

Frontiers of Democracy: Embedding Democratic Values in Central and Eastern Europe

Good practices and limits of transferability

Edited by
Bogdan Mihai Radu
Zsuzsanna Végh

Center for European Neighborhood Studies, 2017

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List of Contributors

Victoria BUCATARU is program director at the Foreign Policy Association of Moldova. She holds a BA and MA degree in international relations, political and administrative sciences from the Moldova State University. In 2005-2010, Victoria worked as a lecturer at the International Relations Department, Moldova State University as well as was involved in the activity of several non-governmental organizations such as the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives, the Information and Documentation Centre on NATO, and the European Institute for Political Studies. In 2010-2012, she was involved in the joint research consortium “Security and Development Research within the Wider Europe Initiative Security Cluster” supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. Victoria has been working for the Foreign Policy Association since 2009. She is the author of several publications on foreign and security policies, and Moldova’s relation with the European Union, and she has provided expertise in the field of foreign and security policies to national and international organizations in the framework of various thematic programs.

Jan HUSÁK is elected board member of the Czech Council of Children and Youth since 2009. At the Youth Council, he initiated the successful and Europe-wide youth project “Have Your Say - Structured Dialogue of Youth”. He is currently coordinator of the National Working Group for the Structured Dialogue with Youth in the Czech Republic, and is also dealing with youth policy and participation research activities. For 2016-2017, he is elected as a member of the Advisory Council on Youth by the Council of Europe. He publishes regularly about civic and political participation and youth policy issues in the Czech Republic and abroad, and contributes to Czech and international conferences. He is a co-author of the books *Youth Policy Review in the Czech Republic* as well as *Political Parties and Nationalism in Visegrad Countries*. Within his Ph.D. study in political science at University of Economics in Prague, he researches the phenomenon of co-management and its impact on democratization of sectoral policies.

Václav KŘÍŽ is grants administrator at the PASOS Policy Association for Open Society, and was previously employed as project manager with the EUROPEUM Institute for the European Policy in Prague. He is member of the town council of Krásno. His is chairman of Young Citizens and member of the Active Reserve of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. He holds a BA degree in international area studies from the Charles University in Prague, where he is currently working on his Master degree. He also studied in Sofia and Saltzburg.

Tomasz MAZUREK is a member of the Institute for Eastern Initiatives and Vice President of the “Między Uszami” – Foundation for Education of Deaf People. He is a scriptwriter, film editor and producer of documentary films. He creates scenarios for e-learning and workshops. For the past few years he has been participating in projects related to the Polish minority in Ukraine and Kazakhstan. He also works on problems of people with disabilities in Poland and in Eastern Europe as well as the status of NGOs and their challenges in Poland.

Rebecca MURRAY is a participant at Teach for Slovakia since June 2016 and is currently teaching at the elementary school in Veľké Leváre in Slovakia. Until September 2016 she worked as a research fellow at the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association as well as editor-in-chief of the webzine *Zahraničná politika* (Foreign Policy). Rebecca graduated in European studies and international relations from the Faculty of Social and Economic Studies at the Comenius University in Bratislava in 2012. Previously, she also worked at the Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs (CENAA). Rebecca also works as online editor and directress at the civic association Democracy in Central Europe, publisher of the webzine *V4 Revue*.

Anton PISARENKO is a project coordinator at the Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation. He received his MA in foreign policy from the Institute of International Relations of the Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University. His Master's thesis is about Russia's soft power in the V4 countries. Originally from Mariupol, Donetsk region, he graduated from Mariupol State University having completed successfully his Bachelor degree in International Relations and was actively involved in civil society in Mariupol being a member of local international relations expert community NGO, Dipcorpus. He was one of the organizers of the first “Euromaidan” in Mariupol. He was a member of the Youth Delegation of Ukraine to the Council of Europe, Strasbourg (December 2014), and has a journalistic background. His research interests include the development of political systems and ideologies, European integration and European values, and Russia's soft power.

Bogdan Mihai RADU is visiting researcher of the CEU Center for European Neighborhood Studies since 2012, and holds a senior lectureship position in the Department of Political Science at Babes-Bolyai University in Romania. He received his MA in European politics from the University of Manchester and his Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Irvine, USA. He completed his doctoral degree in 2007, with the dissertation *Traditional Believers and Democratic*

Citizens. A Contextualized Analysis of the Effects of Religion on Support for Democracy in East Central Europe. His research revolved around issues of political culture, democratic transition and consolidation and comparative studies of public opinion in the context of an enlarged Europe. He conducted research on religious values and political beliefs, for both adults and the youth, focusing on the relationships between religiosity and religious participation on the one hand, and political participation and support for democracy on the other hand. More recently, Bogdan became interested in studying the concept of public opinion in the realm of international governance, especially focusing on international development. He is committed to interdisciplinary approaches and the combined use of empirical and interpretive methods.

Jan ŠEREK is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Research on Children, Youth, and Family at the Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University. His research interest involves political and civic socialization and the development of young people's sociopolitical attitudes. He participated in several national and European research projects, e.g., the EU FP7 project "Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation" addressing civic engagement of young people from ethnic minorities. Currently, he is involved in the EU Horizon 2020 research "Constructing Active Citizenship with European Youth: Policies, Practices, Challenges and Solutions" where he coordinates a work package on the reanalysis of existing data on youth attitudes and participation in relation to Europe and the EU.

Agnieszka SŁOMIAN is the founder and chairwoman of the Institute for Eastern Initiatives in Kraków since 2010. She coordinates cultural, educational and research projects connected with the post-Soviet area. She is also a trainer in the topic of organizational and project management. She collaborates with the Kosciuszko Institute in Krakow since 2008, particularly in the field of Eastern Partnership. She holds a Master's degree in Russian studies (2010) and a Bachelor's degree in Russian philology (2011). At present, she is a doctoral student at the Faculty of International and Political Studies of the Jagiellonian University. Her academic research concentrates on Central Asia, primarily on the role of ethno-cultural organizations in Kazakhstan.

Zsuzsanna VÉGH is a researcher at the CEU Center for European Neighborhood Studies since 2012. Her research focuses on the Visegrad cooperation, the Visegrad countries' foreign, security and international development policy, as well as the European Union's relations with its Eastern neighborhood (Eastern Partnership).

At CENS, she has been engaged, among others, in research projects focusing on the Europeanization/transition experience of the Visegrad countries and its relevance for countries in the Eastern neighborhood. She holds a Master's degree in international relations and European studies from the Central European University (2012) and one in international studies from the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest (2011). She also studied at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland.

Olena VLASIUK was a research intern at the Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation (March-June, 2016). Now, she is a Master student of the sociology department at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. Her research interests include democracy and global transformations. More specifically, her work examines democracy promotion policies in post-socialist countries.

Introduction

by *Zsuzsanna Vég*h

Democratization is a complex process that entails both critical choices of new institutions, and the rooting of those institutions in the societal ethos. Much of the literature on democratic transition, consolidation and Europeanization has been dominated by the study of legal and institutional crafting, especially concerning the post-communist and post-Soviet countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE),¹ where not only political but also economic and social institutions had to be created in the process of the fundamental transformations taking place after 1989. However, the footprint of a healthy democracy cannot be measured only in terms of institutional performance. It has to also include citizens' attitudes to and engagement with the new institutions, and, in fact, a general change of mentality that reflects their attachment to the new system. It is people's attachment to democratic values that may keep governments in check and preclude them from slipping toward populist and anti-democratic measures, when the possibility and temptation to reshape democratic institutions arise.

In the case of Central and Eastern European transitions, it was often assumed that under the political consensus about "returning to Europe," societies would automatically embrace the new democratic polity including its norms and values. This, however, was not the case: the process of embedding democratic values and creeds in the pre-existing belief system – marred by features of mistrust and fear, and institutions poisoned by continued corruption both inherited from the totalitarian regimes and upheld by the hardships of transition – has proven to be a more difficult and complex task than establishing new legislative frameworks and institutions. It has also become obvious that value change requires not only time and patience but the presence of strong and legitimate – governmental and non-governmental – agents promoting such change.

1 Throughout this volume, we use the term 'Central and Eastern Europe' inclusively, referring broadly to the post-communist countries that undertook political regime transformation in and after 1989, meaning the Visegrad countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), Romania, Bulgaria, the Baltic countries as well as the states gaining independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the more eastern parts of Europe. Throughout the volume, the term 'Eastern Europe' is also used in reference to the latter group, the post-Soviet states.

The democratic rollback experienced in certain countries of the region in recent years does not only showcase the reversibility of institutions but also brings to light the survival and resurgence of old mindsets both in societies and among elected representatives. Such internal political developments in Central and Eastern Europe raise questions about the once assumed success and finality of the transition process, and render discussions about what supported and hampered democratic transition timely. In engaging in such discussions, however, one must look beyond – but should not dismiss – the much studied processes of institutional and legal transformation, and devote more attention to mentality and value change the lack of which might have allowed for easier backsliding. In doing so, studying the scope of actors engaged in the transition process should also be broadened as value and mentality change is not only promoted through official channels. Therefore, looking into the contribution of civil society to democratic values creation is essential, since the actors in the civil sphere can be important promoters of democratic progress. With this in mind, we argue that the construction of a democratic political culture – one that reflects interest in and understanding of the newly formed democratic system and the desire to participate in it – is a process worth exploring not only from an academic but also from a practical, a practitioners' point of view in order to gain a more comprehensive picture.

The study of such questions is rendered even more important by the fact that the governments of several of the Central and Eastern Europe countries that democratized quicker, and thus succeeded in their pledge to join the European Union and NATO, have long argued that they have gathered a set of so-called transition experience that can be useful for countries undertaking a similar transformation process at a slower pace. While academia and civil society often echoed such notions, the continued validity of this approach necessitates at least closer explorations. When doing so, lessons drawn from a wide pool of governmental and non-governmental actors and their practices influencing legal, institutional and value change should be considered.

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This volume is the outcome of the project titled “*Frontiers of Democracy: Embedding Democratic Values in Moldova and Ukraine*” led by the Center for European Neighborhood Studies of the Central European University, and implemented in cooperation with the EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, the Foreign Policy Association of Moldova, the Institute of Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association and the Kosciuszko Institute as

consortium partners. Throughout this publication we focus on the countries of the Visegrad Group (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, also referred to as V4 or Visegrad countries) on the one hand, and on Ukraine and Moldova on the other.

We consider the Visegrad countries as examples of states that undertook transition at a quicker pace and were regarded as examples of successful democratization that could legitimately share their experiences with others. Data presented in subsequent chapters, however, show that legal and institutional transformation have not necessarily resulted in the embeddedness of democratic values across the demos or just simply higher political participation as such. Furthermore, recent years have brought steps in some of these countries resulting in backward movements on the road toward democracy or have shown the vulnerability of results achieved to date.

We take Moldova and Ukraine as examples of post-Soviet countries democratizing at a slower pace with frequent set-backs and stalemates, which however, in the recent years, have shown more engagement toward the process of democratization, thanks either to their governments or civil society, especially in the framework of the European Union's Eastern Partnership initiative. Being some of the key target countries of the V4 in sharing transition experience, it is worth discussing whether lessons drawn from the Visegrad experience broadly understood can really benefit these two countries, whether they answer the needs and what the limitations of transferability are.

Recognizing that transition is a vast process with multiple facets, we choose to narrow our focus to social transformation and value change in Central and Eastern Europe. The key topics of this volume have been identified through a process of deliberation among the participants of the consortium. The discussions aimed at pinpointing some of the challenging areas across the six countries where democratization did not lead to value change in the expected direction, and also focused on identifying some of the key channels, which are important in supporting democratization due to their central role in the process. Through these discussions, the need to review general trends and the changes in democratic political participation emerged, along with a call for the examination of some of democracy's key values such as tolerance and cultural diversity, or transparency and accountability. Taking a pro-active approach, our research also devoted attention to concrete anti-discrimination and anti-corruption initiatives that could facilitate embedding these values. Moreover, we incorporated into our inquiry two general channels we considered essential to the building of healthy democracies that can also support social, mentality and value transformations: the media and civic education.

To grasp the complexity of the process and the wide spectrum of actors usually involved in it, we made inclusivity a priority of our research project. The three workshops organized as part of the project between December 2015 and May 2016 in Budapest, Chisinau and Kyiv, as well as the several working papers published in the *Frontiers of Democracy Working Paper Series* on the website of the Center for European Neighborhood Studies featured a variety of stakeholders from academia, think tanks and non-governmental organizations active in the field of study and on the ground, who thus contributed to our explorations with their theoretical and practical knowledge. Experts have been invited to participate from all six project countries on an equal footing, providing the environment to overcome the often present “teacher-student” dichotomy of donors and recipients. This allowed for a setting better suited for unraveling the potential transferability of experiences from the V4 to Moldova and Ukraine, or the other way around.

The volume thus presents the outcome of a year-long process of investigation, reflection and discussion building on the expertise of invited academics, analysts and practitioners, as well as on the research and analysis of the consortium members. The first chapter, written by Bogdan Radu and Zsuzsanna Végh, provides a background for the rest of the publication by discussing some of the existing literature on transition in Central and Eastern Europe and reviewing how perceptions about democracy and certain democratic values have developed over time in the Visegrad countries. In so doing, it also seeks to raise questions about the Visegrad countries so-called transition experience and its potential transferability to the countries of Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans.

The chapter on political participation and socialization of the youth, written by Jan Husák, Jan Šerek and Václav Kříž, focuses on how active political engagement has developed within a group that was already socialized in a democratizing and democratic environment in Central and Eastern Europe. Along with survey results presented in the previous chapter, the data about fluctuating and often decreasing numbers of conventional and non-conventional political participation of the youth across the CEE countries also point to the incompleteness of transition toward a healthy democracy where citizens understand and use the opportunities a democratic system provides for them to shape their lives. The authors of the chapter call for more attention to the political socialization of the youth, including thorough and detailed assessment of the situation across the region.

In raising conscious and empowered citizens, civic education – let it be formal or informal – plays an essential role. In her chapter, Rebecca Murray discusses the role civic education can play in contributing to democratization and shaping the views, values and actions of citizens. She reviews under what conditions civic education ini-

tatives have proven to be more successful and influential in the Visegrad countries and what might have hampered their success. She showcases various initiatives from the individual states to serve as examples and inspiration for democratizing countries, and she assesses their transferability to Moldova and Ukraine.

A participatory social environment cannot exist without a pluralistic and free media scene, either. Victoria Bucataru discusses in her chapter whether and under what circumstances mass media has the power to define and strengthen the values of individuals and communities, and argues that when it does function freely, it can serve as a check on the government by informing and empowering citizens. She discusses some of the key contemporary threats endangering media freedom in the region, such as political and business interests intervening in the operation of the media, the rise of para-journalism and propaganda, which pose threats to the freedom of speech, balanced media environments and the security of the Central and Eastern European region.

The establishment of new, democratic institutions and legal frameworks do not automatically trigger value change in societies in transition. Tolerance, one of the most fundamental democratic values, in Central and Eastern Europe stands as an obvious example in question. In their chapter, Agnieszka Słomian and Tomasz Mazurek discuss how tolerance toward national, ethnic, religious and other minorities is indeed a challenge in the region due to a variety of historical experiences, cultural and religious peculiarities and the heritage of the communist past. Some of the initiatives sampled from the Visegrad countries could be of assistance for Moldova and Ukraine, which are lagging behind in this respect. Słomian and Mazurek, however, argue that solutions to tackle discrimination and develop a tolerant society have to be rooted in the local context.

Anton Pisarenko and Olena Vlasiuk argue in a similar vein in their chapter discussing transparency and accountability, two basic values indispensable for the development of democratic institutions. While the Visegrad countries started to fight corruption in the 1990s, corruption has become a constituting element of the political systems in Ukraine and Moldova that developed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and is now often inherent part of people's mentality. Due to the specificities of corruption in the individual countries, Pisarenko and Vlasiuk argue that simply transferring experiences would not be effective to tackle the challenge in Moldova and Ukraine. Discussing the example of Ukraine after the Euromaidan, they showcase how new and organic initiatives have started to develop in Eastern Europe, which might actually serve as inspiration for the Visegrad countries, as well.

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Democratic Transition and Consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe¹

by Bogdan Mihai Radu and Zsuzsanna Végh

The field of democratic transition, or transitology gained momentum in 1989. Traditionally, the field was characterized by analyzing ongoing democratization processes based on previous waves of transformation (e.g. understanding transitions in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries by bringing in literature focusing on Latin America and Southern Europe). Transition represents “major shifts from one stable state of society to another potentially stable state”.² It does not necessarily imply that the arriving point is a consolidated democracy, though most of the discourse seems to disregard this. According to Balcerowicz, there are four types of transitions that had preceded the changes in Central and Eastern Europe.

1. Classical transitions including countries that undertook their transition between 1860 and 1920 and are now categorized as the advanced capitalist democracies or consolidated, traditional democracies. Although they are older, the age per se is not as important as the fact that they democratized at a slower, historically organic pace and without pressure from the outside.
2. Neo-classical transitions, including democratization processes in capitalist systems after World War II: West Germany, Italy, Japan; then, in 1970, Spain and Portugal, some parts of Latin America in 1970–1980, and South Korea and Taiwan in 1980. In each of these younger democracies, external factors influenced both the pace and the nature of democratization. The victors of World War II were constructing democratic systems in the defeated countries.
3. Market-oriented reforms in non-communist countries, comprising most of the countries mentioned above, though their economic changes seem to have preceded their political changes.

1 Parts of this chapter have been published in Bogdan Mihai Radu, *To Clash or Not to Clash? Religious Revival and Support for Democracy in Post-communist East Central Europe* (Bucharest: University of Bucharest Press, 2016).

2 Leszek Balcerowicz, “Understanding Post Communist Transitions,” in *Democracy after Communism*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002): 63.

4. The somewhat isolated Asian post-communist transitions, such as China in the 1970s and Vietnam in the 1980s, which did not result in full-fledged democracies.

While comparative research is popular in the field, many argue that the scope of transformation brought about by the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe was so big that comparisons with previous transitions are not particularly helpful. Indeed, after 1989, Central and Eastern Europe had to undertake a transition from totalitarian regimes to democracy and market economy, which entailed fundamental changes within political, economic, social and cultural institutions, creeds and values, and which limits opportunities for comparison with previous processes.³

Due to the complexity and uniqueness of the process, everything that defines a social system – national identity, social structure, the relationship of the state to its citizens, the economy, and the international system – is subject to intense negotiation in the post-communist world.⁴ According to Bunce, “in post-communism, political institutions seem to be more a consequence than a cause of political development”⁵ Indeed, the political institutions adopted in CEE in the 1990s were often imported from elsewhere and sometimes adjusted to national contexts, but they were not the results of organic historical political development. There was no time and historical precedent available for organic development.

Along this logic of institutional adaptation, transitology internalized the path-dependency approach: countries were shown a set of transformations they had to undertake, and, upon implementing them, would presumably arrive at democracy; this linear, path-dependent understanding of democratization contradicts democracy itself, which should exist upon constant re-examination of context, reforms that are made within the context, and in consolidated democracies, permanently reflecting upon the quality of one’s democracy.⁶

Balcerowicz sums up three features of transitions in Central and Eastern Europe that grant them a unique status, and argues against the adoption of a path-dependent approach.⁷ First of all, there is an exceptionally large scope of change; not only the political institutions are changing, but also the economic system, the societal values/culture, even defense alliances, integration in supranational structures (the

3 Valerie Bunce, “Comparing East and South,” in *Democracy after Communism*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

4 Bunce, “Comparing East and South...” 23.

5 Bunce, “Comparing East and South...” 28.

6 Guillermo O’Donnell et al., eds. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

7 Balcerowicz, “Understanding Post Communist Transitions...”.

EU), while state and nation-building are taking place. Although economic and political liberalization are said to occur simultaneously in Central and Eastern Europe, the former is bound to take a longer time to settle, since privatization and its effects are more tedious than setting up the founding elections and drawing up a constitution: “mass democracy (or, at least, political pluralism, that is, some degree of legal and political competition) first, and market capitalism later”.⁸ Secondly and consequently, market-oriented reforms have to be introduced under democratic or at least pluralistic political arrangements, in contrast to most other historic cases of democratization, in which economic liberalization usually preceded democratization and occurred during periods of authoritarian rule. Finally, transitions to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe have been peaceful, with the exception of Romania. This rather smooth change of system is indeed one of the most interesting features of the region’s transitions, since it is customary for changes of regime to incur more resistance from the defeated party.

As the above circumstances show, democratic transition in Central and Eastern Europe had unique features that may render it difficult to include in comparative research. Moreover, even within the so-called post-communist group of countries, there are many differences. Thus even raising the question of how appropriate it is to study democratic transition in Central and Eastern Europe as a regional phenomenon and how the experiences of one group of countries can benefit others. Despite the various starting points and circumstances across the Central and Eastern European region, the Visegrad countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) have long argued that thanks to their transition and Europeanization processes, they have a valuable set of transferable transition experience that can serve those countries which lag behind on their way of democratic transformation, that is, the countries of the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. It is a question, however, if this body of experience can address the needs stemming from the local context beyond sharing knowledge about building new legal and institutional frameworks and legal approximation to the European Union.

