted principles of strategic planning of the projects was formed in this area:

– enhancement of the means of provision of governmental services to the population and businesses;
– increase in the degree of participation of citizens in state governance; support to and expansion of opportunities for self-service by citizens;
– growth of technological competencies and qualifications of citizens;
– decrease of the influence of the geographical location factor.[12]

Belarusian e-government profile. In Belarus, as well as everywhere else in the former USSR countries, development and implementation of various e-government elements has been pursued since 1970s when the development of a statewide system of recording and processing of

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[10] Гребнев Е. Открытие данных о государстве становится новым трендом 2010. Available at: http://www.cnews.ru/reviews/free/gov2010/articles/articles2.shtml$ (Accessed 25.09.2011); Маламуд К. Десять правил для радикалов 2010. Available at: http://notabenoid.com/book/20470/66892/ (Accessed 25.09.2011); Fing, D. (2010). *Open Public Data Future Scenarios*. Available at: http://www.slideshare.net/slidesharefing/open-public-data-future-scenarios (Accessed 25.09.2011); Tauberer, J. (2009). *Open Data is Civic Capital: Best Practices for «Open Government Data* (рус перевод «Открытые данные – это общественный капитал: Практические рекомендации для «Открытых государственных данных»). Available at: http://translated.by/you/open-data-is-civic-capital-best-practices-for-open-government-data/into-ru/trans/ (Accessed 25.09.2011).

[11] Петров О. В Стратегия электронного правительства в России: на пути к эффективному государству, ориентированному на граждан 2005. Available at: http://emag.iis.ru/arc/infosoc/emag.nsf/BPA/b947e2ada21505a6c3257456002e2977 (Accessed 25.09.2011).

[12] Иванова Г. Электронные правительства: потенциал и практическое использование. Москва, 2008.

information (OGAS) aimed at the automatization of the entire economy management in the USSR was launched. In the 1980s, as an alternative to non-Marxist approaches of information society theories, the concept of informatization policy started to develop in the USSR. Until now, this policy has been shaping the basis for the programs of utilization of ICT potential for social and economic development.

> **Single-Window Principle**
> Establishment of a single access point to state services and information means that the system is organized in accordance to the needs of citizens or organizations; instead of explaining what powers state institutions have and who is responsible for them. One "life-episode" may be related to several state services, which are often managed by different departments. When the citizen (user) deals with an efficiently organized e-government system, he or she is not concerned about which specific department should provide the service (this means to perform one of the functions). An important component of these activities is the reconstruction of the administrative process and he design of electronic administrative regulations.
> A. Danilin

The adoption of the "Strategy of the development of information society in the Republic of Belarus until 2015"[13] in 2010 did not result in the fundamental reconsideration of priorities as the document mostly presents the formal adaptation of the areas of activities mentioned in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society that was adopted at the second phase of the World Summit on Information Society (2005).[14] In March 2011, the decree of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus adopted the "National program of the accelerated development of services in the ICT area for 2011–2015",[15] which included a sub-program "E-government". The structure of the document itself demonstrates that

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[13] Совет Министров Республики Беларусь. Постановление № 1174 О стратегии развития информационного общества в Республике Беларусь на период до 2015 года (5/32317). Минск, 2010. Available at: http://www.pravo.by/pdf/2010-197/2010-197%28010-023%29.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011).

[14] UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), UN Division for Public Administration and Development Management. (2005). *UN Global e-government readiness report 2005 from e-government to e-inclusion* (UNPAN/2005/14). Available at: http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan021888.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011).

[15] Совет Министров Республики Беларусь Постановление № 384. Национальная программа ускоренного развития услуг в сфере информационно-коммуникацион-

informatization with the emphasis on technological aspects remains the basis for the strategic planning of e-government in Belarus.

The approach described above created the framework for the development of state programs, laws and standards associated with e-government in Belarus where e-government is understood as implementation of state powers in electronic form – "a state e-government". These documents are focused on creating an electronic nationally distributed system of document management and processing, requirements for the websites of state institutions, regulation of administrative procedures, etc. "State-centered" and technocratic approaches in the projects of introduction of e-government elements were the reason why the main characteristic of large implemented projects is the orientation of state institutions towards, first of all, their own needs. The best illustration is the *Joint portal of state services and websites of Ministries and Departments* (http://portal.gov.by/), where citizens encounter a long list of administration procedures – activities of the authorized state body, which "are performed on the basis of the written request of the interested person", which are completed with an "issuing of a certificate or another document …, or registration or record of the interested person, their property, or allocation of money, other property and (or) services at the expense of the national or local budget funds, state extra-budgetary funds, or from the property in the national or communal possession".[16]

As analysis of the subprogram "E-government" shows, despite the introduction of the component "provision of e-services through various access environments by means of modern network infrastructure" the implementation of state powers in electronic form remains the main program guideline as:

– there is no definition of state service in the subprogram;
– the terms *state e-service, information service, administrative procedure* are used totally inconsistently;

ных технологий Минск, 2011. Available at: http://www.mpt.gov.by/File/Natpr/Natpr. pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011).

[16] Палата Представителей, Совет Республики Закон Республики Беларусь № 433-з "Об основах административных процедур". Минск, 2008. Available at: http://www. yurist.by/ob-osnovah-administrativnyh-procedur-0 (Accessed 25.09.2011).

– it is not mentioned that convenience and demand of the citizens plays a crucial role in forming the set of services based on the" life situation" principle but not on the automatization of current administrative procedures;
– the effect of program implementation for the citizens is measured only quantitatively (decrease of administrative load on the population and businesses, reduction in the number of appeals to the bodies to request services, decrease in the waiting time);
– the expected results concern mostly state institutions and organizations that "use the global computer network – internet – to receive from and provide the state bodies with information".

Documents associated with implementation of e-government components are not only technocratic and state needs oriented but also lack systemic conceptualization. None of the documents define the terms *e-government* and *state service,* which are vital from the perspective of strategic planning. Moreover, on the one hand, e-government becomes, strangely, a program for service development in the area of information technologies explained as "development and selling of program products, provision of services in consulting, establishment and support of information technologies, including the performance by the contractor of functions associated with support and maintenance of information systems and IT-infrastructure, as well as development of software "on request". But on the other hand, the subprogram "E-government" implies such objectives (or their specification in this area) as "creation of the system of e-services provision in social protection area", "creation of generally accessible electronic medical resources", measures to "raise the computer literacy level among state officers and population in general", "improvement of the system of interaction between state and businesses in the area of informatization", etc.[17]

These conceptual deficiencies prevented the authors of the subprogram from formulating priorities and criteria to estimate systemic effects of its implementation. The initial task of "subprogram implementation measures" such as "complete the work on creation and development

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[17] Совет Министров Республики Беларусь Постановление № 384. Национальная программа ускоренного развития услуг в сфере информационно-коммуникационных технологий Минск, 2011. Available at: http://www.mpt.gov.by/File/Natpr/Natpr.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011).

of basic components of e-government infrastructure and formation of state system for provision of e-services" (even taking into account the specifications proposed in the document) is too abstract to be considered a priority.

The main guidelines that the subprogram defines for development of the monitoring and forecasting system in this area are no less problematic. It concerns, first and foremost, the UN e-government index (with e-services sub-index). Firstly, the position in the global ranking does not help much in precise analysis of the situation in the country and identification of specific problems and priorities. Secondly, the ranking is based on a very limited set of indicators. Particularly, e-services sub-index is calculated on the basis of only six factors (government and five ministries: health-care, education, social welfare, labor and employment, finance). Apparently, this is not sufficient to adequately and comprehensively understand the situation in the country.

The abovementioned aspects of the informatization policy (technocratic approach, focus on state needs, and lack of comprehensive concept) define the nature of strategic planning in e-government area in Belarus, which contradicts significantly the concepts of maximization of ICT. Overcoming informatization inertia is the necessary condition for the country to move to the "follower" position and then the leader country position in the implementation of e-government project.

Subprogram "E-government" is published. What's next? Belarus has made quite some progress in introducing the information society technologies in the field of state bodies functioning and e-government development. The publication of the strategy to create the e-government as a subprogram of "National program of accelerated development of services in ICT area", on the one hand, shows the awareness of the need for an integrated approach, and, on the other hand, demonstrates that technocratic and "state-centered" approaches formed by "informatization policy" have not disappeared.

In this situation, the further promotion is impossible without developing the concept and systemic project of e-government, reflecting the best world practices. These models show close relations between the focus on citizens and success of the projects. They are based on the following principles:

– e-government radically changes the relations between the state (and the essence of the state) and the citizens, which are treated as customers who deserve respect and trust;
– e-government requires equality in partnerships between the state and citizens;
– shift from the separated ministries model to the completely integrated government.[18]

Thus, in the Belarusian context, besides the goals of developing infrastructure and creating state information systems and resources, the concept of the government oriented towards the citizens should include:
– precise definition of *e-government* as a basis for conceptualization of what is to be achieved;
– priorities and classifications of goals into short- and long-run ones (it is especially important given the complexity of the tasks set by the subprogram "E-government");
– a section devoted to studying the needs and measures to shape the demand of citizens and businesses for the state e-services;
– identification of the priority groups of services, which are to be converted into electronic form, and the task of their integration to the level of life episodes and business-situations;
– issues that concern modernization of implementation of state functions in the area of control, supervision, forecasting, and regulation in the framework of e-government establishment;
– convenience in the provision of services and their efficiency from the perspective of citizens and businesses as basic criteria for e-government evaluation;
– national standard of media-literacy of citizens, including state officers, that corresponds to the global standards;
– specific identification of the directions of strategic partnership with representatives of civil society and business communities.

