
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

UDC 327(476)“1991/2021”

TOPICS OF DISSERTATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEFENDED IN BELARUS IN 1991–2021

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The author of the paper analyses topics of the international affairs dissertations defended in Belarus between 1991 and 2021 in the specialities “International law. European law”, “History of international relations and foreign policy”, “Politics of international relations, global and regional development”, and other related domains. Based on the number of dissertations and the range of topics covered, it is established that Belarus has developed a distinctive national school of international affairs scholarship since gaining its independence. After reviewing the successes and shortcomings field by field, it is concluded that historical research dominates the field, representing over 70 % of all international affairs dissertations defended. Increasing the number of doctors of science, post-doctoral and doctoral students, and defences, are identified as priorities for future development.

Keywords: international affairs studies; historiography of international relations; dissertation; international relations; foreign policy; international law; politics of international relations.

Образец цитирования:

Гурин АВ. Тематика диссертаций по международным отношениям, защищенных в Беларуси в 1991–2021 гг. *Журнал Белорусского государственного университета. Международные отношения.* 2023;1:3–13 (на англ.).
EDN: JLSWTM

For citation:

Huryn AV. Topics of dissertations in international affairs defended in Belarus in 1991–2021. *Journal of the Belarusian State University. International Relations.* 2023;1:3–13.
EDN: JLSWTM

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ТЕМАТИКА ДИССЕРТАЦИЙ ПО МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫМ ОТНОШЕНИЯМ, ЗАЩИЩЕННЫХ В БЕЛАРУСИ В 1991–2021 гг.

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Анализируются темы диссертаций, защищенных в Беларуси в 1991–2021 гг. по специальностям “История международных отношений и внешней политики”, “Международное право. Европейское право”, “Политические проблемы международных отношений, глобального и регионального развития”, и смежные вопросы. На основе анализа количества диссертаций и их тематики установлено, что в постсоветский период в стране сформировалась национальная школа международных исследований, представителями которой были рассмотрены достижения и проблемы каждой отрасли науки о международных отношениях. Обоснован тезис о популярности науки о международных отношениях в определенный период, за который были защищены более 70 % диссертаций. Названы такие проблемы развития науки о международных отношениях, как незначительное количество защищаемых докторских диссертаций, уменьшение количества докторантов и аспирантов, а также нечастые защиты диссертаций по международным проблемам.

Ключевые слова: международные исследования; историография международных отношений; диссертация; международные отношения; внешняя политика; международное право; политические проблемы международных отношений.

Introduction

The production and defence of dissertations, particularly doctoral dissertations, reflect the usefulness and maturity of an area of study. Over the past 30 years, Belarus' national school of international affairs scholarship has developed, showing notable progress in the number of dissertations written and completed. 160 candidate dissertations and 27 doctorate dissertations were submitted between 1991 and 2021, the vast majority of them were defended. These figures indicate that a system of training for academics of international politics has been established [1; 2]. Nevertheless, barring a few rare publications, the subjects of the defended dissertations have evaded a thorough examination. As a result, we examine the foreign policy dissertations defended in Belarus since independence.

Owing to the complexity and interdisciplinary character of the international affairs domain, dissertations in some of the following academic specialities are covered initially in this evaluation: 12.00.10 “International law. European law”, 07.00.05 (now 07.00.15) “History of international relations and foreign policy”, and 23.00.04 “Politics of international relations, global and regional development”, 23.00.01 “Theory and philosophy of politics, history and methodology of political science”, 07.00.02 “National history”, 07.00.03 “General history”, and 23.00.02 “Political institutions, processes and technologies”. To determine the research gaps and

recommend prospective areas of study, we looked at the dissertation themes in each speciality.

A radically new era in the development of Belarusian social sciences began with the turn of the 1990s. Deep changes occurred, one of which was the emergence of a national school of foreign affairs scholarship.

In the domain of the history of international relations and Belarusian foreign policy, two main study fields emerged between the 1960s and 1980s. The first covered the theory and history of European governments' foreign policy and international relations from the late Middle Ages until the end of the 20th century. The second was concerned with Belarus' post-World War II foreign policy and diplomatic history. The topics have significantly broadened since Belarus gained independence to cover contemporary foreign policy of Belarus and international relations. New topics have emerged, and old ones have been examined creatively from new angles.

In addition, there was a growing demand for research in fields that were in the purview of the all-union research institutes under the USSR. For example, areas like international politics and international law were only sometimes addressed. Early research lacked a national approach and depended on sparse data and theoretical frameworks. It should come as no surprise that these scholarly fields did not achieve high degrees of sophistication and confidence until the early 2000s.

Historical studies

The theory and history of international relations and foreign policy of foreign nations, as well as the history of international affairs, Belarusian foreign policy, and foreign relations during the Soviet era, were the primary

topics of historical research in international affairs, as previously noted.

The 1990s saw the emergence of the Belarusian academic school in the areas of international relations

theory, history, and foreign state policy. Belarusian scholars were building on the strong foundation of the Soviet era to explore previous topics and venture into new areas, such as international relations in the Far East, international security, or the emergence of a new international relations architecture in Europe. We look more closely at a few of these works below.

Dissertations in international relations in ancient, middle age and early modern history have been defended by K. A. Reviako, A. V. Martyniuk, V. I. Bobyshev, M. V. Gleb, E. A. Gurinov, A. I. Yeustratsyev, A. V. Yesman, G. A. Lastovskiy, A. A. Levshevich, A. A. Liubaya, Y. M. Moroz, P. D. Podberezkin, Y. V. Sitkevich, D. N. Cherkasov, E. K. Shimak¹. Even with certain successes, these studies still fall short of creating a distinct strand of research in Belarusian international relations studies. Admittedly, a significant portion of these works such as dissertations by V. I. Bobyshev, A. I. Yeustratsyev, G. A. Lastovskii, A. A. Lyubaya, Y. M. Moroz, P. D. Podberezkin, Y. Y. Sitkevich, and A. K. Shimak deal with international relations in Eastern Europe and Russian foreign policy. This is indicative of Belarus' relatively high standard of slavic studies research, particularly at the Belarusian State University, where seven of this eight dissertations in this field were completed, including four under the guidance of A. A. Yanovsky, the head of the department of Russian history.

