East, West, Within, Without: Identities in the Political Discourse of Belarus and Ukraine, 2001-2010

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The aim of this study is to analyze the
• mass media discourse,
• analytical papers, and
• high political discourse on Europe and European Union in Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia in the 2000s in order to distinguish the prevalent meanings of “Europe” in the political discourse of these countries.

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Scope and Sources of the Study

- A sample of periodical materials of national and regional mass media of Russia (70 items) and Ukraine (50 items) on the basis of the EastView database.
- A sample of Internet news resources from Belarus (15 items).
- Initially, the time scope embraced items of 1991 and later (as the moment of discourse penetration was undefined). Eventually, the sources that got into the sample dated from 1996-2010.
- After we limited the time scope of the sample to 2001-2009 there were 118 items left in the sampling (55 from Russia, 50 from Ukraine, 13 from Belarus).

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Frequency of mentioning “Europeanization” in the press

YEAR

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Summary I

• First, publications on Europeanization appeared in Russia (2001), then in Ukraine (2003) and, finally, in Belarus (2009).

• The amount of publication varies from year to year in line with political dynamics, and there is no “leader” among the countries.

• The biggest proportion of publications on Europeanization dates back to 2009, the smallest to 2001, which indicates of a general growth of the topic of Europeanization in publications.

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Attitude to Europeanization in the press

![Bar chart showing the attitude of different countries towards Europe.

- Negative to Europe
- Neutral to Europe
- Positive to Europe

Countries included:
- Russia
- Ukraine
- Belarus

The chart indicates the number of negative, neutral, and positive messages from each country towards Europe.}
Summary II

• In Russia, the prevalent vision would combine both positive and negative attitude to Europeanization or treat it as an objective social and political process, a specific form of modernization and Westernization (alternative to Americanization.)
• In Ukraine and Belarus, the positive vision dominated.
• The peaks in publications could be associated with declaring the common economic space between Russia and the EU in 2002, Ukraine’s official course on the EU in 2005, and the inclusion of Belarus in the Eastern Partnership program in 2009.

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# Meanings of “Europeanization”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cultural traditions</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Democratization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 EU enlargement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Europe as community</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 European integration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 “European standards”</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Modernization</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Security</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Westernization</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Summary III

- The meaning “Cultural traditions” that dominated in Russia referred to a broad understanding of Europeanization that did not touch exactly on politics.

- Ukraine’s most popular meanings of Europeanization include the “European standards” and “Cultural traditions.”

- The treatment of Europeanization in Belarus favored mostly the aspects of democratization and modernization.

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Political Analytics on Europeanization

Belarus: a “new hegemonic discourse” (Ousmanova), “Westoxication” (Pikulik), “there is a difference between truly European values and Europe as the EU” (Fours).

Ukraine: “it is levelling-out the fundament of Ukrainianness” (Okara), “a band tying together Ukrainian politics” (Poselsky).

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Positions towards Europe in High Political Discourse and Public Opinion

• Sample: annual speeches of the Presidents and prime-ministers of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine before the Parliament (in Ukraine irregular).

• National public opinion surveys in Ukraine and Belarus.

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Russia [framework]

• The Russian President’s annual speeches before the Parliament did not often address the EU issues in the 2000s.
• The topics mentioned covered: common economic space, energy policy in Europe, the European security system, European and Russian political and cultural values.
• The EU is called Russia’s “partner”, an important yet equal actor. The “EU” was a positive reference, whereby Russia best intentions in fulfilling its economic interest were reiterated.

Ukraine

- Ukrainian leaders’ speeches in 2001-2009 concerning the EU constantly involved more than one actor or strategy.
- In 2000, the EU has been declared Ukraine’s political course: «There is and there can be no other way for Ukraine but European integration» (2002).
- The peak of pro-European sentiments was in late 2007 (67%), while in mid-2010 it stabilized at about 50% (data of the “Democratic Initiatives” Foundation).

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Belarus

• The EU was mentioned more regularly. The popular contexts included: combining cooperation and integration with Russia and the EU, European security in energy and migration, EU enlargement, and economic relations with the EU.

• The country specific was that the idea of matching "European standards" was not even discursively accepted. The normative EU rhetoric was refuted.

• "Europe" was used strategically – to bargain with Russia: formula "Belarus is an independent European country" was coined (2003).

• The proportion of pro-European population grew, and pro-Russian was falling, so that in mid-2009 they equaled at 41%. By 2010 isolationism and "pragmatic" treatment gained in popularity. After the 011 crisis, pro-EU opinion grew up to 45% (Data of IISEPS).

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Conclusions

1. Lying between the EU and Russia, Belarus and Ukraine have to coordinate their external policy both at the level of discourse and institutional building, between these two regional leaders. The major leverage of EU’s influence in the region was the expected promise of the membership perspective and then – cooperation within the Eastern Partnership programme.

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Conclusions

2. Ukraine was more pervasive in promoting the state’s pro-European orientations; as a result, a stronger idea of the country’s belonging to the Western (and not to the Russian civilization) became popular and gained public support.

3. In Belarus the Europeanization discourse appeared at the point when a substantial proportion of the elite and the population had been socialized in the rhetoric of isolationism and sovereignty.

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