

From the Soviet Union to Russia, the fall and rise of an empire

Vjollca Muçaj

European University of Tirana, Email Address: violet61v@hotmail.com

Abstract

The fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War incited the beginning of a new World order of international relations and the creation of new actor roles in this new stage. In the last 25 years Russia's role as a great power had a different context, from an empire in free fall to the revitalization of its international role. The main question this work asks is: Which is Russia's position in the international arena after the disintegration of the Soviet Union? The answer to this question is given by researching under the prism of the creation of a new vision, around what Russia represents in two and a half decades and how its role is represented in a different context of international relations. It will be also researched on the perspective of Europe as an instrument to balance and obstruct the Russian expansion. The work will be based on the analysis of the archival information of the period of time. The methods of historical, logical and comparative analysis have been used, together with various literatures from different researchers and politician. This study aims to explain the forms and weaknesses of the regime and the causes which brought to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, in other words the causes of the fall of the communist bloc: Yeltsin's presidency (1991-1999); Russia's new context in the international arena and the role of the new actors will be explained: Putin's presidency (1999-2008); and the explanation of the revival of Russia's international role as a great power (2009-2014). This work also highlights the foreign policy, the alterations and the contradictory character of the leadership, the change of presidency between Putin and Medvedev and the problems with Ukraine and Crimea.

With the fall of the communism, which incited the divide of the balances from the bipolarity of the Cold War, the changing economic world, in the midst of other alterations, presented a new equilibrium of power. As a descendent of the communist empire, Russia is fully convinced that it has the right of rebuilding of the empire through expansion. It also knows that the main part is not the will, but the ability. If it can, Russia will rebuild the destroyed empire through a constant expansionist policy. And if they can, the USA and the west will hinder the building of this empire.

Keywords: *geopolitics, international relations, Soviet Union (USSR), contemporary history, European Economic Community (EEC).*