

Possible Effects of the Ukrainian Revolution for Russia and Belarus – Modern Trends

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The development of the Ukrainian political situation continues to raise the question of possible similar scenarios in other post-Soviet countries – mainly Belarus and Russia. How do the recent events in Ukraine affect relations between the authorities and society in those countries? Are the societies of those countries ready for changes? What is the level of public support for the current political regimes and political institutions in those countries and what direction of international integration do the societies in Russia and Belarus support?

The continuing and ever-present situation in Ukraine in the last two years has provoked many questions in other countries with a similar political and social situation, as well as a shared past with Ukraine – part of the 20th century Soviet Empire.

The Ukrainian revolution of 2013-2014 was a result of the unrealized Euro-integrational hopes of the Ukrainians, combined with the inability of the authorities to find a solution to the situation, and a surfeit of society's dissatisfaction with politicians and levels of corruption in the country. People went out into the streets in order to show their opposition to the about-face in the course of the country's policy direction on the international arena and to demonstrate their readiness to fight for changes. Initially, the aims of the protesters were mainly connected with the country's European aspirations and the decision of the Ukrainian government to put the process of integration with the EU on hold. The protest was entirely apolitical, people gathered simply to show they belonged in European society. This was the case until the end of January 2014. During that period, the authorities attempted to break up the protest a few times using special "Berkut" police units, but were unsuccessful. In February the decision was made to forcefully break up the main protests in Maidan, in Kiev, with the use of armed intervention. As a result, on 19-20 February 2014, snipers opened fire on the protesters and over 100 people were killed.

The later annexation of Crimea by Russia and the emergence of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics on the territory of Ukraine consolidated society and started the process of political transformation through revolution. It brought

deep changes to the way the political reality of the country was perceived by the citizens of Ukraine. The events of that period showed the citizens and the international community the total inability of the existing regime – including political institutions, the government, the President and local authorities – to find any mutually beneficial solution to the established situation.

Today Ukraine is experiencing the difficulties of an economic crisis, internal armed conflict – due to the aggressive separatist movement supported by Russian forces in the East – and the constant decrease of public support towards the reforms of the new government (over 40% of Ukrainians do not support them¹). Nevertheless, such a situation should still be considered normal for a country going through the transformation process towards democracy, Europeanization and market liberalization.

Ukraine was not the first country among the post-Soviet states whose citizens decided to fight for their rights and for changes in the political system. Similar attempts were previously made in Russia (the most significant were held after the last parliamentary elections in Bolotnaya Square in 2011 and 2012, while the most recent were in March 2015, after the assassination of Boris Nemtsov) and in Belarus (especially after the presidential elections in 2006 and in 2010). At this moment in time, Ukraine might be considered a unique example where radical changes in the political situation were initiated due to the readiness of its citizens.

Belarusian Social Trends

In order to answer the question whether Belarusian society is ready for such a Ukrainian scenario, a range of factors should be taken into consideration. The first is analysis of the current condition of Belarusian society, which is characterised as atomized, with a low level of trust for the opposition and a large level of support for ideas of European integration, as well as for integration with Russia. It is also characterized by a high level of apprehension towards the political authorities.

The Belarusian political regime can be characterised as “stable autocracy”. This means that the state (control of the state) is present in almost all public spheres of life, which is why all potential rudiments of political instability in the country are eliminated as soon as they appear. Nevertheless, despite the political regime’s attempts at controlling all areas of public life in, the country is not transforming into a totalitarian state. The authorities do not interfere in the private lives of its citizens, although such attempts were made (according to the information from the technical website Habrahabr.ru – through the years 2011-2013, there were at least four attempts to disconnect Belarusian Internet users from the global web).

¹ Available at: http://www.uceps.org/ukr/poll.php?poll_id=1023 Accessed on: 3 June 2015.

The country is also trying to implement a single ideology in the country through organizations such as the “Pioneers”, “BRSM” (Belarusian Republican Youth Union), or “White Rus”, in which membership is almost mandatory. The Patriarchate of the Belarusian Orthodox Church of Moscow also serves the purposes of the authorities.² In addition, because of the paternalistic relations existing in Belarusian society – which means it is almost impossible for ordinary citizens to get to positions of political power – the percentage of people who are interested in politics is low.