It appears that the subject of international relations during the interwar years (1919–1939) saw more productivity, as evidenced by the numerous dissertations,

including several doctorate dissertations, produced by V. A. Kosmach, G. G. Lazko, and N. N. Miazga (who also successfully defended a candidate dissertations). Candidate dissertations were defended by E. N. Dubrovko, I. V. Zhylynskaya, T. A. Prannik, and V. V. Repin². N. N. Miazga's doctoral dissertation, which is devoted to the historiography of the Soviet-Polish relations in 1918–1941 as presented in the Soviet and Polish sources, is particularly noteworthy because it was the first doctoral dissertations in international affairs defended in the speciality “Historiography, source study and methods of historical research”. This is the first comparative analysis of Polish and Soviet sources for the given time frame. The author summarises the major theories and findings of historians from both states and lists the major influences on the historiography. He concludes that the historiography served the political objectives of Poland and the Soviet state, respectively, and so contributed to the resurgence of both the Russian state in its Soviet form and the Polish independent state, while also making it extremely difficult to obtain objective scientific knowledge.

There has been an abundance of research done since independence on the history of international relations from 1945 to 1990. A popular topic for dissertation research in the 1980s and 1990s, it garnered much interest from young academics between 2000 and 2010, when two doctoral dissertations (by L. V. Loiko, M. V. Straliec) were defended and several candidate dissertations by N. V. Vialichka, L. V. Gavrilovez, E. O. Dubinka-Hushcha,

¹Martyniuk A. V. [Austria and Eastern Europe: establishment and development of political relations and cultural contacts (13th–15th centuries)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2021 (in Russ.) ; Reviako K. A. [The struggle between Rome and Karphagen for the world supremacy] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Russ.) ; Bobyshev V. I. [International relations in Eastern Europe in the 30–80s of the XV century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03, 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.) ; Gleb M. V. [The evolution of the imperial idea in Great Britain in the second half of the XIX century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Russ.) ; Gurinov E. A. [The county of Edessa in the system of the Crusader states (late 11th – mid 12th century)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; Yeustratsyev A. I. [Colonial policy of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia in the 17th–18th centuries] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; Yesman A. V. [The influence of the English East India Company on the politics and economy of Great Britain, 1763–1813] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; Lastovskiy G. A. [Political development of the Smolensk land at the end of the XIII–XV century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 1998 (in Russ.) ; Levshevich A. A. [Forming of the united Romanian state and France (1829–1864)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; Liubaya A. A. [Tatar factor in relationship of Eastern European states at the end of XVth – first third XVIth century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Belarus.) ; Moroz Y. M. [The public opinion in Russia and the problem of Anglo-Russian relations in 1907–1914] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; Podberezkin P. D. [“Yur'yev tribute” in Russian-Livonian relations of XIII – middle of XVI century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2020 (in Russ.) ; Sitkevich Y. V. Russian state in relations with the countries of Eastern Europe (the last quarter of XV and mid-fifties of the XVI century)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; Cherkasov D. N. [The foreign policy of Burgundy in 1419–1467] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2010 (in Russ.) ; Shimak E. K. [Russia's foreign policy priorities in relations with the Roman Curia (1469–1582)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2010 (in Russ.).

²Kosmach V. A. [Foreign cultural policy of Germany during the Weimar Republic (1919–1933)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03. M. : Inst. of World History of Russ. Academy of Sciences, 1995 (in Russ.) ; Lazko G. G. [European policy of Poland (1932–1939)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03, 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.) ; Miazga N. N. [Soviet-Polish relation in Soviet and Polish historiography of 1918–1941] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.09. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2016 (in Russ.) ; Dubrovko E. N. [The United Kingdom policy on the eastern borders of Poland (November 1918 – March 1923)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2015 (in Russ.) ; Zhylynskaya I. V. [Anglo-Soviet economic, scientific and cultural contacts in 1931–1939] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.) ; Miazga N. N. [Rapallo's politics and Polish-Soviet relations in 1922–1926] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1996 (in Russ.) ; Prannik T. A. [The problem of the Anschluss in Austro-German relations in 1918–1932] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; Repin V. V. [The Bessarabian problem in the foreign policy of the Soviet state (1918–1940)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2012 (in Russ.).

I. I. Kovyako, Y. A. Loseva, Y. S. Pavlovets, V. P. Skok³. L. V. Loiko's doctoral dissertation defended as a scientific report, is particularly noteworthy. The dissertations, which bridges two academic disciplines and draws from the author's professional and scholarly background, investigates the position and function of the Polish United Workers' Party among the Eastern Bloc's ruling communist parties, particularly in light of its status as the closest ally of the USSR Communist Party. It offers a comparative examination of the factors that contributed to the Polish socialist system's downfall as well as the party's transition into a social-democratic one.

Belarusian scholars have also been interested in the theme of international relations after the fall of the Soviet Union. They have studied a variety of topics related to world politics, including the unification of Germany and its connections with the Republic of Belarus, the role of the USA in contemporary international affairs, the emergence of a new international security architecture and the role of international organisations in these developments, European and post-Soviet integration, and other topics. Doctoral dissertations in the field were

defended by M. E. Chasnousky, L. M. Gaidukevich, and V. V. Froltsov (who also defended a candidate dissertations). I. M. Aulaska, K. B. Bencheva, O. B. Bychkouskaya, I. V. Vinokurova, A. M. Hryshel, I. V. Zuyeu, Mihub Nazar, P. A. Patapeyka, and V. V. Starychonak defended candidate dissertations⁴. M. E. Chesnovsky's dissertation is noteworthy. He and V. G. Shadurski were two of the first individuals to defend their doctorates in the speciality "History of international relations and foreign policy" before a specialised dissertation council in 2000. Another scholar, V. V. Froltsov, has gone through every phase of his academic career, from student to doctor at the faculty of international relations of the BSU.