The present paper serves as a theoretical introduction to the collection of essays presented in this volume. It seeks to describe the starting points of our inquiry and provide a background for the discussion featured in further chapters. Here, we highlight the importance of value change as a key component of the complex transition process that is preeminent for the sake of consolidating democracy and an element that has not received due attention e.g. in the case of the Visegrad countries. We then discuss how political values and beliefs are formed and transformed within newly democratizing countries. Afterwards, we review how this transformation

8 Balcerowicz, “Understanding Post Communist Transitions...” 64.

proceeded in the case of the Visegrad countries, and set out the question whether this experience can be of use for supporting the democratization processes of Moldova and Ukraine. Answers are to be found in the subsequent chapters.

Institutions and values during transition

Transition to democracy is a two-folded process. The first component is the introduction of democratic political institutions. The relation between the executive and the legislative provides an example of this component. While the executive may preserve the most power of decision-making, a democratically elected legislature consecrates the democratic character of the new regime. All governments require an executive to exercise the authority of the state, but representative democracies invest the people with authority, expressed indirectly through a popularly elected legislature usually endowed with at least some degree of responsibility over the executive.⁹

The second component of transition is the lengthy process of rooting the democratic institutions in the political culture of every particular country, thereby creating a civil society and increasing the odds of democratic consolidation. The importance of this component is best explained in contrast to established democratic regimes. In consolidated democracies, public support for the regime is important for its success or performance, but its democratic nature or existence is not in question. Transitional regimes are different in that the public evaluation of the regime establishes the legitimacy of a democratic government or justifies a return to non-democratic regime types: "The critical question for newly democratic legislatures is not whether citizens trust their legislatures, but whether they think the legislatures should be performing at all".¹⁰ The "democratized" public thus needs to undertake a process of "democracy learning" in order to familiarize itself with the mechanisms of democratic politics. Mere "adoption" of democratic institutions does not guarantee a "full" democracy.¹¹

The choice of democratic political institutions has been widely debated in the literature.¹² The second component of the transition process, the response of the society to the new institutions and their rooting, has, however, not received equal attention. The reasons for this imbalance are two-fold. First, societal responses to

9 William Mishler and Richard Rose, "Comparing Regime Support in Non-democratic and Democratic Countries," *Democratization*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2002): 4.

10 Mishler and Rose, "Comparing Regime Support..." 9.

11 William M. Reisinger, "Choices facing the Builders of a Liberal Democracy," in *Democratic Theory and Post-Communist Change*, ed. Robert Grey (Prentice Hall, 1997).

12 Guillermo O'Donnell et al., "Transitions from..."; Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell and J. Samuel Valenzuela, *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1992).

new political institutions vary significantly from context to context; although there may only be a limited set of institutional choices, their rooting in particular context results in a very diverse landscape of political orientations. Capturing this diversity is, indeed, challenging.

Second, there are debates in the literature on the necessity of preexisting democratic political culture and the relationship between institutions and political values. Does democratization build political culture, or does the pre-existing political culture condition democratization? However, one assertion is true at any rate: the institutional arrangements do condition and influence the development of political culture. According to Munck and Leff initial institutional choices, affected by the identity and strategy of the agent of change, determine the extent of democratic support. In other words, people might learn democracy, but they will only be as democratic as the incumbent transitional regimes allowed them to be.¹³

The societies' responses, that is, the outcome of implementing democracy in Central and Eastern Europe is diverse, and there is no single explanation for this diversity. Previous experience with democracy is a pertinent influencing factor. Historical evolutions and patterns of foreign domination both before and during communism seem significant, as well. Every country in the area has been dominated by, at least one empire, and there are differences between the cultures imposed by the Ottomans, the Habsburgs and the Russians. Communism, as well, has been either homegrown, and thus more legitimate, or imposed from the outside. Ekiert explains that countries that lived through a culture of publicly and collectively opposing communism, such as Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic are more probable to succeed in democracy, since such opposition contributed to building a civil society.¹⁴

While international influences played a part in other democratic transitions, its role is the strongest in Central and Eastern Europe both because of security concerns (NATO and the former Warsaw Pact) and the attractiveness of EU integration. Rupnik draws a distinction between joining NATO and joining the EU, and identifies a paradox in the fast-paced NATO integration, and the slow and uncertain EU enlargement. While, the former is explained by strategic goals of the Western European countries and the US, which try to avoid the recreation of the "no man's land" in Central Europe, the latter is also more demanding for the candidate countries.¹⁵

13 Gerardo L. Munck and Carol Skalnik Leff, "Modes of Transition and Democratization: South America and Eastern Europe in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 29, No.3 (1997).

14 Grzegorz Ekiert, *The State Against Society: Political Crises and Their Aftermath in East Central Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

15 Jacques Rupnik, "The International Context", in *Democracy after Communism*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

EU integration functioned as a powerful agent for democratization, through the EU's Copenhagen criteria and the principle of conditionality.¹⁶ Conditions for accession emphasize strict standards of liberal democracy, market economy, and the adoption of the EU's *acquis communautaire* before a country can be given the green light to join. Heather Grabbe argues that throughout the process of adopting the *acquis*, candidate countries were often put in a position of inferiority that required them to adapt to diverse outcomes (e.g. the restricted free circulation of people), but they accepted this because the goal of EU accession had been internalized both in the political culture and in the policy-making of most political parties of the candidate states. Hence rejection would have meant losses of political capital.¹⁷

Indeed, the effect of signing pre-accession EU association agreements has been documented to play a major role in explaining successful democratization.¹⁸ However, our goal is to draw attention to the shortcomings of the Europeanization process in CEE, which is still heavily focused on legal and institutional approximation to the EU, whereas less attention is devoted to social transformation. We thus seek to raise awareness that transformation is not yet done when an agreement with the EU is signed (let that be accession as in the case of the Visegrad countries, or association as in the case of Ukraine or Moldova). In the following section, we will therefore discuss the importance of value change in democratic transformation.

Embedding democratic values

Political values and attitudes form the nucleus of political culture. Almond and Verba first formulated their *Civic Culture* thesis in 1963. They defined political culture as “the particular distribution of patterns of orientations toward political objects among the members of a nation.”¹⁹ Political attitudes are often grounded in core political values. According to the authors, democratic political culture is of three types: parochial, subject, and participatory. In the parochial type of political culture, citizens choose to be rather isolated from the political phenomenon, without participation and significant information. The subject refers to a situation in which individu-

16 Frank Schimmelfennig et al., *International Socialization in Europe. European Organizations, Political Conditionality and Democratic Change* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

17 Heather Grabbe, *The EU's Transformative Power. Europeanization through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

18 Nina Bandelj, Katelyn Finley and Bogdan Radu, “Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe: Test of Early Impact,” *East European Politics*, Vol. 31, No.2 (2015): 129-148.

19 Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Culture and Attitudes in 5 Nations* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1963): 14-15.

als understand and are knowledgeable of the functioning of the political system but do not see their own input as valuable or efficacious. Finally, participatory political culture refers to the situation – most coveted in a consolidated democracy – in which people are both knowledgeable and engaged in the political process.

In Central and Eastern Europe, democratic political culture is a problematic issue for several reasons. First, communism influenced political participation by implementing mandatory participation (voting), as a facade for creating the illusion of legitimacy for the regime. After 1989, political participatory acts had to be re-defined and societies had to understand the importance of voting in free and fair elections. Second, attitudes towards the political regime during communism were not expressed freely, for fear of repression, and political discussion and persuasion was virtually non-existent (except for dissident circles). Third, the very principles of democratic policy making were not part of everyday life, leading to core political values having to be introduced to the population en masse after 1989. Fourth and finally, a further complication occurs in Central and Eastern Europe, where simultaneous processes of democratization and marketization also interacted with an ongoing third process of nation building. Kuzio argues that support for nationhood is actually positively correlated with support for democracy.²⁰ Accordingly, Nodia argues that nationhood provides the necessary level of social cohesion for democracy to work. Movements for nationhood, understood as political autonomy, were often movements for democracy. As such, democratization and nation-building processes may have occurred simultaneously, and not always focused on the same core political values.²¹

Under these circumstances and linking back to the debate about the necessity of preexisting democratic political culture, understanding democratic political culture in recent democracies turns to understanding how it can be developed in contexts without a long tradition of democracy. Almond and Verba and Ronald Inglehart are advocates of the so-called culturalist approach. Democratic political culture, manifested as civic beliefs and participatory acts, conditions democratic development. This argument asserts the necessary pre-existence of democratic values before democratization occurs. Following this thesis, the countries in Central and Eastern Europe have fairly bleak prospects for democratic consolidation, due to their communist experience. Even after the break-down of the communist regime, people's perception of meaningless mandatory political participation can have

20 Taras Kuzio, "Nationalising States' or Nation Building. A Critical Review of the Theoretical Literature and Empirical Evidence," *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol 7, No. 2 (2001): 135-154.

21 Ghia Nodia, "How Different are Postcommunist Transitions?" in *Democracy after Communism*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

a lingering influence on how they understand their role as citizens under the new regime.

The argument clearly developed in Muller and Seligson turns the culturalist thesis on its head when stating that civic beliefs are not the prerequisite of a democratic regime, but rather, they are created and developed by a democratic regime. They clearly maintain that, at least in the case of interpersonal trust, the regime can be the creator of this quality.²² There is no unique answer to this conundrum. On the one hand, it is obvious that pre-existing political values that are compatible with democracy can facilitate transition. On the other hand, the experience of transition itself will also contribute to the formation of a democratic political culture (although democratization processes can be fairly frustrating and anti-democratic beliefs may also be formed at the same time). We consider that, in the case of Central and Eastern Europe, the creation of democratic political culture is mostly the result of transition experiences; experience with democracy in post-communist societies sends one too far back in time to consider it an adequate reference point.

Instead of linking the development of democratic political culture to previous democratic experience, modernization theses relate it to economic development, starting the discussion at the country-level and trickling down to the level of the individual. Lipset's 1959 article on the determinants of maintaining democratic government is strongly correlated with his modernization theory.²³ Firstly, economic development is closely associated with increases in education, which in turn promotes political attitudes conducive to democracy (e.g. interpersonal trust and tolerance of opposition). Secondly, economic development alters the pyramid-shaped social stratification system, in which the majority of the population is lower class and poor, to a diamond shape, in which the majority of the population is middle class and relatively well-off.²⁴ Thus, as economic development takes place, the levels of education increase, and the social stratification of the society changes, making space for the middle-class – the main promoter of democracy.

Most scholars of Central and Eastern European democratization find support for the modernization theory. Age, gender, education, place of residence, and size of the community have been mentioned in several studies as independent variables affecting people's attitudes towards democratic opening and towards the market

22 Edward Muller and Mitchell Seligson, "Civic Culture and Democracy: The Question of Causal Relationship," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (1994): 635-652.

23 Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (1959).

24 Edward Muller, "Economic Determinants of Democracy," *American Sociological Reviews*, Vol. 60, No. 6 (1995).

economy system.²⁵ The simultaneous occurrence of democracy and market economy in Central and Eastern Europe causes favorable attitudes to be developed more by citizens that stood to gain from the process; the supporters of democracy are those that benefited from an economic opportunity structure that allowed them to convert previous skills and abilities necessary for succeeding in the new economic and political context.²⁶ While the economic opportunity structure has a stronger effect on attitudes towards market economy, it also has a significant effect on political liberalization, with supporters of privatization also being more accommodating of liberal values.

The applicability of the modernization hypotheses, however, has its limits in Central and Eastern Europe thanks to the presence of deeply rooted communist values. For instance, Finifter and Mickiewicz found that in the former USSR, highly educated people were more inclined to support political change, but also less inclined to support individual responsibility for the welfare of the citizenry.²⁷ The inconsistency of this finding is evaluated against western criteria, according to which, more educated people usually do not lean on the state for support.

In conclusion, democratic transition in Central and Eastern Europe seems to have presented some unique features, from the scope of the implemented reforms, to the simultaneity of political transition and nation building in some cases. Consequently, some of the generally accepted theories explaining the nature and pace of political change in the context of democratization are only partially applicable. In the next section, we turn to analyzing the evolution of political culture in the V4 countries.

Democratic values in Central and Eastern Europe

There is overwhelming evidence that democracy is at its widest coverage ever and enjoys incredibly widespread support.²⁸ There are two causes for this unexpected avalanche of countries manifesting high levels of support for democratic polities, even outside of the Western hemisphere:

25 Frederic Fleron Jr., "Post-Soviet Political Culture in Russia: An Assessment of Recent Empirical Investigations," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (1996).

26 Judith Kullberg and William Zimmerman, "Liberal Elites, Social Masses, and Problems of Russian Democracy," *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (1999).

27 Ada Finifter and Ellen Mickiewicz, "Redefining the Political System of the USSR: Mass Support for Political Change," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 86, No. 4 (1992).

28 Pippa Norris, *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Hans-Dieter Klingemann, "Mapping Political Support in the 1990s: A Global Analysis," *Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung gGmbH (WZB)*, FS III (1998): 98-202.

- The diffusion of democratic norms through the mass media, personal contacts, and rising levels of education: overall, people seem to appreciate democratic regimes and principles (at least, at face value) everywhere around the world.²⁹
- The changing value structure of citizens, in the sense of more personal autonomy and post-material values that occurs in non-western contexts as well.³⁰

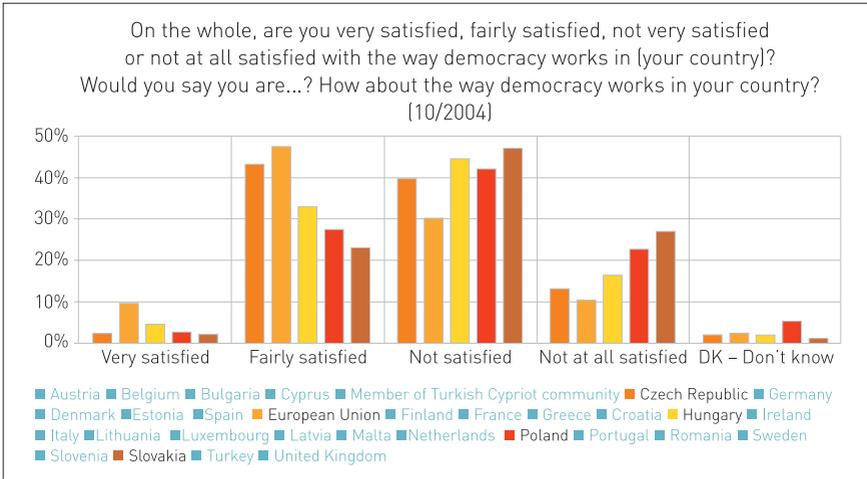
But how do support for democracy and the embeddedness of democratic values look in Central and Eastern Europe's young democracies if we take a closer look at statistical and survey data? Can we claim that democratization was successful? In this section, we aim to offer a concise image of how democracy is understood, practiced and evaluated in the countries of the Visegrad Group, which were often seen as the frontrunners of democratization and "democracy's new champions".³¹ Our goal is to assess whether citizens' views of the political system have changed throughout and as a consequence of transition and EU integration. The theoretically driven expectation is that favorable attitudes towards democracy will develop throughout and because of democratization. Moreover, this process would also be strengthened by EU accession.

Graph 1 and 2 show satisfaction with how democracy works in the view of respondents from the Visegrad countries. The Eurobarometer data shows such evaluations at two moments in time: 2004 (the year of the Visegrad countries' EU accession) and 2016 (the most recent year when data is available), and serves to characterize satisfaction with democracy in the Visegrad countries 12 years after becoming EU members. While in 2004 the EU average for satisfaction with democracy was higher than any of the V4 country averages, in 2016, more people in the Czech Republic and Poland are fairly satisfied with the way democracy works than in the EU on average. If Slovakia had the highest number of respondents dissatisfied with democracy in their own country in 2004, this position is disputed by Hungary in 2016, where more than 60 percent of respondents are not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works. It is possible that the low satisfaction in Hungary correlates with the political developments under the Orbán-government, which led to Freedom House downgrading Hungary to the status of semi-consolidated democracy in its Nations in Transit report in 2015.

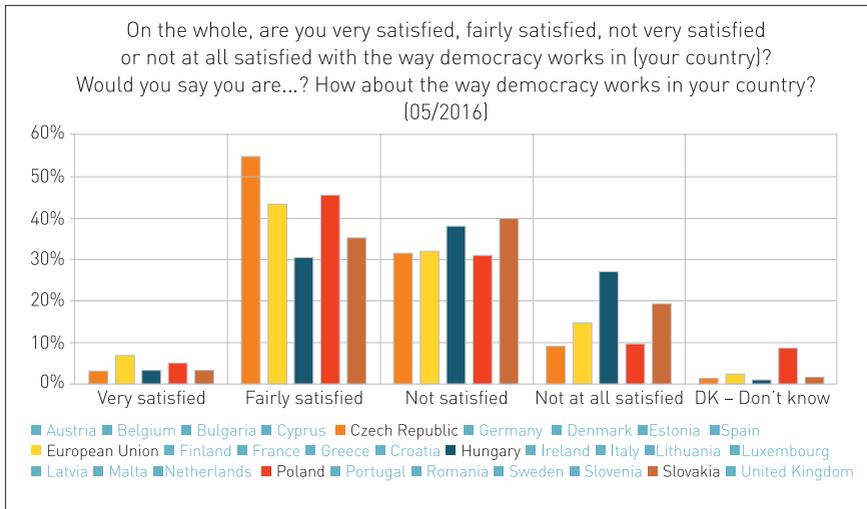
29 Frederic Weil, "The Development of Democratic Attitudes in Eastern and Western Germany in a Comparative Perspective," *Research on Democracy and Society*, Vol. 1 (1993).

30 Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

31 Jacek Kucharczyk and Jeff Lovitt, eds. *Democracy's new champions. European democracy assistance after EU enlargement* (Prague: PASOS, 2008)



Graph 1. Satisfaction with how democracy works in own country (Eurobarometer, 2004)



Graph 2. Satisfaction with how democracy works in own country (Eurobarometer, 2016)

However, the next step is to ask what people understand by democracy. Fortunately, large multi-national surveys have extensive batteries of items on this count. Based on the European Values Survey dataset, Table 1 shows how different understandings of

democracy changed in the Visegrad countries from the late 1990s (before accession) to the late 2000s (a few years after accession). Around 4 to 50 percent of respondents in each country believe that democracy is indecisive, although the trend has been descending in the Czech Republic and Poland, and ascending in Hungary and Slovakia. The same is true for those that consider democracy to be incapable of maintaining order. Except for Poland, during the 10 years in between surveys, the percentage of those considering that a democratic political system is very good decreased. In the Czech Republic, by even 15 percentage points.

Country/year	Democracy is indecisive [agree]	Democracy cannot maintain order [agree]	Democratic political system (very good)	Democracy best political system (agree strongly)	Strong leader (very good)	Experts making decisions (very good)
Czech Republic 1999	44.4	46.6	45.2	40.5	3.0	14.3
Czech Republic 2008	41.6	41.7	30.1	31.6	8.0	19.0
Hungary 1999	44.7	30.1	37.3	27.7	7.7	39.0
Hungary 2008	46.8	35.7	28.8	23.8	6.7	33.7
Poland 1999	55.9	46.6	23.6	23.6	7.5	26.0
Poland 2008	53.1	41.2	23.6	23.4	3.5	21.2
Slovakia 1999	39.8	30.1	32.2	31.9	6.0	37.5
Slovakia 2008	45.6	36.6	25.2	28.1	2.6	22.7

Table 1. Changes across time and space in the understandings of democracy (%) [European Values Survey]

The same is true for those agreeing strongly that democracy is the best political system, with the most dramatic decrease being registered in the Czech Republic again. At the same time, the Czech Republic is the country with the highest support for democracy, so a significant drop still ranks the Czech Republic ahead of the other countries in the Visegrad Group. The Czech Republic is also the only country where respondents believe that it is very good to have a strong leader (with a growth in percentage from 1999 to 2008) and so is having experts make decisions (again the only upwards change regarding this question). Overall, Table 1 shows that there is a fair amount of dissatisfaction with democracy in all Visegrad countries, and, worryingly, such dissatisfaction increased after accession. This result is somewhat at odds with the idea according to which EU integration has a positive impact on political reform and the quality of democracy. However, post-accession conditionality is fairly weak in comparison to accession conditionality, and it is possible that dissatisfaction with democracy after EU integration is a consequence of such mechanisms.