According to IISEPS, almost 55% of Belarusian society feels that the country is moving in the wrong direction. Only 13% consider that the economic situation will improve in the next few years. In 2014, 40% of Belarusians expressed feelings of distrust in President Lukashenko (this number has decreased compared to the year 2011, when 60% voted against him). Nevertheless, if the presidential elections were held during the next weekend, almost 40% would vote for Lukashenko.³ Such a situation can be explained by a lack of real and strong-enough alternatives to the current president.

The low level of political culture in the country and a lack of information concerning political parties mean that only a sixth of the respondents is interested in the activities of political parties.⁴ Only 9% of Belarusian society publicly confirms confidence in political parties, while 39% don't trust them at all.⁵

What is interesting is the comparison of levels of public support for different methods of international integration for Belarus. In 2013, according to IISEPS, approximately 35% of society voted for integration with the EU (in 2011, the number was almost 50%). What is significant is that while in 2013 the level of support for integration with the Russian Federation decreased – from 45% in 2007 to 25% in 2013 – it is now back at a level of 40-45%. What is more, if there were a choice between the two directions of integration, around 30% would vote for integration with the EU, while around 45% would support integration with the Russian Federation (mainly economic and political integration, while maintaining sovereignty).⁶

The second element that should be presented for further investigation is the Belarusian experience of protest actions.

2 Belarusian Analytical Workroom, “Belarus Real ‘Nost’”, No. 12, March 2015

3 Actual trends, IISEPS. Available at: <http://www.iiseps.org/trends/11>. Consulted on: 25 May 2015.

4 Available at: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/politics/Interes-grazhdan-Belarusi-k-politicheskim-partijam-vozrastaet_i_605682.html. Consulted on: 26 May 2015.

5 Available at: http://naviny.by/rubrics/politic/2012/3/28/ic_articles_112_177329/. Consulted on: 26 May 2015.

6 Geopolitical Balance, IISEPS. Available at: <http://www.iiseps.org/analitica/561>. Consulted on: 25 May 2015.

The March 2006 presidential election, in which Lukashenko won a third term – with 82.6% of the vote) – did not meet with democratic standards. Throughout the campaign, the opposition was routinely harassed, civil and political rights were disregarded, and opposition candidates were afforded very little media coverage. After the announcement of the falsified results, about 10,000-15,000 protesters gathered in Minsk’s October Square. The authorities, using OMON units, detained and beat many activists. Opposition activity also dwindled in the aftermath of the protests, as the government jailed opposition leaders (A. Lebedko, A. Milinkievic) and intimidated their supporters with fines and warnings. Alyaksandr Kazulin, one of three opposition candidates, was sentenced to five and a half years in prison for protesting both the improper election and the subsequent crackdown.⁷

On 19 December 2010, Lukashenko won a fourth presidential term (gaining 79.65% of the vote) in a heavily falsified election. Election night was marred by the detentions of most of the other presidential candidates and 15,000 protesters turned out to question the legitimacy of the vote. Among them were journalists, human rights activists and other representatives of civil society. The Belarusian authorities explained at the time that a number of participants in ‘unsanctioned activities’ had been sentenced by the courts to administrative arrests and fines, in addition to which criminal proceedings were initiated under the guise of “mass disturbances”. Almost all the detainees were released, including three former presidential candidates (Andrei Sannikau, Dzmitry Uss, and Mikalay Statkevich). It was the most quantitative action in the modern history of Belarus. Sanctions against the participants of the protest forced people to search for new opportunities to show their civil opposition. The Internet and news media presented them with such an opportunity. Through the years 2011-2012, a wide range of actions was organised using social networks (Vk.com, odnoklassniki.ru), allowing people who were ready to fight for the ideals of freedom and democracy to work together. Players of online games such as World of Tanks, World of Warcraft etc., shared alternative information on in-game chat forums. These activities culminated in the “Revolution through Social Networks (RSN)” in 2011 – silent actions in Minsk and a number of other big cities in Belarus. These actions were broken up and new control measures were implemented in Belarusian society to maximise the state’s control over Internet activity. Today, the majority of these social networks groups no longer function or they are controlled by the regime and utilized as agitation platforms by Lukashenko’s regime. In addition, political institutions are trying to control all Internet activity, especially on international websites, such as Facebook, Twitter etc. It is obvious that these social network actions have not affected the