Between 1991 and 2021, European integration has been drawing substantial interest from Belarusian international relations scholars, such as A. A. Valodzkin, T. V. Vorotnitskaya, O. P. Rubo, A. N. Sadovskaya, and A. M. Chyzh⁵. Another common area for postgraduate dissertations, defended primarily by foreign nationals from Asia and Africa, is the foreign policy of Asian and African states. Ali Osam Abed Ali, Ahmad Gani Al-Kataunekh, Bao Ying, Dibo Kava Usef, Muthana Mohamed, Asad Rashidi, Feras Sallum, Sahab Ahmed Ali

³Loiko L. V. [From communism to social-democracy: transformation of the left-wing party in Poland (1970–2000)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03, 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Russ.) ; *Straliec M. V.* [The FRG and problems of limitation and reduction of armaments in Europe (1949–1990)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2002 (in Russ.) ; *Kosmach E. N.* [Foreign policy of the United States of America toward Yugoslavia in 1943–1980] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2006 (in Russ.) ; *Vialichka N. V.* [France's policy towards German question (1945–1949)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2012 (in Russ.) ; *Gavrilov L. V.* [Foreign policy of the People's Republic of Poland on the "German question" between 1955 and 1970] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2012 (in Russ.) ; *Dubinka-Hushcha E. O.* [Foreign policy of Denmark (1972–2012)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2014 (in Russ.) ; *Kovyako I. I.* [British policy towards the German question in 1979–1990] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2012 (in Russ.) ; *Loseva Y. A.* [Cooperation between France and the Federal Republic of Germany in the field of science and higher education (1949–2019)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2021 (in Russ.) ; *Pavlovets Y. S.* [The Yugoslavian-Albanian relations in conditions of formation of the Soviet sphere of influence in the East Europe (November 1944 – November 1948)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2007 (in Russ.) ; *Skok V. P.* [The USA and the German question (autumn 1945–1954)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.).

⁴Chasnousky M. E. [System transformation in the Republic of Poland (1989–1999)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03, 07.00.05. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Belarus.) ; *Froltsov V. V.* [German policy toward Post-Soviet states (1991–2005)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2017 (in Russ.) ; *Gaidukevich L. M.* [Tourism in international relations of Central and Eastern Europe countries (1989–2009)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2010 (in Russ.) ; *Aulaska I. M.* [U.S. and EU policy towards regional conflicts at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2015 (in Russ.) ; *Bencheva K. B.* [The problem of ethno-confessional relations in the Balkans (late 80s – mid 90s of the XX century)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1999 (in Russ.) ; *Bychkouskaya O. B.* [Transatlantic relations in the field of international security in the U.S. foreign policy strategy (2001–2013)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., Minsk, 2015 (in Russ.) ; *Vinokurova I. V.* [International counteraction towards terrorism in 1990–2000s] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; *Hryshel A. M.* [The activities of the right-wing parties in the domestic and foreign politics of France (2002–2012)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; *Zuyeu I. V.* [European direction of Switzerland's foreign policy in 1991–2016] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2021 (in Russ.) ; *Mihub Nazar.* [NATO's advance to the East: the formation of the global anti-NATO public opinion of the Russian media (on the example of the newspapers "Pravda" and "Izvestia". 1986–1998)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1998 (in Russ.) ; *Patapeyka P. A.* [The Northern Ireland conflict in the international relations in 1990–es] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.05. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.) ; *Starychonak V. V.* [Participation of the USA in military conflicts in 1989–2000 evaluated by American public opinion] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Russ.) ; *Froltsov V. V.* [The East German factor and its influence on internal and foreign policy of the FRG in the nineties] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03, 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Russ.).

⁵Valodzkin A. A. [Transformation of EU and NATO relations with the states of the Baltic Sea region in 1991–2004] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Russ.) ; *Vorotnitskaya T. V.* [The policy of the European Union enlargement to the East from the end of the 1980s to 2004] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.) ; *Rubo O. P.* [The foreign policy course of the European Union towards the People's Republic of China (1975–2016)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; *Sadovskaya A. N.* [The European Union policy towards the developing countries in the 1990s–2000s] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; *Chyzh A. M.* [Energy policy of the European Union in 2006–2014] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2017 (in Russ.).

Nur, and Elmalyan Abduraof Salah are a few examples⁶. Another noticeable trend is the increase in dissertations defended by Chinese nationals, particularly in the early 2020s. Chinese postgraduates defended four theses between 2020 and 2023, two of which were completed during the period covered by this review.

Scholars from Belarus have also been engaged in the study of foreign policies of African and Asian states, these include N. E. Ablova, with a doctorate in the subject, and V. R. Borovoi, V. V. Voronovich, M. V. Danilovich, A. S. Dudaronak, A. S. Ioksha, D. L. Sheveliov, and M. V. Sheveliova with candidate dissertations⁷.

The subject areas covered in the domain of theory and history of international relations and policies of foreign states have not changed significantly since the Soviet era, but the topic range has expanded remarkably. Some themes, however, have received very little attention. These include early modern international relations, the foreign policy of European states during the Middle Ages, and international relations in the Ancient World.

The study of international relations throughout the 20th century has been rather patchy, with little attention paid to the foreign policies of the European nations that are closest to Belarus, and almost none to the theory of international relations. The majority of dissertation topics either belonged to a field of study that has been studied since the Soviet era or were primarily determined by the researcher's or consultant's academic interests. Even though more doctorates have been granted, some doctorate holders are ending their careers. Of the ele-

ven people who received doctorates during the covered period, three have passed away (L. V. Loiko, M. E. Chasnousky, and K. A. Reviako), and nearly half passed the 60-year mark (as of 2021).

