

## THE “FRACTURED” SOCIAL SPACE IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE\*

*by Marek Pietraś*

East-Central Europe can be easily distinguished, despite different views on the subject, as a geographical space. It cannot be said, however, that it constitutes a distinct and coherent political, economic, social, and cultural space. Changes taking place in contemporary Europe, in particular those associated with the integration processes, mark a new, specific dividing line, different from that during the Cold War. It runs across the geographical, and, consequently, social, political, economic and cultural space of East-Central Europe. The research objective is therefore to identify and analyze the “fracture” of social space in this part of Europe. For research purposes it is assumed that social space, denoting the whole of social behaviors and ties as well as material products of human activity, is a complex, multifaceted construction. Especially significant seems to be the problem of the political empowerments of society and its limitations, the problem of the socio-economic situation, and the problem of cultural

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\* Excerpts from M. Pietraś, *Specyfika Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej jako przestrzeni społecznej*, [in:] H. Chałupczak, M. Pietraś, E. Pogorzała (eds.), *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w procesie transformacji i integracji. Wymiar społeczny*, Zamość 2013,

identity. It is also assumed that the EU's political strategy currently being pursued, consisting in relinquishing the prospect of EU enlargement towards the east to include selected countries of the so-called post-Soviet area, contributes to strengthening "the fracture" of East-Central Europe. This is apparently the result of the European Union's implementation of "A Europe of Projects" strategy, which is the measures undertaken under the European Neighbourhood Policy, Eastern Partnership, or Back Sea Synergy.

In the context of the foregoing research assumptions, the starting point for the investigations and for verification of the adopted research hypotheses will be to define the geographical (even if disputable) boundaries of East-Central Europe. Next, bearing in mind the abovementioned multifaceted construction of social space in East-Central Europe, the subject of analysis will be the specificity of political empowerment in this part of Europe and its limitation, and, subsequently, the specificity of the socio-political situation and the specificity of the problem of cultural identity will be examined. The defined research area poses methodological challenges. The question arises how to investigate such markedly qualitative phenomena as the political empowerment of society and the functioning of civil society, or cultural identity, but also the socio-economic situation? It is assumed that while investigating the state of development of civil society and the level of its political empowerment, the current socio-economic situation, and while verifying the "fracture" of East-Central Europe at those two levels, the quantitative analysis of selected indicators will be useful, for example the number of non-governmental organizations per million inhabitants, the press freedom index, Democracy Index, Human Development Index (HDI), Gross National Income (GNI), Gender Inequality Index (GII), and Human Poverty Index (HPI). When analyzing the specificity of cultural identity, factor analysis was used in the form of identification of three variables restricting the possibility of emergence of a separate East-Central-European identity.

## THE GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE OF EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE AS A SOCIAL SPACE\*

It is self-evident to say that the geographical environment, its physical properties, is a space where social, economic, political and cultural processes function. What is more, with the thesis about geographical determinism not being accepted, this environment can be a variable that determines social processes. Nevertheless, with regard to East-Central Europe, it is first of all specific social processes, however disputable this may seem, what has made it geographically distinct rather than a separate geographical character having formed it as a coherent socio-economic and cultural space. Consequently, regardless of the defined geographical range of East-Central Europe, the process of its “fracturing” as a distinct social space is taking place. In other words, a coherent social space is not functioning in the emergent geographical space.

The geographical range of the area called East-Central Europe, still the subject of dispute and controversy, is not explicitly and exactly defined, although Jerzy Kłoczowski argues that the concept “East-Central Europe” has been accepted by various historical schools.<sup>1</sup> An important contribution to thinking about this area and its identification was made by Oskar Halecki. His term “East-Central Europe” was to render the specific and distinct character of the eastern part of Central Europe as culturally and historically different from the western part of Central Europe, which is formed by the uniform German speaking area. In this context, East-Central Europe is, in Halecki’s view, the area between Sweden, Germany and Italy on the one side, and Turkey and Russia on the other.<sup>2</sup>

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\* Excerpts from M. Pietraś, *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w strukturze ładu międzynarodowego*, [in:] H. Chałupczak, M. Pietraś, P. Tosiek (eds.), *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w procesie transformacji i integracji. Wymiar polityczny*, Zamość 2010, 12–13, were used.

<sup>1</sup> J. Kłoczowski, *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w przestrzeni europejskiej*, <http://jazon.hist.uj.edu.pl/zjazd/materialy/kloczowski.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> O. Halecki, *Borderlands of Western Civilization. A History of East Central Europe*, New York 1952 (electronic version).

While Oskar Halecki focused on defining the area, or more precisely, the boundaries of the space called East-Central Europe, others tried to identify the states that made up this region. Robert Magocsi, however, used an intermediate solution by defining the zones of East-Central Europe and the countries located in them. He distinguished the northern zone, the Alpine-Carpathian zone and the Balkan zone. The countries located in the northern zone are Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, and the former East Germany. The Alpine-Carpathian zones comprises the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Slovenia, a part of Croatia, a part of Serbia, and northern Italy; the Balkan zone is composed of southern Croatia, southern Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece and the European part of Turkey.<sup>3</sup> Robert Magocsi thus delineated wider boundaries of the East-Central European area than Oskar Halecki did.

A similar line of thinking – i.e. definition of the area boundaries and identification of countries – is represented by East-Central European Center at Columbia University in New York. East-Central Europe is recognized as the area between Germany and Russia, and between the Baltic Sea and the Aegean Sea. The area covers Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine.<sup>4</sup> The *Centre D'Étude de L'Europe Mediane* [Center for the Study of Median Europe] defines East-Central Europe as the area between Russia and Germany, from the Baltic region to the Balkans. The Center conducts studies on 17 cultures: Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Polish, Romanian, Serbian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Sorbian and Ukrainian.<sup>5</sup>

Jerzy Kłoczowski, when defining the spatial range of East-Central Europe, referred to the common historical experiences and concluded that this is the area which for centuries used to be part of the Commonwealth

<sup>3</sup> R. Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of East-Central Europe*, Seattle 1993.

<sup>4</sup> Columbia University, East Central European Center, <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ece/about/mission.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Centre D'Étude de L'Europe Mediane, <http://www.ceem.fr>.

of Both Nations and historical Kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary. He locates the following countries in the area: Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, and a large part of Romania.<sup>6</sup>

The foregoing definitions of the East-Central European area generally agree that this is a space between Germany and Russia. There are controversies mainly over the boundaries of this area along the North-South axis. It appears that Paul Magocsi's inclusion of Greece and the European part of Turkey in the south in East-Central Europe is not justified. The fewest controversies seem to be provoked by Oskar Halecki's attempt to determine the East-Central European area, and by the attempts to identify the countries located in this area by Columbia University's East-Central European Center. In the last case, it may be disputable, given historical experience, cultural traditions, and political standards, to locate Austria in this area, whereas it is necessary to include Kosovo.

### THE SPECIFICITY OF POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT IN THE SOCIAL SPACE OF EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

A significant element in the analysis of the specificity of social space in East-Central Europe and the "fracture" in this space is the political empowerment of societies. The adopted definition describes it as the capacity of individuals and organized social groups to behave consciously in order to realize their own interests by exerting influence on political power centers. It can take the form of formal powers and its actual realization.<sup>7</sup> The object of analysis will be the actual functioning of political empowerment of societies in East-Central Europe and the existing divisions in this field. An essential problem, however, is to define the criteria for measuring the political empowerment of society and the elements of its analysis. A necessary condition for this is the existence of civil society.

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<sup>6</sup> J. Kłoczowski, *Wprowadzenie*, [in:] J. Kłoczowski (ed.), *Historia Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, Lublin 2000, t. 1, 7.

<sup>7</sup> See M. Gulczyński, *Nauka o polityce*, Warszawa 2007.

It is also necessary to take into account the factors that determine its functioning.