⁷ Freedom House Report on Belarus in 2013. Available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/belarus#.Uy3E24U2Q6s> . Consulted on: 24 May 2015.

whole country, as the Internet has not become a common source of information in Belarus, especially among the elder generation.

Another strong factor affecting the stability of the political regime in Belarus is the economic situation. From the beginning of 2011, the country has been experiencing an economic crisis related to the negative effects of the chosen economic model and the increased demand for foreign currency in the country. According to public opinion, the economic situation is getting worse as of 2013. More than 50% of respondents think that their consumer potential is decreasing.⁸ Nevertheless, such a situation has not affected the level of public support for Lukashenko and it remains at a steady level of 50-55%⁹ – even after the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development predicted a 2.5% decline to the Belarusian economy in 2015.¹⁰ Although the economic crisis in 2011-2012 was one of the triggers that caused the destabilization of society and caused outbursts of social protest, the current situation might be characterized as stable. This fact means only that Lukashenko's previous policy towards protesters was rather effective and there are no potential reasons for possible protests or the destabilization of the existing regime.

The recent release of Ales Bialiatski in June 2014 (leader of the “Viasna” human rights organization and arrested in 2011 for allegedly hiding sources of income), was much applauded by the international community and it was the final argument towards the fact that Lukashenko's political regime is not only internally stable, but is fully recognized on the international arena. The signing of the Eurasian Economic Union and launching of the “Temporary Phase” program between the EU and Belarus in 2014,¹¹ bears significant meaning for the current political regime and fully meets both the pro-Russian and pro-European expectations of the public. The fact that the release of Ales Bialiatski did not cause any public actions of support (in the form of meeting, etc.) means that Belarusian society is now mollified and – even with the poor economic situation – is ready to vote for Lukashenko and support his politics.

All these facts, together with the experience of previous public protest attempts in 2006 and 2010, demonstrate that the main trigger that caused each wave of public protest were the presidential elections. Parliamentary elections did not cause any protests. This means that the public level of support and confidence for the president is much lower than for parliament.

⁸ Actual trends, IISEPS Available at: <http://iiseps.org/trends/11>. Consulted on: 27 May 2015.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ <http://www.krizis.by/belarus/2608-belorusskaya-ekonomika-prodolzhaet-padenie.html>

¹¹ Temporary Phase. Narodnaya Vola. Available at: <http://www.nv-online.info/by/459/printed/7-9061/%D0%92%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%8F-%D1%84%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B0.htm> Consulted on: 2 June 2015.

Another issue is the fact that none of these protest actions lasted longer than one week. This also supports the statement that Belarusian society is neither consolidated nor ready enough to start on a path similar to the Ukrainian revolution. In order to prove this thesis, public opinion towards the Ukrainian revolution should be presented. Firstly, the Belarusian media has not paid much attention to Ukraine throughout the last few months. The general level of public support in Belarus for the Ukrainian Maidan – before and after the Russian annexation of Crimea – was less than 50%.¹² The latest articles that have appeared on Ukrainian news websites published by Belarusian analytics show a generally negative estimation of the Ukrainian situation.

The next presidential elections in Belarus will be held in November 2015. According to analysis, it is seen as a moment of increasing potential for social protest. Notwithstanding, the general trend shows that around 40% of people are ready to vote for Lukashenko in these future elections, while a number of alternative candidates have each gained less than 10% of the vote.¹³ This means that if the situation in Belarus were to develop in the same manner – deepening economic integration with Russia and finding new ways for integration with European Union, as well as providing total control over the online activities of its citizens and the limitation of their rights – there is no chance for a repeat of the Ukrainian scenario in Belarus.