The next step is the development of normative base in accordance with the citizen-centered e-government concept. It is necessary to study

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[18] Бунчук М.А, Петров О.В. (2007) Концепция формирования в Российской Федерации электронного правительства до 2010 года: международный опыт и рекомендации *Информационное общество (1-2)*. Available at: http://emag.iis.ru/arc/infosoc/emag.nsf/BPA/29b41c2d359d2b71c3257456004015cf (Accessed 25.09.2011).

in detail the current legislation and then develop recommendations and amendments that eliminate the legal barriers to the realization of such a concept. However, it is already obvious that the most important issues here are:

– definition of the terms *e-government* and *state service* fixed by the law;
– development of the project of the law on the provision of access to information about the activities of state bodies;
– adoption of the Council's of Europe *Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data.*

The adoption of a separate law about the e-government to unite several related issues into one document could be efficient in terms of implementation of the comprehensive approach. The development of the concept and the appropriate legislation would allow for the creation of a system of services for citizens, which is based on the classification of users and requirements to the services as it is defined by the users and on the general principles of service provision (classification of the services, hierarchy of requirements, priorities). In Belarus, there is no generally accessible knowledge base so far, nor is there a collection of experience and best practices in the field of e-government, or detailed analysis of causes and consequences, successes and problems in project implementation. Therefore, it is needed to create an open and adapted on request topical resource, which would include a well-organized thesaurus of terminology, main directions for monitoring and evaluation, analysis of results and discussion of perspectives, designation of key factors of success, etc. This would help to:

– more actively engage experts from social sciences and public administration in the development of the e-government concept and projects, guarantee them an opportunity for preliminary, adequate and open official participation in the development of such projects;
– devote attention to the issue of governing, knowledge exchange and generalization of best practices in e-government, particularly, through establishment of a network of competencies in this area;
– organize regular thematic events for the citizens and identify the real demand for the e-government services.

As establishment and development of e-government means continuous improvement of state management, its evaluation and monitoring that helps to trace tendencies and evaluate the efficiency of the project becomes

especially important. Position in the global ranking and correspondence to the quantitative parameters, as it is mentioned in the subprogram "E-government", can barely ensure that the task formulated above is fulfilled. The alternative is to define specific aims and for the executors of the monitoring to take into consideration financial, institutional and other limits.

In order to guarantee efficiency (optimal ratio of cost and benefits) and the orientation towards the citizens it is necessary to hold:
1) monitoring of electronic maturity;[19]
2) monitoring of priorities in e-government services;[20]
3) monitoring of state bodies needs in automatization of activities and the level of readiness to provide services in electronic form;[21]
4) interviews with experts[22];
5) rating of e-government development in the regions;[23]
6) systemic monitoring of governmental web-sites;[24]

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[19] Дрожжинов В. *Мониторинг услуг электронного правительства* Москва, 2010. Available at: http://www.iatp.am/economics/egov/it%20government.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011).

[20] Абрамычев В. Методология оценки приоритетности перевода государственных и муниципальных услуг в электронный вид. 2011. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/78ras5d (Accessed 25.09.2011).

[21] Центр содействия и консультирования в области создания электронного правительства региона'' (НП ЦСК ЭПР). Анкета экспертного опроса Электронное правительство: достижения, проблемы и перспективы Москва, 2009. Available at: http://www.egov-reg.ru/index.php/test/category/7-anketa (Accessed 25.09.2011).

[22] Центр содействия и консультирования в области создания электронного правительства региона'' (НП ЦСК ЭПР). Исследование потребностей органов социальной защиты населения в автоматизации деятельности и уровня готовности к оказанию услуг в электронной форме Москва, 2009. Available at: http://www.egov-reg.ru/index.php/research/75-soczashita (Accessed 25.09.2011).

[23] Комиссия Совета Федерации Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации по информационной политике, Некоммерческое партнерство «Центр содействия и консультирования в области создания электронного правительства региона», Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет информационных технологий, механики и оптики Центр технологий электронного правительства. Рейтинг уровня использования технологий электронного правительства в органах исполнительной власти субъектов Российской Федерации 2009. Москва, 2010. Available at: gosbook.ru/system/files…2011/04/06…20091.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011).

[24] Институт развития свободы информации. Мониторинг. Москва, 2011. Available at: http://www.svobodainfo.org/ru/node/6 (Accessed 25.09.2011).

7) monitoring of the quality of state services provision in electronic form;[25]
8) monitoring of user satisfaction.[26]

Such multi-faceted monitoring of e-government projects implementation is possible by means of active drawing on resources possessed by non-governmental organizations. For example, in the Russian Federation non-commercial partners such as "The center for facilitation and consulting in e-government establishment in the regions", Institute of Development of the Information Freedom, and other organizations are involved in the implementation of this goal.

Besides, monitoring with open and generally accessible results organized with the help of non-governmental actors is a vital condition for effective public control over the program implementation and project results and a means to attract public attention and, hence, to stimulate demand for electronic interaction with the state bodies.

Thus, the development of the concept of e-government with the emphasis on the provision of services to the citizens, establishment of adequate legal base, formation of open resource for the expansion of the expert network and organization of public control as an efficient monitoring based on the international methods, which take into account qualitative characteristics of e-government, would allow to create the preconditions for overcoming the inertia of informatization and, correspondingly, for the development and implementation of efficient projects.

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[25] Департамент госрегулирования в экономике Минэкономразвития РФ. Методика мониторинга качества предоставления государственных и муниципальных услуг в электронном виде (проект) Москва, 2010. Available at: http://www.gosbook.ru/node/10565 (Accessed: 25.09.2011).

[26] Лоринч Б., Колклаф Г., Тинхолтом Д и др. Более умное, быстрое, лучшее электронное правительство. Брюссель, 2009. Available at: http://www.rusg2c.ru/system/files/egov_benchmark_2009_rus_v2.pdf (Accessed 25.09.2011).

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Citizens' Perceptions of the Political Regime in Post-Soviet Belarus

Introduction[1]

Belarus is a special case among the post-Soviet countries in Europe. In contrast to the democratic (Baltic states) or semi-democratic (Russia, Moldova or Ukraine) tendencies in other countries, Belarus has been characterised as a fully-fledged authoritarian regime, personified by its president Alaksandr Łukašenka. Similar to a large number of modern non-democratic regimes, this personalized authoritarian regime has enjoyed a high level of public support over the years. As indicated by the Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies (IISEPS), levels of trust in the president were between 50 and 60 per cent from 2005 to 2010 (IISEPS, cited in Belarus-Analysen 2011, p. 8). Although this support can be expected to foster positive attitudes towards the regime – especially in a personalised system like Belarus – it is unclear what factors determine such positive perceptions among citizens.

Previous quantitative studies on patterns of political culture in Belarus deliver mixed results regarding citizens' attitudes towards various aspects of political life in Belarus and do not provide any explanation

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[1] The full version of this article is fothcoming.

of determinants of such attitudes (Haerpfer 2003, pp. 85–99, White and McAllister 2005, pp. 17–34). These studies explore a range of citizens' attitudes in Belarus from attitudes towards the best and worst features of the communist rule, assessment of different political systems, trust in political institutions, attitudes towards the electoral mechanism, corruption, government and alternatives to democracy, and present typologies of citizens' political orientations. Similarly, earlier qualitative studies did not reach a consensus over determinants of public attitudes towards the regime in Belarus (Matsuzato 2004, pp. 235–261, White and Korosteleva 2005, pp. 59–77, Marples 2007, pp. 59–67, Leshchenko 2008, pp. 1419–1433, Ioffe 2007, pp. 37–58).

This study aims to explain the popularity of the authoritarian regime in Belarus. Our endeavour is driven by the following research question: what are the sources of citizens' positive attitudes towards the regime in Belarus? To provide an answer, we employ bivariate and multivariate analyses that put a series of theoretically driven explanations in a common model. To this end, we identify a series of explanations for attitudes towards the authoritarian regime in Belarus. Drawing upon previous literature, we formulate and test hypotheses on citizens' positive attitudes towards the political regime in Belarus. We expect people, who positively evaluate the communist regime in the Soviet Union (H1), who positively evaluate the current economy in Belarus (H2), we are proud of their country (H3), who have a predisposition towards the authoritarian regime (H4) to support the current regime in Belarus. We also expect people with lower education (H5), from the rural areas (H6), and older people in Belarus (H7) to express more positive attitudes towards the regime in Belarus than younger people with a higher education, living in urban. Data comes from the 2004 New Europe Barometer survey.

Our results indicate that positive attitudes towards the existing political regime in Belarus are mainly driven by similar evaluations of the economy and by an appreciation of the previous regime. Unlike previous studies, we find that the older, less educated, and those living in rural areas are not characterised by more positive attitudes as compared with the rest of the population. Such findings shed a light on the stability of the regime and prospects for democracy in Belarus.