Civil society is a value but first of all a dynamic process of its functioning in a specific reality. Regardless of differences in its interpretation and its ideologization<sup>8</sup>, it was already identified in ancient times with the freedom of the people and their involvement in political activity.<sup>9</sup> It was interpreted as the opposite of political power and located between family and the state<sup>10</sup>, and consequently it emphasized the political empowerment of individuals and social groups. With regard to East-Central Europe, the object of analysis will be the way civil society was organised, but also the conditions for its functioning, taking the existing restrictions into consideration. A view should be accepted that civil society cannot be confined to the activities of non-governmental organizations.<sup>11</sup> This opinion in no way changes the fact, however, that the latter are an important element of building the empowerment of society. An essential element in the analysis of political empowerment of societies in East-Central Europe and of the consequent divisions is the conditions for utilizing this empowerment. Significant variables that determine them are the freedom of the press and the general democratic level of a political system measured with the Democracy Index, and restrictions on human rights in the group of political freedoms, the so-called first generation.

Regardless of the acceptance of the earlier view that the existence of non-governmental organizations does not exhaust the complexity of the phenomenon of civil society, they are an indispensable element of its empowerment, activity, and influence on the decision-making processes in a political system. The force of this influence is a separate problem. It has been assumed that one of the criteria (albeit imperfect) for the development of civil society and its empowerment is the number of nongov-

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<sup>8</sup> See P.S. Załęski, *Neoliberalizm i społeczeństwo obywatelskie*, Toruń 2012.

<sup>9</sup> S. Kowalczyk, *Teorie społeczeństwa obywatelskiego*, [in:] *Nowoczesność – ponowoczesność. Społeczeństwo obywatelskie w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej*, Lublin 2007, vol. 1, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> G. Hegel, *Zasady filozofii prawa*, Warszawa 1968, p. 397.

<sup>11</sup> L. Zacher, *Społeczeństwo obywatelskie, czy społeczeństwo bez etykiet?*, [in:] *Nowoczesność – ponowoczesność...*, p. 20.

ernmental organizations in a country. Absolute figures cannot however be compared since the demographic potential of individual East-Central European countries is highly varied. Hence, what can be compared is the rate of nongovernmental organizations per one million inhabitants.

Statistical data on the level of development of civil society measured by the number of nongovernmental organizations per one million inhabitants clearly show that the dividing line runs first of all between the East-Central European countries that are EU members and those that are not (see Table 1).<sup>12</sup> In each of the EU member states located in the East-Central European area the number of nongovernmental organizations per one million inhabitants is higher – in some even several times more – than in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine. Except for Georgia and Kazakhstan, where the number of nongovernmental organizations per one million inhabitants is slightly higher than the figures for Poland and Romania, the analyzed data are higher compared to the other countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States. Significant differences in the data should also be observed. For Russia (2,794 nongovernmental organizations per one million inhabitants) the data are only slightly lower than analogous figures for Poland and Romania. However, for Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan – 297, 360, 21, and 200 respectively – they are at least a dozen or so times lower than the figures for Poland and Romania. Similarly, for the Balkan states, apart from Croatia, which joined the European Union on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2013, the dominant tendency is a smaller number of nongovernmental organizations per million inhabitants than in the case of EU member states located in East-Central Europe. The “fracture” of Europe with regard to this element of the development of civil society and its empowerment, which is the existence of nongovernmental organizations, is clear.

An important factor in building the empowerment of society and the possibility of its participation in public life is freedom of the media. They are an indispensable condition for the existence of an open, empowered society. Hence, in liberal societies, they are even called the “fourth power”

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<sup>12</sup> See *2012 CSO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia*. 16<sup>th</sup> edition, Washington DC 2013.

**Table 1: The development of civil society in East-Central Europe and in other countries based on the number of nongovernmental organizations (in 2011 or 2012)**

Country	No. of NGOs	No. of NGOs per million inhabitants	Country	No. of NGOs	No. of NGOs per million inhabitants
<b>EU member states in East-Central Europe</b>			<b>Non-EU states in East-Central Europe</b>		
Bulgaria	ca. 35,000	ca.7,000	Belarus	2,477	258
the Czech Republic	103,735	10,170	Moldova	6,884	1,912
Estonia	ca. 30,000	ca. 23,600	Ukraine	71,767	1,613
Lithuania	ca. 24,000	ca. 6,860	<b>CIS states outside of East-Central Europe</b>		
Latvia	14,563	6,620	Armenia	3,432	1,144
Poland	114,045	2,970	Azerbaijan	2,850	297
Romania	70,036	3,213	Georgia	17,217	3,776
Slovakia	ca. 38,500	ca. 6,500	Kazakhstan	57,740	3,262
Slovenia	ca. 25,000	ca. 12,500	Kyrgyzstan	ca. 11500	Ca. 2,090
Hungary	ca. 65,000	ca. 6,500	Russia	398,168	2794
			Tajikistan	ca. 2,600	ca. 360
			Turkmenistan	106	21
			Uzbekistan	ca. 5,700	ca. 200
			<b>Balkan Non-EU states</b>		
			Albania	1,651	550
			Bosnia and Herzegovina	ca. 12,000	3,077
			Croatia (since 1 July 2013 in EU)	47,368	10,526
			Serbia	18,543	2,576

Source: Own calculations based on 2012 CSO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia. 16<sup>th</sup> edition, Washington DC 2013

that exercises a controlling function over the executive, legislative, and judicial powers. The nongovernmental organization *Reporters without Borders* publishes an annual ranking, also called the Press Freedom Index. It is determined based on surveys, whose main objective is to identify constraints on freedom of the press such as direct attacks on journalists



and the media, or any other restrictions on their functioning regardless of whether they are imposed by government or non-governmental structures.

The result of the survey is the ranking of states from the highest (first position) to the lowest (last position) level of media freedom. In 2013 the survey was held in 179 countries. The data pertaining to the countries of East-Central Europe and the neighbouring Commonwealth of Independent States are shown in Table 2. The distinct dividing line runs again between the East-Central European EU member states and non-EU countries. The only East-Central European state in the group of non-EU members, which occupies a higher position in the ranking than the lowest positioned EU member states in this part of Europe, is, rather surprisingly, Moldova. In the 2013 ranking it occupied 55<sup>th</sup> place, ahead of Hungary – 56<sup>th</sup> place and Bulgaria – 87<sup>th</sup>. Apart from Moldova the difference in ranking positions between Belarus and Ukraine on the one side and EU member states in East-Central Europe is significant. Ukraine ranks 126<sup>th</sup> and when compared with the year 2012 it has dropped by 10 positions, while Belarus ranks 157<sup>th</sup>, a move upwards by 10 positions. For comparison, the highest position in the ranking among the East-Central European EU member states is occupied by Estonia- 11<sup>th</sup> place, the Czech Republic – 16<sup>th</sup>, Poland – 22<sup>nd</sup>, Slovakia – 23<sup>rd</sup>, Lithuania – 33<sup>rd</sup>, Slovenia – 35<sup>th</sup>, Latvia – 39<sup>th</sup>, and Romania – 42<sup>nd</sup>.<sup>13</sup>

When compared with the ranking of the East-Central European EU member states, the CIS states not counted as this part of Europe score significantly poorly. Only Armenia (position 74) and Georgia (position 100) are within the first hundred positions in the media freedom ranking. Most of the Central Asian countries and Russia are in the bottom section of the ranking. The latter ranks 148<sup>th</sup>, Tajikistan – 123<sup>rd</sup>, Azerbaijan – 156<sup>th</sup>, Uzbekistan – 164<sup>th</sup>, and Turkmenistan – 177<sup>th</sup>.<sup>14</sup> The post-Soviet area clearly constitutes a space with low standards of media freedom which

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<sup>13</sup> See *Reporters Without Borders*, 2013 World Press Freedom Index, <http://en.rsf.org/press-freedom-index-2013,1054.html>.

<sup>14</sup> *Reporters Without Borders*, Press Freedom Index...