The Case of Russia

In order to compare the situation in Russian society with that of Ukrainian society, similar investigations to those related to Belarus, should be undertaken.

When presenting the situation in Russian society, the present attitudes of its citizens toward its main political institutions should be reviewed.

When Putin came to power in 2004, his approval rating was around 80%.¹⁴ In 2011, his level of public support was lower, with only 65% of respondents claiming that they “trust” or “rather trust” the president. Though Putin’s level of public support decreased, 36% of respondents admitted the fact that they just have no one else to vote for in presidential elections.¹⁵ This means that there is no real alternative in Russian politics to the current president. Further, polls held in 2014 show that at the 2018 elections, 55% of Russians will vote for Putin.

¹² Available at: http://naviny.by/rubrics/politic/2014/03/19/ic_articles_112_184934/ . Consulted on: 25 May 2015.

¹³ Actual Trends, IISEPS Available at: <http://iiseps.org/trends/11>. Consulted on: 27 May 2015.

¹⁴ Available at: <http://www.levada.ru/17-03-2014/10-let-spustya>. Consulted on: 25 May 2015.

¹⁵ Available at: <http://www.levada.ru/27-09-2013/vladimiru-putinu-doverayut-no-voskhishchayutsya-im-menshe>. Consulted on: 25 May 2015.

In 2014, the level of public support for Putin reached the same level as before his election in 2012 – 58%.¹⁶ In spite of this, 24% of respondents said that the main aim of Putin's approach to his presidential duties was only to stay as in power long as possible, while 21% believe that only Putin and his team can keep social order and bring stability to the country.¹⁷ Today, 86% of people support Putin and more than 55% are persuaded that the situation is developing in a desirable direction.

Analysis of the level of public support for political institutions in Russia in 2011-14 has shown the following results: the level of public confidence has increased from 50%¹⁸ in 2011 to 55%¹⁹ in 2013. Public support for the government in 2011 and 2014 has increased from 30%²⁰ to 60%.²¹ Public approval of the State Duma has increased from 20 % in 2011 to 53% in 2015.²² All of this means that the president of Russia still has the highest level of public support in comparison to other public institution. Nonetheless, their level has also significantly increased throughout the last two years. Such a change can be related to the Ukrainian situation and the strong support of those institutions towards Putin's initiatives and policies, as Russia remains a country with an authoritarian regime and all power continues to be concentrated in the office of the president. This is why all the most important decisions are made by the president and every institution is subordinated to him – together with the low level of political culture of society, this brings an astoundingly high level of public support for the President of the Russian Federation.

The Ukrainian revolution of 2013-14 has pluralized aims. The initial goal was connected to Ukrainian aspiration to join the European Union. The level of public support for Euro-integration in Ukraine was considerably high – more than 60% of society was for it. On the other hand in Russia, according to polls, 29% of society estimates Euro-integration to be negative for Russia.²³ Such a situation can mainly be explained by the negative image of the European Union created by official state mass media and also by popularizing the idea of the “Russian World”

¹⁶ Available at: <http://www.levada.ru/06-03-2014/igry-v-polzu-putina>. Consulted on: 25 May 2015.

¹⁷ Available at: <http://www.levada.ru/06-11-2013/kurs-vladimira-putina-v-predstavleniyakh-rossiyan>. Consulted on: 25 May 2015.

¹⁸ Available at: <http://www.levada.ru/24-11-2011/doverie-rossiyan-institutam-vlasti-i-obshchestva>. Consulted on: 25 May 2015.

¹⁹ Available at: <http://www.levada.ru/07-10-2013/doverie-institutam-vlasti>. Consulted on: 25 May 2015.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ Available at: <http://www.levada.ru/22-04-2015/aprelskie-reitingi-odobreniya-i-doveriya> Consulted on: 25 May 2015.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ Available at: <http://www.finmarket.ru/life/txt.asp?id=3610359>. Consulted on: 25 May 2015.