The situation is not entirely clear and positive when one looks at tolerance, either. Even in western consolidated democracies, support for a democratic political regime is not necessarily accompanied by deepening levels of tolerance. According to Sullivan, Shamir, Roberts and Walsh, while citizens are in principle supporting democratic rights in consolidated democracies, they are “less likely to extend these rights to disliked groups.”³² Moreover, there is evidence that intolerant people hold stronger, more powerful beliefs and attitudes than more tolerant people.³³ They observe that in consolidated democracies, especially in the US, tolerance is harder to learn than abstract democracy.

Pefley and Rohrschneider claim that democratization in Central and Eastern Europe does not mean that tolerance or other liberal values are also widespread.³⁴ Table 2 depicts a brief image of tolerance and trust in the V4 countries. Although there are differences among countries, there are signs that tolerance is on the increase in the decade captured between the two surveys. One exception is the Czech Republic, where intolerance towards Jewish people, people of different race and homosexuals seems to be growing. It is interesting to note that, besides the actual difference across time and within countries, there are significant differences between countries in absolute numbers; for example, intolerance towards homosexuals is still more than 50 percent in Poland, both in 1999 and 2008, while in Hungary and the Czech Republic the numbers are 20 to 30 point lower.

Finally, Table 2 also includes a measure of interpersonal trust, directly associated with social capital, which, in turn, is associated with the quality of democracy. Commonly conceived of as encompassing social trust, norms and associationalism, social capital is a resource that empowers citizens and creates a fertile context in which democracy is enacted. According to Esser, social capital is unique because it combines individual and social features.³⁵ It is only through social relations that social capital as an individual resource can be activated; participation in various

32 John Sullivan et al., “Political Intolerance and the Structure of Mass Attitudes,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (1984); John Sullivan et al., *Political Tolerance and American Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982): 2.

33 John Sullivan et al. (1982) *op.cit.*; On Russia, see James Gibson and Raymond Duch, “Political Intolerance in the USSR: The Distribution and Etiology of Mass Opinion,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 26 (1993); On East Germany, see Robert Rohrschneider, “Institutional Learning Versus Value Diffusion: The Evolution of Democratic Values Among Parliamentarians In Eastern and Western Germany,” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (1996).

34 Michael Pefley and Robert Rohrschneider, “Democratization and Political Tolerance in Seventeen Countries: A Multi-Level Model of Democratic Learning,” *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (2003).

35 Hartmut Esser, “The two meanings of social capital” in *The handbook of social capital*, Dario Castiglione, Jan Van Deth and Guglielmo Wolleb (eds.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

networks increases one's chances of attaining different social, political or career goals.³⁶ Social capital is a resource – as all social relations can be - but it only becomes effective if it is used as such, however, post-communist countries typically display low levels of social capital.³⁷ At the same time, research shows that consolidated democracies have the highest level of social trust and social capital.³⁸ In our case, the trends are divergent. While in the Czech Republic and Poland trust seems to have increased, in Hungary and Slovakia, it decreased, though minimally; and the decrease is potentially statistically insignificant.

Country/year	Do not like Jews as neighbors	Do not like people of different race as neighbors	Do not like homosexuals as neighbors	Most people can be trusted
Czech Republic 1999 Czech Republic 2008	4.4 11.9	9.6 22.4	19.3 23.3	24.5 30.1
Hungary 1999 Hungary 2008	10.3 (1991) 6.4	22.9 (1991) 9.0	75.3 (1991) 29.5	22.3 21.2
Poland 1999 Poland 2008	25.8 17.9	18.1 12.2	55.4 52.7	18.4 27.6
Slovakia 1999 Slovakia 2008	9.8 12.5	17.0 15.4	44.0 34.1	15.9 12.6

Table 2. Changes across time and space in tolerance and interpersonal trust (%) [European Values Survey]

Table 3 displays the results of data analysis for political interest and petition signing – both measures of political engagement. Interestingly, except for Slovakia, political interest has decreased in the Visegrad countries. The results look similar for petition signing, with fairly low yet stagnating numbers in Hungary and Poland, and 20 point drops in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

³⁶ Nan Lin, "A network theory of social capital" in *The handbook of social capital*, eds. Dario Castiglione, Jan Van Deth and Guglielmo Wolleb (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

³⁷ Sigrid Rossteutscher, "Social capital and civic engagement: A comparative perspective" in *The handbook of social capital*, eds. Dario Castiglione, Jan Van Deth and Guglielmo Wolleb (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

³⁸ Robert Putnam, Robert Leonardi and Rafaella Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

Country/year	Political interest (very interested)	Political action (have signed petition)
Czech Republic 1999 Czech Republic 2008	21.4 7.9	58.4 33.0
Hungary 1999 Hungary 2008	11.0 (1991) 7.1	15.8 15.2
Poland 1999 Poland 2008	7.5 (1990) 6.3	21.1 21.2
Slovakia 1999 Slovakia 2008	7.5 (1991) 9.8	59.6 37.5

Table 3. Changes across time and space in political interest and petition signing (%) (European Values Survey)

Visegrad countries in support of embedding democratic values in Ukraine and Moldova

Following their EU accession, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and more particularly, the Visegrad countries, have developed a narrative advocating for a new role for themselves as new actors of democracy promotion. The narrative gained immediate legitimacy from the fact that as recognition of their successful political and economic transition these countries were admitted to the European Union. As the EU put concrete and ambitious benchmarks to meet under the Copenhagen criteria as prerequisites of accession, membership in the European Union was understood as a sign that democratic transition was successfully undertaken. Building on this direct credibility and normative legitimacy, the Visegrad countries argued that they had a special set of knowledge, the so-called transition experience, they can share with those countries that were lagging behind with their democratic transformation and consolidation processes in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. Some countries considered that sharing their experience would be a valuable way to give something back.³⁹

The general belief was that thanks to their recent experience both with transformation and being a recipient of democracy assistance, these countries had insights, expertise and perspective that other donors providing democracy assistance

³⁹ Paulina Pospieszna, "When Recipients Become Donors: Polish Democracy Assistance in Belarus and Ukraine," *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol.57, No.4 (2010): 13.

lacked,⁴⁰ and that they understood better the priorities and needs of both the donor and the recipient side.⁴¹ In turn, this position allowed them to tailor their assistance more to the recipients' needs,⁴² and their advice could be accepted more easily as the relationship was seen by the recipient not as hierarchical, but rather as partner to partner.⁴³

Nevertheless, the way this transition experience was to be shared suggests that the Visegrad countries followed in the footsteps of previous democracy assistance donors. The wording of a non-paper⁴⁴ concerning transition experience suggests that it is expected to be shared in the form of technical assistance, similarly to the assistance these countries had received, e.g. from the European Union, throughout their transition process in the 1990s and early 2000s. A significant shortcoming of this approach, as mentioned earlier in this paper, is that it concentrates on legal and institutional crafting, often not giving as much attention to social transition and value change as the importance of that process would warrant. Furthermore, this also leads to the depoliticization of the assistance provided, which in turn raises the question whether democratic transition, a fundamentally political process, can really be supported by technical means.⁴⁵ Technical assistance generally targets the recipient country's government, and it is unlikely that any major shifts can be triggered in the power structures against the will of the partner government through such means.⁴⁶ Transition experience when shared through technical assistance, the dominant means the Visegrad countries rely on in supporting the democratic transition of their partners, is therefore more likely to be effective and conducive to democratization and market-oriented reforms if that is already what the recipient government aims at.

40 Tsveta Petrova, *The New Role of Central and Eastern Europe in International Democracy Support*, (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011).

41 Kucharczyk and Lovitt, "Democracy's New Champions..." 17.

42 Tsveta Petrova, "International, National or Local? Explaining the Substance of Democracy Promotion: The case of Eastern European Democracy Promotion," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2015).

43 Tsveta Petrova, "The New Role of Central and Eastern Europe in International Democracy Support," *op.cit.* 17.; Katerina Kesa, "Latvian and Lithuanian Policy in the Eastern Neighborhood: Between Solidarity and Self-Promotion," *Perspectives*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2011): 87.

44 "Non-paper by the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovak Republic and Slovenia. Harnessing the transition experience in the EU's external relations – from policy to implementation," February 16, 2011. Available at: http://www.mzv.cz/public/b8/eb/d6/591175_508622_non_paper_on_the_transition_experience.pdf

45 Balázs Szent-Iványi and Simon Lightfoot, "Central and Eastern European Transition Experience: A Depoliticisation of Democracy Aid?," in *Democratization in EU Foreign Policy. New member states as drivers of democracy promotion*, ed. B. Berti et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

46 Ondřej Horký, "The Transfer of the Central and Eastern European 'Transition Experience' to the South: Myth or Reality?," *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2012).

The above sampled set of survey data, however, indicates that on the level of societies in terms of value change, the Visegrad countries' democratic transition is not such an obvious and unequivocal success. The results presented indicate that there is no general trend in terms of the understanding and evaluation of democracy across the Visegrad countries. Although the Visegrad countries are geographically close and had experienced five decades of communism, the differences existing between them seem to loom larger than similarities. The experience of democratic transition implied hardship and frustration, and it is not surprising that support for and satisfaction with democracy in the individual countries is not uniformly high.

The data on value change collected in the Visegrad countries prompt us to be more conscious of the complexities of transition, acknowledge that the process is not closed with the EU accession and consequently reflect more on the so far used means and tools of transition support when turning to countries further behind in their transition process. Assessing how value change took (or did not take) place can provide the opportunity for such reflection and can highlight challenges as well as good practices – both in terms of official policies and initiative originating from the civil society. As governmental and administrative solutions seem to receive more attention generally when the Visegrad countries' transition experience and the possibilities of sharing it are discussed, the following chapters will pay more attention to civil society initiatives seeking to support embedding democratic values.

Apart from highlighting that democratic transition does not have such a clear-cut end point, the survey results of the Visegrad countries also showed that even with similar starting points, countries and societies tend to develop in a variety of ways: the broader political, economic, social and cultural context in which democratic institutions are planted influences fundamentally the final result of the said transition. Paying due attention to country specificities seem to be essential for understanding differences between newly formed types of political culture in the individual Visegrad states. This in turn warns us against assuming that what worked in the Visegrad countries can be automatically transferred to Ukraine and Moldova – let that be on the governmental, administrative or civil level. For this reason, the following chapters also devote attention to discussing the local needs and context of Ukraine and Moldova, and assess the transferability of various lessons from the Visegrad context to these countries of Eastern Europe.

We consider that the experience with democratization accumulated by the Visegrad countries contains, by and large, valuable insights into how political and economic reforms can be managed in post-communist contexts, and under EU influence. Indeed, the prospects of European integration encouraged the adoption of reforms in the Visegrad countries, and the more recent democratic set-backs can partially be

attributed to weak post-accession conditionality. In this respect, the transferability of transition experience from the V₄ countries to Moldova and Ukraine is limited, since these two countries have not been granted an EU membership perspective to date. Moreover, the potential of the transferability of the transition experience is also limited by the geopolitical configuration extant in Moldova and Ukraine, generated by the interaction with Russia in the context of problematic nation-state building processes. Therefore, we conclude that the V₄ countries transition experience can be a valuable resource in analyzing, and, in fact, supporting transition in Moldova and Ukraine, but only if the local context is taken into account as a dynamic intervening variable.

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Youth Political Participation and Socialization in Central and Eastern Europe

by Jan Husák, Jan Šerek,¹ Václav Kríž

Both Ukraine and Moldova are undergoing a transition to possibly develop into democratic societies and states with a functioning political system. Part of this process lies in intensive and efficient political socialization, which takes place in the given societies and is permitted or even supported by the system itself. Successfully managed political socialization leads to political participation of all kinds, which strengthens the democratic nature of society – either by means of a richer community life or a higher turnout rate of people in elections or an increasingly more proactive participation in the promotion of changes as a new political force. The exploration of all possible aspects of political socialization enables us to strengthen policies in various areas, which are somewhat neglected after the years of communist rule and are yet to be discussed and worked on during the transitional period.

Our paper focuses on the Visegrad Group (that is the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland) for the purpose of identifying the shared experience of these countries with post-communist transition. Shared experience, examined in consideration of basic data, might reveal tendencies that could serve as a means of improving political socialization as well as political participation in the Ukraine and Moldova.

The present paper will, however, not examine the field of political socialization as a whole but will focus instead on the aspects of the political socialization of the youth. It will do so in order to call attention to a topic that is less widely researched but where there is an imperative for action. First, the theoretical aspects of political socialization are extensively elaborated on in order to illustrate the development of the field, the complexity of the concepts, and the need to approach this subject with

1 Jan Šerek contributed to this paper by providing parts of his unpublished dissertation, *Psychosocial antecedents of political beliefs in adolescence*, that were adapted into a theoretical account of political socialization in the first part of the paper.

a broad understanding of the society as well as that of the individual. Subsequently, relevant data regarding the political participation of the youth in the Visegrad Group, and in Ukraine and Moldova, are analyzed. In conclusion, we identify the key trends based on which future recommendation could be drawn.

Youth political socialization: a theoretical overview

The interdisciplinary field of political socialization has existed for more than fifty years. Although some works from the first half of the 20th century, for example by Freud² or Dewey³, can be considered as essays on political socialization, political socialization as a “self-conscious” scientific field, based on empirical research, was not established until the 1950s. Historical overviews generally agree that the first well-known and influential work in the field was “Political socialization” by Herbert H. Hyman⁴. Subsequent development of the field is sometimes characterized as a dramatic history of rise and fall and rise again.

Macro- and micro-level perspective

Although political socialization was established as an integral interdisciplinary field, drawing from psychology, political science, media studies, and sociology, the approaches of the mentioned disciplines have never been fully integrated⁵. Particularly the tension between political scientists’ and the psychological approach left a significant mark on both theoretical debates and research practices in political socialization. That is why Sapiro,⁶ when defining the aims of political socialization research, suggested a useful distinction between the macro- and micro-level perspective. Al-

2 Sigmund Freud, *Totem and taboo: Resemblances between the psychic lives of savages and neurotics* (New York: Random House, 1946).

3 John Dewey, *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education* (New York: Macmillan, 1923).

4 Richard G. Niemi and B. I. Sobieszek, “Political socialization,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 3 (1977): 209-233. Stanley Renshon, “Political socialization,” in *Encyclopedia of government and politics*, ed. Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan (London, New York: Routledge, 1992), 443-470.

Virginia Sapiro, “Not your parents’ socialization: Introduction for a new generation,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 7 (2004): 1-23.

David O. Sears, “Political socialization,” in *Handbook of political science*, ed. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1975), 93-153.

5 Renshon, “Political socialization,” 443-470.

Judith Torney-Purta, Jo-Ann Amadeo and Molly Andolina, “A conceptual framework and multimethod approach for research on political socialization and civic engagement,” in *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth*, ed. Lonnie Sherrod et al. (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 497-524.

6 Sapiro, “Not your parents’ socialization: Introduction for a new generation,” 1-23.

though these two perspectives are not necessarily irreconcilable, they might produce divergent research questions and types of inquiry⁷.

The macro-level perspective studies how societies and political systems maintain their stability by instilling certain values, beliefs, and behavioral norms in their citizens. From this perspective, whole social groups, countries, or historical periods serve as the basic units of analysis. Macro-level determinants of citizens' political thinking and behavior, such as political institutions or civic cultures, are expected to exert their influence on whole populations, abstracting from the individual-level responses.

On the other hand, the micro-level perspective takes into account individual psychological differences among people. From this perspective, political socialization aims to conduct "*research on the patterns and processes by which individuals engage in political development and learning, constructing their particular relationships to the political contexts in which they live*"⁸. A diversity of individual dispositions and developmental histories is considered when explaining citizens' political thinking and behavior. Therefore, individuals are the primary analytical units in this type of analysis.

The perspectives are complementary as each of them provides a part of a broader picture. This can be illustrated on the example of the ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner⁹. According to this theory, a person's life span is formed by various contexts, ranging from the most proximal to the very distal systems. Among contexts that are proximal to the person (microsystems), family or school are the most important. These contexts, however, are not isolated and can influence one another (mesosystem). Moreover, distal contexts that are not directly related to the person, such as parental workplace, can also affect the development (exosystem). Finally, the development is formed by the attitudes and ideologies present in the broader society (macrosystem). As shown by Wilkenfeld et al.¹⁰, this general model can be applied to the political development of the youth. For example, political beliefs of young people are formed by discussions with their parents and teachers (microsystem); parents try to affect the content of school civic education (mesosystem); parents obtain some political information from their work colleagues, and bring such pieces of information to the family political discussions (exosystem); and finally, young people react on political ideologies that are dominant in the society or on opportunities for political participation that are open to them (macrosystem). These considerations

7 Renshon, "Political socialization," 443-470.

8 Sapiro, "Not your parents' socialization: Introduction for a new generation," 3.

9 Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The ecology of human development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

10 Britt Wilkenfeld, James Lauckhardt and Judith Torney-Purta, "The relation between developmental theory and measures of civic engagement in research on adolescents," in *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth*, ed. Lonnie Sherrod et al. (John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 193-220.

show that political socialization proceeds on many levels (micro and macro) and only a limited picture is obtained by focusing solely on one of them. On the other hand, it is almost impossible to grasp all levels by single empirical research since extremely large amount and complex data should be required. Therefore, there are not many studies that successfully embrace multiple perspectives¹¹.

The concept of the political

Another important issue, present in the field of political socialization, pertains to the definition of the “political”. Early research on political socialization often assumed that the formal aspects of politics should be the sole subject of interest. Therefore, election- and party-related aspects of politics, such as predictors of voting, the development of party identification, or trust in politicians, were addressed¹². These aspects are essential for conventional political participation and include but are not limited to, inter alia, voting or membership in political parties. The conventional means of political participation, while being recognized as the basic ones, do not cover all possibilities of political participation. Thus, another category, i.e. unconventional political participation, has been developed to cover the means of participation like demonstrations, strikes, and the signing of petitions. The dynamic development and understanding of conventional and unconventional aspects are also illustrated by the fact that protest behavior (such as the said strikes, demonstrations) is not necessarily seen as unconventional anymore.¹³ This complexity needs to be taken into account when analyzing the political participation of the youth. Moreover, the youth of is becoming increasingly more involved at the local level and their participation involves activities such as work in school parliaments and student councils, or voluntary work for their communities¹⁴. These activities are of-

11 The Michigan political socialization study can be mentioned as an extraordinary example since it captured political development in several subsequent generations; Kent M. Jennings, “American political participation viewed through the lens of the political socialization project,” in *Advances in political psychology* ed. Margaret Hermann (Amsterdam: Elsevier Science, 2004), 1-18.

12 Judith Gallatin, “Political thinking in adolescence,” in *Handbook of adolescent psychology*, ed. Joseph Adelson (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1980), 344-382.
Sears, “Political socialization,” 93-153.

13 Joakim Ekman and Erik Amnå, “Political participation and civic engagement: Towards a new typology,” *Human Affairs* 22 (2012): 290.

14 Amy K. Syvertsen, Laura Wray-Lake, Constance A. Flanagan., Wayne D. Osgood, and Laine Briddell, “Thirty-year trends in US adolescents’ civic engagement: A story of changing participation and educational differences,” *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 21 (2011): 586-594.
James Youniss, Susan Bales, Verona Christmas-Best, Marcelo Diversi, Milbrey McLaughlin and Reiner Silbereisen, “Youth civic engagement in the twenty-first century,” *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 12 (2002): 121-148.

ten called civic engagement. Although some scholars prefer to limit the term “political” to the activities that aim to influence governmental actions, either directly or indirectly,¹⁵ in reality it is difficult to make a clear distinction between political participation and civic engagement. The main reason for that is the overstretching of both concepts. There is an agreement that civic engagement revolves around engagement, the active participation of individuals in their surrounding environment, for example, the local community. However, the further stretching of the meaning of the term makes it rather all-inclusive and overlapping with the meaning of political participation, which has also been witness to being stretched from traditional actions of individuals to influence politics, for example the act of voting, to include protest behavior and even activism nowadays. Although there is a difference in the root of both terms, their further conceptual development often makes them indistinguishable.¹⁶ For instance, adolescents’ participation in student councils does not target the government; hence, it is not political activity in a limited sense. Nevertheless, student councils often aim to influence the decisions taken by the local level counterparts of the government, such as school headquarters or city councils. Additionally, in the course of local level engagement, adolescents learn whether they are able to have an impact on social authorities, which may be decisive for their future political engagement at other levels.¹⁷ Thus, civic experience is closely related to the political development of adolescents. As is summarized by Youniss and his colleagues, “*perhaps the fairest conclusion is that there is not a definite demarcation between the political and civil realms. Rather there is a continuum between formal political acts such as voting, political actions such as protesting for a moral cause, and performing a service such as working in a rural literacy campaign*”.¹⁸

As illustrated above, the process of further specifying what can be considered political in young people’s lives also involves approaches opposite to one another. Furthermore, ‘political’ is a broad term, which in order to be assessed, needs to be analyzed in a gradually broadening manner. Although there is no common agreement in political socialization research on what aspects of young people’s lives should be referred to as political, there are intense tendencies to comprehend

15 Sidney Verba, Kay L. Schlozman and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

16 Ekman and Amnå, “Political participation and civic engagement: Towards a new typology,” 284-287.

17 Elizabeth Beaumont, “Political agency and empowerment: Pathways for developing a sense of political efficacy in young adults,” in *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth*, ed. Lonnie Sherrod et al. (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 525-558.