Table 2: Freedom of the press in East-Central European countries in 2013

Country	Rank	Score	Change compared with 2012	Country	Rank	Score	Change compared with 2012
<b>EU member states in East-Central Europe</b>				<b>Non-EU states in East-Central Europe</b>			
Bulgaria	87	28.58	-7	Belarus	157	48.35	+10
the Czech Republic	16	10.17	-2	Moldova	55	26.01	-2
Estonia	11	9.26	-8	Ukraine	126	36.79	-10
Lithuania	33	18.24	-3	<b>CIS states outside of East-Central Europe</b>			
Latvia	39	22.89	+11	Armenia	74	28.04	+3
Poland	22	13.11	+2	Azerbaijan	156	47.73	+6
Romania	42	23.05	+5	Georgia	100	30.09	+4
Slovakia	23	13.25	+2	Kazakhstan	160	55.08	-6
Slovenia	35	20.49	+1	Kyrgyzstan	106	32.20	-6
Hungary	56	26.09	-16	Russia	148	43.42	-6
				Tajikistan	123	35.71	-1
				Turkmenistan	177	79.14	0
				Uzbekistan	164	60.39	-7
				<b>Balkan non-EU states</b>			
				Albania	102	30.88	-6
				Bosnia and Herzegovina	68	26.86	-10
				Croatia (since 1 July 2013 in EU)	64	26.61	+4
				Serbia	63	26.59	+17

Source: *Reporters Without Borders*, Press Freedom Index 2013, <http://en.rsf.org/press-freedom-index-2013,1054.html>

restricts the empowerment of the societies living there and contribute to the existing ‘fracture’ of East-Central European space.

Another (it seems valuable) measure of political empowerment of societies in East-Central Europe, which at the same time confirms the “fracture”, is Democracy Index. It was developed by the think tank *The*

*Economist Intelligence Unit* from London, and was first applied in 2006. This index is used to “measure” the state of democracy in 167 states worldwide. It is determined through surveys and is based on 60 indexes grouped into five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture.<sup>15</sup> The maximum number of points denoting the highest level of democracy is 10. The lower the number of points, the lower the democracy level is. Four types of democracy are distinguished: full democracies – 10–8 point range; flawed democracies – 7.9–6; hybrid regimes – 5.9–4; and authoritarian regimes – below 4 points.

The data in Table 3 explicitly show that all East-Central European EU member states occupy higher positions in the democracy index ranking than the states in this part of Europe that are not EU members. Out of the latter, Moldova (ranking 67<sup>th</sup>) and Ukraine (ranking 80<sup>th</sup>) occupy relatively high positions. Comparatively low positions are occupied by Russia (122) and Belarus (141). Out of the countries of the post-Soviet area higher positions in the ranking than the last two states are occupied by Georgia (93), Kyrgyzstan (106) and Armenia (114). Lower positions went to Kazakhstan (143), Uzbekistan (161) and also Turkmenistan (161) out of the 167 states classified in the ranking.<sup>16</sup>

It should also be emphasized that in the context of the foregoing four types of democracy only the Czech Republic out of the East-Central European EU member states was classified into the group of full democracy states. The others were categorized as flawed democracies. Lower scores were given here for political participation and political culture. However, out of the East-Central European states- non-EU members, only Moldova was categorized as a flawed democracy. Ukraine, along with Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia were categorized as hybrid regimes. The other states, including Russia, Belarus and Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, were classified as authoritarian regimes. Except for Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, particularly low scores were

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<sup>15</sup> See *Democracy Index 2012. Democracy at a standstill. A Report from the Economists Intelligence Unit*, London 2013, 27–28.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, 3 et seq.

Table 3: Democracy Index in East-Central European states and in others in 2012

Country	Rank	Overall score	Electoral processes and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties
the Czech Republic	17	8.19	9.58	7.14	6.67	8.13	9.41
Slovenia	28	7.88	9.58	7.50	7.22	6.25	8.82
Estonia	34	7.61	9.58	7.14	5.00	7.50	8.82
Slovakia	40	7.35	9.58	7.50	5.56	5.00	9.12
Lithuania	42	7.24	9.58	5.71	5.56	6.25	9.12
Poland	44	7.12	9.58	6.43	6.11	4.38	9.12
Latvia	47	7.05	9.58	5.36	5.56	5.63	9.12
Hungary	49	6.96	9.17	6.07	4.44	6.88	8.24
Croatia	50	6.93	9.17	6.07	5.56	5.63	8.24
Bulgaria	54	6.72	9.17	5.51	6.11	4.38	8.24
Romania	59	6.54	9.58	6.07	4.44	4.38	8.24
Moldova	67	6.32	8.75	5.00	5.56	4.38	7.94
Ukraine	80	5.91	7.92	4.64	5.56	4.38	7.06
Albania	90	5.67	7.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	7.35
Georgia	93	5.53	8.25	3.21	5.00	5.00	6.18
Bosnia and Herzegovina	98	5.11	6.92	2.93	3.33	5.00	7.35
Kyrgyzstan	106	4.69	6.58	2.21	5.00	4.38	5.29
Armenia	114	4.09	4.33	3.21	3.89	3.13	5.88
Russia	122	3.74	3.92	2.86	5.00	2.50	4.41
Azerbaijan	139	3.15	2.17	1.79	3.33	3.75	4.71
Belarus	141	3.04	1.75	2.86	3.89	4.38	2.35
Kazakhstan	143	2.95	0.50	2.14	3.33	4.38	4.41
Uzbekistan	161	1.72	0.08	0.79	2.78	4.38	0.59
Turkmenistan	161	1.72	0.00	0.79	2.22	5.00	0.59

Source: *Democracy Index 2012. Democracy at a standstill. A Report from the Economists Intelligence Unit*, London 2013, 3–8.

given for social participation and political culture, while with regard to Belarus and some Central Asian states the electoral processes and the level of political pluralism were those that scored low and were criticized. Consequently, for all the debatable character and awareness of the imperfections in presenting qualitative phenomena by means of quantitative indicators, the line of “fracture” of Europe in reference to the level of democracy and political empowerment of individual societies runs between the East-Central European EU member states and those that are not EU members. Therefore, the distinguishable geographical space of East-Central Europe does not constitute a coherent space of common democratic political standards that enable the common understanding and exercise of political empowerment.

Studies on the political empowerment of East-Central European societies were also conducted by the American *Freedom House* foundation. The published Report *Nations in Transit 2013* analyzes the functioning of civil society and civil liberties and freedoms in 29 states of Central Europe, the post-Soviet area, and in the Balkans.<sup>17</sup> In comparison with Democracy Index analyzed earlier, a different rating scale and measuring scale of the democracy level and functioning of civil society were used. This is a scale from 1 – the highest level- to 7 – the lowest level. In the context of this rating scale, five categories of qualities of political systems and their importance for civil liberties were distinguished: consolidated democracies – in the 1.00–2.99 index range; semi-consolidated democracies- 3.00–3.99; transitional governments/hybrid regimes – 4.0–4.99, semi-consolidated authoritarian regimes- 5.00–5.99, and consolidated authoritarian regimes – 6.00–7.00.

The conducted studies provided grounds for a pessimistic estimate of the tendency in the evolution of the democracy level and the functioning of civil societies in the countries surveyed. In 17 out of the 29 states there was a lowering of the indicator, and, consequently, in the level of democratic freedoms and in the conditions for the functioning of civil society;

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<sup>17</sup> *Nations in Transit 2013. Authoritarian Aggression and the Pressures of Austerity. Selected data from Freedom House’s Annual Analysis of Democratic Development from Central Europe and Eurasia*, Washington DC 2013.

only in 6 states an increase was reported. The tendencies of changes do not however explain the general level of democracy and civil liberties in individual countries. Again, as is the case with studies on Democracy Index, there is a clear dividing line in the level of democratic standards, which runs first of all between the new EU member states and the Eurasian post-Soviet states. This is clearly illustrated in Figure 1. The Balkan states seem to form a characteristic “buffer zone” between the areas in question. The new European Union member states, except Bulgaria and Romania, were classified as consolidated democracies. The states in the post-Soviet area are characterized by significant diversification in the categories of development of democracy and civil society, or more precisely, by the lack of them. Only Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine were categorized as states in transition. Armenia and Kyrgyzia were classified as semi-consolidated authoritarian regimes, and the others (Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) were categorized as consolidated authoritarian regimes. A large number of these states are obviously not counted as located in the East-Central European area. However, the fact that they were listed clearly shows that the standards of democracy and functioning of civil society in the whole post-Soviet territory significantly differ from those binding in new EU member states in East-Central Europe and – except for Belarus – the farther away from EU borders, the lower, with some oversimplification, the level of democracy index.