(created by Dugin), which has become kind of an official doctrine for Russian foreign policy. This is why the launching of the Eurasian Economic Union in 2014 has gained so much support in Russian society and positively affected the ratings of President Putin and the main Russian political institutions subordinate to him.

All of the above has influenced the public opinion of Russians towards the Ukrainian revolution. A joint Russian-Ukrainian investigation of public opinion towards the “Euro-revolution” held in March 2014 in Ukraine has shown that 63% of Russians characterize their position as neutral – they do not support any side in the protests. 43% of the respondents declared that all the appearing protests in Ukraine are due to European influence (Western ideas), while 31% claimed it was because of growing nationalism in the region.²⁴

In order to present the chances for a similar Euro-revolution in Russia, all previous protest attempts in Russian society should be taken into consideration. Some of the first attempts of Russian society to fight for their freedom were the protests of Soviet society in 1991-1993 (Manege Square). These actions were motivated by the desire of residents to live in a democratic country, showing support for Yeltsin, and demanding the dismissal of Gorbachev. Those protests contained some features similar to the modern Euro-revolution in Ukraine – people were fighting against the then political regime, characterized by the demolishing of symbols of the regime, such as the monument to Dzerzhinsky in Moscow. Nonetheless these protests might also be explained by the general trend in the USSR at the time – a moment of state weakness, when Baltic countries initiated the process of separating from the Soviet empire.

Another kind of action started in 2005 – after the authorities introduced the Day of National Unity – was called “Russian March”. The title was meant to underline the main idea of the event – that all Russians were united under the nationalistic idea of an integrated Russian society. Many of the organizers were representatives of such social movements as “NASHI”, the Eurasian Youth Organization and other nationalistic organizations. Their aim is promoting Russian identity, national unity and counteracting illegal immigration.

All these actions could be characterized as local, without any influence on the whole of Russian society and without any revolutionary purpose. The first protest that took place that aimed to change some element of the socio-political order took place in 2010 in Kaliningrad. The protesters produced a resolution with demands to the authorities, mainly connected with their political rights (the principal one was connected to the cancellation of the previous elections for governor of the region). At the same time, they also protested legal limitations on the right to

²⁴ Available at: <http://www.levada.ru/03-03-2014/otnoshenie-zhitelei-ukrainy-i-rossii-k-sobytiyam-v-ukraine>. Consulted on: 25 May 2015.

hold public opposition meeting (changes implemented in Article 31 of the Russian constitution). It was presented by Limonov and supported by the Moscow Helsinki Group, the “Memorial” human rights movement and others. The movement was named “Strategy-31” and during the years 2009-2011, it organized a number of protest marches – mainly in Moscow – for the political rights of citizens. They were rather local and did not receive much public support throughout Russian society; the vast majority of society remained mostly uninterested in these kinds of actions.

Although all these public actions did not much have much real effect, they may be viewed as a sort of preparation of Russian society towards greater changes and social activity. This culminated with the protest movement that took place after the elections to the State Duma in 2011, on Bolotnaya Square, which more than 100,000 citizens took part in. This incident might have been perceived as a real chance for Russians to initiate changes in the political system and for the country to move towards democracy. That is why the authorities implemented strict sanctions against the protesters. Among those arrested were Navalny – candidate to the State Duma in 2011 and one of the main opponents to the Putin regime in Russia.

Through the whole of 2012, civil society in Russia continued to play a more active role in public life, but it met with increased repressions following Putin’s return to the Kremlin. Street protests continued throughout the year, though they dropped in size in the months after the presidential inauguration. The opposition initiated Internet elections for the 45-member Coordinating Council – the institutional body that was thought to coordinate the activities of the opposition. This resulted with a range of protests throughout 2012, although they were not as sizeable. This was probably because of the fact that they had no precise aims (a combination of Russian marches, Strategy-31” marches and meetings of the opposition), and thus they did not have much popular support. The largest opposition protest in Russia in 2012 took place in Lubyanka Square – where more than 15,000 protesters gathered. Such a decrease in numbers might be explained by the common trend in public opinion – influenced by the media – of polarizing society, as well as by the coming presidential elections. Also worthy of consideration is the fact that the majority of society (88%) is convinced that the only trustworthy source of information is television, thus all images of the opposition created by the media affect the level of public support for any protest action. Also, in Russian society, opposition to the current political regime is mainly associated with such populists as Zhirinovskiy, or communists such as Zyuganov.