Positive Perceptions of the Regime in Belarus

Based on the original scale of attitudes towards the regime, we created five ordinal categories. The distribution of Belarusian citizens along these categories is graphically depicted in Figure 1. Almost half of citizens (48 per cent) consider that the regime is good. Nearly one in ten respondents (9 per cent) has a very good perception of the same regime. Thus, 57 per cent of citizens have a positive attitude towards the regime. Almost one third of the population (30 per cent) has a neutral opinion about the regime, whereas only 13 per cent perceive the regime as bad or very bad. This general picture confirms the findings of previous research in two respects. Firstly, there is a generally positive perception of the regime among citizens. Secondly, there is little contestation: most people who do not perceive the regime positively are somewhat neutral rather than oppose the regime.
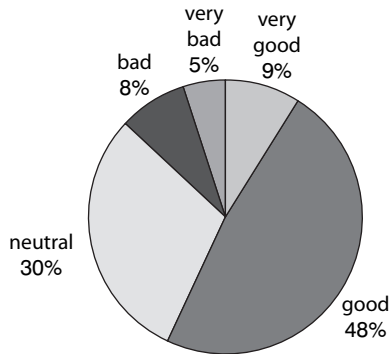

Figure 1. Attitudes towards the regime in Belarus (%)

In light of these general characteristics, we now move to testing the hypotheses. Table 1 includes the values of the correlation coefficients (Pearson r), their level of statistical significance, and the number of cases. The results indicate that there is empirical support for the first four hypotheses. According to hypothesis 1, citizens who positively evaluate the Communist regime in the Soviet Union are likely to display similar attitudes towards the current type of political regime in Belarus. This is

indeed the case in Belarus: there is a positive correlation between these two variables, statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Hypothesis 2 expects a direct relationship between the economic and political evaluations of the current regime in Belarus. The positive correlation, statistically significant at the 0.01 level, reveals the existence of such a relationship. Hypothesis 3 expects a direct relationship between Belarusian's national pride of and positive perceptions of the political regime in Belarus. The negative correlation coefficient in Table 1 suggests that this is indeed the case (national pride was coded on a scale ranging from 'very proud' to 'not at all proud' in the previous section). The values of the coefficients indicate that citizens' economic evaluation of the regime is the variable that correlates best (0.58) with their perception of the political regime in Belarus. In fact, this is the only variable correlating strongly with perceptions of the regime. Such a result suggests a thin line between these two dimensions of the regime in Belarus. In other words, as long as the economy is fine, perceptions of the political regime are positive.

Table 1
Correlation with the evaluation of current political regime

Variable	Coefficient	Cases
Evaluation of the Communist past	0.22**	796
Regime's Economic Evaluation	0.58**	851
National Pride	-0.18**	852
Authoritarian Attitudes	0.02	863
Education	-0.03	872
Place of Residence	0.04	872
Age	0.10**	872

*   Statistically significant at the 0.01 level.
** Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Evaluation of the previous regime and national pride are weakly related to attitudes towards the current regime. This implies that similarities between the current and previous systems of government are relevant, but only marginally. The same is true for the national pride cultivated by the Belarusian president over a long period. Such factors may become relevant when they are part of an entire ideology. On their own however, they do not greatly explain citizens' positive attitudes towards the regime

in Belarus. The hypotheses about authoritarian attitudes, education and place of residence find no empirical support. In other words, it appears that citizens who are predisposed towards authoritarian regimes, have a low level of education, or live in rural areas support the regime to the same extent as those citizens without authoritarian attitudes, who are highly educated, and who live in large cities. This evidence goes against the arguments presented in some qualitative studies on the foundations of the popularity of the regime in Belarus summarised in the introduction section of this article. Finally, age appears to be weakly correlated to attitudes towards Lukashenka's regime, with older people showing higher levels of support for the regime.

When Economy Matters

The multivariate analysis from Table 2 complements the findings of the bivariate correlations. Its task is twofold. Firstly, the models aim to explain attitudes towards the regime in Belarus. Secondly, the predictive power of each variable can be observed when the other variables are held constant. Model 1 includes all the variables for which hypotheses were formulated in the previous section of the article. Model 2 is simplified and includes only the statistically significant variables from Model 1. Both models have the same relatively high explanatory power: they explain the 36 per cent variation in attitudes towards the regime in Belarus. Among the variables, economic evaluations and perceptions of the former communist regime have substantial predictive power. These are also the only statistically significant variables in predicting citizens' positive attitudes towards the political regime in Belarus.

These findings generally confirm the results from the bivariate analysis. However, there are three differences. National pride loses strength and statistical significance when the other variables are held constant. A similar observation is valid in the case of age. Whereas age correlated more strongly than education with attitudes towards the regime, the multivariate model shows a reversed situation. Education becomes stronger and statistically significant and age loses any predictive power. The direct conclusion of this situation is that age does not influence attitudes towards the regime, but other factors do. It is mostly

a coincidence that older people's attitudes towards the regime are strongly influenced by other factors. One final note about education is that it does not influence attitudes towards the regime as hypothesised. The statistical results indicate that, to a marginal extent, better-educated people display more positive attitudes towards the regime than those with a lower level of education.

Table 2
Explaining attitudes towards the regime in Belarus (OLS)

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Evaluation of the Communist past	0.18** (0.03)	0.18** (0.02)
Economic evaluation of the regime	0.54** (0.03)	0.56** (0.03)
National pride	-0.04 (1.57)	
Authoritarian attitudes	0.05 (2.59)	
Education	0.06 (0.75)	
Place of residence	-0.04 (0.66)	
Age	0.02 (0.09)	
R^2	0.36	0.36
N	762	782

Note: The reported coefficients are standardised (standard errors in brackets).
* Statistically significant at the 0.01 level.
** Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Following these results, Model 2 only includes evaluation of the previous regime and economic perceptions. This parsimonious model (with two variables) explains the same amount of variation in positive attitudes towards the political regime in Belarus as Model 1. In other words, nothing is lost if we eliminate the other five variables from the model; these two variables are the ones that make a real difference overall. Although some variables, for instance national pride, appeared relevant in the bivariate analysis in Table 1, they do not have an impact when included in a model with other factors. The ranking of variables according to their explanatory power is similar in Model 2 with those observed in Model 1. Positive evaluations of the previous regime have a weaker impact. Positive attitudes of people towards the regime in Belarus are mainly driven by the current economic situation in the country. Korosteleva describes it as 'specificity' of Belarusian society,

arguing that most Belarusians are aware of the regime's election frauds, corruption and abuse of law, but value their material stability under the current regime (Korosteleva 2009, p. 340).

Conclusion

Drawing on a survey from 2004, this study identified some explanations for attitudes towards the political regime in Belarus. The authoritarian regime in Belarus personified by its president combines a plethora of different features of authoritarian regimes and relies on various sources for its public legitimacy. A general overview of our study indicates that more than half population considers the regime to be either good or very good, whereas only one in ten citizens considers it to be bad or very bad. This lack of animosity towards the regime among citizens confirms the findings of the previous qualitative studies.

Our main results strengthen some of the existing research on Belarus. In this respect, we reveal that perceptions of the current economic situation and a positive evaluation of the Communist past are the key determinants of citizens' positive attitudes towards the political regime in Belarus, with the regime's economic performance being the most important factor. Our multivariate statistical test indicates that these two variables are the strongest predictors and explain more than one third of positive attitudes towards the regime. Unlike other studies, our findings also suggest that authoritarian attitudes of citizens, education, place of residence, or age do not in any way influence perceptions of the regime. These results also indicate that the specific features developed by president Łukašenka to legitimise his rule, for instance national identity, do not play a role if they are isolated from the other components of citizens' perceptions. At the same time, there is no real target group of the message: no profile can be sketched. Citizens of Belarus have similar opinions about the regime irrespective of education, age, and place of residence.

In light of this empirical evidence, further conclusion about the stability of the regime in Belarus can be drawn. In general, Belarus has positive prospects for democratisation at the grassroots level. Although the study indicates nostalgia among Belarusian citizens toward the

Communist past as one source of citizens' positive attitudes towards the regime, it should not pose a threat to Belarus' transition, once the regime in the country disintegrates. In general, people in Belarus do not have a predisposition toward the authoritarian regime and they do not seem to be proud of the regime either. Public perception of the economic performance of the regime is a short-term factor, which also increases possibilities for democratization in Belarus. When the economy does not perform well, citizens express discontent with the regime and use public protests to demand change. With the increase of modernisation process in Belarus, we can also expect an increase of postmaterialist values, which eventually lead to democratization at the grassroots level.

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Youth Policy and the Attitude of the Authorities Towards Youth Organizations in Contemporary Belarus

This article focuses on the youth policy in Belarus, which will be considered through the prism of relations and the attitude of the authorities towards youth organizations. In particular, we will focus on youth social and political protest movements and the Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM). Drawing parallels with the situation in Russia, where the question of young people's political mobilization is particularly acute and is one of the main concerns of the authorities, I will try to outline what the objectives of the authorities are, how they build relationships with young people in Belarus, respond to the activity of youth protest organizations and look for if not active support of the youth, but at least their loyalty.

Youth issue, in particular the socio-political mobilization of young people, has gained greatest relevance after the so-called «color revolutions», where young people played a major role in the preparation and in-field conduct of the street protests.[1] Thus, the youth showed

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[1] Ó Beacháin, D. and Polese, A. (2010), *The Colour Revolutions in the Former Soviet Republics: Successes and Failures*, London & New York, Routledge. Concerning the role of young people in these revolutions see Kuzio, T. (2006), Civil Society, Youth and Societal Mobilization in Democratic Revolutions, *Communist and Post-communist Studies*, No 39, p. 365–386; Special issue "Youth" *SAIS Review*, vol. 25, No 2 summer fall 2006, in particular, Bunce, V.J. and Wolchik, Sh. Youth and electoral revolu-

what a powerful and valuable political resource it can be and how its mobilization can threaten the stability of political regimes. Authorities in many post-Soviet countries, it seems, have learned from these events and have taken a number of pre-emptive measures to prevent the threat before it significantly increases.[2] Reassessing their attitude to young people, the authorities were if not looking for active support, at least trying to somehow organize them and channel their energy in the needed direction.

One can single out several types of attitudes shown by the authorities about the youth, depending on the political position that they take.

In relation to the politically engaged young people, the authorities are interested in their demobilization and the suppression of their protest activity. For these purposes, the state apparatus has a large «repertoire of repressive means and methods".[3] First of all, it is the legislation which creates obstacles for the legal activities of organizations, introduces criminal responsibility for acting on behalf of unregistered organizations, as well as following the adoption of the latest amendments[4] makes it virtually impossible to organize street protests. The authorities also rely on the structures having direct repressive purposes, such as the police and the courts. Their aim is not only to punish young people for protest activity, but also to eliminate any desire to be engaged in political activities at all.