The *Freedom House* foundation Report also reviewed the condition of democratic standards and civil society in each of the particular 29 states. The specificity of the existing problems and restrictions was thus captured. The way the dividing line runs in East-Central Europe was again confirmed. In reference to the post-Soviet area the Report emphasized that the practices of intimidating civil society activists in Russia were used. Similar patterns of action were applied in the neighbouring autocratic states of Russia. In 2012, restrictions on civil society were stepped up in Belarus and Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and in Tajikistan.<sup>18</sup> The Report also stressed that in that year the governments of autocratic states in which

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<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 1.

# Nations in Transit 2013: Overall Democracy Scores

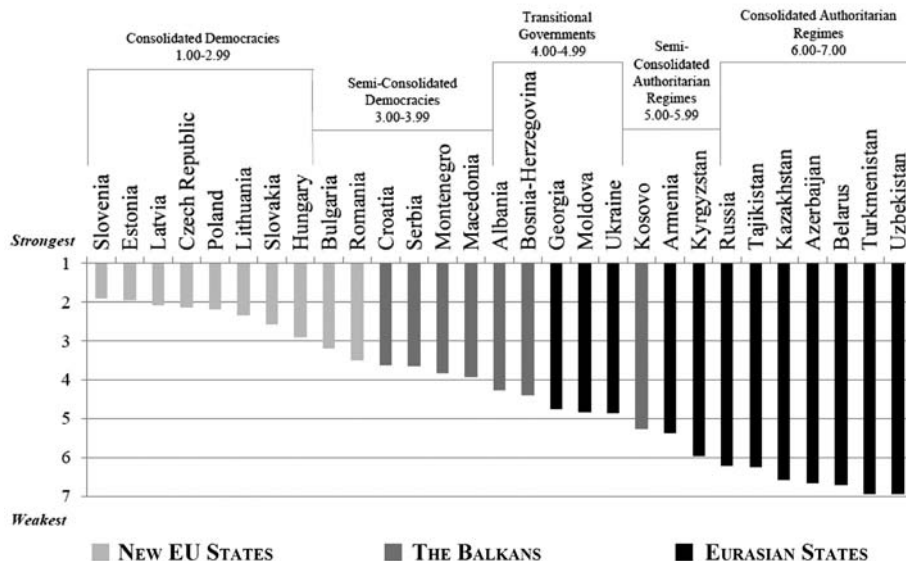


Fig. 1: Democracy Index of states in transformation

Źródło: [http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT2013\\_Graphs\\_June\\_6\\_TR.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT2013_Graphs_June_6_TR.pdf)

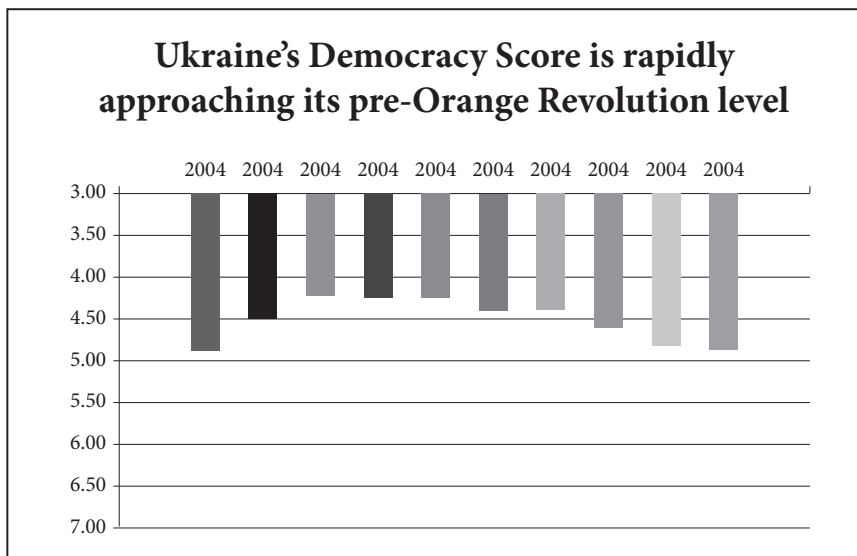


Fig. 2: Evolution of Democracy Index in Ukraine

Źródło: [http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT2013\\_Graphs\\_June\\_6\\_TR.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT2013_Graphs_June_6_TR.pdf)

there were social protests in 2011, took measures aimed at curbing such protests in 2012. Consequently, Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan restricted the freedoms of functioning of civil society, in particular freedom of association, religious freedom, and activities of non-governmental organizations.<sup>19</sup> Special attention was devoted to Ukraine. According to Fig. 2 a distinct tendency in the functioning of this state is the process, begun in 2006, of steadily deteriorating conditions of the functioning of civil society. The indicators defined by *Freedom House* reach the level from before the Orange Revolution. One can thus assume that Ukraine even wasted the benefits of the Orange Revolution in civil liberties and functioning of civil society.

In new EU member states in East-Central Europe the general deterioration of the conditions of the functioning of civil society and its empowerment was also reported. However, the reasons for and ways of manifestation of these constraints are significantly different. It should also be emphasized that the conditions of the functioning of civil societies improved in 3 out of the 10 states. The problems and restrictions that occur are varied. In Bulgaria and Poland there was a slight lowering of the level of media freedom. In Slovakia, the independence of the functioning of judicial agencies slightly decreased. The lowered Democracy Index in Estonia was caused by the intensification of corruption in 2012. The last issue is a vital problem for the other Baltic republics. An increase in the level of civil liberties was reported for the Czech Republic, and, despite corruption practices, for Latvia.<sup>20</sup>

An essential element in the analysis of the empowerment of society but also the existing “fracture” in this field in East-Central Europe is the observance of human rights, or more precisely, the restrictions in this field. It should be clearly emphasized that human rights are a vital element of European political identity, and their observance is clearly given precedence before the principle of sovereignty of states and non-interference in their internal affairs. It was recognized that where violations of human rights may be the source of destabilization of the international environ-

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3.



ment, the states cannot invoke the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs.<sup>21</sup>

However, the practice of observance of human rights in East-Central European countries is the subject of criticism, for example from non-governmental organizations.<sup>22</sup> In its annual Reports *Amnesty International* identifies and criticizes the cases of violation of human rights worldwide, taking the abovementioned group of states into account. Based on the analysis of the Reports for 2009 and 2013 a conclusion can be drawn about different intensity of human rights violations in particular states in this part of Europe. Once again, the clear dividing line, a kind of “fracture”, runs between the East-Central European EU member states and those outside of the European Union. In the former the level of observance of human rights standards is higher than in the latter, each state having its specific problems.

The problems restricting civil liberties and the empowerment of society persist in time, being clearly noticeable. In the case of the Czech Republic the main problem is the discrimination of the Romany community. The problem was consistently pointed out in *Amnesty International* Reports of 2009<sup>23</sup> and 2013.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Slovakia was accused of discriminating against the Romany community in the spheres of education, housing, and access to health care.<sup>25</sup> These charges were confirmed in the 2013 Report.<sup>26</sup> The main charge against Poland is the discrimination of sexual minorities and the consent to host secret CIA prisons connected with US operations

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<sup>21</sup> See M. Pietraś, *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w strukturze ładu międzynarodowego...*, p. 22

<sup>22</sup> Excerpts were used, *Ibid*, p. 22–23.

<sup>23</sup> *Human rights in the Czech Republic Republic*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/czech-republic/Report-2009>.

<sup>24</sup> *Human rights in the Czech Republic Republic*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/czech-republic/Report-2013>.

<sup>25</sup> *Human rights in Slovak Republic*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/slovak-republic/Report-2009>.

<sup>26</sup> *Human rights in Slovak Republic*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/slovak-republic/Report-2013>.

against terrorist organizations.<sup>27</sup> The 2013 Report critically assessed the excessively lengthy inquiry into alleged secret CIA prisons in Poland.<sup>28</sup> Similar charges were leveled against Romania, which was additionally accused of unjustified use of violence by public officers, discrimination of the Romany community, and failure to observe the rights of sexual minorities.<sup>29</sup> The 2013 Report emphasized the excessive use of force by police during demonstrations, cases of evictions of the Romany in some towns, and excessively lengthy inquiry into CIA prisons.<sup>30</sup> To generalize, it should be emphasized that the critical comments refer first of all to socio-economic problems, while significant restrictions on political freedoms are clearly absent.