Another factor is that only 21% of Russians consider democracy as the best political system for Russia; the Soviet political system still has a large number of adherents and admirers. Russians do not seem ready to separate themselves from

Soviet ideals – 54% are still persuaded that the state should plan the economy, and only 29% believe in a market economy.²⁵

Although on the international arena Bolotnaya Square became a sign of possible democratic transformation in Russia, sanctions against the participants, as well as information spread in the media against the opposition, combined with Putin's return to power, all affected the level of public support for these events. Statistical data shows that more than 60% of Russian society in 2013 had no idea of the events that took place on Bolotnaya Square²⁶ or of the sanctions imposed on its participants. This means that the authorities try not to draw attention to these events and attempt to misinform people about the main ideas of the protest (for example the film "Anatomy of a Protest", produced by NTV).

Afterwards, there were some other actions that were strongly connected with Bolotnaya Square, including a wave of mass actions in Moscow such as "March against the Means" (Марш против подделцов). The main reason for these protests was connected with the unfair court verdicts against people participating in the Bolotnaya Square protests. The most recent marches were held in March-April 2014, including a march against the annexation of Crimea and support for Ukraine (around 100,000 participants) and the "March for Truth" in support of fair mass-media and against manipulation through information.

All these facts should serve as argumentation towards the conclusion that Russian society is not ready at the moment for a revolution similar to the one that took place in Ukraine – despite the fact that Russian society can be characterized as polarized and split into two parts: the vast majority that supports the current political regime and is affected by the official state media, and the rest – those who are mainly associated with the audience of the Internet website "Dozhd", "*Novaya Gazeta*" newspaper, as well as the people who actively participated in the events on Bolotnaya and Lubyanka Squares. It is a fact that all the marches had different aims and its participants – even after the formation of the Coordinating Council – do not have a single unifying leader. Despite this they did play a role in correcting Putin's political regime, influenced the increase of the level of his public support and the implementation of new laws limiting the right to assemble publically.

After successful operations in Ukraine, including the annexation of Crimea and the destabilization of the Eastern regions, it seemed like public support of the current political regime in Russia was so high that nothing could destabilize the situation. Nevertheless, the murder of opposition leader Boris Nemtsov on 27 February 2015, caused an unpredictable outburst of public dissatisfaction. It was perceived

²⁵ Available at: <http://www.levada.ru/24-02-2014/luchshaya-politicheskaya-i-ekonomicheskaya-sistema>. Consulted on: 24 May 2015.

²⁶ Available at: <http://www.levada.ru/04-10-2013/bolotnoe-delo>. Consulted on: 25 May 2015.

entirely as a political murder and it prompted a large united action. On 1 March 2015 thousands of people poured out onto the streets. The scale of the protest action was comparable to the last Bolotnaya Square demonstration. European media presented this action as a new chance for Russian society to consolidate and organize itself against the existing regime. In Russia, this event did not affect the level of public confidence in the president – compared to the same period in 2014, it even increased from 16% (in March 2014) to 26% in March 2015.²⁷ This means that the very questionable murder of one of the main opposition activists in Russia has not affected levels of public support for Putin or other political institutions. It means that the level of trust and public support for political institutions in the country has reached a significantly high level and there is no reason for the general public to think that these events might be somehow related.

All this put together not only demonstrates the unlimited power of Putin and his subordinated institutions, but also shows the power of the Russian media that is affecting public opinion.