The history of diplomatic relations, foreign policy, and diplomacy in Belarus has garnered increasing interest among Belarusian academics, which has led to a notable increase in the variety of dissertation topics. Scholars have focused on the early history of Belarusian statehood, examined Belarus's foreign policy in the 1920s and after 1944, as well as the foreign policies of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Rzeczpospolita, and the Belarusian principalities in the early Middle Ages. Research on the last three topics has been conducted only since the 1990s. Polish, Russian, and Soviet historiography have treated Belarusian history in a biased, one-sided manner, emphasising their states' political interests over scientific objectivity. The freedom to write without restriction about the independent foreign policies of the mediaeval Belarusian principalities did not come to historians of Belarus until the late 1980s. Interest in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's diplomatic history has shown an increasing trend, despite the dearth of dissertations on the subject. Dissertations in medieval history have been completed by A. V. Dzemidovich, A. V. Eroshevich, V. I. Kononovich, O. I. Lazorkina, S. A. Lashkevich, L. V. Mikalayeva, B. I. Sidorenko, and A. M. Yanushkevich⁸. Of these, eight dealt with foreign policy, diplomacy, and the structure of diplomatic services in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It must be acknowledged that eight dissertations are

⁶Ali Osam Abed Ali. [The foreign policy of Iraq in 2003–2014] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2015 (in Russ.) ; Ahmad Gani Al-Kataunekh. [The Jordanian's role in the peaceful process's establishment and development in the Nearest East in the 90s] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.) ; Bao Ying. [Chinese-Russian cooperation in education, science, technology and youth exchanges (2003–2018)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2020 (in Russ.) ; Dibo Kava Usef. [The Kurdish question in international relations in the Near and Middle East (1918–1990)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.05. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1999 (in Russ.) ; Muthana Mohamed. [Role of the Arabian countries in the question of the establishment of the new world information and communication order in the 70–90-th years] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2002 (in Russ.) ; Asad Rashidi. [The regional and international aspects of the strife of the Kurds for a self-determination (1980–90-s)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Russ.) ; Feras Sallum. [The role of Syria in inter-Arab relations in the Middle East (1991–2003)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2011 (in Russ.) ; Sahab Ahmed Ali Nur. [Iraq – USA relations (1980–2003)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2016 (in Russ.) ; Elmalyan Abduraof Salah. [The priorities of foreign policy of Libyan Jamahiriya (1969–2003)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2010 (in Russ.).

⁷Ablova N. E. [The CER and Russian emigration in China: international and political aspects of history (the first half of the XX century)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03. M. : Inst. of Far East of Russ. Academy of Sciences, 2005 (in Russ.) ; Borovoi V. R. [Chinese policy in Central Asia (1990s – beginning of the 21st century)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; Voronovich V. V. [Security problems in Kazakhstan's foreign policy in the 1990s] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Russ.) ; Danilovich M. V. [Central Asian vector of PRC's foreign policy in 2001–2013] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2015 (in Russ.) ; Dudaronak A. S. [Interstate relations between India and China in the second half of the XX – beginning of the XXI century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2006 (in Russ.) ; Ioksha A. S. [East Jerusalem in Jordanian-Palestinian relations (1949–2006)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2011 (in Russ.) ; Sheveliov D. L. [Genesis of the question of Palestine, 1882–1917] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.05. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Russ.) ; Sheveliova M. V. [The process of the Palestinian-Israeli settlement (1991–2001)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.).

⁸Dzemidovich A. V. T[he Grand Duchy of Lithuania in foreign affairs of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with Russia and Sweden in the first third of the XVII century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2012 (in Belarus.) ; Eroshevich A. V. [Influence of Napoleonic wars on public-political life of Belarus (1799–1815 years)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 2003 (in Belarus.) ; Kononovich V. I. [Diplomacy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1480 – the first quarter of the XVI century (relations with the Grand Duchy of Moscow and the Crimean Khanate)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 1995 (in Belarus.) ; Lazorkina O. I. [Diplomatic

not very much over 500 years. However, they continue to indicate observable advancements in Belarusian historiography in the field of international affairs research. For instance, V. V. Shved successfully defended his doctoral dissertation, which examined the socio-political conditions in the Belarusian territories at the beginning of the 19th century, as well as how Russian foreign policy strategists and planners saw Belarus⁹.

The 1990s also witnessed an increase in scholarly interest in the international dimensions of Belarusian state building and the foreign policies of the Belarusian People's Republic and BSSR in 1918–1920, the interwar years, and during World War II. Although this problem field has been studied in the past, the dominant ideological and political dogmas constrained their studies. After independence, academics in Belarus were free to write on subjects that were once restricted or forbidden. O. M. Borovskaya, L. A. Kovaleva, V. G. Mazec, D. A. Mihun, T. Yu. Paulava, D. V. Romanovsky, A. V. Tikhomirov, and V. M. Tsinkevich addressed these new topics in their dissertations¹⁰. The first scholarly investigations into the diplomatic endeavours of the Belarusian People's Republic were carried out in the 1990s by V. G. Mazec and T. Yu. Paulava. A. V. Tik-

homirov studied the Belarusian emigration. Regrettably, research on those subjects came to an end in the early 2000s.

For Belarusian historiographers of international relations during the Soviet era, one of the most extensively studied subjects was Belarusian foreign policy after 1944. It was not until the 1990s and 2000s that they were able to abandon the Soviet approaches and use fresh sources and a national historiographical concept to cover this period. S. F. Svilas, V. G. Shadurski (doctor of sciences), V. V. Borisenko, O. N. Vazhnik, A. F. Veliky, S. B. Garbitsky, N. E. Dziadzichkina, L. G. Karalionak, S. V. Ksenzov, L. V. Lyakhovich, R. G. Ramanousky, and L. P. Stanishevskaya (candidates of sciences) conducted dissertation research on Belarusian relations with foreign nations during the USSR¹¹.

Among these scientists, U. E. Snapkouski stands out as the first Belarusian historian to critically examine in-depth Belarusian foreign policy initiatives between 1944 and 1953. His dissertation, defended in 1993, examined Belarusian diplomacy from the republic's acquisition of foreign policy powers to the start of a new chapter in the development of Soviet diplomacy and foreign policy following Stalin's death in 1953. He documented the BSSR's

service of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the foreign policy mechanism of Rzeczpospolita in 1600–1697]: diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Russ.) ; *Lashkevich S. A.* [The diplomacy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in relationship between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Russian State (1586–1598)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2014 (in Belarus.) ; *Mikalayeva L. V.* [Organisation of the foreign policy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the late XV – mid XVI century] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Belarus.) ; *Sidorenko B. I.* [The lands of Eastern Belarus in the

⁹*Shved V. V.* [Social and political life of the lands Belarus (1772–1863)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Belarus.).

