

UKRAINIAN POLITICAL SPACE: CONFLICTS AND RECOMPOSITIONS

SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

26 and 27 June 2014, Lyon, France

Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Lyon – ENS de Lyon –
Université Lumière Lyon 2

The events taking place in Ukraine today can not leave researchers in social sciences indifferent. That is why the Institute of Political Studies of Lyon, ENS of Lyon and Lyon University are organizing a conference on the Ukrainian political space with a particular interest in forms of reconstruction and reformulation of political identities. This conference will provide a forum for multidisciplinary discussions of methods and reflection, in order to better understand contemporary Ukraine transformations. This conference will provide a space and time for researchers to develop tools and methods for envisaging contemporary Ukraine from a critical distance.

The conference will be organized around eight themes.

The first axis of study will focus on how history and memory **articulate the short-term view of events happening in Ukraine compared to the long-term view which establishes the identity of this country**. We will connect contemporary confrontations between actors, the powers of this country and Ukraine's own past in order to know how the past can help us to understand the multiple meanings of contemporary politics. The conference will also provide a renewed focus on the relationship between the short-term and the long-term and in doing so, to re-think the relationship between the contemporary and former discourses about Ukraine and its identity.

The second conference theme will be the question of **the relationship between Ukraine and Europe** in order to understand in what way this country is a European one and to better understand why Ukraine wants to get closer to. On the one hand, there is the debate taking place in this country on the question of acceptance into the European Union in the light of their historical relations with Russia. On the other hand, it is important to analyse how the debate regarding the presence of Ukraine in Europe echoes the older debate about the relationships between Western Europe and Eastern Europe. Finally, the debate on relationships between Ukraine and Europe fits into the scope of the debate on the future of the European Union, but also on the contemporary critics of the euro.

The third focus of the conference will examine the **relationships between Ukraine and Russia** and the place of this relationship in contemporary Ukrainian public space. We propose to question both the historical dimension of these links, especially in the

field of language and culture, and their geographic dimension. The question of the place of Russian culture in Ukraine will be related to the question of the history and memory, the question of contemporary relations between Ukraine and Russia, and the place of Ukraine in the international dimension of Russia. Particular attention will be paid to the identity of the Crimea and the role of this region in the debate concerning relations between Ukraine and Russia.

The conference will also discuss **the role of the economy in the contemporary debate on Ukraine**. It will analyse both the place of the debate in the economic future of Ukraine in the political debate, the role of energy issues in the public debate and the role of economic factors in contemporary political confrontations. A fundamental question about the meaning of Ukrainian debate in the field of political economy will be the question of confrontation between the logic of economic independence and sovereignty and the logic of dependence and submission to the logic of assistance.

In addition, the conference will address the question of political debate and how it is organized and expressed. Reflection will focus on the **analysis of Ukrainian and French media discourses and on the analysis of political discourses in Ukraine but also in France**, in order to compare the representations of the Ukrainian conflict. The conference will study new forms of public debate, new expressions of political discourse and new media that build a renewed public space, both through the use of the Internet and through the emergence of a more-or-less visible and more-or-less public underground space, parallel to the legitimate and institutionalised public space.

The sixth conference theme will be the question of the **limitations of information, communication and repression**. In situations of tension, a form of institutional violence is exercised by the state to limit public debate and control the public space. Some forms of symbolic violence are exercised by the actors themselves, thus limiting their expression in a form of self-censorship. The conference will address these aspects of the limitation of information and communication and will compare the Ukrainian situation with other contemporary situations in which censorship has been exercised.

The seventh theme of the conference will be the question of **political identities in contemporary Ukraine**: identities of traditional political actors (parties, authorities, associations, religions), but also new identities involved in contemporary political debate. The conference will analyse collective mobilisations and other forms of expression of political identities in the urban public spaces in large cities, but also in other places of Ukrainian public space. Finally, it will analyse the confrontation between the authorities and the criticism they are subjected to, but also the confrontation between power and counter-power during the recent events.

Finally, in the particular context of the upcoming election to the European Parliament in European Union countries, it will be important to address **the place of the**

Ukrainian events in the electoral debate and in the candidates' discourses in France and in other European countries. Events in Ukraine are certainly related to the evolution of the European Union and the prospects for its future enlargement. They question the EU vision of European identity and the role of its institutions in the political development of neighbouring countries. Understanding the meanings of events taking place in Ukraine will help us to better understand the meanings of the evolution of our political system, including, in particular, the construction of new identities and new actors and a shifting of the public debate.

This conference aims to create a space for exchange and dialogue between the various actors in public spaces – political scientists, social scientists, journalists and actors in public debate. It is hoped that this dialogue will continue beyond this conference.

Proposals should be submitted no later than April 20, 2014 as a 500-word abstract through the web platform: <http://ukraine2014.sciencesconf.org>.

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