18 Youniss, Bales, Christmas-Best, Diversi, McLaughlin and Silbereisen. “Youth civic engagement in the twenty-first century,” 126.

various forms of experience that are not limited to the traditional¹⁹. Recently, new typologies of political participation have been developed in political science in order to include both traditional and non-traditional types of participation²⁰. By employing these typologies, political socialization can be captured in its complexity, describing adequately the actual patterns of political participation among the youth.²¹ Moreover, the inclusion of non-conventional activities can help to better understand political development of young adolescents, whose participation in traditional activities is limited by the law, but who are already involved in public life.²² Furthermore, it has been shown that engagement in civic activities, such as community service, plays a role in political socialization and is associated with traditional political activities.²³ Accordingly, not only traditional political activities, but also non-traditional activities and civic engagement seem to be relevant parts of political socialization.

Socialization agents and their roles

Research on political socialization has identified several sources of influence that play an important role in the political development of the individual. A list of so-called socialization agents, traditionally including family and school, peers, organizations, or neighborhoods, as well as the media and political institutions, such as political parties, has to be considered as significant agents in the political socialization of the youth.

Among the non-political agents, the effect of parents on the political development of their children has been demonstrated at different levels, involving the effect of

19 Torney-Purta, Amadeo and Andolina, "A conceptual framework and multimethod approach for research on political socialization and civic engagement," 497-524.

20 Ekman and Amná, "Political participation and civic engagement: Towards a new typology," 284-287.
Pippa Norris, "Young people & political activism: From the politics of loyalties to the politics of choice?" (report presented at the Council of Europe Symposium 'Young people and democratic institutions: from disillusionment to participation,' Strasbourg, November, 2003).

Jan Teorell, Mariano Torcal and José R. Montero "Political participation: Mapping the terrain," in *Citizenship and involvement in European democracies*, ed. Jan W. van Deth et al. (London, New York: Routledge, 2007), 334-357.

21 Youniss, Bales, Christmas-Best, Diversi, McLaughlin and Silbereisen. "Youth civic engagement in the twenty-first century".

22 Richard G. Niemi and Mary A. Hepburn, "The rebirth of political socialization," *Perspectives on Political Science* 24 (1995): 7-16.

23 Daniel Hart, Thomas M. Donnelly, James Youniss and Robert Atkins, "High school community service as a predictor of adult voting and volunteering," *American Educational Research Journal* 44 (2007), 197-219.
Edward C. Metz and James Youniss, "Longitudinal gains in civic development through school-based required service," *Political Psychology* 26 (2005): 413-437.

parental socio-economic and educational background²⁴, the effect of parental beliefs²⁵, the effect of family political discussions²⁶, or the effects of parenting practices²⁷. Similarly, the effects of school were described at the levels of curricula, classroom discussions, or school democracy²⁸, and also at the level of school-based community service²⁹. Political institutions, for instance political parties, can also be linked to conventional political participation. Therefore, though perhaps questioned in terms of their significance, they need to be taken in account as well in the empirical part of this text.

Although research has resulted in many fascinating findings regarding the role of socialization agents, two directions of criticism can be found in the literature, which are often interconnected. Nevertheless, it is useful to distinguish between them. Firstly, an implicit assumption that young people passively accept political beliefs of socialization agents (parents, teachers, media personalities, etc.) and merely imitate thereof political behavior has been identified in many studies. This issue pertains not only to the area of political socialization but to the socialization

24 Cliff Zukin, Scott Keeter, Molly Andolina, Krista Jenkins and Michael X. Delli, *A new engagement? Political participation, civic life, and the changing American citizen* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

John Bynner, Sheena Ashford, "Politics and participation: Some antecedents of young people's attitudes to the political system and political activity," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 24 (1994): 223-236.

Daniel A. McFarland and Ruben J. Thomas, "Bowling young: How youth voluntary associations influence adult political participation," *American Sociological Review* 71 (2006): 401-425.

25 Paul A. Beck and Kent M. Jennings, "Family traditions, political periods, and the development of partisan orientations," *The Journal of Politics* 53 (1991): 742-763.

Kent M. Jennings, "American political participation viewed through the lens of the political socialization project", in *Advances in political psychology*, ed. Margaret Hermann (Amsterdam: Elsevier Science, 2004), 1-18.

26 Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins and Delli, *A new engagement? Political participation, civic life, and the changing American citizen*.

27 Naomi N. Duke, Carol L. Skay, Sandra L. Pettingell and Iris W. Borowsky, "From adolescent connections to social capital: Predictors of civic engagement in young adulthood," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 44 (2009): 161-168.

Elizabeth Smith, "The effects of investments in the social capital of youth on political and civic behavior in young adulthood: A longitudinal analysis," *Political Psychology* 20 (1999): 553-580.

28 Erik Amnå and Pär Zetterberg, "A political science perspective on socialization research: Young Nordic citizens in a comparative light," in *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth* eds. Lonnie Sherrod et al., (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 43-65.

Judith Torney-Purta, Carolyn H. Barber and Wendy K. Richardson, "Trust in government-related institutions and political engagement among adolescents in six countries," *Acta Politica* 39 (2004), 380-406.

Molly W. Andolina, Krista Jenkins, Cliff Zukin and Scott Keeter, "Habits from home, lessons from school: Influences on youth civic engagement," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 36 (2003): 275-280.

29 Metz and Youniss, "Longitudinal gains in civic development through school-based required service," 413-437. Hart, Donnelly, Youniss and Atkins, "High school community service as a predictor of adult voting and volunteering," 197-219.

process in general. Current theories in developmental psychology stress that the process of socialization cannot be understood as a mere transmission of the environmental influences on a child. Rather, it is more adequate to understand it as a process by which young people actively ascribe meanings to the world of politics based on the information and experience provided by socialization agents.³⁰ Secondly, the unrealistic assumption that the relationships between young people and socialization agents are unidirectional has been pinpointed and criticized.³¹ More precisely, many political socialization studies assume that the influence proceeds only in a “top-down” direction, i.e. from socialization agents to young people. Although the existing models that test multidirectional relationships in political socialization are either incomplete, or have not been empirically verified,³² the political practices of the youth of today demonstrate clearly the insufficiency of traditional approaches.

Additionally, political socialization cannot be understood separately from other areas of a person’s development. Flanagan and Gally³³ have argued that even private experiences have their political meanings. For example, the processes of cooperation and negotiation in the family serve as the first models of power relationships and democratic competition for the child. Through family discussions, children learn that differing opinions might be resolved by negotiation and compromise, which is important for their future understanding of politics. In addition, the experience of authoritative parenting (e.g., being respected by parents), can make children feel more efficacious, as well as attentive to the rights and perspectives of others. Similarly, experiencing open discussions in schools can serve as additional models that form young people’s views and expectations regarding politics³⁴. Besides, Mondak and Halperin³⁵ have shown that many political beliefs and behaviors are correlated with personality characteristics (e.g., Big Five personality traits). Therefore, it seems appropriate to understand political

30 Aaron Metzger and Judith G. Smetana, “Social cognitive development and adolescent civic engagement,” in *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth*, ed. Lonnie Sherrod et al. (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 221-248.

31 Amnå and Zetterberg, “A political science perspective on socialization research: Young Nordic citizens in a comparative light”.

32 *Ibid.*

33 Constance A. Flanagan and Leslie S Gally, “Refraining the meaning of “political” in research with adolescents,” *Perspectives on Political Science* 24 (1995): 34-41.

34 Ellen Claes, Marc Hooghe and Sofie Marien, “A two-year panel study among Belgian late adolescents on the impact of school environment characteristics on political trust,” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 24 (2012): 208-224.

35 Jeffery J. Mondak and Karen D. Halperin, “A framework for the study of personality and political behavior,” *British Journal of Political Science*, 38 (2008): 335-362.

socialization broadly, as being shaped by multiple non-political contextual and personality factors and their interactions.

Political socialization in Central and Eastern Europe

The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia have enjoyed about 25 years of democracy, which allowed them to develop the environment as well as the institutions for the political socialization – in its broad sense – of their youth. Democracy has enabled these societies to have discussions and develop freely, so young people have grown up experiencing this freedom and the liberty to express themselves.

The complex long-term development of societies has its influence on their capacities to have a certain set-up of political socialization of their youth. In spite of the shared history of Central Europe and the legacy of communism, the historical and institutional experience of each country differs from one another. Therefore, the presented data should not be interpreted normatively out of context but should rather be used as a base for broader interdisciplinary discussion.

For the purpose of illustrating the situation in the respective countries, in the following section, relevant data concerning political participation and socialization within Central and Eastern Europe as well as a comparison of the Visegrad Group's and other EU member states' data are presented in order to illustrate the situation of the selected countries in the broader context of the dynamics of European democracies. The EU Youth Report 2015³⁶ provides the most comprehensive information about the political participation and socialization of the youth in the Visegrad Group and the EU as a whole. Four sets of statistics, reflecting the theoretical discussion mentioned in this paper, will be illustrated and drawn upon. Information will be provided on the traditional means of political participation (and socialization) such as elections or agents such as political parties. However, in order to make the case more grounded, more recent forms of agents are incorporated into our analysis, such as sports clubs and other organizations.

The statistical approach as well as the overall idea of finding linkages between the statistics of these four countries limits the scope of the methodology to the macro-level as described above. The data will be interpreted in the context of the different social and historical narratives of these countries. While the narrative of a shared communist history is certainly important and comparisons at the macro-level among the neighboring countries are worth mentioning, it should be kept in mind that other kind of historical experiences and cultural specificities might be eventually of more significance.

36 "EU Youth Report 2015," *European Commission*, accessed October 28, 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/youth-report-2015_en.pdf.

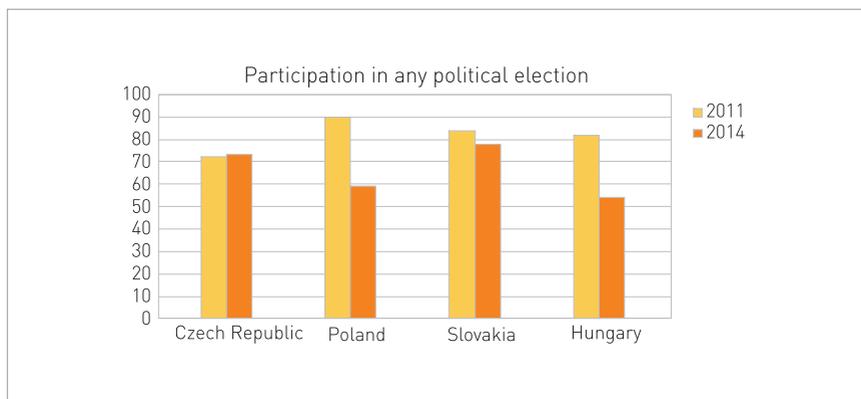


Chart 1. Source: EU Youth Report 2015

The EU Youth Report 2015³⁷ indicates that participation in any political election (local, regional or national) over the preceding three years was the highest in Poland where 90 percent of the respondents declared that they had participated (as of 2011) therein. Nevertheless, Poland has also witnessed the most significant drop in turnout rates. In 2014, only roughly 60 percent of the youth declared that they had participated in elections. A similarly significant difference is noticeable in Hungary where, in 2011, 80 percent of the respondents declared that they had participated in the elections in the previous three years, but in 2014, it was only slightly above 50 percent. As for the Czech Republic as well as Slovakia, the development is not so dramatic. In the Czech Republic, the turnout rate was slightly above 70 percent in the three years prior to 2011, and it increased a bit in 2014. Slightly more than 80 percent of the Slovakian respondents participated in elections according to data from 2011, and in the year of 2014, this figure dropped roughly below 80 percent. It is necessary to take into account that different sets of elections take place in each country. However, the overall development is that traditional political participation in the form of election participation is decreasing among the youth in Hungary and Poland. In Slovakia, it seems to be stable and rather high in comparison to the other countries. Similarly, the Czech Republic has a stable environment, and even a slight positive change between 2011 and 2014 can be detected.

³⁷ The source of the selected statistics is the "Participation in Democratic Life and Voluntary Activities" section of the EU Youth Report 2015. The age range of the respondents was 15-29 years. As in the case of Flash Eurobarometer surveys, the data was obtained through telephone interviews.

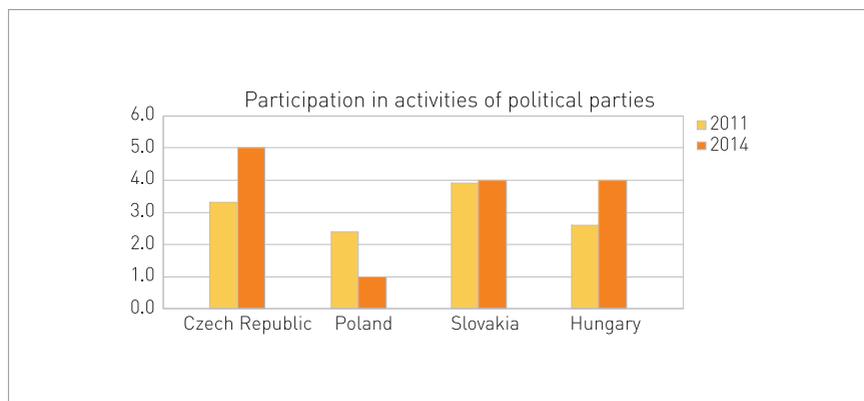


Chart 2. Source: EU Youth Report 2015

The development of youth participation in elections can be ascribed to the recent political developments in the countries as well as to their political socialization characteristics. As the process of political socialization is connected directly with politics and current institutionalized participation, it is relevant to take a look at youth participation in the activities of political parties.³⁸ In this regard, Poland is a specific case among the other Visegrad countries, since it has rather low rates of declared participation. In 2011, it was slightly above two percent, and in 2014, only one percent. In Hungary and the Czech Republic, participation grew: three percent of the Czech respondents participated in 2011, and five percent in 2014. Roughly three percent of the Hungarian youth participated in activities of political parties in 2011, and four percent in 2014. Slovakia witnessed quite stable participation rates with four percent both in 2011 and in 2014. Yet again, it is necessary to say that a wide range of social developments might have influenced these figures. Social or economic issues, which differ from country to country, might have strengthened either the political messages of parties or possibly anti-systematic tendencies. There is also no differentiation regarding the political party to which the youth was engaged: it might have been an extremist or a populist party. Obtaining more information about this would possibly enable a more complex understanding of the social developments manifesting themselves in such figures, as well.

³⁸ The question was “In the last 12 months, have you participated in any activities of the following organizations? (Political Party)”.

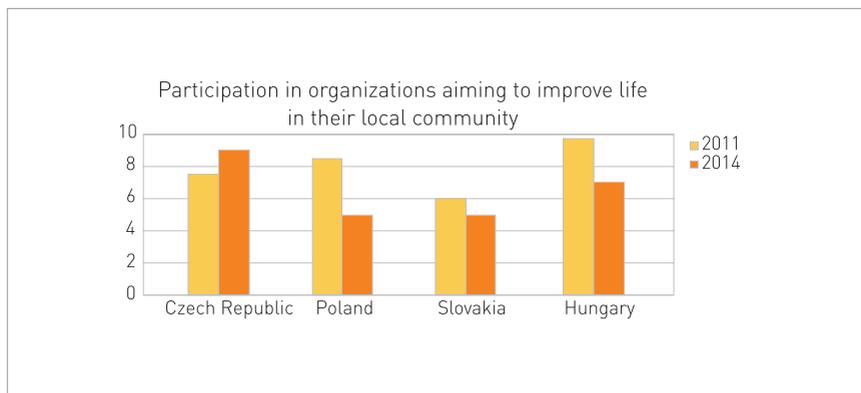


Chart 3. Source: EU Youth Report 2015

Participation in the activities of organizations with a view to improving life in local communities, which might raise the interest of young people in broader social affairs as well as in politics, should also be considered. In this regard, the only positive change took place in the Czech Republic where, in 2011, the declared participation rate was roughly seven percent and grew to nine percent by 2014. In the other three countries, participation has dropped – the most significant decrease took place in Poland where the participation rate of eight percent in 2011 shrank to five percent in 2014. Ten percent of the Hungarian youth declared to participate in 2011, while in 2014, only seven percent. Slovakia has witnessed a drop from six to five percent. Many factors shall be considered to explain such figures. They can be explained by the overall social-political atmosphere as well as by the institutional design – the size of municipalities and their capacity to support local organizations and activities, possibly even in respect of such details as the possibility of obtaining grants by the organizations. The legal system might also be a factor in the regulation of the activities of organizations.

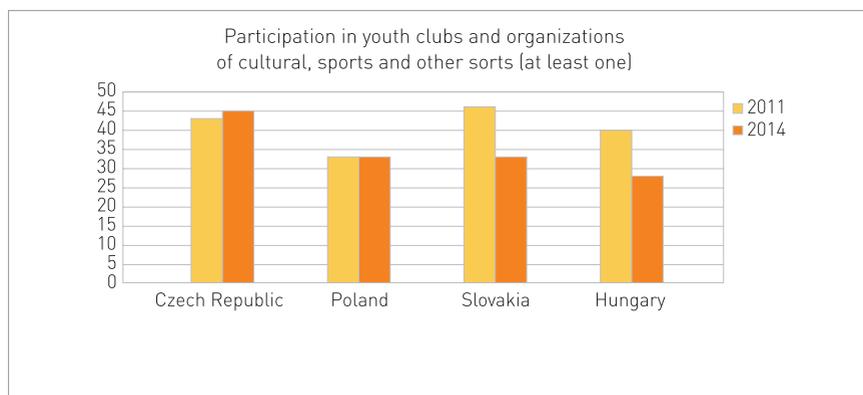


Chart 4. Source: Flash Eurobarometer 408 – European Youth

The environment that in general tends to support youth participation and is therefore relevant to the process of political participation includes youth clubs and organizations of cultural, sport or other kinds of activities, which allow the youth to learn how to work in groups of people, to promote and defend their interests as well as opinions, and last but not least to develop their organizational skills.³⁹ The question was „In the last 12 months, have you participated in any activities of the following organisation?“ Multiple answers possible. Total percentage shown of option „At least one organisation“.] In the Czech Republic, the declared participation rate in such activities was approximately 43 percent in 2011, and – with a minor increase – 45 percent in 2014. Poland experienced a stable tendency, however, at a much lower level – with participation approximately at 33 percent for both 2011 and 2014. Quite significant decrease was witnessed in Hungary and Slovakia. In Hungary, 40 percent of the respondents declared participation in 2011 which has dropped to roughly 28 percent. Slovakia also had a significant reduction in participation – in 2011 the declared participation rate was 46 percent; in 2014, 33 percent. Yet again, these numbers can be due to multiple factors, e.g. incentives from local governments as well national governments concerning such organizations. However, the tendency of dramatic decrease in Hungary as well as in Slovakia must have some deeper social or even political reason, which can then be also considered and possibly solved.

The extensive research, which in the EU focuses on youth participation and in a broad sense on political socialization, provides comparable data based on one

³⁹ The question was „In the last 12 months, have you participated in any activities of the following organisation?“ Multiple answers possible. Total percentage shown of option „At least one organisation“

methodology. The data presented⁴⁰ here in relation to Ukraine and Moldova is regarded as comparable. In Moldova, the monitoring of youth participation is rather limited. Therefore the source of data is limited, as well.

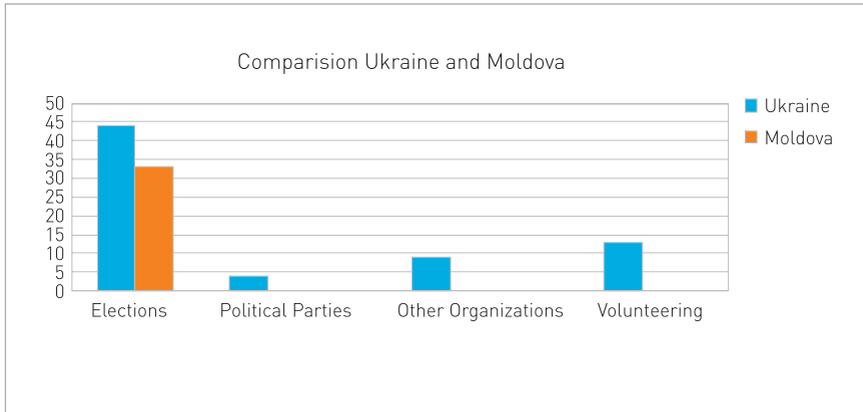


Chart 5. Sources: United Nations Ukraine, National Youth Council (Moldova), Radio Free Europe

In Ukraine, the participation rate in elections in 2014 accounted for approximately 44 percent of the youth. At the same time, the 33percent of the youth in Moldova stated that they had participated in the most recent local and state elections. Other indicators are available solely for Ukraine. Membership in political parties has been four percent in Ukraine among the youth. Young Ukrainians have reported that nine percent of them are active in youth clubs and organizations of cultural, sport or other kinds of activities. Volunteering of any kind was an activity conducted by approximately 13 percent of the youth in Ukraine.