¹⁰*Borovskaya O. M.* [Belarusian issue at the Soviet-Polish negotiations 1918–1921] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 2015 (in Belarus.) ; *Kovaleva L. A.* [Foreign policy activity of Soviet Belarus in 1919–1929] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 1993 (in Russ.) ; *Mazec V. G.* [Belarusian National Republic: proclamation and activity (1918 jar)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 1995 (in Belarus.) ; *Mihun D. A.* [German policy applied to Belarus (1914–1922 years)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.) ; *Asipovich A. I.* [BSSR and Great Britain: proletarian solidarity and humanitarian, economic, scientific, cultural contacts in 1921–1938] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.) ; *Paulava T. Ya.* [BNR foreign-policy activity in 1918–1920] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.) ; *Romanovsky D. V.* [Foreign trade ties of BSSR with foreign countries (taking as an example the activity of Gostorgbel in 1922–1931)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Belarus. State Pedagogical Univ. named after Maxim Tank, 2003 ; *Tikhomirov A. V.* [Belarusian emigration, the 90s of the XIX century – 1917] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 1994 (in Belarus.) ; *Tsinkevich V. M.* [Political relations between the BSSR and the Polish Republic in 1921–1929] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.).

¹¹*Svilas S. F.* [Byelorussian SSR activity in UNESCO (1954–1964)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; *Shadurski V. G.* [Cultural links of Belarus with the nations of Central and Western Europe (1945–1990)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.05. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Russ.) ; *Borisenko V. V.* [Participation of Belarus in foreign economic relations of the Soviet Union (1971–1985)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Belarus. State Pedagogical Univ. named after Maxim Tank, 2001 (in Russ.) ; *Vazhnik O. N.* [The BSSR and the Polish People's Republic: economic, scientific, technical and cultural ties in 1949–1979] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; *Veliky A. F.* [Exchange of population between of BSSR and Poland in 1944–1946] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Belarus. State Pedagogical Univ. named after Maxim Tank, 2002 (in Belarus.) ; *Garbitsky S. B.* [Belarus and Czechia: economical, scientific and technological, cultural relations (the late 40s of the XXth – the beginning of the XXIst century)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Belarus. State Pedagogical Univ. named after Maxim Tank, 2015 (in Russ.) ; *Dziadzichkina N. E.* [Foundation and development of the science collaboration of the Science Academy of the BSSR (the second half of the 1950s – 1980s)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Belarus. State Pedagogical Univ. named after Maxim Tank, 2009 (in Russ.) ; *Karalionak L. G.* [Belarus and Great Britain: economic, technical-scientific and cultural contacts in 1970–2003] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.) ; *Ksenzov S. V.* [Cooperation of the Belarusian SSR and Eastern European countries (based on the material of socio-political organisations of Belarus, the 80s)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.01. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1992 (in Russ.) ; *Lyakhovich L. V.* [France and Belarus: economic, scientific, technical and cultural ties in 1971–1999] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.) ; *Ramanousky R. G.* [The participation of Belarus in UNESCO's activities (1984–2001)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2006 (in Belarus.) ; *Stanishevskaya L. P.* [Belarus in Soviet-Bulgarian relations in the agro-industrial sphere (70–80-ies)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1992 (in Russ.).

involvement in the UN and its specialised agencies, its stance on matters of global security, and its contributions to relations between the USSR and Poland¹².

The 1991 Declaration of independence opened up a new area of study for academics in Belarus: the country's foreign policy as an independent nation. This topic area has been studied by several researchers. A. V. Rusakovich (doctoral and candidate dissertation), V. M. Matsel (doctoral dissertation), B. Khmelinsky (doctoral dissertation), B. A. Ganbarov, A. I. Gordeychik, A. P. Gross, I. I. Dorniak, D. A. Kryvashei, K. A. Krivichanina, E. V. Navoschik, A. V. Selivanov, Abdolrahim Hassannejad Omrani, and D. V. Yurchak are a few more names we could mention in addition to those already mentioned¹³. B. Khmelinsky and Abdolrahim Hassannejad Omrani are the foreign nationals among them.

A. I. Gordeychik (1998) defended his candidate dissertation "Political and economic relations of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation in the 1st half of the 1990s" the first in independent Belarus in the field of history of international relations and foreign policy. With a focus on the particular formats, the international political context, and the military-political aspects, it outlines the major trends in the political, economic, and

military ties between Russia and Belarus from December 1991 to April 1996.

Themes and subject areas in the historical studies of Belarusian foreign policies have changed. Like with the general history of international relations, however, several issues and topics such as Belarus' foreign policy during the early Middle Ages, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian Empire, and the Soviet era, as well as Belarus' bilateral relations with specific foreign nations seem to require more in-depth study. While much research has been done on Belarus' participation in the UN and its specialised agencies, Belarus' involvement in other organisations, especially regional ones, has been far less researched, at least as of 2021. An additional area that needs further investigation is Belarus' economic diplomacy. The quantity and quality of academic research do not appear to increase in proportion to the growing number of candidates in the sciences. After their defence, some science candidates will reduce their research efforts, or switch to new fields (like the political sciences). In the field, two dissertations are pending defence. The heads of some scholarly schools defended their candidate dissertations during the Soviet era.

International law and politics domain

There were relatively few studies conducted in Belarus during the Soviet era in the fields of law and international politics as distinctive areas of international affairs scholarship. Only after independence were postgraduate courses offered in this area; these were taught primarily at Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Belarus, and the Belarusian State University. The first dissertations were written by the end of the 1990s, and the subject areas

that these specialities covered were gradually defined. Dissertation defence councils were also formed.

Some key problem areas in the speciality "International law. European law" were the theory of international law, sectoral regulations, law of international organisations, and international integration.