In relation to critically minded youth, which keeps itself at distance from political structures, the authorities are trying to prevent it from moving to more active work and discourage political protest. For this purpose, certain methods are applied which fall within Myra Marx Ferree's term of "soft repression",[5] as they are not based on a direct

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tions in Slovakia, Serbia and Georgia, Khamidov, A. Kyrgystan's revolutionary youth: between state and opposition.

[2] Concerning the «policy of pre-emption» be the Belarusian regime see Silitski V. (2005) Pre-empting Democracy: the case of Belarus, *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 16, No4, pp. 83–97.

[3] By analogy with Charles Tilly's concept of "*repertoire of collective action*", Tilly Ch., (2008), *Contentious performances*, Cambridge (N.Y), Cambridge University Press.

[4] Express bulletin of the legislation of the Republic of Belarus for the period from 10 to 16 November 2011. Available at: http://pravo.by/main.aspx?guid=1871&t=46413

[5] Ferree, M.M. Soft repression: ridicule, stigmat and silencing in gender-based movements, in: Davenport Ch., Johston, H. and Mueller, C. (2005), *Repression and mobilization,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 138–158.

and overt use of force. For example, the stigmatization of protest youth structures in the state media, as well as all kinds of «maneuvers» to distract attention, done be educational bodies to keep pupils or students from participating in the protests: the organization of festivals on the day of opposition rallies, appointing extra classes with a mandatory presence check and so on.

However, these more or less repressive methods do not always yield results. On the one hand, activists are trying to somehow adapt to this situation. They are constantly reviewing their tactics of protest and transforming their structures. So, some organizations disappear to provide activists with a possibility to regroup and create new structures. Young activists also improvise with the forms of protest actions, coming up with new ones, in order to somehow prevent the dispersal and detention. A good example is flash mobs or political performances, which started after a wave of repression that swept the country after the 2006 elections. In fact, initially flash mobs were not political actions but rather entertainment. However, this form of activities was taken over and used in favor of political mobilization, which allowed the activists to support the protest wave.

On the other hand, because they were used very frequently, detention and sort-term imprisonment eventually began to lose their intimidating effect. As activists often say, after the first arrests and serving 5 to 15 days at the Akreścina Center for isolation of offenders, a certain re-evaluation of risks, they are ready to take, occurs. After experiencing this, short term imprisonments lose their intimidating ability and do not reduce the desire to continue in protest activities.

Therefore, the main goal, which the authorities seem to set, is to secure the loyalty of young people and prevent them from turning to a critical position. It is done through the creation of the authorities' own youth organizations that oversee and channel youth activity in the right direction. The basic tool for the realization of these goals is the Belarusian Republican Youth Union.

The BRSM was created in 2002 through the merger of several large youth organizations (Komsomol successors), such as the Youth Union of Belarus and the Belarusian Patriotic Youth Union. Formally the BRSM positions itself as a non-governmental organization, but it is the major organization that implements the state youth policy and it is directly

funded by the state.[6] The BRSM also uses administrative resources as it is directly linked to the Ministry of Education and in the universities it is often engaged in student unions activities.

If one looks closely and analyzes the real activity of the Belarusian Republican Youth Union, it is difficult to argue that this organization has been conceived as an instrument of political youth cooptation or its active mobilization in support of the regime, as it is in Russia, through organizations such as *Nashi*, or *Molodaya Gvardiya* (Young Guard, the MG) – the youth wing of the United Russia Party. These organizations were established in the mid-2000s in response to the development and strengthening of new protest youth movements. *Nashi* and the MG in fact actively mobilize young people both on the streets and on the Internet in order to demonstrate how much the youth shares and supports the government policies. Besides support seeking, the creation of these organizations was preconditioned by the authorities' attempt to delegate to the non-state actors the task of countering and undermining the protest mobilization.[7] So *Nashi* and the MG actively organize street counter-rallies in the same place and at the same time as the opposition movements. The last example can be seen after the parliamentary elections in December 2011, when activists of these organizations gathered on the Triumph Square in Moscow, beating drums to drown out the opposition protest slogans against electoral fraud.

As for the Belarusian Republican Youth Union, it is hard to imagine that its members would go to the square to confront the protest mobilization and thus demonstrate their commitment and support of the authorities. After all, if one looks at the BRSM, it can be argued that it is more a social organization, which is used for political purposes. That is why the BRSM is not seeking to politicize young people and to involve them in politics, even regardless of Łukašenka's statement at the

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[6] In 2010, the BRSM received a bit less than 15 billion Belarusian rubles; see Якжик Е. 15 миллиардов для "самоокупаемого" [*Jakžyk A. 15 billion for 'self-supporting' BRSM*]. Available at: http://www.gazetaby.com/index.php?sn_nid=25419 (Accessed 15.04.2010).

[7] On delegating to non-state structures the task of counter-acting the protest mobilization see: Luders, J, Counter-movements, the State and the Intensity of Racial Contention in the American South, in: Goldstone J.A. (2003), *States, Parties and Social Movements*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 27–44.

September 2011 congress saying that the young people should not stay away from politics and that the BRSM should become the cadres reserve for the country. The BRSM activity is rather directed to make young people less interested in political life (that is, to prevent the formation of individuals with critical or openly conflicting positions regarding the authorities) and prevent them from the transition to protest activity. After all, even if the BRSM is working to make the youth perceive the existing political regime as something natural and eternal, the organization does not require the young people to have a sincere faith in the official ideology and loyal support to the regime. One can prove this idea by the following examples.

First, it is a passive membership and lack of strict ideological control in the organization. In fact BRSM does not require neither activity, nor support for the organization's ideas or political beliefs. Cases when anti-government protests' participants on the basis of some strategic considerations remained members of the Belarusian Republican Youth Union are not uncommon. Even at a campaign rally in December 2010, that brought together young people under the BRSM flag, one could hear interesting discussions about plans to vote for Niaklajeŭ or Sańnikaŭ. Certainly, the BRSM set itself the task to gather in its ranks as many young people as possible. Now, it has about 500,000 members, and in this sense is the largest youth organization in the country. But its recruitment methods are rather «sticks» than «carrots». Further they do not contribute to neither the activities of the organization, nor to the faith in its ideas and devotion to them. Even the «administrative-bureaucratic» language of the articles on the BRSM website reveals how little it tries to interest and attract young people.[8]

Second, the main BRSM activities are basically social: leisure, cultural and recreational activities, helping with summer employment, sports and volunteering. In fact, the BRSM monopolized all the areas related to youth so that doing some activities, even of non-political nature, outside the BRSM framework or without its support is simply impossible. A step out of this framework is seen as a potential protest. Thus, providing some resources, the BRSM absorbs youth initiatives and directs the energy of young people in the right direction, that is, as far as possible

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[8] See: www.brsm.by

from political criticism. At the same time, the BRSM does not require ideological commitment. It simply requires young people to be apolitical and thus tries to shield them from participating in political organizations and to limit its protest moods.

Third, it should be noted that in the BRSM there is no focus on the involvement of young people in politics. If the Russian movement *Nashi* organizes meetings with politicians and political scientists, *Molodaya Gvardiya* holds debates on the topic of conservatism in politics and organizes youth primaries before the elections of the State Duma (even if it looks more like the game of politics), party-like political activity is virtually absent within the framework of the BRSM. This can be explained by the fact that the Russian-style party in power does not exist in Belarus. In general, the Belarusian authorities do not recognize the very idea of political representation, as Łukašenka prefers «direct connection» to the people without any intermediaries.[9] Therefore, the main and most political direction of the BRSM's activity is the patriotic education of young people, aimed at cultivating the ideas of state patriotism. However, as all the activities that the BRSM holds in this framework, this idea is not stated in its policy, program or party categories and terms. At the same time, one can not deny that through the idea of patriotism the authorities try to impose on young people a particular world view, where there is no room for protest or critical position, but there is rather a kind of vision of consensual coexistence of the society with the government. Therefore, it should again be stressed that if the BRSM is working with the youth to make them treat the existing political regime as a given fact, at the same time, it does not require sincere faith in its ideas or dedicated support.

In conclusion, I would like to add that no matter how fictitious BRSM activities sometimes seem, it does a good job of de-politicizing some young people and keeping them far away from the protest activity and openly critical stance regarding the current government.

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[9] See Goujon, A. (2002), Le «Loukachisme» ou le populisme autoritaire en Biélorussie, *Politique et Sociétés*, vol. 21, No 2 , pp. 29–50.

NATALLA ARCIOMIENKA
Warsaw University, Poland

Education Abroad:
Brain Drain or Investment in the Future?

Since Belarus gained independence in 1991, immigration from the country has never ceased. Unfortunately, the official Belarusian statistical records are not sufficient for the analysis of the real situation. And consequently, it is impossible to trace the dynamics and structure of the migration groups from the country.

One of the noticeable groups that leave the country is represented by Belarusian students. Do Belarusian students at foreign universities plan to come back to Belarus after they graduate? Do they identify themselves as Belarusians after they have moved abroad? These are the questions of my research, and the results of the pilot study are presented below. When the results of further research are available, it would be possible to answer the following questions: Do the Belarusians educated abroad represent a drain of young people with their brain, ambitions and opportunity? Or, nevertheless, some of them might be treated as those who would participate in effective lobbying of Belarusian attractions abroad, who would work, from abroad, for the benefit of the country and who, upon the change of the regime in Belarus, would come back and work to reform and develop various areas of Belarusian society and economy?