As indicated by the scope of this paper, youth political socialization is a complex and important process for the society to develop democratically and freely. To analyze the current situation and to develop proper policy, broad data collection is needed focusing not only on basic data concerning conventional and unconventional

⁴⁰ Irina Stelmach, “Youth goes to vote or for a beer?,” *Radio Free Europe – Radio Liberty*, October 23, 2014, accessed October 7, 2016, <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/26651567.htm>.

“Youth of Ukraine,” *United Nations Ukraine*, accessed October 7, 2016, https://www.gfk.com/fileadmin/user_upload/dyna_content/UA/Molod_Ukraine_2015_UA.pdf, 62.

“Youth Index,” *National Youth Council*, accessed October 7, 2016, <http://www.cntm.md/ro/news/indexul-de-tineret-realizat-de-cntm-publicat-pe-platforma-cooperarea-sud-sud-mecanisme-%C8%99i>.

political participation, but on a number of different issues, as well, for example, volunteering. With regards to it, the V4 countries have the advantage of being integrated into the EU where policies on the youth are closely monitored and developed. Therefore the V4 countries have tangible and comparable data.

In lieu of conclusions

Based on the illustrative case of youth participation in various activities as well as organizations, some correlation in the trends of political socialization leading to, for instance, voters' turnout as well as party membership as a candidacy of young people in the Visegrad Group can be seen. The Czech Republic has experienced rather stable and high overall youth participation rates, and the Czech youth's participation in politics even grew. On the other hand, Poland, for instance, has witnessed a significant drop in the indicators of youth participation and such development is also noticeable in young people's participation in political life. In comparison with the EU's average figures, the Visegrad Group usually underperforms.

Comparing similar data in Ukraine and Moldova, it is possible to see whether there is a significant difference between these two and the Visegrad Group. With regards to voting in elections, given the overall decline in the Visegrad Group, Ukraine slightly underperforms, and Moldovan youth is, in some cases, half as active as those in the V4 countries. Ukraine shows similar rates in the participation of the youth in various youth organizations to Poland, Hungary and recently Slovakia, as well. The only significant difference is noticeable in the Czech Republic, where participation rates are significantly higher than in the other countries. Comparing the rates of participation at the local level with data regarding volunteering in Ukraine, it is understandable that figures for Ukraine are higher since volunteering is a broader term than participation at a local level.

The comparison of basic data shows that there is no significant difference between the Visegrad Group and Moldova and Ukraine. The numbers show, however, that there are significant differences within the V4 countries. This might suggest that while Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary share significant historical and political commonalities, diversity takes precedence. Therefore, it is more difficult to find transferable policies, which can be equally effective in all countries in the Visegrad Group and Eastern Europe.

It is necessary to reflect upon the various historical events of the region, as their interpretation is relevant to measuring their impact on the political socialization processes of individuals and the society not only because of the shorter transforma-

tion periods, but also because of the geopolitical influences and the regional political situation. Different reactions across the region are also influenced by how societies experience and perceive the western world. They became more sensitive toward the failures and imperfections of western societies and politics than they were in the 1990s. Many of the criticism and the differences of values lay in how western politics were interpreted in the region during previous times and by previous political leaders. It is also important to keep in mind that the interpretations are influenced by the incomplete understanding of the situation in other countries and regions as well as the incomplete understanding of one's own country.

Within the Visegrad Group, integration into the EU and NATO are significant processes for all countries and should result in similar data. But despite the overall similarities, there are differences in the details, which could be explained by the varieties of these countries' communist systems as well as their routes of transformation. Finally, there were also quite significant differences in the historical development in the V4 countries prior to the communist rule. With more data provided, the overall picture of shared history would still be apparent. Nevertheless, the differences could be better understood and explained. Such an approach could also be adopted also in Ukraine and Moldova, where similar overall patterns are present but an even smaller scale of data is available regarding youth political participation, which makes it harder to have conclusive findings.

Youth political socialization and participation show that there is a dynamic development in theorizing about the subject with an overall tendency to include more aspects as they have an impact on or manifest themselves among the youth in a political sense. This broadening tendency requires a large scope of data on various areas stretching from voting to volunteering and activism. As relevant data show, there are shared tendencies in post-communist countries as well as between the V4 countries, Ukraine and Moldova, yet to find out more about the details which could then be studied and based on which it would be possible to improve policies, is also necessary. The significance of youth political socialization in the development of democratic societies has to be recognized.

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Civic Education as a Means to Democratization

by Rebecca Murray

One of the very basic questions that arises during the times when a society undergoes a major transition, as was the case of the Central and Eastern European countries after 1989, is the role that (civic) education can play in preparing the citizens for the new political, social, economic reality. The question is not only what role (civic) education should play, but also what it should look like both in theory and in practice. What do we mean by civic education and how is it understood in the context of CEE countries? Are we talking about formal or non-formal initiatives? What are the most crucial prerequisites if a country and its educational system and non-formal structures want to raise the awareness of its active and engaged citizens of their rights and responsibilities and their being capable of taking part in public life? What are some of the best examples from the region, and what can other countries learn from them when implementing them in their particular context?

The primary aim of this paper is to introduce the concept of civic education and its various theoretical interpretations; secondly, to explore its relevance in the post-communist and democratizing contexts of the Central and Eastern European countries; and thirdly, to explore and sketch out the relationship between education and democratic political culture. Civic education is one of the key and critical tools in the process of creating democratic demos. Also, with a view to educating the people to become members of the democratic demos, it is vital that they are actually taught how to exercise their agency in order to achieve the desired ends particularly through civic education and its various forms.

The following pages will offer both a theoretical overview and a review of the existing academic and applied research as well as very concrete case-study presentations and reflections on good and bad practices in the CEE region.

Why does civic education matter in Central and Eastern Europe?

The unprecedented changes that the CEE countries were undergoing after the fall of communism presented both practical and theoretical challenges. Definitions of various terms had to be re-thought and reformulated. One of them was citizenship:

citizens who used to obey the rules and the countries' leaders now had to "know how to act as engaged citizens in a democracy: casting votes, staying informed, expressing opinions".¹ The basic question which arises with such structural changes that require a new type of political and cultural behavior is how citizens learn what to do.²

According to some scholars,³ political and economic systems cannot function well and develop progressively without "cultural congruency" – an idea that has been used and developed also by Tobin. In practical terms, this first and foremost means that citizens – students – should learn about democracy and its principles in order to be able take an active part in it. Secondly, they should all learn the same things about how it works.

As Buk-Berge explains "for the first time ever, the educations of 'citizens', previously based on the aim of indoctrinating them into being builders of Communism, had to be transformed into the education of citizens living in a democracy."⁴ One of the answers to the question of how to achieve such a change in the mindsets of citizens is civic education.

Civic education in theory

According to many scholars, (civic) education is one of the key and critical tools in the process of creating a democratic demos. It is vital that the people are actually taught how to exercise their agency in order to achieve desired ends,⁵ and become a democratic demos. The challenging part begins when one starts to question the possible ways of how to educate (young) citizens or tries to measure results of democratic/civic education and the importance of civic education programs, or to take into consideration many external factors and different contexts.

As the research of Heater reveals, the debate on civic education can be traced back to ancient eras.⁶ Although research in the last decades was rather preoccupied

1 Kerri Tobin, "Civic Education in Emerging Democracies: Lessons from Post-Communist Poland and Romania," *Journal of Research in International Education*, Vol.9, No. 3 (2010): 273.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba, *The Civic Culture. Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Newbury Park, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1963); David Easton, *A System Analysis of Political Life* (New York: Wiley, 1965); Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996).

4 Elisabeth Buk-Berge, "Missed opportunities: the IEA's study of civic education and civic education in post-Communist countries," *Comparative Education*, Vol.42, No.4 (2006): 534. as quoted in Tobin, "Civic Education...".

5 Tobin, "Civic Education..."

6 Derek Benjamin Heater, *A brief history of citizenship* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2004).

by the term of citizenship, as Heater notes, civic education has gradually made it into the centre of attention.⁷ As a result, a wide range of both theoretical approaches and models of describing, analyzing, and offering civic education have been developed and each of them have been at the same time employed in different contexts.

So how can one define civic education? As Cohen aptly observes, in order to capture and describe the educational experience dealing with the task of developing democratic-minded citizens, different terms have been used including “civic education, citizenship education, social education, moral education or even democratic education.”⁸ Yet what all the terms have in common, as well as the studies focusing either on theoretical aspects⁹ or empirical case studies¹⁰ is, as Cohen argues, their “interest in examining what types of citizens the state wants to cultivate” and how to achieve and transmit this ambition “within an educational framework”.¹¹

In the broadest definition, *civic education* could be described as “all the processes that affect people’s beliefs, commitments, capabilities, and actions as members or prospective members of communities.”¹² Civic education can also be described as an aspiration to influence the ways in which the individual behaves in society.¹³ Or, according to Parker, the educational process should lead to “enlightened political engagement”,¹⁴ whereas “political engagement refers to the action or participation dimension of democratic citizenship ... Democratic enlightenment refers to knowledge and commitments that inform this engagement.”¹⁵ As Cohen explains, this means that the behaviour of people – citizens – is based on how they are enlightened by knowledge and commitments within the educational process.

7 Derek Benjamin Heater, *Citizenship: The civic ideal in world history, politics and education* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

8 Aviv Cohen, “Conceptions of Citizenship and Civic Education: Lessons from Three Israeli Civic Classrooms,” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2013), 7.

9 E.g. Walter Parker, “Knowing and doing in democratic citizenship education,” in *Handbook of Research in Social Sciences Education*, eds. Linda S. Levstik and Cynthia A. Tyson (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008).

10 E.g. Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne, “What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy,” *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2004).

11 Parker, “Knowing and doing...” as quoted in Cohen, “Conceptions of Citizenship...”, 14.

12 Jack Crittenden and Peter Levine, “Civic Education,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed December 30, 2016, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/civic-education/>.

13 John Dewey, *The school and society; The child and the curriculum* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1906/1990).

14 Parker, “Knowing and doing...” 67, as quoted in Cohen, “Conceptions of Citizenship...” 27.

15 Parker, “Knowing and doing...” 68, as quoted in Cohen, “Conceptions of Citizenship...” 27.

Furthermore, Cohen makes a distinction between education for a democratic mode of citizenship as well as a non-democratic one.¹⁶ Having this distinction set, one should also bear in mind that the content of civic education is heavily influenced by the fact that there are also various ideological conceptions regarding citizenship in a (non-)democratic state, and as a result, this may lead to very different educational plans.

The educational process as such does not have to be intentional or deliberate in any of the cases, and both norms and values can be transmitted unintentionally by various social players. Therefore, an important feature of civic education is that it is not – and should not be – limited only to schools and focused on children and youth.¹⁷ Quite to the contrary, it can indeed be a lifelong process and can encompass many social agents including, among many others, the family, the government, religions, mass media, and international organizations. However, a great emphasis both in research and practice is put on schools. As Crittenden and Levine claim, based on empirical evidence by Sherrod, Flanagan, and Youniss, “civic habits and values are relatively easy to influence and change while people are still young.”¹⁸ As a result, schooling can be more effective than other methods of educating citizens.

With regards to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, it is however of crucial importance not to limit the framework of the debate only to civic education in the school environment as the democratic political culture in the countries of the region is still in the process of its evolution, and a general and urgent need to educate and engage the entire citizenry in the public sphere and matters persists.

Back to school

From the vast amount of theoretical approaches and methods of how to grasp and understand the potential and effects of civic education and the relationship between

16 Cohen, “Conceptions of Citizenship...” 7. For studies on educational processes on authoritarian regimes, see e.g. Abdolrahim Navehebrahim and Somayeh Masoudi, “Citizenship behavior among the Iranian elementary school students” (paper presented at the International Conference on Social Science and Humanity, Singapore, 2011), accessed on December 30, 2016, <http://www.iperd.com/vol5/no1/59-H00137.pdf>; Minghua Zhong and Wing On Lee, “Citizenship Curriculum in China: A shifting discourse towards Chinese democracy, law education and psychological health,” in *Citizenship curriculum in Asia and the Pacific*, eds. David L. Grossman, Wing On Lee and Kerry J. Kennedy (Hong Kong: Springer Netherlands and the Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong, 2008).

17 Jack Crittenden and Peter Levine, “Civic Education”...

18 Lonnie R. Sherrod, Constance Flanagan and James Youniss, “Dimensions of Citizenship and Opportunities for Youth Development: The What, Why, When, Where, and Who of Citizenship Development,” *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol.6, No.4 (2002): 267 as quoted in Jack Crittenden and Peter Levine, “Civic Education”...

civic education and democracy, this chapter will present the theoretical framework used by Tobin, as it is relevant and applicable in this case.¹⁹ Furthermore, it offers many useful insights into the issue as well as the possibility of a cross-country comparison among, at least, the Visegrad countries.

Tobin uses the findings of the 1999 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievements (IEA) Civic Education Study.²⁰ According to her research, the study revealed a very visible difference in the scores of the pupils on the indicators of civic knowledge and attitudes between the countries that had only recently undergone transformations and the more stable – old – democracies. The second level of the results, however, also shows that Poland scored above the international average as well as other CEE countries on the indicators of civic knowledge and attitudes. Based on the available data, Tobin then presents an evaluation of civic education's potential for promoting civic knowledge in transforming nations, and finds that "successful programs tend to pay attention to national context, provide for teacher professional development, engage students in active learning and collaborate with established democracies to create curricula."²¹

The IEA study reveals important patterns both in Poland and Romania that, according to Tobin and others, had an impact on the results. Soon after 1989, Poland initiated civic education in schools, and since 1989, Polish students of 8th grade have been having classes entitled "Knowledge about society". Furthermore, a nationwide civic education initiative, called Education for Democratic Citizenship in Poland (EDCP) implemented by the Ministry of Education of Poland and the Ohio State University in the USA, started in 1992. The important distinction between this pro-

19 Tobin, "Civic Education..."

20 "The IEA Civic Education Study is a two-phase, cross-national study. The main goal of the study was to identify and examine, in a comparative framework, the ways in which young people are prepared to undertake their role as citizens in democracies. About 90,000 14-year-olds as well as 10,000 teachers and 4,000 school principals from 28 countries participated in the first survey in 1999, about 60,000 16/18-year-old students and 2,000 school principals in a second survey in 1999/2000." Source: "Civic Education Study," accessed December 30, 2016, <https://www.erziehungswissenschaften.hu-berlin.de/de/ebf/document/iea/>.

The IEA Civic Education Study and its results also offer very valuable insights into the various civic education curricula, teaching environments and settings in the studied countries as it is also composed of a phase in which both documentations and expert interviews were carried out in order to explain the content and process of civic education in the respective countries. It also offers insights of the experts into what they believe students should be taught on issues such as democracy, elections, individual rights, national identity, political participation and tolerance. See: Wolfram Schultz and Heikko Siebbens eds. *IEA Civic Education Study Technical Report* (Amsterdam: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2004) accessed December 30, 2016, http://www.iea.nl/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Electronic_versions/CIVED_Technical_Report.pdf.

21 Tobin, "Civic Education..." 273.

gram and the “traditional” curricula was that it involved active learning, real-world applications of lessons and was more intense. Apart from the EDCP, the Education for Democracy Foundation has also been set up as another joint project between Poland and the US, this time involving the Independent Education Group in Poland and the American Federation of Teachers, sponsored by the Polish Solidarity. As Tobin explains, the Education for Democracy Foundation offered trainings for students and teachers on how to function in a democracy. Additionally, the teachers also had at their disposal a journal called “Open Society” that provided them with views of civic education in other countries and useful materials. Many other projects were also developed under activities of UNESCO.²²

Apart from the few projects listed above with a special focus on schools, a wide range of projects were also carried out in Poland with a focus on adults and their education regarding the possibilities of participating in the relatively newly established democratic political environment in their country. According to some scholars, engaging adults is a crucial element of civic education, as children are not only educated at schools but also internalize opinions and world views that they encounter at home.²³

On the contrary, the situation in Romania in the educational landscape looked a bit different. Although officially the country did establish some priorities in the sphere of civic education, fewer initiatives were developed in practice and the education system in Romania offered many opportunities for improvement including even explanations of the fundamental rights, freedoms and duties of citizens as well as an explanation of forms and functions of government bodies and the legal system.²⁴

But what do the Polish case and the IEA study tell us? How are they relevant in the current situation in the V4 countries, Moldova and the Ukraine? First, as the study shows on the contrasting example of Poland and Romania, “context-appropriate curricula, preparation of teachers, lessons that encourage students to participate actively in learning about democratic processes, and coordination with western democratic educators may lead to higher civic education scores.”²⁵ The scores in the IEA study

22 For example, summer language camps or the “Neighbors and Minorities” curriculum construction project of the UNESCO Polish Commission. Tobin, “Civic Education...” 279.

23 Kazimierz M. Slomczynski and Goldie Shabad, “Can support for democracy and the market be learned in school? A natural experiment in post-Communist Poland,” *Political Psychology*, Vol.19, No.4 (1998).

24 Gheorghe Bunescu et al., “Cohesion and Diversity in National Identity: Civic Education in Romania,” in *Civic Education Across Countries: Twenty-four National Case Studies from the IEA Civic Education Project*, eds. Judith Torney-Purta, John Schwille and Jo-Ann Amadeo (Amsterdam: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 1999) accessed December 30, 2016, <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED431705.pdf>.

25 Tobin, “Civic Education...” 286.

alone are yet only a very small part of the puzzled concept of civic education. However, context-based and up-to-date curricula, capable and well-educated and prepared teachers together with like-minded parents, school lessons, extra-curricular and non-formal projects and initiatives promoting active participation and learning democracy acting in cooperation with international projects remain vital pre-requisites of an active and engaged citizenry in any of the six countries that are subject to this research.

In order to reflect on both the findings of the IEA study and the work of the above mentioned scholars dealing with the phenomena of civic education and its various understandings, this chapter will introduce a number of currently existing (or recently concluded) initiatives and projects in the CEE region, which fall within the realm of civic education. It will discuss not only their impact but also highlight the crucial importance of their potential of being transferable to other contexts crossing both borders and time.

Civic education in practice: realities in the CEE region

In the light of this brief literature review, it can be argued that one of the key elements of a well-functioning and flourishing civic education system lies in the establishment of official education plans and their integration into school curricula. Furthermore, what is absolutely crucial is that civic education is actively taught and passed on to pupils at any age. The first set of criteria seems to be met in all of the CEE countries. For example, in Hungary, civic education has been officially part of the central education plan since 1978, and since 1995, it has been part of the National Base Curriculum. Yet, in reality, civic education predominantly is only a part of some subjects such as history and does not necessarily enjoy the attention required to really meet its end and raise active and critical citizens. Furthermore, according to its critics, the current framework is too centralized and rather than relying on developing critical thinking, it focuses on lexical knowledge. And yet, although civic education is in part sidelined by schools, according to the findings of some research carried out by TÁRKI-TUDOK on active citizenship and civic education among young people, schools are still being perceived by the Hungarian youth as preeminent actors in civic education: 75 percent thinks that it should be important to teach civic education at school.²⁶

In cases such as the Hungarian one, or similarly also in Ukraine, Moldova or Slovakia, where the official state structures and educational systems are not meeting the

²⁶ "Alattvalók vagy polgárok lesznek? A fiatalok aktív állampolgársági készségei Magyarországon nemzetközi összehasonlításban. Másodelemzés nemzetközi adatbázisok és a szakirodalom alapján," TÁRKI-TUDOK Tudásmenedzsment és Oktatási Központ, 2010, accessed December 30, 2016, http://www.t-tudok.hu/file/alattvalok_vagy_polgarok_lesznek_kutatasi_osszefoglalo_2010.pdf.

expectations of the active parts of the demos, other key players take over the initiative and responsibility of enhancing or developing civic educational activities. As it has been highlighted in the TÁRKI-TUDOK research, the Foundation for Democratic Youth (DIA)²⁷ and Krétakör²⁸ have been very active for many years in Hungary striving to complement or replace what is missing at classes at schools: critical thinking, debating, and encouraging youth to perceive itself as an active and capable part of the society in the country whose voice counts. A very concrete example in Hungary that aims at addressing such deficits is the civic education program called Free School (Szabadiskola) run by Krétakör which seeks to empower youths to express themselves and make their voice heard. This is implemented by providing students the opportunity to experience cooperation with people from different backgrounds and directly engage with a variety of social problems that they otherwise would not encounter. One such an exercise included students in investigating the situation of homeless people in Hungary, which also served as a means of fighting prejudices against them by gaining a better understanding of their situation.²⁹

A very important element that was highlighted by the TÁRKI-TUDOK research concerning Hungary is the lack of information the youth has regarding existing possibilities and opportunities to become more active and participate in public life or activities organized by civil society. This is where the media should come into the picture, and be involved in preparing young people to understand and accept the rights and responsibilities that citizenship implies.