Research in the theory of international law is crucial in laying the groundwork for national approaches to the study of international law. Notably, no doctorates have been defended in this field, and the bulk of the dissertations were completed before 2014. Candidate

¹² *Snapkouski U. E.* [Foreign policy activity of the Belarusian SSR (1944–1953)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Academy of Sciences of BSSR, 1992 (in Russ.).

¹³ *Rusakovich A. V.* [Germany in the foreign policy of Belarus (1990–2015)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2016 (in Russ.) ; *Khmelinsky B.* [Public movement in Poland for good neighbourliness with Belarus (1991–2006)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2007 (in Belarus.) ; *Matsel V. M.* [Policy of the Republic of Belarus in East and South Asia (1991–2002)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.15. M. : Diplomaticeskaya akademiya MID Rossii, 2005 (in Russ.) ; *Ganbarov B. A.* [The Republic of Belarus in Azerbaijan foreign policy in 2001–2012] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2013 (in Russ.) ; *Gordeychik A. I.* [Political and economic relations of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation in the 1st half of the 1990s] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.05. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1998 (in Russ.) ; *Gross A. P.* [International activity of public associations of the Republic of Belarus. 1991–2010] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 2016 (in Russ.) ; *Dorniak I. I.* [Belarusian and Polish economical and cultural collaboration in 1999–2004] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 2010 (in Russ.) ; *Kryvashei D. A.* [Development of cultural relations of the Republic of Belarus with the countries of Central and Western Europe (1991–1996)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 1999 (in Russ.) ; *Krivichanina E. A.* [Scientific and technical cooperation of Belarus with the NIS and EU (1991–2000)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 2010 (in Belarus.) ; *Navoschik E. V.* [Belarusian-Swedish relations (1991 – 2017)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2019 (in Russ.) ; *Rusakovich A. V.* [Belarusian and German relations in 1990s] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.05. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Russ.) ; *Selivanov A. V.* [Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and international organisations on establishing of the national system of refugee protection] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2007 (in Russ.) ; *Abdolrahim Hassannejad Omrani.* [Relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Belarus (1991–2013)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2017 (in Russ.) ; *Yurchak D. V.* [The state-political and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine from 1991 till 2011] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02. Minsk : Inst. of History of Nat. Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 2014 (in Russ.).

dissertations have been defended by R. R. Galstyan, A. F. Douhan, A. V. Zharsky, E. V. Konnova, E. B. Leanovich, M. V. Loiko, T. N. Mikhailiova, V. M. Strachuk, T. Y. Ushakova, and A. V. Shchukin¹⁴. The national application of international standards has been the focus of the theses by A. I. Zybalyo, A. V. Barbuk, and V. Yu. Kalugin, and it is currently a major area of study in the theory of international law¹⁵.

Sectoral regulation has been the most prolific area of international law in terms of dissertation production, with two doctoral dissertations defended between 1991 and 2021.

A. F. Douhan explores in her doctoral dissertation the concept of regional collective security mechanisms as distinctive features of international relations at the present stage. Some of the outcomes of this work include an updated definition of the legal framework governing coercive actions by regional organisations, a detailed analysis of the idea of a collective security system, an explanation of the conditions for the application of UN Charter chapter VIII, and a list of the justifications and possible formats for cooperation between regional organisations and the UN and other regional organisations.

In her doctoral dissertation, V. N. Talochka presents the following main findings: a general framework for a mechanism for national application of international

economic law, as well as several useful recommendations for amending national legal frameworks of international economic relations generally, including those relating to Belarus¹⁶.

The candidate dissertations by Andre Victor, K. V. Istomenok, O. M. Starovoitov, E. V. Syagrovets, Hazem Nouredin ibn Safi, and Kibret Aredo Shimelis are concerned with international legal cooperation¹⁷. International cooperation in combating crime as a subfield of sectoral regulation addressed by N. O. Moroz, V. V. Merkushev, S. I. Mukashov, and I. V. Fisenko in the candidate dissertations they defended¹⁸.

International law scholars were particularly interested in the law of international organisations and international integration, as evidenced by the number of defences between 1991 and 2021. I. A. Barkovskij, A. V. Velichkovsky, E. A. Deikalo, A. M. Shirmont, A. L. Kozik, D. G. Kolas, V. B. Korzun, Yu. A. Lepeshkov, E. S. Rudko, V. Kh. Seitimova, and H. V. Simonian defended candidate dissertations in subject areas related to law drafting activity in the EU and the CIS, the work of international judicial bodies and the status of international civil servants¹⁹.

Since Belarus gained its independence, significant numbers of studies in international law have been conducted, laying the groundwork for the rise of a national

¹⁴Galstyan R. R. [State immunities] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Russ.) ; Douhan A. F. [The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states and its interpretation in modern international law] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; Zharsky A. V. [The institution of reservations to international treaties and its application in practice of the Republic of Belarus] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.) ; Konnova E. V. [Unilateral acts of states in international law] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2014 (in Russ.) ; Leanovich E. B. [Institutional mechanism of the international cooperation on intellectual property questions] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1998 (in Russ.) ; Loiko M. V. [Correlation of private international and public law] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1998 (in Russ.) ; Mikhailiova T. N. [Succession of states on citizenship issues] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2011 (in Russ.) ; Strachuk V. M. [International legal regulation of prevention of transboundary damage from lawful activities of states and responsibility for its infliction] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2006 (in Russ.) ; Ushakova T. E. State succession in respect of state property, archives and debts (with reference to the practice of Republic of Belarus) : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1998 (in Russ.) ; Shchukin A. V. [International responsibility of states for internationally wrongful acts (a mechanism of realisation)] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.).

¹⁵Barbuk A. V. [Direct application of the norms of international treaties in national legal systems] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2007 (in Russ.) ; Zybalyo A. I. [Implementation of the norms of international law in the Republic of Belarus] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2000 (in Russ.) ; Kalugin V. Yu. [Implementation mechanism of international humanitarian law] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Russ.).

¹⁶Talochka V. N. [International economic law and the implementation of its norms in the national legal system (on the example of the Republic of Belarus)] : diss. ... doctor of science (law) : 12.00.10. Saint Petersburg : Saint Petersburg State University, 2013 (in Russ.).