Entirely different charges were leveled in the *Amnesty International* 2009 and 2013 Reports against the states of East-Central Europe and the post-Soviet area which are not EU members. Belarus was accused in 2009 of excessive control of society, increased control of the public media and restrictions against the independent media. It was also accused of restricting public assemblies and detaining participants in peaceful demonstrations. The Report concludes that civil society activists and journalists of the independent media are persecuted. Belarus was also accused of execution of death penalties, four such cases having taken place in 2009.<sup>31</sup> The 2013 Report pointed out that there are political prisons in Belarus, and stressed that civil society activists, with human rights defenders and journalists topping the list, have their rights restricted regarding freedom of

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<sup>27</sup> *Human right in Republic of Poland*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/poland/Report-2009>.

<sup>28</sup> *Human rights in Republic of Poland*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/poland/Report-2013>.

<sup>29</sup> *Human rights in Romania*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/romania/Report-2009>.

<sup>30</sup> *Human rights in Romania*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/romania/Report-2013>.

<sup>31</sup> *Human rights in Republic of Belarus*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/belarus/Report-2009>.

speech and the right to association and assembly. The execution of three death sentences was reported.<sup>32</sup>

Ukraine was accused of failure to effectively prevent growing racist attacks, of compulsorily sending away refugees and asylum seekers, of the use of torture during police interrogations, and impunity of those responsible for human rights violations.<sup>33</sup> The 2013 Report pointed out the use of torture, and impunity of police officers for such acts. It emphasized the lengthiness of court proceedings, as well as imprisonment and expulsion of asylum seekers to their countries of origin.<sup>34</sup> In the 2009 Report, Moldova, like Ukraine, was accused of the use of torture and impunity of those responsible for human rights violations. Cases of racial discriminations were not punished. The Report also concluded that new regulations concerning freedom of assembly were not enforced.<sup>35</sup> The 2013 Report pointed out the use of torture and impunity of police, and discrimination of sexual minorities.<sup>36</sup>

The analysis of the *Amnesty International* reports provides grounds for a conclusion that in the East-Central European territory the formal acceptance of human rights standards is not followed by the corresponding practice of their implementation, whose level varies considerably. A clear dividing line, a specific “fracture”, is found between the EU member states and the post-Soviet states. Specific problems with the observance of human rights, mainly in the context of the legacy of recently finished wars, are encountered in the Balkan states. With regard to the observance of human rights standards, the East-Central European territory is thus not a uniform, coherent region. This is also the case with civil liberties and freedoms and the above mentioned conditions of the functioning of civil society.

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<sup>32</sup> *Human rights in Republic of Belarus*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/belarus/Report-2013>.

<sup>33</sup> *Human rights in Ukraine*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/ukraine/Report-2009>.

<sup>34</sup> *Human rights in Ukraine*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/ukraine/Report-2013>.

<sup>35</sup> *Human rights in Moldova*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/moldova/Report-2009>.

<sup>36</sup> *Human rights in Moldova* <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/moldova/Report-2013>.

## THE SPECIFICITY OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE SOCIAL SPACE OF EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

“Socio-economic situation” is a term with a broad content scope and with blurred boundaries. A research challenge, particularly in view of the size of this study, is to comprehensively present the specificity of the socio-economic situation in East-Central Europe and the existing divisions. For the purpose of the study, such a comprehensive measure could be the Human Development Index (HDI). It was devised in 1990 by a Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq, and since 1993 it is applied by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to prepare annual reports concerning the level of social development worldwide. HDI is a synthetic measure of the development level of society in a particular state, combining social and economic elements. The following are assessed: a) Life expectancy at birth b) Mean years of schooling of the citizen in a state, aged 25 years or more, c) Expected years of schooling for children which begin education, d) Gross National Income (GNI) per capita in a state calculated by purchasing power parity.<sup>37</sup>

The data in Table 4 clearly show that East Central Europe does not constitute a coherent socio-economic space. Conditions of socio-economic life are highly diversified. The dividing line again runs between the EU member states in East-Central Europe and those that are not EU members. Taking into account the overall HDI value and the resultant ranking, only two EU members i.e. Romania and Bulgaria (ranks 56 and 57 respectively) occupy slightly lower positions than the highest ranks of non-EU members in East-Central Europe. These states are Belarus and Russia ranking 50<sup>th</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> respectively. However, regardless of the comparatively high position of Belarus and Russia in the HDI ranks, there are significant differences between the other EU member states in East-Central Europe and those East-Central European states that are not EU members. While Slovenia ranks 21<sup>st</sup>, the Czech Republic 28<sup>th</sup>, Estonia 33<sup>rd</sup>, Slovakia 35<sup>th</sup>, and Poland 39<sup>th</sup> as well as Lithuania ranks 41<sup>st</sup>, and Latvia 44<sup>th</sup>, then

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<sup>37</sup> See *Human Development Report 2013. The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World*, New York 2013, p. 147.

Table 4: Human Development Index (HDI) in East-Central European states and others in 2013

Country	Rank	HDI value	Life expectancy at birth	Mean years of schooling	Expected years of schooling	GNI per capita (US\$)
<b>EU member states in East-Central Europe</b>						
Bulgaria	57	0.782	73.6	10.6	14	11,474
the Czech Republic	28	0.873	77.8	12.3	15.3	22,067
Estonia	33	0.846	75.0	12.0	15.8	17,402
Lithuania	41	0.818	72.5	10.9	15.7	16,858
Latvia	44	0.814	73.6	11.5	14.8	14,724
Poland	39	0.821	76.3	10.0	15.2	17,776
Romania	56	0.786	74.2	10.4	14.5	11,011
Slovakia	35	0.840	75.6	11.6	14.7	19,696
Slovenia	21	0.892	79.5	11.7	16.9	23,999
Hungary	37	0.831	74.6	11.7	15.3	16,088
<b>Non-EU states in East-Central Europe</b>						
Belarus	50	0.739	70.6	11.5	14.7	13,385
Moldova	113	0.660	69.6	9.7	11.8	3,319
Ukraine	78	0.740	68.8	11.3	14.3	6,428
<b>CIS states outside of East-Central Europe</b>						
Armenia	87	0.729	74.4	10.8	12.2	5,540
Azerbaijan	82	0.734	70.9	11.2	11.7	8,153
Georgia	72	0.745	73.9	12.1	13.2	5,005
Kazakhstan	69	0.754	67.4	10.4	15.3	10,451
Kyrgyzstan	125	0.622	68.0	9.3	12.8	2,009
Russia	55	0.788	69.1	11.7	14.3	14,461
Tajikistan	125	0.622	67.8	9.8	11.5	2,119
Turkmenistan	102	0.698	65.2	9.9	12.6	7,782
Uzbekistan	114	0.654	68.6	10.0	11.6	3,201
<b>Balkan non-EU states</b>						
Albania	70	0.749	77.1	10.4	11.4	7,822
Bosnia and H.	81	0.735	75.8	8.3	13.4	7,713
Croatia*	47	0.805	76.8	9.8	14.1	15,419
Serbia	64	0.769	74.7	10.2	13.6	9,533

\* As of 1 July 2013 Croatia is a EU member state

Source: Own compilation based on *Human Development Report 2013. The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Divers World*. New York 2013, 144–146

Ukraine ranks 78<sup>th</sup>, and Moldova 113<sup>th</sup>. The positions of other countries of the post-Soviet area are also distant. Kazakhstan ranks 69<sup>th</sup>, Georgia 72<sup>nd</sup>, Azerbaijan 82<sup>nd</sup>, Armenia 87<sup>th</sup>, Turkmenistan 102<sup>nd</sup>, and Uzbekistan 114<sup>th</sup>.<sup>38</sup> The existing differences and divisions mean that East-Central Europe does not constitute as a comparatively coherent social space. It can be said with some oversimplification but capturing the logic of the situation that the farther away from the European Union boundaries, the more profound the differences are.