As far as Ukraine is concerned, the Euromaidan is one of the most recent examples where many civic education initiatives have emerged and gradually institutionalized themselves into NGOs that regularly organize awareness raising campaigns. One such example is the “Open University of Maidan”, which was created on the Maidan and transformed into an NGO with 22 regional centers organizing e.g. “The School of Conscious Citizen”, a project aiming at spreading the idea of civic responsibility, sustainable development, and contributing to building a civil society in Ukraine, particularly through education.³⁰ Similarly to Ukraine, civic education is a domain of the civil society rather than that of the state in Moldova, as well. While there are dozens of examples of both national and international educational initiatives carried out across the whole country by civil society actors, civic education in schools is

27 “Foundation for Democratic Youth,” accessed December 30, 2016, <https://en.i-dia.org/>.

28 “Krétakör,” accessed December 30, 2016, <http://kretakor.eu/home-en/>.

29 Bálint Juhász, “Krétakör Free School: A democratic education program,” *Frontiers of Democracy Working Papers* (2016), <https://publications.ceu.edu/node/44962>.

30 “Open University of Maidan,” accessed December 30, 2016, <http://vum.org.ua/>.

taught as part of optional courses.³¹ In order to encourage young citizens to become more active, developing partnerships between schools and civil society organizations would be a step into the right direction.

A case to prove the point is the current state of civic education in the Czech Republic. The system is far from being perfect, yet the country does have a working system, which emphasizes the preparation of the individual for interactions within a democratic regime. Similarly to Moldova or Slovakia, there are classes dedicated to civic education both at the elementary school level as well as high schools. An important moment came in 2014 when the Chamber of Deputies passed the declaration on the civic education in the Czech Republic stating that it is a key instrument for maintaining freedom, democracy, and a society based on the rule of law. Apart from the official declaration, there is also an active on-going discussion about the quality of civic education including state officials, stakeholders from the civic sector,³² and what is crucial, teachers themselves. As a result, the debate on the content and delivery of civic education in the Czech Republic create a sound ground for improving the quality of civic education by reflecting on its methodology, teaching approaches, and processes. An essential actor that also steps into the consultation process in the Czech Republic is high schools' unions that advocate a more intense and complex curriculum for civic education.

If the Czech case was compared to the current attitude in Poland, Ukraine or Moldova, a distinctive factor in the set-up and approach toward civic education and its place in the official curricula or public debate would be how these countries, their officials and societies answer the question "why" civic education is needed. Why should people actually care? Why should they become active citizens and engage in public life? The solution that has proven to work in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and other CEE countries is to bring the question of active citizenship and civic education onto the local level. Horbowski especially underlines the role of local initiatives (e.g. city movements) which tap into those local issues people directly feel responsible for and can easily take ownership of.³³

31 As optional courses, students can choose from the following list in Moldova: Education for community development; Education for gender equity and equal opportunities; Learn to think and act strategically; Education for tolerance; History, culture and traditions of the American people for middle school; History and local culture for middle school; Economic and entrepreneurial education; Environmental education; Human Rights Education; Social and financial education; European integration for you.

32 Such stakeholders include, for example, EduIn (<http://www.eduin.cz/>), Centrum pro demokratické učení (The Center for democratic education: <http://www.skolaprodemokracii.cz/>) or Centrum občanského vzdělávání (Civic education centre: <http://www.obcanskevzdelavani.cz/english-version>), accessed December 30, 2016.

33 "Embedding Democratic Values: The Role of Civic Education and Media in Democratization," Center for European Neighborhood Studies, April 1, 2016, accessed December 30, 2016, <https://cens.ceu.edu/article/2016-04-01/embedding-democratic-values-role-civic-education-and-media-democratization>.

A case to prove this point is the organization “Mladí občané”³⁴ a youth movement that also conducts educational simulation on the work of the local council of various Czech towns. The project itself includes collaboration with local high schools and selected groups of students as well as with the local officials, who consult the students. On the one hand, the students learn about the competences of the local councils, but also about their own possibilities as citizens to engage in the process, propose solutions to real problems, address local politicians and, as a result, transform their ideas into reality. A different example working in Slovakia on the local level is the initiative named “Odkaz pre starostu” (A message for the mayor)³⁵ where people can actively communicate about their local problems with the city council, check the progress on how problems are being solved, engage in direct debates with the council and jointly improve their local environment.

Yet, in some cases, international or European input, which acts as a stimulus, is needed to enable the local initiatives to work, as was also noted by Tobin in the case of Poland. A recent example from Moldova is the Youth Bank Orhei.³⁶ With the support of the East Europe Foundation financed by the Swedish Government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, a group of 22 young people engaged with the Youth Bank Orhei have created the Journalists Club ORH-idea. The Club ORH-idea offered youth the possibility to develop their skills to write news, conduct interviews, and to maintain discussions with people from Orhei about activities, ideas, initiatives, and issues related to their interests and needs. Articles written by young people were published in a local newspaper distributed further on to the population, local public administration, and other community stakeholders. Another initiative is the European Leadership and Political Learning for Highly Motivated Young Leaders in Moldova that aims at training young political leaders from Moldova on interactive methods of learning politics (e.g. learning by doing). Similarly, in Ukraine many public initiatives, NGOs, and civil society actors that contribute toward developing civic education and advancing democratic values are supported by American, Canadian, and European organizations.

What lesson can be drawn?

The list of civic educational initiatives – both formal and informal – in the CEE region could be continued, but the aim of this chapter was not to provide a reference list, but rather to identify some good and effective examples and look into their potential of being transferable from one country to another.

³⁴ “Young Citizens,” accessed December 30, 2016, <http://www.mladiobcane.cz/>.

³⁵ “Odkaz pre starostu,” accessed December 30, 2016, <https://www.odkazprestarostu.sk/>.

³⁶ “Journalists Club ORH-idea was created in Orhei,” East Europe Foundation, June 11, 2015, accessed December 30, 2016, <http://www.eef.md/index.php?pag=news&id=1024&rid=784&l=en#.dpuf>.

Reflecting upon the vital pre-requisites of an active and engaged citizenry, civic education ranks high. Key items on the list would be: context-based and up-to-date curricula, capable and well-educated and prepared teachers together with like-minded parents, school lessons, extra-curricular and non-formal projects and initiatives promoting active participation and learning democracy by doing in combination with international projects. Based on our review, it is clear that perhaps the most challenging sphere for transferability, for a number of reasons, is the official state curricula. First, the context of each country in the region is very particular, although there might be some resemblances among the post-1989 trajectories, but also the concept and content of the idea of civic education might differ from country to country. Existing educational systems create completely different teaching environments for the teachers. Their position within the society in these countries is not valued either in financial terms or through social acceptance, and in a number of CEE countries, they fight for better working conditions and do not necessarily get the support needed in order to fully develop the children's skills to become active citizens.

The field with the biggest potential for transferability, also reflecting the projects and initiatives that have been listed in this text, are the extra-curricular and non-formal projects and initiatives. Compared to the official structures that are bound by the system in which they function, these initiatives rely rather on active and engaged citizens, groups and likeminded individuals that are also more eager to share their know-how and the experience acquired during the implementation of the initiatives.

What makes civic education a very crucial and at the same time a useful tool to enhance the democratization process and support the democratic demos is certainly its multi-form nature. As was shown by a number of examples from the CEE region, there are existing state-led school curricula that reflect the topic to a higher or lesser degree, but at the same time, there is a very strong and exponentially growing number of bottom-up initiatives that are led by various constituents of the civil society, local schools, individuals, non-formal groups etc. Civic education is surely a field where both top-down and bottom-up approaches can work in synergies and can have even larger effect and impact on their recipients, the citizens.

With regards to the citizens, it is vital to stress another element of the nature of civic education which should be kept in mind when thinking about its potential effect on strengthening the democratic nature of the society: it should not and cannot be limited only to children and young people attending schools. It has to target adults, as well. As was highlighted earlier, it is in fact crucial to engage adults as they themselves have the potential to take an active part in shaping the values of the society, while at the same time children internalize opinions and worldviews that they are exposed to at home. In order to expand civic education beyond schools, there are

many existing initiatives both on the national, but also international level, for example, the EU's Lifelong Learning Program, and since 2014, the Erasmus+ program that are both designed to enable people, at any stage of their life, to take part in stimulating learning experiences, as well as to develop themselves through education and training across Europe.³⁷

What makes civic education such a unique and crucial component of the transformational process of a country is that it offers learning by doing from very small steps, like involving students in the classroom into school decisions, through letting them take part in the decision-making processes in various initiatives and thus offering them the experience of taking responsibility. As such, civic education may cultivate feelings of efficacy that can result in civicness in the later stages of the lives of those who participate in it. It can, therefore, serve as one of the cornerstones of enhancing democratic values and principles across the transitioning country either on local levels, through regional initiatives, and reaching up even to the national and international level.

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³⁷ The Lifelong Learning Program was operated by the European Commission between 2007 and 2013. For further information, see: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme_en.

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The Turn of Democratic Values in a New Media Environment: Particularities of the Eastern European Region

by Victoria Bucataru

One of the fundamentals of a solid democracy is the fruitful coexistence of the four powers in the state which all together guide and supervise the respect for fundamental human rights. Although, theoretically, we talk about the separation of three powers which ensures the rule of law, mass media has emerged as a fourth, and has become essential in preserving and strengthening democratic values and principles, and the connection between the state and the people. The degree of media freedom and the freedom of speech in a country could serve as a scale for measuring the level of democracy itself, the quality of public discourse and the directions used to shape public opinion.

Mass media organizations are generally considered to play an important role in building up a democratic political culture, even more so now, when contemporary societies are overwhelmed with mass communication: television, newspapers, radio as well as new media such as social media and internet media outlets. Performing as a watchdog by providing information to the general public and, to a certain degree, acting as a platform for citizens in expressing their societal views and keeping governments accountable makes media a crucial actor in preserving and establishing democratic values. The level of their performances, the freedom of the media environment, and, no less important, the quality of journalism impacts the values of communities and the attitude of people toward democratic regimes.

The 21st century is characterized by the appearance of new media (online media, social media), which step by step tends to replace the traditional. Such a tendency raises a series of questions related not only to their capabilities to influence and contribute to the process of democratization, but also to the ability to preserve journalistic ethics and deontology. Mass media could be considered an important tool of democratization. However, issues such as the role and responsibility of the media and journalists in changing the domestic and international political, economic, and security environment should not be overlooked.

The present paper intends to analyze the different models of media functioning in the Visegrad and Eastern European countries emphasizing the common trends as well as the positive and negative evolutions of the changing media environment in stable and transitioning democracies. The paper covers three main topics: the

freedom of speech as an important instrument in shaping democratic societies, the freedom of the media as an element of democratic ruling, and hybrid conflicts (propaganda) as an attempt of violating human rights and liberties as well as threatening national and international security.

The role of mass media in democratization

Talking about the impact of mass media on the quality of democracy, Lisa Müller refers to two theories which test whether mass media serves or harms democracy once it has been established. On the one hand, according to the “media malaise” theory, mass media in established democracies operate according to market principles disregarding democratic values, thus causing apathy, cynicism, and ignorance with regard to politics among citizens. On the other hand, the “mobilization” perspective claims that media sources provide enough information for citizens to recognize when their interests are in danger and that media consumption actually increases civic engagement, and thus argues the lack of solid empirical evidence.¹ Nevertheless, both theories are based on current trends and express the attitude of people as media consumers.

Lisa Müller argues that media performance is undoubtedly related to some aspects of democratic regime functioning. Countries having a higher degree of media performance tend to have a higher level of participation and less corruption. Comparing the status of the media in the V4 and Eastern European countries (Moldova and Ukraine) on the basis of the Freedom of the Press 2015 report of Freedom House and the Corruption Perceptions Index 2015 of Transparency International, we could indeed observe the correlation between the two. Corruption perception is higher in the countries where media is less free.²

In the report titled “Media and Democratization: What is known about the role of mass media in transitions to democracy”³, the authors acknowledge as well the scar-

1 Lisa Müller, “The impact of the mass media on the quality of democracy within a state remains a much overlooked area of study,” The London Schools of Economics and Political Science, December 10, 2014, accessed September 28, 2016, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/eurocrisispress/2014/12/10/the-impact-of-the-mass-media-on-the-quality-of-democracy-within-a-state-remains-a-much-overlooked-area-of-study/>.

2 Poland scores 62 points, Czech Republic 56 points, Hungary and Slovakia 51 points, Moldova 33 and Ukraine 27. A country or territory’s score indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). “Corruption Perceptions Index 2015,” Transparency International, accessed September 30, 2016, <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015>.

3 Nael Jebri, Václav Štětka and Matthew Loveless, *Media and Democratization: What is known about the role of mass media in transitions to democracy*, (Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford, September 2013), accessed September 28, 2016, https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Media%20and%20Democratization_o.pdf.

city of empirical research on the relationship between media and democratization in Central and Eastern Europe. However, media is regarded as a trigger for democratization due to the fact that in transition processes media could influence the political debate, provides pluralistic opinions, offers platforms for new political parties as well as influences political decisions and political orientations. The authors incline to support the “mobilization” perspective as in their view both in established and in transitional democracies, the media has a decisive role in shaping people’s values, ideas, and decisions. By providing information, media outlets do not just report on ongoing events but they establish societal patterns, encourage or set preconditions for civic engagement, and shape the roots of civic and political behavior.

Due to the war in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in March 2014, the eastern European region, as well as the international community, found itself in a hybrid conflict.⁴ The use of mass media in order to promote untrue information and manipulate public opinion in old democracies and countries in transition revealed the existing institutional shortcomings and the lack of policies as well as the incapacity to dispute messages which rely on societal values, mentalities/stereotypes, core political beliefs, and nostalgias. As mass media has a significant impact on shaping public discourse, the attention on professional journalism, the preservation of journalistic ethics, and the freedom from political and business pressures on the media environment has to be constant and should endure no violation.

Hindered media freedom

The freedom of speech is recognized and protected by the constitution in all Visegrad countries as well as in Moldova and Ukraine. Nevertheless, the legal background bears both positive and negative effects taking into account the historical precedents of the countries, the political culture, and the values embedded in the society. According to the Freedom of the Press Report of Freedom House from 2015, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland are considered to have a free media environment while Moldova and Ukraine are partially free. One of the most considerable declines in the freedom of the press in 2015 was witnessed in Hungary, which moved from a free status to partially free due to the attempts of authorities to establish control over the media environment.

4 “Hybrid conflict is a situation in which parties refrain from the overt use of armed forces against each other, relying instead on a combination of military intimidation (falling short of an attack), exploitation of economic and political vulnerabilities, and diplomatic or technological means to pursue their objectives.” “Understanding hybrid threats,” European Parliamentary Research Service Blog, accessed September 28, 2016, <https://epthinktank.eu/2015/06/24/understanding-hybrid-threats/>.

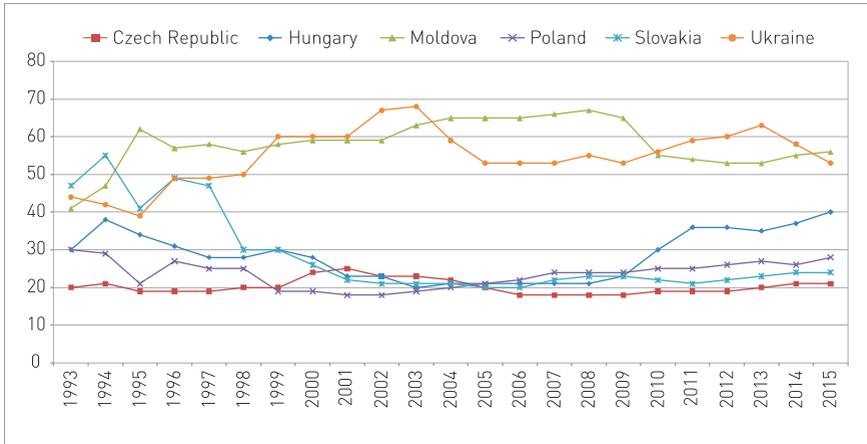


Table 1. 'Freedom of media' scores in 1993-2015⁵

One of the greatest threats to media freedom observed in all of the above countries is represented by the consolidation of power or control of the media and broadcasting regulators in the hands of the authorities or political parties. Due to the financial crises in 2008, as well as the incredible shift of readers from traditional (print) media to online publications, the big western media groups in Central Europe, including the Visegrad countries, preferred to sell their media outlets to local players,⁶ which has dramatically changed editorial policies and has affected integrity. The “oligarchization” of the media in Moldova and Ukraine is also present. The largest part of the media is owned by businessmen playing a decisive role in the political life of the country. In comparison with the Central European countries, the Eastern European countries, which thanks to the *colored revolutions* finally began to liberate their media environment, did not have the experience of working mostly with western media players. This eventually facilitated the process of local media ownership concentration, be it private or state-owned.

The trend of political actors and businessmen “capturing” media emerged with the necessity to control one’s image in public. The Czech Finance Minister, Andrej Babiš, can be considered as a recent example: he has acquired a significant part in

5 The scale represents the status of the countries in terms of media freedom during the period 1994-2015. Each country receives a numerical score from 0 (the most free) to 100 (the least free).

“About Freedom of the Press,” Freedom House, accessed September 28, 2016, <https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-press>.

6 Lucia Virostková, “Oligarchs spark debate on press freedom in Slovakia,” *EUobserver*, January 14, 2015, accessed September 28, 2016, <https://euobserver.com/beyond-brussels/127186>.

the newspaper market (two of the country's biggest daily newspapers) and owns a radio station in the Czech Republic.⁷ The Republic of Moldova is also characterized by a high percentage of mass media having business and/or political owners. For example, in order to increase the popularity of the Democratic Party and of his own, Vladimir Plahotniuc,⁸ acquired four TV channels, two of them having national coverage, and three radio stations.⁹ The business and/or political ownership of the media has a major influence on the content and editorial policy of the outlets, thus violating the pluralism of opinion and obviously promoting certain interest groups.

Ukraine, even after the Revolution of Dignity, is not immune to the problem, either. During the last two years, the media landscape in Ukraine has been regarded as pluralistic. Legislation on the freedom of speech complies, in most cases, with the European standards.¹⁰ However, the Ukrainian media environment finds itself also under the control of oligarchs actively involved in the political and economic life of the country. The parliamentary elections in 2014 have revealed clear interference of owners over the editorial policies of media outlets.¹¹ In consideration of the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and the de jure frozen but de facto violent conflict in the Donbas region, the evaluation of media freedom in these particular regions is undoubtedly complex and problematic. The emergence of such crisis situations underlines the importance of free media environment since providing accurate and unbiased information does not only shape the local public opinion, which definitely contributes to the decision-making process, but also determines, in a longer perspective, the general way of local people's life.

7 "How a media mogul helped turn Czechs against refugees," *The Economist*, September 13, 2016, accessed October 1, 2016, <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21707125-politics-central-and-eastern-europe-are-increasingly-driven-businesses-own-media>.

8 Vladimir Plahotniuc is the deputy-chair of the Democratic Party and one of the most influential political and business leaders in Moldova. His name is associated with state capture scenarios and the establishment of the oligarchic system in Moldova.

9 Julieta Savițchi, "Cine sunt proprietarii posturilor de radio și televiziune din Moldova," Center for Investigative Journalism, November 18, 2015, accessed September 28, 2016, <http://anticoruptie.md/ro/stiri/cine-sunt-proprietarii-posturilor-de-radio-si-televiziune-din-moldova>.

10 "Country Report 2016," Freedom House, accessed September 28, 2016, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/ukraine>.

Arif Aliyev et al. eds., *Eastern Partnership Media Freedom Landscape 2014* (Kyiv: EaP Media Freedom Watch, 2015), accessed September 28, 2016, <https://baj.by/sites/default/files/analytics/files/eap-mfw-final-publication-2015-en.pdf>.

11 President Petro Poroshenko owns the television network Fifth Channel. Other oligarchs like Ihor Kolomoysky (1+1), Dmytro Firtash (Inter), Rinat Akhmetov (Ukraine), Viktor Pinchuk (Novy Kanal, STB, ICTV), and Andriy Podshchypkov (cable and satellite broadcaster 112 Ukraine) also have media interests.