¹⁷Andre Victor. [Progressive development and modification of diplomatic law] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1997 (in Russ.) ; Istomenok K. V. [The status of a diplomatic courier and diplomatic mail in the context of international law-making of the Republic of Belarus] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2010 (in Russ.) ; Starovoitov O. M. [International legal protection of the rights of the child] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2004 (in Russ.) ; Syagrovets E. V. [Participation of the Republic of Belarus in the formation of the institute for international protection of women's rights] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Russ.) ; Hazem Nouredin ibn Safi. [Legal protection of victims of armed conflicts] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1993 (in Russ.) ; Shimelis Kibret Aredo. [International legal regulation of foreign economic activity of developing countries: on the example of African states] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1999 (in Russ.).

¹⁸Merkushin V. V. [International collaboration in combating transnational organised crime] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., Minsk, 2005 (in Russ.) ; Moroz N. O. [International legal cooperation in the fight against high-tech crime] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., Minsk, 2014 (in Russ.) ; Mukashov S. I. [International legal cooperation of the Republic of Belarus in the field of combating banknotes' counterfeiting] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., Minsk, 2002 (in Russ.) ; Fisenko I. V. [The problem of creating an international criminal court] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1996 (in Russ.).

¹⁹Barkovskij I. A. [The rule-making activity of the Commonwealth of Independent States] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2008 (in Russ.) ; Velichkovsky A. V. [The jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Russ.) ; Deikalo E. A. [International legal responsibility of intergovernmental organisations for illegal acts] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Russ.) ; Shirmont A. M. [Interpretative function of the European Court of Human Rights] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2006 (in Russ.) ; Kozik A. L. [International legal regulation of integration processes in Belarus and Russia] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2003 (in Russ.) ; Kolas D. G. [Competence of the Court of the Eurasian Economic Union and of the Court of Justice of the European Union: comparative legal analysis] : diss. ... PhD (law) : 12.00.10. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2020 (in Russ.) ; Korzun V. B. [Legal regulation

school of international law scholarship in the face of multiple difficulties. However, there do not seem to be enough doctoral dissertations in the field right now (just two have been defended) for a school of this kind to start up. The examination of the dissertations defended reveals that young scholars continue to play a very small role in academic supervision and that only a small number of advisors oversee all of the postgraduates and degree seekers in the field. Many young scholars of international law believe that there are not enough opportunities for them to advance academically in the field, which leads them to choose other areas of law like constitutional law, administrative law, or even political science that seem more promising in terms of dissertation defence. Finally, there are still many gaps in the scholarship that need to be filled. Even when a topic has been studied by a scholar from the Soviet Union or Russia, it still matters from a Belarusian perspective.

Like international law, the study of world politics in Belarus dates back to the early 1990s. International politics research was less systematic, even when compared to more general political science subject areas, while decades of research in international law led to the establishment of academic traditions and institutions. Nevertheless, four doctoral dissertations have been defended, demonstrating an impressive overall performance. Of these four doctorate holders, three are still working as academics while the fourth, Y. V. Matusevich, has since passed away.

Researchers in the political sciences have shown particular interest in the theory of international relations, regionalisation, and globalisation; the function of regional alliances in international relations and global

politics and the place of the Republic of Belarus in these domains.

Yu. M. Malevich, A. A. Plashchinsky, and A. L. Shevtsova defended dissertations in the theory of international relations between 1991 and 2021, basing their works in large part on specific country cases²⁰.

Scholars like Azghar Abdi, G. Y. Volkov, and V. M. Grynyova have studied the nature and characteristics of globalisation as a phenomenon of world politics and international affairs and a subfield of the theory of international relations²¹.

In his doctoral dissertation, S. A. Kizima discusses the geopolitical aspects of nation-state formation in the context of globalisation. He then uses his research to suggest changes to the Belarusian social development model. In addition to outlining some of the key characteristics of contemporary globalisation, he discusses the intricacies of nation-building in the era of globalisation²².

Y. I. Malevich examines how globalisation affects the understanding of human rights across civilisations and how this understanding might promote just and cooperative relationships within the international community of states. As geopolitical interactions change, with implications for Belarus' foreign policy, she argues that the UN should adopt new global solutions to protect human rights²³.

The candidate dissertations of P. A. Barakhvostov, M. J. Verameyeu, E. A. Dostanko, I. S. Kuznetsova, and A. V. Shevchenko discussed the function of regional alliances and associations in international affairs²⁴. Many of them focussed on the European Union, seen as the most developed example of interstate integration to date.

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²⁰*Malevich Yu. M.* [Reflection of the principles of the concept of human rights in the foreign policy doctrines of the United States (70–80-ies)] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.01. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1995 (in Russ.) ; *Plashchinsky A. A.* [US foreign-policy strategy of leadership: formation and development] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.02. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; *Shevtsova A. L.* [The influence of internal political regions of the nation state in its foreign policy (on the example of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia)] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Acad. of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2014 (in Russ.).

²¹*Asghar Abdi.* [Modern cultural globalisation: the dynamics and political consequences (for the Islamic Republic of Iran)] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2016 (in Russ.) ; *Volkov G. Yu.* [The subjects of globalisation and their influence on the national state] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Acad. of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2011 (in Russ.) ; *Grynyova O. N.* [The policy of neutrality in the context of globalisation] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2007 (in Russ.).

²²*Kizima S. A.* [Development of the nation-state under conditions of globalisation: geopolitical aspect] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Russ.).

²³*Malevich Y. I.* [Evolution of conceptual approaches to human rights in the context of globalisation] : diss. ... doctor of science (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.).

²⁴*Barakhvostov P. A.* [The Eastern Partnership Initiative in the EU foreign policy in 2009–2017] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; *Verameyeu M. J.* [State sovereignty transformation under the conditions of European Union integration] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2009 (in Russ.) ; *Dostanko E. A.* [The European community of states as international system: restructuring at the edge of XX–XXI centuries] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1998 (in Russ.) ; *Kuznetsova I. S.* [The European Union common security and defense policy: conceptual and practical aspects] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Acad. of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2011 (in Russ.) ; *Shevchenko A. V.* [Interstate integration the strategic direction of the Commonwealth of Independent States development] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2001 (in Russ.).