Conclusion

When analysing the situation in both Russia and Belarus and comparing it to the Ukrainian reality, it becomes obvious that these three societies are developing in different ways. Despite the fact that all of them have similar backgrounds (the years spent together in the USSR), only Russia is today attempting to rebuild “the Empire”, using all the tools at its disposal. These include creating a Customs Union with the perspective of constructing a Eurasian Union, in order to reunite all ex-Soviet countries. Belarus has been developing in its own unique way – trying to recreate the Soviet institutional system, instituting Russian as the official language and accepting all the technical achievements of the globalised world, while trying to stave off the process of democratization in an atomized society. Russia, on the other hand, established an authoritarian country with limited human rights laws and a totally coordinated system of mass media which has resulted in a polarized society and the absence of a middle class.

Ukrainian society, in comparison, has become the only one of the three that has abandoned almost all the symbols of its Soviet past (the last remains – monuments of Lenin – were destroyed during the Euro-revolution). Throughout the years of independence, the Ukrainian educational system has supported the creation of a new generation of people who value Ukrainian language, culture and history. The majority of this generation was present during the Maidan revolution in winter 2013-14.

²⁷ Putin: trust and estimation. Levada centre. Available at: <http://www.levada.ru/27-03-2015/vladimir-putin-doverie-otsenki-otnoshenie> Consulted on: 1 June 2015.

Today, Belarusian society has little opportunity to develop its own language; it is mainly – with the implementation of Russian – used as a second language, albeit an official one. The history of the country is strongly connected with Russia; they celebrate the same holidays and the country's official symbols remain distinctly rooted in the Soviet past. All of these factors deeply affect the development of a Belarusian national identity; combined with the level of public support for the Belarusian President, public opinion towards European integration and the Euro-revolution in Ukraine. These factors mean that today, Belarusian society is not yet ready for such radical changes to the political system as those that took place in Ukraine.

Analysing all the previous attempts of Russian society to change the political reality of the country, and taking into consideration the reaction of the authorities (as well as the opposition) and the level of public support for those activities, it should be concluded that at the moment, Russia and its people are also not ready for revolution, although circumstances could change according to the global situation. Following the international sanctions imposed on Russia after its annexation of Crimea, the situation in Russian society might develop in quite an unpredictable direction. But the fact that the opposition has no precise leader and the level of public support for Putin and his institutions is still very high – especially after the successful launch of the Eurasian project – means there is no chance for the development of a Ukrainian scenario in Russia.

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Potencjalne skutki ukraińskiej rewolucji dla Rosji i Białorusi – współczesne trendy

Ludmiła Dackowa

Rozwój sytuacji społeczno-politycznej na Ukrainie coraz częściej wywołuje kwestie związane z możliwością podobnych zmian w innych republikach postradzieckich, a mianowicie w Rosji i na Białorusi. Związane to jest głównie z bliskością i podobieństwem społeczno-kulturowym tych państw, oraz wspólną przeszłością. W celu odpowiedzi na pytanie o szanse na realizację ukraińskiego scenariusza w Rosji i Białorusi niezbędnym jest przeprowadzenie analizy gotowości społeczeństw obu państw do zmian oraz stabilności istniejących reżimów politycznych, ocenianej pod względem poziomu poparcia społecznego oraz poziomem zaufania do poszczególnych instytucji. Niniejszy artykuł jest poświęcony tej analizie, a także przedstawia wcześniejsze doświadczenia rewolucyjne obu państw oraz opis zmian, które zaszły w społeczeństwie rosyjskim i białoruskim w związku z wydarzeniami na Ukrainie.

Потенциальные последствия украинской революции для России и Беларуси – новые тенденции

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Развитие социально-политической ситуации на Украине все чаще наталкивает на вопросы, связанные с возможностью подобных событий в других постсоветских республиках, а именно в России и на Беларуси. Это связано главным образом с близостью и социально-культурным сходством этих стран, и общим прошлым. Для того, чтобы ответить на вопрос о шансах реализации украинского сценария в России и Беларуси, необходимо проанализировать общество обеих стран на предмет готовности к переменам и стабильности существующих политических режимов, вычисляемых с точки зрения уровня общественной поддержки и уровня доверия в отдельных институциях. Эта статья посвящена такому анализу, а также показывает предыдущий революционный опыт двух стран и описание изменений, которые произошли в белорусском и российском обществе в связи с событиями на Украине.