Aside from political and business interests intervening in its operation, institutionalized state influence over the media represents another major threat to its freedom and survival. The authoritarian mindset and desire of the leaders to have absolute power unleash the fight against critical and “disobedient” media and generates institutional traps. Although integrated in the European Union, Hungary has taken some considerable steps back in terms of preserving media freedom. In the course of consolidating the power of the Fidesz-government after 2010, Hungarian media freedom has been reduced considerably, while governmental control has increased significantly. All this was rendered possible by the broad media legislation adopted in 2010¹² with the supermajority of Fidesz in Parliament. The new legislation has led to negotiations with EU media monitoring bodies, which requested legislative amendments as the law was not in line with European standards.¹³ Nevertheless, the minor changes that were introduced limited the power of the newly established Media Council, the regulation authority supervising the whole media sector, only slightly, considering that the ruling party still remained the one which had a decisive position in appointing the chair and the members of the Council. Having jurisdiction over broadcast and print media, both public and private, as well as control over the assignment of all frequencies and content monitoring, the Hungarian Media Council’s activity raises questions regarding the freedom of the media environment.¹⁴

The newly elected Polish Parliament led by the Law and Justice Party, which won the 2015 October elections with clear majority, has also undertaken actions to hinder public media autonomy. It has passed an amendment to the media law that gives the Treasury Minister the power to hire and fire the management of TVP and Polskie Radio. Such steps have been disapproved by both the European Union and the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). The high interest to control the TVP is generated by the fact that it is the most popular news source among Polish media users and represents an important player in the TV market, having between 35-50 percent of the

12 The Media Package of Laws foresaw the consolidation of media regulation under the supervision of a single entity, the National Media and Intercommunications Authority (NMHH). Also, a new regulatory authority, the Media Council, was set up tasked with content regulation as well as with the right to nominate the executive directors of all public media. The chair of the Media Council is appointed by the Prime Minister, while the five members are elected by a two-thirds majority in the parliament, a procedure which undermines the autonomous status of the Media Council.

13 “Freedom of the Press Report 2014,” Freedom House, accessed October 1, 2016, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2014/hungary>.

14 Kim Lane Scheppele, “Hungary’s free media,” *The New York Times*, March 14, 2012, accessed October 1, 2016, http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/14/hungarys-free-media/?_r=0.

national audience share since 1992.¹⁵ This decision affects not only the independence and pluralism of opinion but also the level of the public's trust, the professionalism of journalism as well as the impartiality of the editorial policy.¹⁶

In Moldova, the phenomenon of media ownership concentration in the hands of politicians with an influence on country-level policy-making amplifies. Regardless of the reform processes, the Moldovan legislation does not include clear provisions against ownership concentration. Only in 2015, after persistent requests of civil society organizations and recommendations of foreign partners, the obligation to declare the shareholders and final beneficiaries of media companies was introduced.

New tendencies in the media trust level

The media's influence and control over public opinion is generally a factor that hinders democratic development in transition democracies, and endangers the pluralism of opinion and diversity in well-established democratic societies, as well. Although, empirically quite difficult to demonstrate, practice shows that mass media plays a crucial role in triggering political activism and civic participation. The level of trust or distrust that people have in various means of communication determines the level of its influence and capacity to change or strengthen society values and norms.

The EBU survey on how citizens perceive different types of media shows that, in 2015, across the EU, a decrease of trust in the media could be observed. Nevertheless, radio and TV are still the most trusted in comparison with the written press and online media. The tendency of the media to go online because of various, among them financial, factors, does not correspond to the perception of the public's trust. On the EU level, trust in the internet has decreased by eight points since 2011, while only 12 countries out of 33 surveyed¹⁷ claimed to trust the internet compared to 20 countries the year before. The internet as a source of information is trusted mostly in Eastern European countries. Compared to 2014, in 2015, all Visegrad countries registered a decrease of trust in the internet with the most significant drop being observed in the Czech Republic. At the present time, Poland scores the highest level of trust among

15 Beata Klimkiewicz, "Poland: The Public, the Government and the Media," The London Schools of Economics and Political Science, February 8, 2016, accessed September 28, 2016, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mediapolicyproject/2016/02/08/poland-the-public-the-government-and-the-media/>.

16 Nic Newman et al., *Digital News Report 2016* (Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford, 2016): 67, accessed October 1, 2016, <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Digital-News-Report-2016.pdf>.

17 "Media Intelligence Service – Trust in Media 2016," European Broadcasting Union, March 2016, accessed September 28, 2016, <http://www.ebu.ch/files/live/sites/ebu/files/Publications/EBU-MIS%20-%20Trust%20in%20Media%202016.pdf>.

V4 countries, while Hungary the lowest. Trust in social networks has increased slightly but still is the least trusted source of information in 15 countries out of 33. In Poland, “trust” and “non-trust” levels in online social networks were equal amongst the population in 2015. This represents an increase compared to 2014 when the index was in the negative. Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary still have a negative index, though compared to 2014, it has slightly increased.

Hungary registers a decrease of trust in the media that is accompanied by a decrease of the freedom of the press. According to the EBU survey, Hungary scored a negative trust index across all five measured media sectors.¹⁸ Hungarians prefer television as their most trusted source of information, while print media was not very highly regarded. Compared to 2014, by 2015, trust in television has dropped one point, in radio eight points, and the print media has seen a decrease of 28 points.

According to the April 2016 Barometer of Public Opinion, in Moldova, television (59.2 percent), internet sources (26.1 percent) and radio (4.4 percent) are the three most important sources of information, while the most trustful one remains to be (off- and online) television (50.5 percent) followed by internet outlets (28.3 percent). The high percentage of trust in mass media reveals the possible impact media outlets can exert over people’s beliefs and values, as well as over their decisions concerning election processes or mass movements, as well. The so-called 2009 “Twitter revolution” in Moldova highlighted the power of the social media, by the means of which the mobilization of people was possible in a very short period of time.

Based on a poll conducted by the Razumkov Centre in Ukraine in 2016, the level of people who “tend to trust” the Ukrainian media reaches 39.3 percent, whereas those who “tend not to trust” represent 17.5 percent.¹⁹ The percentage shows a slight decrease compared to 2015 in the category of “rather trust” (44.5 percent) and also in that of the “rather distrust” (26.6 percent).²⁰ Russian media does not enjoy a high level of trust among Ukrainian citizens: 1.3 percent of the people trust it fully, while 56.7 percent express their full distrust. The conflict in Ukraine and exposure to the continuous Russian propaganda have definitely impacted the media outlets as well as the media policy. Due to the fact that Ukrainians traditionally rather trust media, its power to shape public opinion is greater than before the war and thus requires

18 Viktória Serdült, “Hungarians trust television more than radio or print media,” *The Budapest Beacon*, August 15, 2016, accessed October 1, 2016, <http://budapestbeacon.com/news-in-brief/hungarians-tust-television-more-than-radio-or-print-media/37655>.

19 Andriy Bychenko, “Transforming Ukrainian Society: Public Opinion on Current Events, International Affairs and the War in Donbas,” Razumkov Center, 2016, accessed October 1, 2016, http://www.razumkov.org.ua/upload/1467713464_file.pdf.

20 “How much do you trust the following social institutes,” Razumkov Center, accessed October 2016, http://www.razumkov.org.ua/eng/poll.php?poll_id=1030.

bigger attention in terms of quality and journalistic and editorial ethics. Ukraine has banned cable television relays of leading Russian TV channels²¹ as a response to massive propaganda using media tools. In 2015, it launched a public service TV broadcaster as part of the media reform process.²²

In countries where democratic ruling is long-standing, the people's set of values as well as their perception of freedom and liberty cannot be overthrown that easily. The diversity of opinions as well as the possibility to get information from various sources generate critical thinking and mistrust towards ownership concentration in various sectors, including media institutions. Nevertheless, countries with less democratic regimes and a high level of people's trust in mass media tend to be easily influenced by media outlets. Public opinion is more easily dominated by relying on messages appealing to certain values that people hold and to nostalgia about past authoritarian regimes based on fear. In this particular case, the freedom of the media is regarded as a vital element in a democratic society mainly because of its capacity to deliver information and create opinions, perceptions and even human values. Apart from critical thinking, the diversity of information encourages consumers to both strengthen their views, moral and ethical principles, and to increase the level of tolerance in the given society.

The downfall of professional journalism and the propaganda threat

Apart from the freedom of the media, nowadays, the issue of professional journalism and journalistic ethics is getting increasing attention in the Central and Eastern European region. The emergence of the new media as well as the tendencies to constrain media independence in order to pursue political influence have largely affected the professional autonomy of journalists and the pluralistic media landscape. The self-censorship of journalists and the incapacity to write critically reduce the role of the media as a watchdog of democracy. In one of his recent speeches, Pope Francis²³ referred to the voice of the journalists as a "very powerful weapon" as they can reach the large public. He also mentioned their entailed responsibility whereas "journalism based on gossip or rumors is a form of "terrorism"."

The oligarchization of the media in the Visegrad and Eastern European countries, the unsuccessful separation from state power, and thereof interference significantly damage the quality of journalism and endanger the pluralism and value of public

21 "Ukraine country profile," BBC News, accessed October 1, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18018002>.

22 *Ibid.*

23 Philip Pulella, "Pope says journalism based on fear-mongering, gossip is form of 'terrorism'," *Reuters*, September 22, 2016, accessed October 1, 2016, <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN1S26D>.

discourse. As a result of the rise of the Czech oligarchs into media moguls, visible examples of journalists' self-censorship have been observed.²⁴ This has had a direct impact on public attitudes towards the media. The 2016 Digital News Report shows that Czechs have one of the lowest levels of trust in media across the 26 countries in the sample, and only 20 percent trust individual journalists.²⁵ Hungarians have the same proportion, while up to 42 percent of Polish people tend to trust individual journalists. Although Poland historically has had a high level of public trust in the media and journalists, after the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2015, the trust level has fallen. This might be the result of the highly politicized media coverage, a situation which has amplified in time.

The rise of the internet and social media as a means of information and news production also plays an essential role in enhancing the pluralism of opinion and engages people in open discussions, thus overthrowing the traditional media which was more concentrated on individual dissemination of the information. Nevertheless, it entails negative aspects too, such as a lack of control over the quality of information, the spread of misinformation either by political or even state actors, the promotion of hate speech and verbal aggression, and most importantly, the disregard of ethical codes and standards of journalism as a profession. Provided as alternative pieces of information, various online media outlets easily penetrate the public space presenting a large variety of news consisting of reprinted texts and opinions from social networking sites, blogs and other websites with no clear sources, fact-checking or providing a second opinion.

Both in the Visegrad and the Eastern European countries, the risk of these sources heavily influencing public opinion is relatively high due to the massive and continuous flow of information and populist messages that come as an alternative to the already existing media patterns. Due to the general decrease of trust in the media, such types of para-journalistic business projects might seriously influence public discourse, the interpretation of the fundamentals of democracy and human rights, human values, and beliefs. Václav Štětka²⁶ refers to the spreading of digital misinformation as one of the main threats for international security and contemporary soci-

24 Václav Štětka, "Between Instrumentalization and Para-Journalism. Current challenges to democratic roles of the media in the Czech Republic," *Frontiers of Democracy Working Papers* (2016): 7, <https://publications.ceu.edu/sites/default/files/publications/fod-stetka.pdf>.

25 The Digital News Report by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford, summarizes data from an annual survey which explores changing news consumption habits among internet users around the world. The 2016 edition involved 26 countries: United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland, Greece, Turkey, Korea, Japan, Australia, Canada and Brazil. Available at <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/>.

26 Václav Štětka, *op.cit.*, 7.

ety. “The Parliament Letters” manifests such an example from the Czech Republic, being an online paper with an outstandingly high number, almost one million, of users per month. This, according to Czech media commentators and experts, seriously harms professional journalism by disregarding journalistic accountability and duties. Referring to “The Parliament Letters”, Štětka, points out the unperceivable threat that is posed by deliberate engagement in spreading populist and extremist views and agendas as “alternative” and legitimate positions. Such positions, however, are identified as biased and are controlled by specific political or business interests.²⁷

Martin M. Šimečka²⁸ cites the Slovak example of the “Free Broadcaster”, a radio spreading conspiracy theories that is available only on the internet reaching a public of hundreds of thousands of followers. This example is particularly interesting because according to Šimečka, it reveals the direct link between the content of the outlets (pro-Russian and anti-Western propaganda with conspiracy theories and hatred against Muslims and Slovak Roma) and the results of the parliamentary elections held in Slovakia in March 2016.

Pro-Russian and anti-Western propaganda is undoubtedly even more visible in the Eastern European countries which have a historically shared media environment. Ukraine and Moldova, along with the European countries, are facing massive propaganda warfare unleashed by the Russian Federation as a result of the war in Ukraine and the stated desire of the two countries to leave the Russian sphere of influence and develop on the basis of democratic ruling. One of the vulnerabilities that Russia manages to exploit, as the above mentioned example shows, is the internet which comes as an alternative source of information bypassing traditional media. Making use of values and beliefs held by people, Russian media outlets emphasize the negative emotions and perceptions present in the society regarding foreign and domestic threats in Europe such as uncontrolled migration, the alleged Islamization of Europe and imminent terrorist threat, possible violent conflicts at an international scale, Euroscepticism, and discontent with politicians and institutions. The lack of own narratives and comprehensive communication strategies has provided grounds for Russian propaganda to be more influential and exert its impact on European public opinion.

The GLOBSEC Policy Institute commissioned a series of opinion polls in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia with the goal of mapping the effects of the propaganda campaign on public perception. Discussing the geopolitical choice, more particularly, orientation to the East or the West, the respondents of the three Visegrad countries have not made a clear choice but seemingly prefer a middle position: Slovak

27 Václav Štětka, *op.cit.*, 8-10.

28 Martin M. Šimečka, “Media in Slovakia: Good and bad news,” *Frontiers of Democracy Working Papers* (2016): 6, <https://publications.ceu.edu/sites/default/files/publications/fod-simecka.pdf>.

respondents' support for a pro-Russian (Eastern) orientation is above 12 percent and for a pro-Western one only 23 percent (52 percent want Slovakia to be outside the traditional East and West dichotomy). Public opinion in the Czech Republic is more pro-Western with 30 percent favoring this direction, and only four percent preferring the Eastern orientation (48 percent of Czechs opt for a position in the middle). 32 percent of Hungarians prefer the West and six percent the East, while 48 percent chose neither.²⁹

Moldova and Ukraine are exposed to Russian propaganda to a larger extent taking into account the control carried out over the years on the media landscape. The shared past and the older generations' nostalgia for the Soviet times as well as the polarization of the political environment between East and West create a proper context for promoting propagandistic messages and controlling the minds and hearts of the people. The danger lies not only in the virtual popularity that the Russian orientation is acquiring as a geopolitical vector, but in the fact that propaganda creates the basis for undemocratic regimes and mindsets, which contribute to the aggressive violations of human rights and liberties.

The Russian media in Moldova is accessible and is considered to be very popular due to the diverse entertainment programs compared to the lack of attractive local content produced by Moldovan mass media. The Russian media has a very large share in the Moldovan media market especially compared to Western media. The frontrunner channels in terms of promoting Russian political lines are all present in Moldova, being also covered by local dominant media groups, which ensure the re-broadcasting of Russian channels in the whole territory of Moldova. Such a channel is Prime TV owed by businessman and politician, Vlad Plahotniuc. This has a national coverage frequency and re-broadcasts the Russian Pervii Kanal TV channel. While acknowledging the enormous security threat, the national regulatory authority in the broadcasting sector (the Broadcasting Coordination Council, BCC) cannot take full action because of political influence and financial interests involved. Due to messages endorsing hatred in relations with Ukraine, manipulations and deliberate dissemination of false information, the BCC has applied penalties and suspended the emission of Rossia 24 TV channel,³⁰ viewed by the Russian authorities as an attempt of violating the plurality of opinion and the freedom of speech.

The situation in Ukraine is more complex taking into account the fact that mass media is used as a weapon in the de facto war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Al-

29 Milan Šuplata and Milan Nič, "Russia's information war in Central Europe: New trends and counter-measures," GLOBSEC Policy Institute, November 8, 2016, accessed October 1, 2016, http://www.cepolicy.org/sites/cepolicy.org/files/attachments/russias_information_war_in_central_europe.pdf.

30 Petru Macovei, "Mass Media in the Context of Democratization: The case of the Republic of Moldova," *Frontiers of Democracy Working Papers* (2016): 8, <https://publications.ceu.edu/node/44992>.

though not recognized officially as a party in the violent conflict, the Russian Federation behaves as an aggressor penetrating the public area with massive disinformation campaigns and manipulative media outlets. In order to protect its informational space, but also to ensure the security of the public debate, the Ukrainian authorities have banned Russian cable television relays of leading Russian TVs. Taking into account the amplitude of hybrid conflicts and the impact on the national security of Ukraine, the Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine was set up in 2014 among slight controversies and fears that it would endanger the freedom of the media. Nevertheless, since 2013, Ukraine has been witness to a positive evolution concerning the freedom of the press (Table Nr. 1).

The perception of Ukrainian citizens during the last few years concerning the Russian media has changed dramatically. According to the Media Consumption Survey, a national survey conducted in Ukraine in 2016 with the support of USAID, Russian TV channels have lost their audience and the trust of media consumers. Only 26 percent of the Russian news audience regards the information presented to be objective and reliable compared to 57 percent having confidence in Ukrainian regional TV channels, and 52 percent in national coverage TV channels. Compared to 2015, the level of trust has decreases by 12 points in Russian news outlets, but on the other hand, it has increased by four points in Ukrainian regional TV channels, and by three points in national coverage TV channels. The share of internet users has grown to 76 percent over the past year; almost all are active users (at least once a week). Respondents said the information they get from websites is more complete and objective than what they see on Ukrainian television (65 percent believe that both regional and national Ukrainian websites provide objective and reliable information while Russian websites enjoy the trust of only 22 percent). The internet is mainly used for information searches (53 percent), communication, checking emails (48 percent), and news consumption (46 percent).³¹

The use of the social networks reaches 51 percent. The most popular social networks remain the Russian sites, VKontakte (49 percent of the users) and Odnoklassniki (40 percent of the users), which entered the market in a stronger position than Facebook (36 percent of the users) and Twitter (12 percent of the users) having been set up based on the model of behavior and networking practices common in the Eastern European region. The two Russian social networks were highly promoted in the post-Soviet region, thus attracting all generations on the basis of rooted social structures (family, school, university, participation in pupils' camps) and cultural habits (music, movies, etc.). The share of those getting their news from social networks has also increased. This trend is typical for all social networks except Odnoklassniki.³²

31 "Media Consumption Survey Ukraine 2016," Internews, August 2016, https://www.internews.org/sites/default/files/resources/Media_Consumption_Survey_2016-09_Eng_Internews.pdf.

32 *Ibid.*

Ukrainian media experts believe that regardless of the positive development of the media environment, the Ukrainian media market is still quite unbalanced and unable to fulfill the educational role in society, thus living the door open for propagandistic strategies. Ukraine is not an exception with regards to the fall of professional journalism and journalistic ethics, the emergence of partisanship and political/business ownership of media. Moreover, facing the Russian propaganda, the Ukrainian government, as well as the civil society, has more responsibility including not only securing the media environment as a strategic asset of the country, but also preserving, respecting and protecting the principles of democratic governance, avoiding the use of the same unlawful strategies as a method of defense.

Conclusions

According to the data presented in the paper as well as the developments in the respective countries, the establishment of democratic governance and participatory social environment cannot be possible without the existence of pluralistic and free media institutions. Free media supports more accountability and responsibility of the authorities towards the people as well as the development of critical thinking and increasing tolerance among the population. Despite a slight decrease, mass media still enjoys a high level of trust. This undoubtedly demonstrates the power of media in defining as well as strengthening the values of individuals and communities. Relying on free media where possible, the Visegrad countries can strive for preserving a democratic environment, which allows people to express their needs using various instruments, and to impede their governments in distorting social values. The Eastern European countries, Moldova and Ukraine, have relatively little experience in expressing popular discontent concerning the violation of their societies' human rights and liberties, as mass media fails to serve its educational role and the principles of democracy are not yet embedded in society. The experience of the Visegrad countries and the identification of common trends reveal the necessity of stronger links between the countries. Finding themselves in a process of transition accompanied by either frozen or violent conflicts, the two countries, Moldova and the Ukraine, could take over the positive experience and learn from the challenges that the Visegrad countries have encountered. Moreover, the similarities and/or historical connections in terms of political and social value systems set up the preconditions for a better understanding of the mentality and behavior, thus providing perfect grounds for credible initiatives in the eyes of the people.

In order to fight the new tendencies of reducing journalistic ethics to a minimum for the purposes of promoting various political or business interests, clear policies and practices are required which would protect professional journalism, condemn propa-

gandistic activities, and support the education of the population in the spirit of quality journalism. This would contribute to a better identification of misinformation and would reduce the impact that propagandistic strategies used in hybrid conflicts have on society. Although all countries face more or less the same threats, the Visegrad countries with an older democratic system in place as well as having the advantage of being part of the EU could serve as reliable partners for Moldova and Ukraine. The expertise, resources, and most importantly, actions undertaken in order to preserve professional journalism create the perfect grounds to establish solid cooperation and, thus, contribute to the democratization of societies in Eastern Europe.