Differences also pertain to particular components that make up the synthetic HDI value. They are the least discernible in education. Differences between individual states are small and it is difficult to speak of a distinct dividing line. Considerable differences, however, pertain to life expectancy at birth, the dividing line being distinctly marked. In the new East-Central European EU member states life expectancy is far longer than in the states in this part of Europe that are not EU members. In Slovenia it is 79.5 years, in the Czech Republic 77.8, in Poland 76.3, in Slovakia 75.6, the lowest being in Lithuania 72.5. In Belarus it is 70.6 years, in Ukraine 68.8, in Moldova 69.6, and in Russia 69.1. Life expectancy in the other post-Soviet states is also diversified. The longest life expectancy is in Armenia- 74.4 years and in Georgia 73.9, and the shortest in Turkmenistan 65.2 and in Kazakhstan 67.4.<sup>39</sup>

There are also distinct differences and divisions in the sphere of the economic situation of societies in particular states, which are measured by the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, and gauged by purchasing power parity. Admittedly, this income in the two poorest EU states, i.e. in Bulgaria and Romania – 11,474 US\$ and 11,011 US\$ respectively- is lower than this figure for Russia – 14,461 US\$ and Belarus – 13,385 US\$, the states of the post-Soviet area with the highest GNI. This indicator is, nevertheless, sometimes significantly lower than the achievements of the other EU member states in East-Central Europe. In Slovenia it is 23,999 US\$, in the Czech Republic- 22,067 US\$, in Slovakia – 19,696 US\$, in Poland 17,776 US\$, and in Estonia 17,402 US\$. For comparison, it is 6,428

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<sup>38</sup> *Human Development Report 2013. The Rise...*, p. 144–146.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 144–146.

US\$ for Ukraine, and for Moldova – 3,319 US\$. In the other post-Soviet states the situation varies, the GNI index being significantly lower than in the East-Central European EU member states. The highest values for Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan are 10,451 US\$ and 8,153 US\$ respectively, the lowest are in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan – 2009 US\$ and 2119 US\$ respectively.<sup>40</sup>

When comparing the foregoing disproportions in the income levels per capita, the data concerning the scale of poverty appear surprising just as, consequently do the figures showing the range of social stratification. It is more significant and the scale of poverty is larger in the East-Central European EU member states compared to those that are not. In the context of determining the Human Development Index for each state, the UNDP also defined the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). Its aim is to show in percentage terms the group of people who encounter difficulties in access to educational services, health care, and who live in difficult financial situations. According to the data contained in the UNDP report for 2013<sup>41</sup> the 2005MPI for Moldova was 1.9%<sup>42</sup>, for Ukraine in 2007–2.2%,<sup>43</sup> for Belarus for 2005–0%,<sup>44</sup> for Russia for 2003–1.3%.<sup>45</sup> For comparison, in several new EU member states in East-Central Europe this index was higher. In Hungary it was 4.6% according to 2003 figures,<sup>46</sup> for the Czech Republic – 3.1%<sup>47</sup> according to the 2002/2003 data, for

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<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, p. 144–146.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>42</sup> *Moldova (Republic of)*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/MDA.html>.

<sup>43</sup> *Ukraine*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/UKR.html>.

<sup>44</sup> *Belarus*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/BLR.html>.

<sup>45</sup> *Russian Federation*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/RUS.pdf>.

<sup>46</sup> *Hungary*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/HUN.html>.

<sup>47</sup> *The Czech Republic*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/CZE.html>.

Slovakia- 0%<sup>48</sup> for 2003. The same value for 2003 was also reported for Slovenia.<sup>49</sup> No data were available to determine the value of this index for Poland and Romania.

Another index that describes social life in individual states is the Gender Inequality Index (GII). The dividing line again runs clearly between the EU member states in East-Central Europe and those that are not EU members. A particularly distinct difference pertains to the political empowerment of women measured by their presence in the parliaments of particular states. This presence in the parliaments of the East-Central European EU member states- except for Hungary- is significantly higher than the states of the post-Soviet area.

The GII index was calculated according to the data for 2012. For example, for Poland GII was 0.14, which ranked 24<sup>th</sup> out of 148 states surveyed. In Poland 21.8% of parliamentary seats were held by women, 76.9% of adult women received secondary or higher education compared to 83.5% of men. 48.2% of women are economically active compared to 64.3% of men.<sup>50</sup> The Czech Republic ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in this ranking- GII index was 0.122. 21% of MPs were women, and 99.8% of adult women completed at least secondary education. 49.6% of women are economically active compared to 68.2% of men.<sup>51</sup> For Slovakia GII index was 0.171, the state thereby ranking 32<sup>nd</sup> in the ranking. 17.3% of parliamentary seats went to women. 98.6% of adult women completed at least secondary education compared to 99.1% of men. 51.2% of women are economically active in comparison to 68.1% of men.<sup>52</sup> Hungary ranked 42<sup>nd</sup>: as compared with the abovementioned states, only 8.8% of parliamentary seats went to women. 93.2% of adult women received at least secondary education compared to 96.7% of adult men. The economic activity coefficient for

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<sup>48</sup> *Slovakia*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/SVK.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> *Slovenia*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/SVN.pdf>.

<sup>50</sup> *Poland*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/POL.html>.

<sup>51</sup> *Czech Republic*, Country Profiles, Human...

<sup>52</sup> *Slovakia*, Country Profiles, Human...



women is also lower. In 2012, 43.8% of women were economically active compared to 58.4% of men.<sup>53</sup> The highest position (8<sup>th</sup>) in the ranking of this group of states went to Slovenia. 23.1% of parliamentary seats were held by women, while 94.2% of women compared to 97.1% of men completed at least secondary education. 53.1% of women were economically active compared to 65.1% of men.<sup>54</sup>

The position of the other East-Central European states and those in the post-Soviet area (the states that are not EU members) is visibly lower in this ranking. Only Romania, ranking 55<sup>th</sup>, occupied a lower position in the ranking than Moldova – 49<sup>th</sup>, Russia – 51<sup>st</sup>, Kazakhstan – also 51<sup>st</sup>, and Azerbaijan – 54<sup>th</sup>. In Moldova 19.8% of parliamentary seats were held by women. 91.6% of adult women completed at least secondary education compared to 95.3% of men. In comparison with EU member states in East-Central Europe, the percentage of economically active women was lower (38.4% compared to 45.1% of men).<sup>55</sup> Ukraine ranked 57<sup>th</sup>. Only 8% of parliamentary seats went to women. 91.5% of adult women received at least secondary education compared to 96.1% of men, while 53.3% of women as compared to 66.6% of men were economically active.<sup>56</sup> There are no data for Belarus.

With regard to the other post-Soviet states: Russia and Kazakhstan equally ranked 51<sup>st</sup> in the GII ranking. For Russia, GII index was 0.312. In the parliament 11.1% of seats went to women. 93.5% of adult women completed at least secondary education compared to 96.2% of men. 56.3% of adult women are economically active compared to 71% men.<sup>57</sup> In Kazakhstan women held 18.2% seats in the parliament, while 99.3% of adult women completed at least secondary education, 66.6% being eco-

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<sup>53</sup> *Hungary*, Country Profiles, Human...

<sup>54</sup> *Slovenia*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/SVN.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup> *Moldova (Republic of)*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/MDA.html>.

<sup>56</sup> *Ukraine*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/UKR.pdf>.

<sup>57</sup> *Russian Federation*, Country Profiles, Human...

nomically active.<sup>58</sup> In Armenia (ranking 59<sup>th</sup>) 10.7% of parliamentary seats went to women. 94.1% of adult women had at least secondary education, and 49.4% were economically active.<sup>59</sup> In Georgia, ranking 81<sup>st</sup> in the ranking, 6.6% of seats in the parliament were held by women. Out of the adult ones, 89.7% completed at least secondary education, with 55.8% being economically active.<sup>60</sup>

### THE SPECIFICITY OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE SOCIAL SPACE OF EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE\*

Just as East-Central Europe does not constitute a separate coherent space of the political empowerment of society, or a space with comparatively uniform socio-economic indicators, so too it does not constitute a space in which there is a distinctly defined East-Central-European cultural identity. It should be said that there are many cultural identities rather than one in the geographical area under consideration. They are a dynamic process conditioned mainly by three determinants functioning at the level of the international environment, or, in other words, the international system.<sup>61</sup> These determinants are: the end of the Cold War, processes of European integration, and globalization processes. Combined together, they produce a kind of triple and synergic change at the same time.