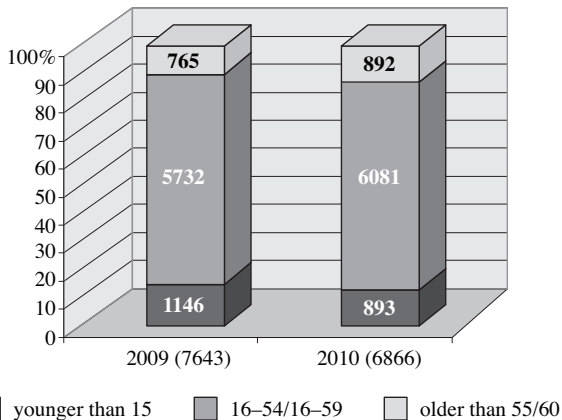## Belarus in the Context of International Migration

Age and regional structure of international migration from and to Belarus is crucial for the research in question.

The methodology used by the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Belarus is not designed to trace the actual directions and structure of international migration groups that arrive to or leave the territory of Belarus. According to the *Population of the Republic of Belarus Statistical Compendium* by the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Belarus, statistical data about the migrations of the population in the Republic of Belarus are developed on the basis of the migration forms submitted by the Citizenship and Migration Departments of the Internal Affairs Offices. But even the analysis of these data demonstrates that the percentage of people of retirement age is considerably larger among those who come to reside in Belarus (20% in 2009 and 22% in 2010) than among those who leave the country (10% in 2009 and 13% in 2010).

Chart 1. Arrivals in Belarus
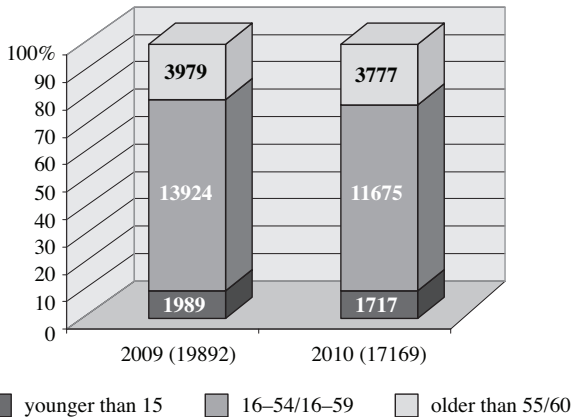
Source: The author's analysis of data from the *Population of the Republic of Belarus. Statistical Compendium* by the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, 2011.

Chart 2. Departures from Belarus

	2009 (7643)	2010 (6866)
older than 55/60	765	892
16–54/16–59	5732	6081
younger than 15	1146	893

younger than 15 ■ 16–54/16–59 □ older than 55/60

Source: The author's analysis of data from the *Population of the Republic of Belarus. Statistical Compendium* by the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, 2011.

If the absolute numbers cited in the compendium of the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Belarus reflected the actual scale of migration at least to some degree, the situation would not seem critical. However, although it is possible that the number of those who arrive to Belarus is more or less correct (as these persons are required to register on the territory of the country) the number of persons who leave the country obviously does not reflect the reality. For example, according to the compendium, 90 persons left Belarus for Poland in 2009, and 113 in 2010. However, *Rocznik Demograficzny* GUS published in 2011 (The annual compendium of demographic statistics by the Central Statistical Office for 2011) states that, in 2009, 4064 newly arrived Belarusian citizens registered in Poland for the period of more than three months and that 894 Belarusians started their studies at Polish universities in the 2010–2011 academic year. In 2010–2011, the overall number of Belarusian students only in Poland was equal to 2650. Hence, Belarusian international migration statistical data that tracks migration to Poland is significantly understated.

If we correlate the abovementioned age ratios with the real number of migrants from Belarus, we would notice that the outflow of migrants

is mainly comprised of the most mobile population group, i.e. youth and young professionals. Clearly, the outflow of this population group would adversely influence the development of the Belarusian economy and can cause severe social problems (for example, by aggravated decrease in the workforce, which means the proportion of people whose taxes and fees to the Social Insurance Fund and Pension Fund ensure the functioning of the budget and social payments, for instance, pensions).

Given the current political and economic situation in Belarus, it is hardly possible to stop the growing migration of young people from the country. But we could think about how this resource – young Belarusians abroad – might be used to work on lobbying Belarusian attractions abroad and potential return home of young educated Belarusians after the regime change in the country.

The Pilot Study

To learn about the reasons that drove young people from Belarus who chose to acquire higher education in Poland and also about their plans for the future I drew up a questionnaire of 33 questions, out of which 22 were questions that help answer the research questions, and 11 were metrics. The students could choose the language of the questionnaire (Belarusian, Russian or Ukrainian). The sample included students from Belarus and Ukraine but the research results about the Ukrainian students are not presented in this text.

The data presented below relates to the second pilot study. The presentation provides the results of the processed questionnaires of 35 students from Belarus who are studying international relations or economics at the bachelor-level in English at a private university in Poland. It should be noticed that all the students who took part in the pilot research pay for their education and do not participate in the scholarship programs for Belarusian students who are victims of political repressions.

Chart 3 illustrates the causes that influenced the decision of Belarusian students to acquire higher education in Poland. As it is shown in the Chart, the most important reason (which was of decisive importance for 22 respondents and significantly influenced the decision of 10 respondents,

i.e. was important for 32 out of 35 persons) was the opportunity to stay in one of the EU countries after graduation. Other most important reasons were geographic proximity of Poland to their home country (for 30 respondents this reason significantly influenced their decision or was of decisive importance), opportunity to master a foreign language (30), the quality of education at the chosen Polish university (38), opportunity to live in a different country (27) and opportunity to leave the home country for permanent residence abroad (24).

**Chart 3. Reasons that influence the decision to study in Poland**
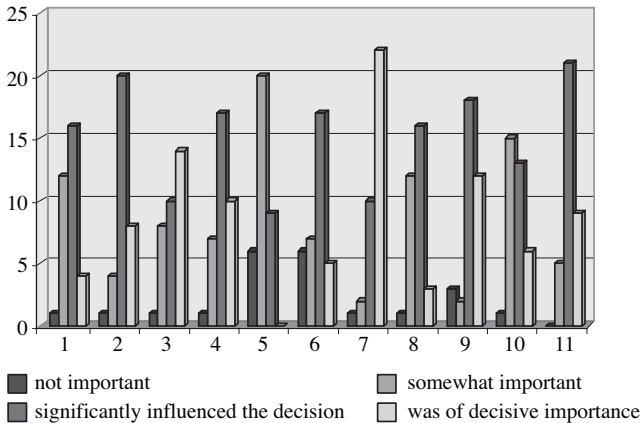
1. Quality of higher education in Poland
2. Quality of education at the chosen university in Poland
3. Opportunity to leave the home country for permanent residence abroad
4. Opportunity to live in a different country
5. Admission process at universities in Poland
6. Opportunity to stay in Poland after graduation
7. Opportunity to stay in an EU-country after graduation
8. Cost of education and living in Poland after graduation
9. Opportunity to master a foreign language
10. Desire to have adventures and get new experience
11. Geographical proximity of Poland to my country

Source: The author's pilot research conducted on 35 Belarusian students who study in Poland.

To check whether the answers are sincere there were questions that completely or partially replicate the questions asked earlier in the

questionnaire. Below are the charts that depict the processed data of the answers to some questions. Chart 4 shows the answers to the question *In what country do you plan to look for job after your acquire higher education?* According to the diagram, 28 out of 35 respondents plan to look for a job abroad, 4 haven't thought about it yet, and 3 consider looking for a job in Belarus. It is worth noticing, however, that the decision to study in Poland of two out of the three persons who plan to look for a job in Belarus were significantly influenced by such factors as opportunity to leave one's country for permanent residence and opportunity to stay in one of the EU-countries after graduation. The foreign countries and regions where students claimed they plan to look for a job include Poland, EU states, Western Europe, Germany, Austria, Canada, the U.S.A., Italy, France, Great Britain, Asia, Turkey.

Chart 4. Processed answers to the question "In what country do you plan to look for job after you acquire higher education?"
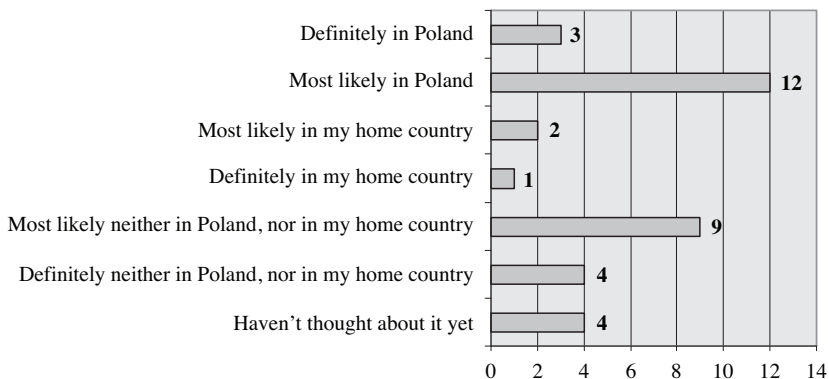
Source: The author's pilot research on 35 Belarusian students who study in Poland.

The question *Do you plan to come back to your home country immediately after you acquire higher education?* was answered with "no" or "most likely no" by 24 persons, 7 persons have not thought about it yet, and only 3 persons said "yes" or "most likely yes". And these were the three persons who plan to look for a job in Belarus after graduation. The processed answers to this question are presented in Chart 5.

