

(Online) ISSN 2424-6034

**THE PERCEPTION OF THREATS TO NATIONAL WELFARE:
THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL OPTIMISM, SELF-CONFIDENCE,
AND OF SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL TRUST**

*IRMINA MATONYTĖ, VAIDAS MORKEVIČIUS, AINIUS LAŠAS,
VAIDA JANKAUSKAITĖ*

Drawing on the concepts of national security, risk society and human development, in this article we analyze threats to the welfare of society. Our analysis is based on the social constructivist approach and a representative survey of the Lithuanian population (carried out by VILMORUS in spring, 2016; N = 1004). Our research confronts the holistic understanding of the welfare of a society, which ignores the possibility that individual categories of threats can have different effects on a society's welfare (evaluations based on both objective and subjective criteria). By recognizing the emphasis of social constructivism on social values, as well as the sociodemographic and experiential factors in the formation of images and evaluations, we also pay attention to the role of trust in the perception of threats. Intervening into the academic debate on various aspects of trust and the role that they play in assessing threats to the welfare of society as well as the possibilities for empirical measurements, we distinguish four concepts of trust which are found in social psychology, social value and political culture studies. The data suggest that social optimism, along with institutional, social trust and individual self-confidence, has a complex and differentiated effect on the individual perception of various threats (military, social, economic, ecological, political, moral-religious and health-related threats). Social optimism and trust in public administration authorities has the most visible effect on assessing the impact of threats, while the assessment of military threats is the least receptive to trust factors. Our results also include recommendations for public policy decision-makers.

THE CHANGES OF GEORGIA'S SECURITY POLITICS AFTER 2012 AND THE SHIFTING SECURITY IDENTITY

TOMAS JANELIŪNAS

After the change of government in 2012–2013, Georgia had suspended the development of national security sector. Georgian politicians, since 2012, have softened the rhetoric towards Russia and have chosen a tactic of “let us wait and not provoke”. The attempts to desecuritize Russia in Georgia is in opposite to the increased securitization of Russia in NATO and the EU. The potential threats coming from Russia have been deliberately desecuritized in Georgia in seeking to avoid any increasing tension with Russia and to evade the potential aggressive reaction from Moscow. The article relays on the constructivist approach and argues that the changes in Georgia's security and foreign policy did occur due to the dynamics of security identity. The dynamics of social identity in Georgia might have happened because of the changes in its domestic politics – a tacit agreement between Georgia's society and political elite to review the priorities and values of national politics – as well as the changes in the international environment that restricted certain choices of security strategies for Georgia. Having in mind the security strategies prescribed for small states in academic literature, most often Georgia remains in an undefined and uncertain phase which could be labelled as “strategic waiting”. Georgia is still aspiring for the Euro-Atlantic integration and seeking to not confront Russia at the same time. However, the article concludes that such an interim status in between “alliance” and “sitting of the fence” (or preserving an autonomy) is lacking clear argumentation and remains very dependent on external influences, first of all – on the dynamics of relations between the West and Russia.

IS MODERN DEMOCRACY A POLITICAL REGIME?

GINTAS KARALIUS

The object of this article is to offer an innovative theoretical attempt to conceptualize democracy. The main idea is to base the critique of the concept on one question: can modern democracy be understood in terms of a

political regime or should it be viewed as a distinct entity? The article argues that to understand what modern democracy is, political philosophy must take into account a twofold challenge: first, from a reductionist inclination (perpetuated by social sciences), to view democracy as an institutional form of rule, determined by various constellations of sociological factors; second, from a normative trend, to conceptualize democracy as an abstract ideal, applicable to all forms of government. The article argues that the fundamental ideas of modern democracy – the sovereignty of the people and the equality of citizens – make it impossible to see democracy merely as a political regime. To understand modern democracy, one must see it as a universal principle of legitimation of power, which can take the shape of various regimes.

**THE POLITIZATION OF PAVEL FLORENSKY'S *EXPECTED
POLITY IN THE FUTURE*: FROM "CORRECT READING"
TO "TODAYIZATION"**

VIDAS DUŠEVIČIUS

The article deals with a search for the interpretations of Pavel Florensky's *Expected Polity in the Future* in various Russian conservative intellectual groups (Zavtra, Izborsk Club, Alexander Prokhanov, Alexander Dugin and the people around him etc.). Also, the authors discuss the ideological field in which Florensky's ideas are expressed, mentioning certain issues related to the authenticity, consistency and ambiguity of Florensky's political insights as well as the evolution of the political mind of the thinker. The authors of this article uphold the view that the interpretations of *Expected Polity in the Future* often are characterized by "correct reading", "todayization" – certain preconceived criteria for the evaluation and selection of the philosophical mind in Russian contemporary conservative intellectual groups. The abovementioned elements of the interpretations of Florensky's *Expected Polity in the Future* reflect far broader trends of the modern Russian conservative mind, as a field of the search for ideology, in which such thinkers as Ivan Ilyin and Nikolai Berdyaev are involved.