The foregoing three kinds of systemic determinants- as a form of change of the international environment, mostly with qualitative features

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<sup>58</sup> *Kazakhstan*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/KAZ.pdf>.

<sup>59</sup> *Armenia*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/ARM.pdf>.

<sup>60</sup> *Georgia*, Country Profiles, Human Development Indicators, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/GEO.pdf>.

\* Excerts from M. Pietraś, *Systemowe uwarunkowania tożsamości kulturowej w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej*, [in:] H. Chałupczak, M. Pietraś, Ł. Potocki (eds.), *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia w procesie transformacji i integracji*, Zamość 2011, 95–99, were used.

<sup>61</sup> See M. Pietraś, *Systemowe uwarunkowania tożsamości...*, 81 et seq.

– create new opportunities to mold identities that go beyond the established national and ethnic ties, usually limited by the territory and borders of individual states. Under these circumstances, relationships between the individual identity of persons and the identity of communities, in which these individuals function, acquire a special meaning. Despite the disputable and controversial character of approach, many authors distinguish between collective and individual identity, or between its collective and individual dimension.<sup>62</sup> One cannot fail to notice, however, that the two kinds of identity are interrelated, being a part of an individual's personal, subjective identity. The need for a collective identity, i.e. membership of a specific community, reflects characteristic individual striving for identification with larger communities. This striving is a manifestation of individual identity and resultant preferences of individuals. Hence, collective identity can be understood as the process of "overlapping" of individual identities.<sup>63</sup> Studying collective identities thus means investigating the problem of dialectics between subjective identity and socially recognized identity. According to Alberto Melluci it is a dynamic construction that serves to assess and interpret reality.<sup>64</sup> It should be remembered that the processes of European integration and the globalization processes, while introducing qualitatively new features into the functioning of the international environment, create grounds for the emergence in East-Central Europe of new self-identification forms of individual identities, also within communities, that can significantly go beyond the space defined by the territories of particular states. Does this lead, however, to the evolvement of a separate East-Central European identity? It seems that the question asked in this way should be answered in the negative.

The foregoing three kinds of systemic determinants are distinguished by their specificity and different intensity of impact on the processes of

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<sup>62</sup> See C. Calhoun (ed.), *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity*, Cambridge 1994, 24 et seq.; CH. Taylor, *Source of the Self*, Cambridge 1989.

<sup>63</sup> K.B. Muller, *Search for a European Identity – Psycho-Sociological Perspective (An Attempt at Agency Approach)*, "Central European Journal of International and Security Studies" 2007, Vol. 1, p. 103.

<sup>64</sup> A. Melluci, *Challenging codes: collective action in the information age*, Cambridge 1996, p. 7.

transformation of cultural identity in East-Central Europe and on molding their collective forms. The intensity of the impact of the end-of-the Cold War factor is clearly going down, while the intensity of impact of the globalization processes factor is growing. The intensity of the integration processes factor varies or is even asymmetrical in reference to the central and eastern part of Central Europe. The central part was included in the European Union, the eastern part being left outside of it. This contributed to marking off a new dividing life of Europe, with qualitatively new features as compared with the Cold-War Iron Curtain. Nevertheless, regardless of the specificity of the foregoing determinants and the asymmetry in the intensity of their impacts, the evolution of cultural identity in East-Central Europe is a synergic effect of each of these factors. None of them can thus be disregarded in the process of analysis.

One effect of the end of the Cold War essential for East-Central Europe was that it initiated the ongoing process of the free flow of culture across the former Iron Curtain. This is the fulfillment of Western demands that appeared already during the Cold War under the CSCE process.<sup>65</sup> At that time the West insisted on the free flow of culture, making it one of the instruments of political pressure on the East. The restrictions existing in the latter stemmed from political and ideological reasons since the Western ideas, values, or patterns of behavior were treated as harmful and destructive: consequently, prevention of their influx was interpreted as a way of protecting the national identities of individual states against the influx of Western mass culture standards. This means that divergent models of cultural policy functioned in Western Europe and in Eastern Europe. In Western Europe there was the liberal model of commercialization of culture. In contrast, Eastern Europe applied state control over the flow of culture.<sup>66</sup>

After 1989 the situation radically changed. Ideological and political divisions disappeared, being replaced by civilizational divisions. Under these circumstances culture is governed by laws of diffusion. It was recognized

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<sup>65</sup> See *Akt Końcowy z Helsinek 1975*, [in:] E.J. Osmańczyk, *Encyklopedia ONZ i stosunków międzynarodowych*, Warszawa 1982.

<sup>66</sup> See K. Krzysztofek, *Patterns of cultural change and cross-cultural communication in post 1989 Europe. Implications for cultural identity*. (typescript), p. 5–7.

and politically accepted that there is no alternative to the free flow of cultural values, and culture is not a form of moral and political pressure on the East-Central European states as it used to be during the Cold War.<sup>67</sup>

The free flow of culture was a great achievement of the post-Cold War Europe. However, the effects were diverse, not only positive. The lasting barrier of the civilizational division created obstacles to the free flow of culture. A kind of characteristic defensive reaction in East-Central Europe was nationalist tendencies. They can be seen as an “abreaction” to the period of ideological pressure of proletarian internationalism. In the autumn of 1989 Zbigniew Brzeziński wrote about post-communist nationalism as a characteristic form of nationalism, not digested by democratization and tolerance processes.<sup>68</sup> This meant that under such circumstances – particularly in the 1990s – the free flow of culture and popularization of European values encountered limitations. A characteristic trait of East-Central Europe became multiculturalism. Under these circumstances the “unfrozen” ethnic problems became a serious political problem, and Western Europe was afraid of the specter of nationalism haunting Europe.

The end of the Cold War did not therefore create conditions for the development of a common Central European cultural identity. Furthermore, it appears that particularly in the 1990s there were dominant factors that divided nations and ethnic groups in East-Central Europe in cultural and political terms. One such factor is without doubt the factor of “difficult” historical past, functioning in the consciousness of present-day generations. The intensity of its influence is confirmed by the fact that reconciliation processes between nations in this part of Europe proved to be far more difficult than in Western Europe. While reconciliation between the French and the Germans, and then between the Germans and the Poles took place under the favorable conditions of European integration processes, reconciliation between for example the Poles and the Ukrainians, coming to terms with the legacy of their shared difficult history, is taking

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<sup>67</sup> Ibidem, p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> Z. Brzeziński, *Post-communis nationalism*, “Foreign Affairs” 1989, No. 5, Vol. 68, p. 2 et seq.

place under the conditions of the emergence of the new dividing line in Europe- its specific “fracture”.

Another factor that makes it difficult or even impossible for a common East-Central European identity to arise is the historically diverse cultural legacy. Many nations functioned as part of different empires (Russia, Austro-Hungary, Germany, and Turkey), experiencing different, often opposing traditions of the functioning of political systems and social organizations. Likewise, the factor of religious divisions into Catholicism and Orthodox Church cannot be ignored, nor can Islamic influences that were present and still are.<sup>69</sup>

European integration processes, regardless of their asymmetric occurrence in the central and eastern part of East-Central Europe, did not contribute to the formation of a distinct East-Central European identity, because they were accompanied by the idea – despite the above mentioned “fracture of Europe” – of forming a new European identity. Views on the subject are fairly concurrent. Karol Muller expressed an opinion that creating an identity is a way of reducing uncertainty and ambiguity,<sup>70</sup> while Ulrich Beck emphasized that building the European unity has to be perceived as an attempt to consolidate and at the same time to ease European national complexities manifested in the form of a national-ethnic mosaic.<sup>71</sup> Ernest Gillnet, in turn, believed that the transformation of national identities should be seen as a specifically understood process of “denationalization” consisting in confirmation of the cultural dimensions of national identities and in weakening their pathological elements.<sup>72</sup> These views explicitly demonstrate that European identity does not mean the rejection of national identities, while there is a demand that their nationalist “layer” be weakened. Jorgen Hagerman suggested that instead of national identities, which he called “ultimate totalitarianisms”, new forms of belonging should be developed in the multinational, multicultural community

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<sup>69</sup> K. Krzysztofek, *Patterns of cultural...*, p. 11–13.