Chart 5. Processed answers to the question "Do you plan to come back to your home country immediately after you acquire higher education?"
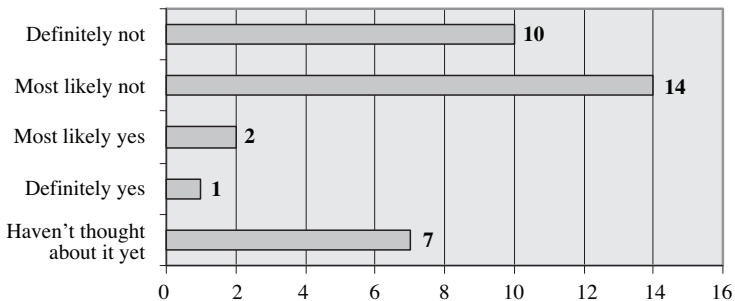
Source: The author's pilot research on 35 Belarusian students who study in Poland.

To find out whether Belarusian students abroad identify themselves as Belarusians, the respondents were asked to choose the language of the questionnaire (Belarusian or Russian). 10 out of 35 students chose the Belarusian language; two more persons wrote on the first page "Belarus" and "Бел, Bel". This means that at least 34% of the respondents identify themselves as Belarusians.

Interview with Alumni of Scholarship Programs for Belarusians in Poland

After I conducted the pilot research, I got interested whether the persons who come to Poland through scholarship programs where Belarusians are one of the target groups return to Belarus more often than those who pay for their education. With full comprehension of the limitations of the research method I used, I will present the results of the interviews with four students who graduated from such programs.

My questions concerned the following programs: Kalinowski scholarship for the Belarusian students who were victims of political repressions, Studia Wschodnie (Eastern Europe Studies) at Studium Europy Wschodniej at Warsaw University (master's program) and PhD program at the School of Social Sciences at the Polish Academy of

Sciences. All of the interviewees were asked questions solely about the participants from the same admission around.

The results of the interviews are:

Out of the 17 alumni of the Kalinowski program whose names my interviewee was able to recall, 15 live in Poland, 1 in Germany and 1 in Belarus.

Out of the 8 alumni of Studium Europy Wschodniej, 5 live in Poland now and 3 in Belarus.

Out of 4 alumni of the PhD program at the School of Social Sciences at the Polish Academy of Sciences, 3 live in Poland and 1 in the U.S.A.

This data shows that after the scholarship programs that target exclusively Belarusians or where Belarusians are among the target groups, the majority of the alumni do not return to their home country.

How the Drain of student Brain Could be Transformed into the Investment Into the Future of Belarus

Taking into consideration the results of the pilot research and interviews with alumni of scholarship programs, one could conclude that the majority of Belarusian students who acquire higher education abroad do not plan to return to Belarus and view their education as the first step to emigration. It means that every year there will be more and more Belarusian students outside Belarus. Given that many of them identify themselves as Belarusians, it is important to maintain and develop this identification. Besides, it would be crucial to direct educational and scientific interests of Belarusian students to the topics related to Belarus and to create opportunities for Belarusian students to engage in social activities aimed at changing the situation in various areas of Belarusian society and economy.

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The Freedom of Conscience in Non-Democratic Environment

The organization for the protection of persecuted Christians, *Open Doors* placed Belarus in 42nd place according to the level of lack of freedom of conscience (based on research findings in 2011).[1] The situation is slightly better than in communist Cuba, but worse than in Muslim (Shia) Bahrain or (Sunni) Kyrgyzstan. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom placed Belarus in the category of «attention», along with 10 other countries where religious freedom is violated or such violations are allowed.[2] Human rights organizations, both domestic and foreign state regular violations of religious freedom in Belarus. The factual account of violations of religious freedom in just two years (2007–2008), compiled by the civil initiative «Free Exercise of Religion», totals to 80 pages of text.[3]

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[1] The Open Doors World Watch List, 2011. Available at: http://www.opendoorsuk.org/resources/documents/WorldWatchList.pdf

[2] Беларусь пад ‚пільнай увагай' Камісіі ЗША ў пытаньнях рэлігійнай свабоды, Радыё «Свабода», 28.04.2011 [*Belarus is under 'close attention' of the US Commission on religious freedom*, *Radio Liberty*]; Available at: http://www.svaboda.org/content/article/16797122.html; US Department of State. International 2010 Religious Freedom Report. Belarus. Available at: http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/171684.pdf

[3] See: Мониторинг нарушений права на свободу вероисповедания и деятельности религиозных организаций в Беларуси в 2007–2008 гг. Минск, 2010 [*Monitoring of the right's to freedom of conscience and activities' of religious organizations violations in Belarus during 2007–2008, Minsk, 2010*].

At the same time, the Belarusian authorities as well as leading denominations – the Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic Church – are inclined to a positive or at least neutral evaluation of the status of religious freedom in Belarus. Commissioner of Religious Affairs Leanid Hulaka argues that «a comparative analysis of the legislation of the Republic of Belarus on freedom of conscience and religious organizations shows its full compliance with international standards, and on certain points our law is more democratic than in some Western European countries.»[4] (Note that in assessing the real situation Mr. Hulaka is even more optimistic than in assessing legislation). The Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus Filaret said, that «the adoption of a new version of the Law on Freedom of Conscience and religious organizations, reflected a new stage in the gradual development of church-state relations, it is the result of improving mutual understanding between the state and Church.»[5] When one of the Orthodox priests, Aliaksandr Šramko, stated the need to change the law on Freedom of Conscience, the Belarusian Exarchate of the ROC vigorously rejected his suggestion.

Catholic hierarch Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State of His Holiness, during a press conference on June 22, 2008 said: «I would like to note the positive beginning of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the State of Vatican City. (...) The law «On freedom of conscience in Belarus, in my opinion, is a good law, which reflects the need to protect and respect rights of the five major religions, traditional in Belarus.»[6]

As one can see, the problem of respect for/violation of freedom of conscience in Belarus is very ambiguous. In this article, I try to identify more precisely those spheres, in which religious freedom is really violated and to certify what is due to their violation.

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[4] Уникальный опыт работы (интервью) // Беларуская думка. Май 2009. С. 17 [*Unique experience of the work (interview) // Belarusian Thought. May 2009. p. 17*].

[5] Няхай беражэ нас Гасподзь у міры і згодзе! // Звязда, 26 красавіка 2003 [*Let God protect us in peace and* accord // Źviazda, 26.04.2003].

[6] Прэс-канферэнцыя з Дзяржаўным сакратаром Яго Святасці [*Press conference with the Secretary of State of His Holiness*]. Available at: http://catholic.by/p2/index. php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4894&Itemid=9

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There are four main spheres of violations against religious freedom: 1) Christian communities (predominantly neo-charismatic ones) are weakly institutionalized, 2) grass-roots initiative of strongly institutionalized churches (Orthodox and Catholic), 3) the pastoral service of foreign nationals, and 4) construction (or reconstruction) of non-Orthodox Christian shrines.

1. Most of the reports from human rights organizations over violations are connected with Protestant communities. The most notorious of all was (and remains) the case of the church «New Life». On August 17, 2005 Minsk City Executive committee passed a resolution on withdrawal from the church the right to use land and the compulsory redemption of the building, which hosts the service. Since then, the authorities with uncompromising insistence have tried to achieve this goal and the parishioners of the church (along with numerous supporters) with even stronger, sometimes almost heroic perseverance continue to protect their right to hold religious services in the building. However, there are many smaller-scale incidents, many of which remain unnoticed. Among them – a fairly high incidence of brutal interruptions by the police into the worships conducted in private premises, fines that the owners of the houses in which there are common prayers are required to pay and the intimidation of believers. Overall we can say that the position of Protestants in modern Belarus is a little bit better than the situation in the former Soviet Union.

There may be several reasons for such conditions. First, the logic of every authoritarian regime is that of suspicion. Any item that does not fit into an ordered system is under suspicion. Protestants are targeted not because they pose a direct threat to the regime, but because they appear in the eyes of the authorities as «others», «unlike», «not fitting» elements. Second, a certain role is played here by internal features of the Protestant and neo-Protestant movements. 1) They are without rigid hierarchy and do not have a single center; 2) they have dynamic development (something similar happens on a global scale; the number of Christians in the world is increasing mainly due to Protestant movements, particularly the charismatic ones), 3) they possess greater consistence in practicing religion (as shown by sociological studies, the percentage of

practicing Protestants is twice as high as the percentage of practicing Catholics, and almost 8 times higher than the percentage of practicing Orthodox), and 4) they are more radical about their faith, inflexible to diplomacy and compromise on the issues that are considered fundamental for Christians. Based on what is mentioned above, Protestants in the eyes of the authorities appear as an energetic uncontrolled element, able to do unexpected things. Here we must add that Protestants do not appear in such light only in the eyes of the authorities, but also (and this is the third factor of discrimination of the Protestant Church) in the eyes of the stronger and more institutionalized Orthodox and Catholic Churches. The development of Protestantism, especially the charismatic churches, is seen as an ambivalent or even negative phenomenon. Thus, the persecution of Protestants often occurs with a quiet (and sometimes even loud) approval of other Christian Churches, which is the saddest moment in this story.

2. The next sphere of religious freedom violations is any grass-roots initiative. Under the grass-roots initiative we understand the set of activities that are initiated by «ordinary» believers of any denomination and are beyond the usual liturgy-pastoral service. There is no big difference if such initiatives appear in Protestantism or Catholicism or Orthodoxy. The incident in Orthodox brotherhood in honor of the Transfiguration of Our Lord can serve as a conspicuous example. The spiritual head of the brotherhood was charged with violating the law in April 2007 «On freedom of conscience,» because he regularly held meetings of the fraternity in his apartment.[7] But the most painful moment is the systematic limiting of charity possibilities under the patronage of the Protestant or Catholic churches. One of the most awkward cases was deportation from the country in 2008 of Anita and Egbert Schoone. They founded and managed a drug rehabilitation center (Śvietłahorsk district), with helped about 100 people free themselves from drug dependence. The reason for their deportation was that one of the rehabilitation measures was praying and reading the Bible.[8]

3. A kind of xenophobia is an integral part of the religious policy of the Belarusian authorities. And here, next to the so-called «non-

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7   Мониторинг... С. 13 [*Monitoring... P. 13*].
8   Мониторинг... С. 65 [*Monitoring... P. 16*].

traditional» Protestant communities, one of the «traditional» religions, namely, the Catholic Church is affected by this xenophobia as well. The peak was the end of 2006, when the government deported seven priests and five nuns of Polish nationality, which led to an unprecedented appeal of Bishop Aliaksandr Kaškievič to believers, in which he clearly criticized the Belarusian authorities.[9] However, before and after that the foreign clergy (usually Polish citizens) were deported (though not quite in large numbers), and those who remained to work in Belarus, were strictly controlled. In September 2007 the then Deputy Prime Minister Alaksandr Kosiniec even reached the point when he declared that all foreign priests should be replaced by those of local origin within seven years.

