



Short paper

VIKTORIA KOZLOVA: LACK OF CHANGE IN BELARUS

Abstract: There is a question as to why there has not been any type of change in Belarus. This article focuses on answering this question by arguing that the absence of resources, knowledge, and ambition of Belarusian citizens contributes to the lack of change.

Many Western countries have attempted to foster directly and indirectly political change in Belarus, however none of them have succeeded. The question rises – why there has not been any change? This article refers to three types of changes – political, economic and social. The question can only be answered once one understands the Belarusian culture, people, and society. The argument is that the people themselves lack the resources, knowledge and ambition for the change.

A majority of the people struggle to live on a daily basis. There certainly are some wealthy people, however they have accomplished that under the current regime and dramatic change may jeopardize their current economic wellbeing. Citizens live calculating everyday how much they can spend today on food or on other day to day necessities. They are occupied thinking how much they will be bringing in financially until next month and consumed with considerations whether they will be able to afford a warm jacket for their children or not. These types of thoughts occupy the majority of the citizens on a daily basis. In order to create change in Belarus there will need to be some expenses – travelling to the capital, reading the newspaper (or internet), and paying the appropriate political party. Since survival is their main priority, the thought of participating in political change in Belarus is not on their mind. It is difficult, if not impossible, to be hopeful and dream of a different and better tomorrow.

Secondly, many of the people lack sufficient knowledge to understand how political, economic and social transformation may occur. There is a young generation that is gaining more knowledge about the world through social sites. They do see that in other countries life seems better than in Belarus. Most of the youth want the change but they are occupied with their studies, working or raising families. All three of these considerations take the majority of their energy. They require attention, money and diligence. So even though young generation may have some of the knowledge they choose not to participate in political or social change, as survival is more important to them.



Ambition and want for change is the most critical element. If, some of the people simply do not care in what society they live – they will not contribute to the change. Simply wanting change will not create it either. Many do want change but they do not do anything about it. According to the countless recent examples – those who did have ambition and worked for changes were severely punished for it. In addition, there are numerous examples unknown to the international community, which are undisclosed since their exposure could result in additional punishment of a small circle of people. There is a large group of people outside of Belarus who wish for change and have the ambition to affect change. Unfortunately this does not, and most likely will not, contribute in any way for a change in Belarus for two main reasons. First if the change was to begin, under many international sanctions and threats the Belarusian government would have had to give in. However, Belarus is structured in such a way that it can still survive (and I mean barely survive) without the Western community. Second the contributions made by Non-Governmental Organizations are very limited due to their fear of expulsion or Belarus's non-reaction. They are simply ineffective when it comes to contributing to change because Belarus does not operate under the influence of others.

In conclusion a lack of change in Belarus exists due to a lack of resources, knowledge and optimism. Once there is change in some of these factors, a possible transformation may occur. Until then Belarus will continue to go on with its own pace.