<sup>70</sup> K.B. Muller, *Search for...*, p. 106.

<sup>71</sup> U. Beck, *Spółeczeństwo ryzyka. W drodze do innej nowoczesności*, Warszawa 2002

<sup>72</sup> E. Gillnet, *Narody i nacjonalizm*, Warszawa 1991.

through multicultural contacts and multiethnic ties.<sup>73</sup> He also offered a conception of cosmopolitan patriotism.

In the context of earlier remarks, Karol Muller advanced a view that European integration is an opportunity to create a positive identity perceived as a complex process “enlightening” national identities and weakening their negative elements chiefly manifested in nationalism. A significant role in the process is assigned to civil society. It should create grounds for an open identity, not oversimplified to its nationalist component. It is therefore a process of reconstructing identities existing in Europe, and building a new form of collective identity, which is the European identity. It must not be seen, however, as a national identity. If a European cultural specific characteristic is diversity, then the European cultural identity is difficult to define in unequivocal terms because it is a “postnational” and “posttraditional” identity.<sup>74</sup>

Karol Muller expressed a view that building this form of identity is possible through specific methods of multicultural communication, dialog, and participation, in which a significant role is played by civil society. Under these conditions, communication is a way of creating the sense of belonging and solidarity. Societies undergoing modernization are becoming communication societies, which is facilitated by modern technologies and network structures. In this context, the forming of a European identity is a process whose main component is active participation of civil society in open communication which can in itself be a characteristic of European identity.<sup>75</sup> This mechanism, despite the asymmetric intensity of occurrence, also creates conditions for the transformation of cultural identity in East-Central Europe. However, taking into account the earlier analyzed diversity of the development degree and conditions under which civil society is functioning in East-Central Europe, and bearing the existing “fracture” in mind, it is doubtful that the process of European integration should generate the emergence of a separate East-Central European identity.

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<sup>73</sup> J. Hagerman, *The Postnational Constellation. Political Essays*, Cambridge 2001, p. 75.

<sup>74</sup> K.B. Muller, *Search for...*, p. 108.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 109.



The effects of the factor of globalization processes on cultural identity in East-Central Europe are difficult to determine in unequivocal terms because, firstly, it is difficult to determine the impact of these processes on social life as such. Secondly, it is difficult to precisely determine the increasing but at the same time diverse, asymmetrical degree of “connection” of the East-Central European societies into globalization processes and their consequent sensitivity and receptivity to these processes.

There are two extreme points of view on the assessment of the effects of globalization processes on national identities. On the one hand, they are perceived as a potent force destructive to cultural identity, resulting in the homogenization of cultural contents under the influence of Western consumer culture regarded by some even as a kind of cultural imperialism. The effects are therefore perceived as a powerful “wave” that destroys local identities and leads to the loss of cultural identity. Consequently, it is difficult to expect that the effects of globalization processes understood in this sense should contribute to distinguishing a separate East-Central European identity.

On the other hand, a view is advanced that despite the potent force of market mechanisms, transnational corporations, and the spread of consumer behavior patterns, the globalization processes do not eliminate cultural identity – on the contrary, they strengthen it. A thesis is even put forward that under such conditions and as a result of a defensive reaction cultural identity is more of a product of globalization processes than their victim.<sup>76</sup> This is because identity is perceived as a powerful force of local culture that counterbalances decentralist forces in the capitalist economy under globalization. Identity is a product of a cultural construction maintained by the state measures, in particular by law, the educational system, and the media. Under these conditions the deterritorialized and transnational forces of globalization processes encounter resistance on the part of what is termed “banal nationalism”.<sup>77</sup> However, the strengthening of national identities under the conditions of globalization processes again

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<sup>76</sup> J. Tomlinson, *Globalization and Cultural Identity*, [in:] D. Held, A. McGrew (eds.), *The Global Transformations Reader. An Introduction in the Globalization Debate*, Cambridge 2003, p. 269.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 270.



does not, as shown in the documentation analyzed, create grounds for developing a specifically regional – i.e. one with a more than national reach – East-Central European identity.

In view of the extreme points of view and the fact of the increasing “connection” of societies in East-Central Europe into globalization processes – through the Internet, satellite television, mobile phones, traveling, network structures of global society, transnational corporations and other mechanisms, there is no doubt that these have become a catalyst for the process of dynamization and change of cultural identity. On the one hand, at the level of consumer behaviors they are clearly seen as homogenized, and the globally functioning patterns created by transnational corporations are adopted. This may be a debatable or even risky thesis but it appears difficult to perceive the retention of national identity or a specific East-Central European identity in consumer behaviors. On the other hand, however, when drinking Coca cola, wearing jeans, having a hamburger at McDonalds, a Hungarian, a Pole, a Ukrainian, a Latvian, or a Slovak are still Hungarian, Polish, Ukrainian, Latvian, or Slovakian. This does not make it easier to create a separate East-Central European identity. This is the more so because the contemporary culture in East-Central Europe, but also in many other parts of the world, is less and less molded by the local since the local is increasingly molded by the global.<sup>78</sup> The Internet and satellite television are a form of penetration of the local by the global. The transnational social space and its characteristic network structures create opportunities to mold a collective identity which crosses the territorial boundaries of individual states. At the same time they cause collective identity to become a complex, multi-level phenomenon for the societies in East-Central Europe. Does this multi-level character of identity create a chance for a separate level of East-Central European identity? It appears, however, that under the conditions of the above-discussed “political, social, and economic fracture” of East-Central Europe this question should be answered in the negative. Consequently, the lack of a common East-Central European cultural identity is the result of divi-

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 273.

sions in other fields of social life, and it strengthens these divisions at the same time.

To sum up, it should be explicitly emphasized that the present studies have confirmed that there is no coherent and separate social space functioning in the defined geographical space of East-Central Europe. It has been assumed that this space is a multi-level phenomenon which comprises the level of civil society and its political empowerment, the level of socio-economic situation, and the level of distinct cultural identity. It has been confirmed that this is a space in which the new division of Europe runs at the level of civil society and at the level of the socio-economic situation of societies, whereas East-Central European identity has not emerged at the level of culture. It is thus a “fractured” space while the existing divisions are becoming consolidated and even deepened under the conditions of the EU-preferred strategy of projects, which is confirmed by the European Neighbourhood Policy, Eastern Partnership, or Black Sea Synergy. The cognitive goal of the article has thereby been accomplished, the adopted research hypothesis having been positively verified.

The present study – a methodological challenge – has confirmed the usefulness of the quantitative analysis of selected indicators serving to characterize individual levels of the social space in East-Central Europe in the process of investigating the abovementioned “fracture” of Europe. In particular, this applied to the aspect of civil society and the socio-economic aspect. Especially noticeable divisions are found at the level of civil society.

### SUMMARY

East-Central Europe being distinguished – despite different views – a geographical space does not constitute a distinct and coherent political, economic, social, and cultural space. Changes taking place in contemporary Europe, in particular those associated with integration processes mark a new, specific dividing line, different from that during the Cold War. It runs across the geographical, and, consequently, social, political, economic and cultural space of East-Central Europe. It is constructed by both different standards and indicators of social, political and economic life in that part of Europe and the specific shape of cultural identity.

The research objective of the paper is to identify and analyze the “fracture” of social space in this part of Europe. It is assumed that social space is a complex, multifaceted construction. Especially significant seems to be the problem of the political empowerments of civil society and its limitations, the problem of the socio-economic situation, and the problem of cultural identity. It is also assumed that the EU’s political strategy currently being pursued, consisting in relinquishing the prospect of EU enlargement towards the east to include selected countries of the so-called post-Soviet area, contributes to strengthening “the fracture” of East-Central Europe. This is apparently the result of the European Union’s implementation of “A Europe of Projects” strategy, which is the measures undertaken under the European Neighbourhood Policy, Eastern Partnership, or Black Sea Synergy.

**Keywords:** East-Central Europe, social space, civil society, economic situation, cultural identity, European Union