5. The construction or reconstruction of churches (prayer houses) was a real headache for Catholics and Protestants. The case of the Navapołack Pentecostal community can serve as an illustration. This community in 2007 had spent 86 million rubbles only on the coordination and preparatory documentation to finally find out that the local authorities had refused to give them a piece of land to build a house of worship. There is a similar situation with the construction of churches in the case of the Catholic Church.

The attack on grass-roots initiatives, charity and pastoral service of foreign nationals, as well as cruel limitations (de facto ban) on construction of the non-Orthodox Christian shrines is the product of a wider policy of the »autarchy« of the Belarusian authorities. This policy aims at depriving subjectivity from all participants in public life, turning them into objects of the almighty state impact, giving them an illusion of autonomy, which in fact depends on the present and sole owner. Meanwhile, grassroots initiatives are always a signal of the appearance of real autonomy. Foreign pastors are unreliable in terms of deprivation of subjectivity (these people, at least psychologically feel protected by their state). New churches guarantee greater independence and confidence. That's why the restrictive measures of the Belarusian authorities are very visible in these areas.

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9 Існуючая сытуацыя прадыктавала. Пастырскі ліст біскупа Аляксандра Кашкевіча // Наша Ніва [*It has been necessitated by the current situation. Congregational letter of the bishop Aliaksandr Kaškievič // Naša Niva*]. Available at: http://nn.by/?c=ar&i=5274

Finally, a few words to sum up. First, it must be noticed that among other civil liberties, the freedom of conscience is the most difficult to formalize by conventional standards. Hence, to some extent several paradoxes are unavoidable. A number of human rights organizations report a very low level of freedom of conscience in Belarus, while leading churches in Belarus say that in general the religious sphere is well protected in this country.

Secondly, one should remember the specific worldview of Belarusians. Belarus is an unprecedented symbiosis of mutually exclusive ideological systems: Bolshevism, paganism (mainly demotic, non-institutional) and Christianity. (A perfect example of this symbiosis are propaganda films »Doroga v Nikuda« (*Road to nowhere*), «Konspiralogija» (*Conspirology*) where the emphases of the Christian (Orthodox) values intertwine with the vigorous apology of the Bolshevik regime. Or another example: the same people: Łukašenka passionately defends Bolshevik symbols but also often supports Christian initiatives). This situation gives rise to considerable confusion around the issue of freedom of conscience. There is no defined axiological basis for the discourse on the freedom of conscience.

Thirdly, in connection with the previous statement, the freedom of conscience in Belarus becomes a function of mutual understanding between two institutions alien to each other: the state with Soviet genealogy and the Orthodox or Catholic Church. For Belarus as a neo-Soviet state the autonomy of the religious sphere is a kind of «necessary evil». And it is clear that the state tries to avoid this «evil» wherever possible. As a result, only highly institutionalized religions, such as the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church enjoy relative autonomy, while poorly institutionalized religions (Protestant communities) and separate initiatives (fraternities, religious social movements) are subject to prosecution.

It will be impossible to solve the problem of the freedom of conscience in Belarus as long as there is no consensus on the overall axiology. Above all, it is not possible until the questions on the role and place of Bolshevism in the historical memory and the current political life are answered. In-depth dialogue between Christian churches can improve the situation in these conditions (but this does not mean that all the problems will be solved). Catholics and Orthodox should become better

acquainted with Protestant communities, including the charismatic ones. They should make contact with them, reconsidering the warnings which are related to charismatic protestants; and support each other in hard times.

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The Role of Social Networks and Other New Media in Shaping Civil Society and Building National Identity in Belarus

When speaking about the processes that are currently taking place on-line and somehow contribute to the formation of civil society in Belarus, it's not possible to only mention social networks. Social networks have been more or less widely presented in Belarus since 2006–2007. But even before that certain processes started in the blogosphere. Therefore, I will talk not only about social networks, but about such concepts as new media in general.

A bit of history. As I said, online activism began in Belarus in the blogosphere. The biggest, the most in demand service, which Belarusians used from the beginning, was the Live Journal. The situation remains pretty much the same till now. According to today's statistics, there are about one million LJ users in Belarus. Even if we assume that some parts of the accounts are fictitious, or duplicate other accounts, it is still a huge figure for a country with less than10 million people, and Internet penetration of around 33%. It turns out that almost one in three in Belarus is a network user, and of that number, again, one-third, to a greater or lesser extent – a user of «Live Journal».

Although LiveJournal appeared in 1999, in the beginning of 2000s its influence on political or public life in our country was hardly noticeable. Speaking about the development of online activism in this period, it is convenient to monitor the outbursts on such momentous events as

the presidential campaigns. Such moments display the most powerful mobilization of all social and informational resources throughout a five-year period.

So, neither during the campaign of 2001, nor even in 2006, was there a significant effect of the blogosphere on the informational space and social life. The campaign in 2006, of course, was the first in which an appreciable part of the information was transferred through the new media. There also were isolated cases of the analysis of the current political processes. However, as the starting point for such a thing as online activism (which is crucial for the development of civil society) I would suggest to consider the period of the first few months after the election in 2006, when there was a wave of protests, flash mobs, at the time a completely new phenomenon for Belarus. It was not just a new form of street activity, but also a new method of preparation, we were dealing with an entirely new approach. The "LiveJournal" became the main platform for the formation and helped conduct the actions created on the Internet. Approximately at the same time a discussion platform *by_politics* was created, which today is one of the largest online discussion centers.

When talking about such phenomena it is necessary to understand a very important thing. In Belarus, there is a very specific situation in the social, political and media spheres. In fact, any heated debates are pushed out of the public sphere. But the vacuum tends to always be filled. Therefore, it is quite logical that, as soon as we get access to some modern tools, which are not under the control of the authorities and cannot be blocked, they immediately begin to flourish. It is this trend that could be seen by example of the growth of the Internet community in the blogosphere, because after the platform *by_politics* LJ themed communities on topics which are not confined to political and social processes began to develop quite intensively.

In fact, already at this early stage of development of new media technologies in *by-net*, we can see that they have very important functions, such as information distribution, debate and, what is particularly important, association. There is no civil society without the freedom of association. *Web 2.0* technologies have provided a unique opportunity for people to join different groups, to feel part of one great whole, without leaving off their daily activities and without the risk of «exposure" and

losing their jobs, or getting into even more trouble. Yes, if there is a need, special services can easily discover the author of a post. But the number of web users is so big that that they can do it only if they are looking for someone specific and they really need to find the person. Full monitoring, as it is done in the case of the Ministry of Justice (registration of off-line civil society players) is impossible.

Summing up what I've mentioned about the blogosphere, I would like to note that today there is a downward trend in the popularity of these online tools, although blogging is still very popular. This form of discussion today is even used by some of the titular Internet media. It is very important, because by being «promoted» and popular, these internet sites actually brought an audience to discussion with the leaders of public opinion. The most striking example of the successful use of blogging in the formation of social and political discourse, are the sites «Belarusian Partisan» and «Belarusian News».

The trend mentioned above, which marks the decline in the popularity of blogging, is associated with the growing popularity of social networks, that happened around 2008 and is still taking place. Such players as «Facebook» and its Russian equivalent «VKontakte» fairly quickly gained popularity as a tool of communication and exchange of information. Since the summer of 2009, there has been a rapid rise in popularity of the micro blogging service of Twitter. It is associated with the revolutionary events in Moldova, which then took place, and with the role of the Twitter network being assigned to this tool by the titular press in their media coverage.

It should be noted that at first neither «Facebook», nor «VKontakte» had any social mission. Their role was actually limited to the entertainment function. The social networks provided people with a virtually new approach to communication, with opportunities to quickly and easily share not only text messages, but also multimedia files. And only one exception to this trend must be considered: as early as 2008 the initiative group of «Movement of the Future» begins «promotion» in the social network «VKontakte» (the one that exploded in summer 2011 – «revolution through social networks «. One should acknowledge that the group acted very shrewdly. Their approaches fit into the classic scenario of media activism. It allowed them, in contrast to all other political and politicized social forces, to be fully armed by the time of the systemic crisis of 2011.

Meanwhile, Twitter, in contrast to so-called classical social networks was initially more perceptive to social activity, in Belarus as anywhere else (more precisely, of course, not the service itself but its users). Let's not forget that the growth of its popularity began after the events in Moldova, and the message informing about what and how was happening attracted the attention of engaged people, mostly those working with information. Twitter does have some strategic advantages over other possibilities exactly in the field of information: They are the following: already then its content was open to search engines, it is not possible to limit access to Twitter, the information is spread almost immediately. This explains the specifics of the public concentrated in the service: either people who work directly with information, or people promoting a particular project (public, commercial, political, informational), sometimes, people who look for interesting partners for communication. Unlike other networks, from the very beginning Twitter brought together people with various interests, but the entertaining function was only secondary.