When it comes to the number of dissertations completed, the role and standing of Belarus in contemporary international relations and world politics was presumably a favoured topic area among academics. It was covered in the candidate dissertations of A. A. Gorelik, D. V. Halubnichy, S. A. Lomov, D. N. Liubkin, A. S. Pisarchyk, V. A. Sakovich, A. V. Sviridov, and V. O. Serebryakov, as well as in the doctoral dissertations of E. V. Matusevich and R. O. Esin²⁵.

In his doctoral dissertation, R. O. Esin outlined potential directions for Belarus' cross-border cooperation with European nations, identified political variables that could influence those directions, and offered doable suggestions to develop those partnerships with the EU. The author addressed the regional aspect of Belarus' cross-border cooperation with European states for the first time in a political science dissertation, proving its multidimensional nature and documenting its evolution in the framework of dynamic integration processes in Eastern and Western Europe.

Although the studies show a great deal of advancement in the political science understanding of world

affairs, the development of a national scholarly school of political theory in the field of international relations is still incomplete. One explanation is a degree of fragmentation among researchers, the majority of whom work as public administration practitioners. A specialised research unit might help advance the field's understanding of Belarusian international relations politics.

Another significant field of study that merits discussion in this review is the historiography of international affairs studies. In this field, only a single degree work (the candidate of sciences thesis by A. V. Huryn) has been successfully defended²⁶. It was the first historiographic review of research on international affairs and foreign policy conducted by Belarusian academics, many of which covered the years since 1991. By examining the historiography of various historical contexts and eras, historians have also made a valuable contribution to the study of a few chosen areas of international affairs. The historiography of the early modern and modern eras of history is covered in V. A. Astroha's dissertation, which serves as an example of such work²⁷.

Conclusions

After reviewing the subjects and the number of dissertations defended between 1991 and 2021, we can conclude with confidence that Belarus has developed a distinctive academic school in international affairs since gaining its independence. This finding is supported by dissertation statistics: in the historical, legal, and political science specialities, 27 doctoral 160 candidate dissertations on international affairs were submitted for defence. Of these, the vast majority were successfully defended: 21 out of 27 doctoral dissertations and 104 out of 160 candidate dissertations (representing 78 % and 65 % of the dissertations submitted, respectively).

International affairs research has fared noticeably better than it did during the Soviet era.

However, a review of the dissertation subjects across the sciences reveals that each field faces a variety of issues. Expanding the scope of topics is a challenge in the field of historical sciences, while for the legal and political sciences filling the scholarship gaps and raising the number of defences are the priorities.

Most dissertation topics in the history of international relations belonged to a field that has been researched since the Soviet era, or they were either based on the researcher's or consultant's academic interests.

²⁵Esin R. O. [The policy of trans-border cooperation of the Republic of Belarus in the European perspective: the regional dimension] : diss. ... doctor of science (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2012 (in Russ.) ; Matusevich E. V. [National and state interests of the Republic of Belarus in the context of the globalisation process] : diss. ... doctor of science (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Russ.) ; Halubnichy D. V. [The Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union in the geostrategy of the Republic of Belarus] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Acad. of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2020 (in Russ.) ; Gorelik A. A. [Contemporary foreign policy activity of Belarusian Parliament] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.02. Minsk : Acad. of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2016 (in Russ.) ; Lomov S. A. [The geopolitical aspect of the national security of the Republic of Belarus] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2008 (in Russ.) ; Liubkin D. N. [Cooperation between Republic of Belarus and the European Union for ensuring border security] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2021 (in Russ.) ; Pisarchyk A. S. [Global challenges of modernity: impact on the national state and its foreign policy priorities (on the example of the Republic of Belarus)] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2018 (in Russ.) ; Sakovich V. A. [Impact of globalisation and integration upon social-political alternative of states, undergoing transformation (on the pattern of Republic of Belarus and Republic of Moldova)] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2002 (in Russ.) ; Sviridov A. V. [Geopolitical space of Belarus in the context of globalisation: the informational and political dimensions] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2015 (in Russ.) ; Serebryakov V. O. [Economic diplomacy in foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus (on the example of the states of South – East Asia)] : diss. ... PhD (political science) : 23.00.04. Minsk : Acad. of Public Administration under the President of the Repub. of Belarus, 2021 (in Russ.).

²⁶Huryn A. V. [Studying of the history of international relations in Belarus in the period of the years 1980–2003] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.15. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2005 (in Belarus.).

²⁷Astroha V. A. [The study of modern and contemporary history of foreign countries in Belarusian historiography (1919–1991)] : diss. ... PhD (history) : 07.00.02, 07.00.03. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 2017 (in Belarus.) ; Astroha V. A. [The study of modern and contemporary history of foreign countries in in Belarus in interwar period (1921–1941)] : diss. ... doctor of science (history) : 07.00.09. Minsk : Belarus. State Univ., 1996 (in Russ.).

Some academic schools may eventually face a crisis because the majority of doctors of science have already reached retirement age and the number of doctoral dissertations is increasing slowly. The issue is made worse in the legal and political sciences by the absence of a strong foundation of research established during the Soviet era.

Ironically, one challenge for the future is the rising number of international degree seekers and postgraduates under one consultant. A consultant is only permitted to supervise up to five postgraduate students or degree seekers at a time under the current regulations. However, after their defence, the majority of interna-

tional degree holders depart home, which means they do not contribute much to research in Belarus.

Proposing future research topics would be a challenging task. In comparison to other fields like domestic history, law, politics, or institutions, international affairs studies still comprise only a small portion of research, despite tremendous advancements in the field. For example, each defence in the speciality “International law. European law” is a noteworthy academic event because there are typically only 1.23 defences held annually.

Many of these issues can be resolved, it seems, by encouraging young scholars to defend more dissertations, particularly doctoral theses.

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Received by editorial board 12.02.2023