

Abstract

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Mapping Oppositional Discourses in Today's Belarus across Languages and Platforms

In post-Soviet Belarus, the public sphere is highly polarized, but it differs from its 'elder neighbor' Russia in two ways. First, the basic political cleavage is similar more to those in the Baltic States, as national consolidation in Belarus has been linked to the movement towards the EU. Second, this split also has a language dimension. Our research shows that catch-all electoral Twitter hashtags #electionsby and #electby were successfully appropriated by the liberal opposition, while on Facebook a split between liberal-oppositional discussants and anti-liberal critics has formed, being structured mostly along the language borders of discussion.