Together, these social media in a very short time acquired immense popularity, many times surpassing the blogosphere. In order to assess the scale of the phenomena specifically for Belarus, just take a look at the statistics. Thus, the number of users of the network «VKontakte» has long exceeded 3 million people, «Facebook» – half a million, Twitter – over 20,000 (but we will not forget about the openness of the service, which provides News Twitter and streams a large amount of passive users). In this case, any of the networks, in fact, managed to find a niche in the Belarusian Society. The audience of «VKontakte» was always known for maintaining political apathy and the correct way would be to compare it with the «broad masses» (both by virtue of the quantity and by the strength of interest). «Facebook» traditionally attracts mainly intellectuals; therefore, it turned into a strong and meaningful discussion area. In addition, Twitter is actually an information center for the contemporary Belarusian Internet community.

Going back a little bit, I would repeat that in the period 2006–2010 the users of the social networks remained largely politically neutral and indifferent to the social process. It is clear that we are dealing primarily with the reflection of the general mood in the Belarusian society. It can be characterized by the words «well-fed apathy.» However, in the end

of 2010–2011 one can observe a qualitative change in the role of social media in shaping civil society.

The presidential campaign of 2010 was already different from previous ones in qualitative terms. Every single candidate was actively using modern technology. However, I must say, no one managed to make any significant impact. We will go back to this phenomenon later. On the other hand, from the very moment of the December 19 crackdown, we can witness literally the rebirth of social media from leisure sphere into socio-political.

Already the very night after the election the role of these tools revealed themselves in full, when all the independent and opposition websites were blocked; the only source of information remaining was Twitter.

During this difficult period the social network appeared not only a center for the dissemination of independent information, but also a center for mobilizing people in civil action. It consolidated people to help the repressed, people gathered there to discuss burning issues; it also was a starting point for solidarity actions.

In fact, from this point on social media became involved in the implementation of several important actions of the civil society functioning, such as crisis communication and mobilization.

A similar situation can be seen in the first few days after the terrorist attack in the Minsk subway. The official media kept silent. The citizens themselves through the social network were exchanging information and organizing themselves to help victims. Already in this period it became clear that there was a new civil society being formed in the country, and the main catalyst for this process was the Internet and social networks that give people all the tools and opportunities that they have been deprived of for a long time due to authorities' monopoly in the information market.

The apotheosis of all these processes was a series of summer actions, organized by the «Revolution through social networks,» in which many of us participated. If you remember those days, you can clearly see how citizens can fulfill their aspirations and goals, turning masses into civil society. In those days, in fact, one could sum up the results of nearly a 10-year cycle of the development of social media as a tool for shaping civil society.

Today, having witnessed the process, we can say that social networks have the following functions, without which the development of civil society would be impossible:

1) **Communication, exchange of information**. Recent sociological research data, just as the results of closed focus groups, shows that the level of confidence to the media, either opposition or state, has disastrously fallen down. This leads to a significant increase of the influence of such information channels as «direct communication». Much of this communication is just rumors, but do not forget about the important features of social media: the content there is transmitted from user to user. As in any public sphere, there appear leaders of public opinion. The new information fields formed around them, seem to people more convincing and credible than most of the media.

2) **Discussion platforms**. One should not forget that all opportunities for *off-line* discussions have long been monopolized by the government. Meanwhile, without discussion society cannot function. The emergence of social media has led to a surge of interest in discussion and debate, and the network appears to be the main operating center.

3) **Another important role of social media – Association**. As in the previous cases, the authorities tightly control all the possibilities for group action in Belarus, therefore ordinary people have very little desire to form associations.

Social media, by contrast, give a complete freedom: entering into a group, a person feels being part of a team, that solves particular problems, feels her/his individuality against the general public. These effects cannot be overestimated.

4) **Civil mobilization and activism**. This important point was fully revealed only by the recent crises. Without the ability to respond to certain challenges, the society cannot function fully.

Civil action of solidarity after the events of December 19, reaction to the terrorist attack in the subway, «the revolution through social networks,» «Stop-benzin» actions helped us to discover the possibility of social networks as tools to mobilize people on civil actions in response to the challenge, as well as the fact that in Belarus these tools are needed.

5) **Crisis informing.** The essence of this option has much in common with the previous one. It is relevant in the situation of public challenge. The difference between them consists in fact in the decision-making process always preceding any civil action, which is impossible without objective information. In a crisis, you need to make decisions quickly, and it is in this context, that social media proved to be invaluable tools.

These five parameters, the functions of social networks in today's Belarusian Society, show that new media actually help build horizontal connections in Belarus: both at the individual level and at the level of organizations, groups, and initiatives. Such horizontal ties are basic for any developed society. The Belarusian one is not an exception. This is now the main peculiarity of the effect of social networks on the development of civil society: without them, this development is almost impossible, and, if possible, then in such a slow pace, that it would lead to enormous development gap.

I would like to illustrate the importance of social networking in forming Belarusian civil society by a small example.

A few days before writing this report, the author returned from a trip to the USA. One of the aims of the trip was to study the experience of using new media for the development of civil society in America. After several days I could say that fortunately or unfortunately, we could not learn anything new from our US colleagues. Rather on the contrary, we could teach them. And I can explain why.

There NGOs have access to any public sphere or type of activity: TV, radio, newspapers, debates. In such conditions the demand for social media is not so high. At the same time, the Belarusian non-governmental organizations and initiatives do not have other channels of communication (Mass Communications) with the population, except for social media. Accordingly, the need for «creativity» to develop new approaches to generate ideas is vital – there simply is no other way.

It is also necessary to say a few words about the role of social networks in shaping national identity.

There is not much to say. We must remember and realize that the audience in social networks almost totally represents those walking along the streets (taking into account the mass character). Therefore, it is not

possible to speak about a significant cultural or linguistic role of the social networks. However, social media can be instrumental even here.

Firstly, networking opportunities are adopted by non-governmental organizations and initiatives working in the field of national revival. This very fact is important: the organizations attract bigger audience, enhance the coverage and opportunities for informational work, and, respectively – the effect of such work.

Secondly, and this phenomenon is more visible, the social media shapes its members' national agenda, if you can call it this.

Before the advent of social networks and opportunities to Mass Public debate, Belarusians were in fact part of a larger post-Soviet Russian-speaking Internet, whose voice was too weak to be heard. However, with the advent of new tools, web 2.0 features, Belarusian users were able to be grouped according to common interests. Important social and political events that occur at the present time, give grounds for national debate, other nations are «out of context.» Even with the naked eye one can see, that it makes Belarusians aware of their community and at the same time, makes them see themselves differently from other national communities. You can say that this kind of common discourse to some extent forms the national agenda.

Having a look at the history of social media in our country, we were able to outline the basic options, that are fulfilled by the new tools in the formation of civil society. We also underline some factors that help the Belarusian use the new media to outline their national identity, thus, contributing to a more efficient national identity development.

I would also like to note that despite all the above mentioned positive aspects, the potential of social networks and other forms of new media in our country remains largely untapped.

This, in my opinion, is associated with low levels of use of the advantages of web 2.0 by recognized community leaders. Although they are present in this segment, they are much less active than in the traditional media. This leads to the fact that in the social media environment, they are recognizable (all social network users read traditional on-line media), but have far less acknowledgement then the leaders of the social-networking segment.

As a result we actually have two Information realities: leaders of public opinion in the social networks differ from the people who are

believed to be leaders and speak to us from the pages of traditional media. This duality leads to the fact that such an important resource as the personal factor, in fact, is not used for the development of horizontal connections on-line, it does not contribute to promoting social ideas and values of civil society.

Taking into account all the factors described above, as well as being more active and interested in working with people via social media, this probably is a key to success for public institutions in civil society development.

Свабода суджэння ў недэмакратычным асяроддзі

некаторыя моманты, якія дапамагаюць беларусам дзякуючы сродкам новых медыяў акрэсліць сваю нацыянальную спецыфіку, садзейнічаюць гэтым самым развіццю нацыянальнай ідэнтычнасці.

Завяршаючы гэты экскурс, хочацца адзначыць, што нягледзячы на ўсё пазітыўныя моманты, якія апісаны ў ім, патэнцыял сацыяльных сетак і іншых формаў новых медыяў у нашай краіне застаецца ў значнай меры незапатрабаваным.

Гэта, на мой погляд, звязана з нізкім узроўнем выкарыстання магчымасцяў web 2.0, прызнанымі грамадскімі лідарамі, якія хоць і прысутнічаюць у дадзеным сегменце, але выяўляюць тут значна меншую актыўнасць, чым у традыцыйных СМІ. Гэта прыводзіць да таго, што ў асяроддзі сацыяльных медыяў яны маюць пазнавальнасць (усё карыстальнікі сацсетак чытаюць традыцыйныя анлайн СМІ), аднак маюць значна меншы аўтарытэт, чым прызнаныя лідары сацыяльна-сеткавага сегменту. У выніку мы маем на сённяшні дзень фактычна дзве інфармацыйныя рэальнасці: у сацыяльных сетках ёсць адны лідары грамадскай думкі, са старонак СМІ нам вяшчаюць іншыя людзі, якіх прыняты лічыць лідарамі грамадскай думкі. Такая раздвоенасць прыводзіць да таго, што такі важны рэсурс, як персанальны фактар, фактычна не ўплывае на развіццё гарызантальных сувязяў і анлайн прасторы, не садзейнічае руху наперад грамадскай ідэі і каштоўнасцяў грамадзянскай супольнасці.

Улічваць усе пазітыўныя апісаныя фактары, а таксама выяўляць большую актыўнасць і зацікаўленасць у працы з людзьмі праз сацыяльныя медыі – у гэтым, мабыць, ёсць сёння ключ да поспеху для грамадскіх інстытутаў у развіцці грамадзянскай супольнасці.