Neither new nor social media as producers of news should be overlooked even though, at the present time, they remain less preferred sources of information among users. The overwhelming amount of information and the impossibility to fully control the online space set up new rules for the media environment which has to face the massive dissemination of misinformation – one of the biggest threats to democracies in the 21st century. The emerging informational threats tightly linked to the conflict in Ukraine define the need for close cooperation between countries in terms of policy-making processes and common initiatives, which would ensure regional security and would protect individuals exposed daily to attacks on their values, models of behavior and fundamental human rights.

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Uneasy Grid of Social Attitudes

by Agnieszka Słomian and Tomasz Mazurek

Tolerance is a prerequisite of real functioning democracy, it is a determinant of balanced freedom and it is also the weakest, most fragile element of a democratic system. Without tolerance in society, in the minds of citizens, no democracy can work properly. According to Sullivan et al.,¹ “political tolerance exists when respondents allow the full legal rights of citizenship to groups they themselves dislike”. But tolerance is not only political; we distinguish tolerance toward other groups and phenomena. Tolerance for religions, for the disabled, for the elderly, for sexual minorities, for different races, ethnic and language groups – all this builds a proper social structure. This factor is necessary to stabilize the functioning of the state.

The aim of this chapter is to show that issues of tolerance, cultural diversity and discrimination are not an easy grid of social attitudes. The societies of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have such an uneasy history and specific national structure that this grid can be tight in many dimensions. This chapter is divided into two parts: the first discusses the historical and legal aspects of the issue; the second brings examples of public opinion, civil society organizations and their good practices.

The chapter starts with an analysis of how historical events contributed to the current approach to tolerance. We believe that the end of World War II was the time when fundamental changes in values took place in Europe. Borders were redrawn, entire nations were moved, some divided, others united, for sure all politically and socially thrilled. Another milestone was the transformation after 1989 which proceeded variedly in each country and played an important role in developing approaches to minority groups. Next, the development of EU legislation on fundamental freedoms and discrimination is highlighted. We concentrate on a few important legal acts adopted by member countries to help with inclusion of vulnerable minority groups.

To show trends over the past three decades, we use data from comparative public opinion surveys. We take into consideration a few categories of social minorities – ethnic and religious minorities, immigrants, the disabled and the LGBT community – and a few indicators like population census, national pride, the perception of neighborhood, approaches towards new trends and events. We also try to explain the reasons for such

1 John Sullivan, James Piereson and George Marcus, *Political tolerance and American democracy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 76.

attitudes, opinions, and changes therein. Finally, we present good practices of NGOs in projects relating to hate speech. Throughout the paper a few significant distinctions have to be made concerning the said countries. Some of them are historical, geographical and political, others are related to sociological and even national mentality problems. Lines of these distinctions very often intersect making it hard to separate them.

Historical background

Political and geographic origins (1945-1991)

The countries of the Visegrad Group from the end of World War II were nominally independent, but in reality subordinate to Soviet domination. Although the influence of the Soviet Union in these countries was very strong, they had their statehood, their national institutions and opportunity to, more or less, cultivate their national cultures and traditions. These countries were ruled by communist authoritarian systems, the leaders and members of the ruling party were also members of their society. They spoke in their national languages and had vested interests in Warsaw, Prague or Budapest rather than in Moscow. It was a state of incomplete, imperfect sovereignty, but allowed to build some mechanisms of social institutions which were helpful during the democratic transformation process in 1989.

Ukraine and Moldova were in a different situation. After World War II, the territories of present Moldova and Ukraine were incorporated into the Soviet Union. Both territories and nations living there had difficult histories between two strong neighbors – the Soviet Union and Poland in the case of Ukraine, or Romania in the case of Moldova. Becoming part of the Soviet Union in 1945 placed these countries and their societies in completely different situations than the Visegrad states. Ukraine and Moldova were thereafter part of a vast communist empire with a much more oppressive political system. National trends were inhibited by the centralized policy of Moscow. The Russian language was the official state language. Even though, budget spending on culture was considerable in the Soviet Union, the goal was rather creating a homogeneous Soviet model of life rather than highlighting national differences. The political situation of the Soviet republics was even worse. The political power system in the Soviet Union was based on decisions made in Moscow by a narrow group of influential communist leaders. There were no strong institutions or even a tradition of decision-making at a regional level. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine and Moldova had to build structures of independent states from the basics and start building their national identity.

In 1945, the borders in Central and Eastern Europe were redrawn in accordance with the Yalta and Potsdam arrangements. There were huge changes, especially in the case

of Poland which lost almost half of its territory in the east and gained vast “additional” lands in the north and the west taken away from Germany. Czechoslovakia lost the eastern “corner” of its territory, Carpathian Ruthenia, which was seized by the Soviet Union. Romania lost its eastern province historically called Bessarabia, where the Soviet Union established the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. Even more significant were the changes in the population structure in this area. Germans were expelled from areas annexed to the Soviet Union and Poland as well as from the territories of Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Poland was literally moved westwards – the Ukrainian population was transferred from the Polish territory to the Soviet Union and the Polish population from Soviet territory was transferred to lands gained by Poland in the west.

These harsh methods over a long term resulted in a relatively high level of national homogeneity, especially in the present V4 countries. Effects of those events are still visible in the results of various sociological research or even political elections. In Poland, there are no significant national minorities. The biggest national minority among the V4 countries exist in Slovakia, where over eight percent of the population is Hungarian. This sometimes causes tensions between the two countries. An issue of a large Roma population is present in Slovakia and Hungary taking the shape of challenges concerning especially their social status and access to education. Finally, Ukraine and Moldova face problems stemming from the multinational mosaic of their societies which include sizable Russian or pro-Russian populations.

Two speeds to independence (1989-2015)

In 1989, historical changes started in Europe: the Soviet Union fell, and its satellite states and the Soviet socialist republics gained independence. There was a difference between gaining real sovereignty in the case of countries like Czechoslovakia, Hungary or Poland, and building independent statehood from scratch in the case of the former Soviet socialist republics. The path to sovereignty for Ukraine and Moldova, where the remaining influence of Russia is more noticeable and only became more visible, was harder and bumpier.

To face the challenges of the new political situation in Europe, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland formed the Visegrád Group in 1991. In the beginning, it was a diplomatic forum to discuss various regional issues among heads of state and government. Afterwards, the creation of the Central European Free Trade Agreement strengthened their economic cooperation providing a good base during negotiations with the EU. The clear objective of joining the EU also strengthened institutions guarding civil rights and enforced certain positive and tolerant public attitudes. Citizens could travel without visas in the EU, scholarships and exchanges between the EU and V4 were increasingly popular. People were much more open to western

democratic values, especially tolerance and cultural diversity. After joining the EU, the process of implementing European law accelerated in the V₄ countries. Changes in legislation concerning discrimination started to show, albeit slowly, that the environment for anti-discrimination activities keep getting better.

Ukraine and Moldova did not have the same advantages. An ineffective economy was carrying the burden of the post-communist system. Moldova has long been one of the poorest countries in Europe, while Ukraine was economically and politically closely related to Russia with market and legal reforms favoring narrow groups of oligarchs having close political connections in Kyiv and Moscow. Despite the passivity and corruption of state institutions, the idea of civil liberties was developing step by step in these countries thanks to the activities of NGOs working on human rights, raising awareness among citizens, and building a civic society. Recently, some legal steps have also been taken by Moldovan and Ukrainian authorities concerning the regulation of immigrants. According to the International Organization for Migration², in the last five years, the number of immigrants in Moldova began to exceed the number of emigrants. It is related to the ongoing process of negotiations with the EU and emigration for the purpose of working abroad. But the Moldovan government only diagnoses the scale of the challenges related with this process, among them discrimination and hate speech. Ukrainian legislation is more advanced, but challenges concerning tolerance and integration of immigrants still require efforts.³

Anti-discrimination acts in the EU

The EU was founded on an idea of peaceful coexistence of European nations overcoming intolerance within and beyond their borders. In this regard, the situation of national and ethnic minorities is the matter of special care as it can be a trigger of social divisions and conflicts, public disorder or even wars. To improve their situation, the EU has built a variety of institutions and a legal framework.

The establishment of the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe or creating documents like the “Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities”⁴ were milestones on a long road toward guaranteeing fundamental freedoms, as well. In parallel, the intensive education of citizens on tolerance and openness started. In the 1990s, legislation concerning tolerance and

2 International Organization for Migration (IOM), *A Study on Integration, Hate Crimes and Discrimination of Different Categories of Migrants In Moldova and Ukraine. Summary* (Kyiv: IOM Mission in Ukraine, 2015), 12.

3 IOM, *A Study on Integration...*

4 Council of Europe, *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and Explanatory Report* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1995).

anti-discrimination in the EU was well developed. It was both an encouragement and an obstacle for the CEE countries aspiring to join the EU as before the enlargement, they were required and put under pressure to adapt their legal system to European standards including regulations concerning minorities and anti-discrimination⁵. In parallel, the societies of the V4 countries had to quickly become familiar with these notions. The social process, which in Western Europe lasted decades, was expected to happen in a few years in the CEE countries, which posed challenges. In Slovakia, the implementation of anti-discrimination laws was subject to such problems that joining the EU itself was at stake⁶. On the other hand, the skepticism of the CEE countries, which introduce anti-discrimination laws, when even some old member states did not comply with them, is not surprising, either. For example, all V4 countries are parties to the “The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities” but Belgium, Greece, Iceland and Luxembourg are only signatories and France is not a member of this convention at all⁷.

Among the legal acts which shape the structure of human rights in the EU, a number of Council Directives referring to minorities, tolerance and anti-discrimination stand out. Council Directive 2000/43/EC, referred to as the “Race Directive”, forbids discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic origin in work, training programs, professional organizations, at the level of social security and health care, education and access to public services.⁸ Council Directive 2000/78/EC, referred to as the “Employment Equality Framework Directive”, forbids discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, religion, belief, age, and disability in the field of employment and occupation. Council Directive 2004/113/EC requires the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between men and women in access to the supply of goods and services in the scope of insurance and pension that are private and voluntary.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,⁹ established in 2000, implements into EU law the political, social and economic rights of EU citizens and residents, but it has had a legal effect only since the Treaty of Lisbon came into force in 2009. The Charter addresses rights in the following categories: dignity, freedoms,

5 Lynn Tesser, “The Geopolitics of Tolerance: Minority Rights under EU Expansion in East-Central Europe,” *East European Politics and Societies* Vol. 17, No. 3 (2003): 483

6 See more at: Vladimír Bilčík et al., *Europeanization in the Visegrad Countries. The adoption of European anti-discrimination legislation in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia* (Budapest: Center for EU Enlargement Studies, 2013).

7 “State parties to the Convention,” Council of Europe - Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, accessed September 10, 2016, <http://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/etats-partie>.

8 Vladimír Bilčík et al., *Europeanization...*, 7.

9 “Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,” *Official Journal of the European Communities*, Vol. 43, 2000/C 364/01 (2000).

equality, solidarity, citizens' rights, and justice. Current EU candidates are already obliged to comply with the Charter,¹⁰ but it has also caused a lot of controversy. For example, Poland and the UK have signed a special protocol that says that the "Charter does not extend the ability of the Court of Justice of the European Union, or any court or tribunal of Poland or of the United Kingdom, to find that the laws, regulations or administrative provisions, practices or actions of Poland or of the United Kingdom are inconsistent with the fundamental rights, freedoms and principles that it reaffirms" and that "(...) the Title IV of the Charter, which contains economic and social rights, does not create justiciable rights, unless Poland and the UK have provided for such rights in their national laws"¹¹.

Social characteristics in Central and Eastern Europe

Ethnic and national overview

When describing the subject of tolerance and discrimination as a general category in the CEE countries, we have to remember the history and social characteristics rooted in the CEE societies. After the end of the communist period, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia were under the influence and pressure of the requirements of joining European structures, including the EU. The OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the EU set the implementation of minority rights as a condition of further negotiations¹². Without disputing the fact that such rights are needed for a modern state, this was an element of legal tolerance implemented from the outside, and not domestically developed. The V4 countries had no time to work out their own approach toward tolerance, and the results of "western" solutions for increasing tolerance and fighting discrimination can often be questionable.

The 2011 Population and Housing Census¹³ provides insights into the ethnic and national structure of the V4 countries showing that Poland has a bigger population (more than 38 millions) than the three other V4 countries combined and is strongly homogeneous without significant ethnic and religious minorities. Over 95 percent of the Polish population declared themselves as Catholics. In the Czech Republic, 25 percent, and in Slovakia 15 percent of the population have not declared any religious affiliation. The biggest national minority among the V4 countries is in Slo-

10 Vladimír Bilčík et al., *Europeanization...*, 10.

11 "Protocol on the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union to Poland and to the United Kingdom," *Official Journal of the European Union*, Vol. 50, 2007/C 306/01 (2007): 156-157.

12 Lynn Tesser, "The Geopolitics...", 493-494.

13 "2011 Census Hub," Eurostat, accessed August 5, 2016, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-and-housing-census/census-data/2011-census>.

vakia where 8.5 percent of the population is Hungarian. In Slovakia and Hungary, two-three percent of the population are Roma which is a relatively high amount compared with the Czech Republic and Poland where the Roma population is under one percent. According to census data for Ukraine (2001) and for Moldova (2004), approximately three-fourths of the population declared themselves as Ukrainian and Moldovan, respectively.

SLOVAKIA			CZECH REPUBLIC		
5,397,036	100%	Total resident population	10,436,560	100%	Total resident population
4,352,775	80.7%	Slovak	6,711,624	64.3%	Czech
458,467	8.5%	Hungarian	2,642,666	25.3%	not specified
382,493	7.0%	not specified	521,801	5.0%	Moravian
105,738	2.0%	Roma	147,152	1.4%	Slovak
30,367	0.6%	Czech	53,253	0.5%	Ukrainian
33,482	0.6%	Ruthenian	5,135	0.01%	Roma

HUNGARY			POLAND		
9,937,628	100%	Total resident population	38,511,824	100%	Total resident population
8,314,029	83.7%	Hungarian	37,393,651	97.1%	Polish
1,455,883	14.6%	not specified	521,470	1.4%	not specified
308,957	3.1%	Roma	846,719	2.2%	Silesian
131,951	1.3%	German	232,547	0.6%	Kaszubian
29,647	0.3%	Slovak	147,814	0.4%	German
26,345	0.3%	Romanian	17,049	0.05%	Roma

Table 1. Source: 2011 Population and Housing Census

An interesting connection can be found between national pride, language, and threats to national identity in *The Atlas of European Values*,¹⁴ where the Polish example is different compared to the rest. Poles are very confident and proud of their country throughout the time period of statistic research, regardless of their state's political status. On the other hand, for Ukrainians, national pride and the importance of the Ukrainian language is relatively low, which could be explained by the large number of Russian-speaking citizens.

¹⁴ "The Atlas of European Values", accessed August 5, 2016, <http://www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/new/home.php?lang=en>.

Country	Percentage of people that say they are very or quite proud of being a citizen of their country			Percentage of people that think it is very or quite important to be able to speak the national language(s) to be a true citizen of their country			On a scale of 0 to 100: Degree to which people are afraid that expansion of the European Union will lead to a loss of national identity and culture		
	1980	1999	2008	1980	1999	2008	1980	1999	2008
Czech Republic	81	81	84	-	-	88	-	-	54
Hungary	88	89	85	-	-	99	-	-	54
Moldova	-	65	82	-	-	90	-	-	44
Poland	97	97	96	-	-	95	-	-	40
Slovakia	81	77	91	-	-	98	-	-	41
Ukraine	-	61	74	-	-	70	-	-	51

Table 2. Source: Atlas of European Values 2008

Analyzing the issue of tolerance toward ethnic groups in the CEE countries, we must keep in mind the distinction between ethnic and national minority. National minorities are most often connected with a neighboring “kin-state” or national “homeland”,¹⁵ and those “kin-states” generally support the protection of their kin’s rights living in neighboring countries and them gaining new ones. This could occur by advocating for the use of European frameworks, for example the legal initiatives of the Hungarian government to ensure the protection of minority rights of Hungarians living abroad. But kin states also resort to diplomatic pressure or even military threat, e.g. Russia’s actions in Ukraine. Ethnic minority refers to ethnic, language or cultural groups which do not have a relationship with the “kin-state” or such a country did not exist, e.g. the Roma¹⁶.

According to the Social Progress Index¹⁷ indicators on tolerance and inclusion, the Czech Republic is the most tolerant country among the six and Moldova is the least. Similarly, the Czech Republic has the lowest level of discrimination and violence against minorities, while Ukraine has the biggest.

15 Rogers Brubaker, “National Minorities, Nationalizing States, and External National Homelands in the New Europe,” *Daedalus*, Vol. 124, No. 2 (1995): 107-132.

16 Melanie H. Ram, “Democratization through European integration: The case of minority rights in the Czech Republic and Romania,” *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Vol. 38, Issue 2 (2003): 31.

17 “Social Progress Index 2016,” Social Progress Imperative, accessed August 5, 2016, <http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/global-index/>.

Country	Tolerance and inclusion generally		Discrimination and violence against minorities	
	Rank	Calculated score	Rank	Calculated score (0-10)
Czech Republic	41	57.42	12	3.8
Hungary	53	53.47	34	4.7
Moldova	102	39.70	68	6.5
Poland	57	52.20	27	4.4
Slovakia	60	50.22	54	5.9
Ukraine	86	43.38	78	7

Table 3. Source: Social Progress Index 2016

Referring to national and ethnic minorities, tolerance toward people of a different race as one's own neighbors slowly but constantly grew in four of the discussed countries between 1999 and 2008, especially in Poland. In the Czech Republic and Moldova, though, it dropped significantly. It would be very intriguing to examine how this score would look today against the backdrop of the refugee and migration crisis.

Country / Year	Percentage of people that would not like to have people of a different race as neighbors		
	1980	1999	2008
Czech Republic	24	10	21
Hungary	23	-	9
Moldova	-	11	19
Poland	17	17	12
Slovakia	28	17	14
Ukraine	-	10	9

Table 4. Source: Atlas of European Values 2008

After a decade of constant, bloody wars in the Middle East, Europe is faced with a refugee and migration crisis. Hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants were crossing the borders of the EU causing debates and divisions among member states. The *Willkommenspolitik* of Germany met strong opposition in the Visegrad countries. The V4 became an advocate of the policy of closed external borders and defense of national identity.

Events in the Middle East, as well as terrorist attacks in France, Belgium and Germany have increased chauvinism and racism not only in Central Europe but throughout the EU. The Social Progress Index 2016 results indicate that the Czechs are the least tolerant toward immigrants, but Slovaks and Poles near them. Moldovans are the most tolerant but their country is not really a destination for immigration and they see the problem differently than the V4 societies. Moldova, until recent years, has had problems with the emigration of its own citizens rather than with immigration. It is puzzling that Czechs, commonly seen as a tolerant society, have the biggest problem with immigrants among the V4 countries. It could be caused by a compilation of various factors. They are “surrounded” from the west by countries having large numbers of immigrants, and it is possible that the Czech society fears that their country can be affected by problems of its western neighbors. Hungary, according to this index, is a much more tolerant country toward immigrants, which is interesting, particularly in light the strong anti-migrant and anti-refugee narrative of the Hungarian government in 2015-16 in the Hungarian media.

Country	Tolerance toward immigrants	
	Rank	Calculated score (0-100)
Czech Republic	129	30.77
Hungary	113	43.51
Moldova	99	47.27
Poland	124	36.43
Slovakia	127	33.39
Ukraine	118	39.2

Table 5. Source: Social Progress Index 2016

A significant example of an ethnic minority in Europe is the Roma people. They are considered as Europe’s largest ethnic minority estimated to be about 10 to 12 million. At the same time, though, they are marginalized and socially excluded. Such minorities without their own “homeland state” are subject to the special attention of the EU which can create legal acts and frameworks to protect and promote their rights at a European level. An example adopted in 2011 is the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020¹⁸. Nevertheless, discrimination against the Roma remains a burning problem: according to the European Union Agency for Fundamen-

¹⁸ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), preface to *The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States. Survey results at a glance* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2012), 3.

tal Rights,¹⁹ in the Czech Republic and Poland 62 percent of Roma respondents have personally felt discriminated because they are Roma, while in Slovakia 34 percent declared that they experienced discrimination.

Question	Answer of Roma	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Slovakia
In the past 12 months (or since you have been in the country) have you personally felt discriminated against because you are a Roma?	Yes	62%	45%	62%	34%

Table 6. Source: Survey data explorer - Results from the 2011 Roma survey

Equally disturbing is that between 1999 and 2008, the proportion of people who do not want to have Roma neighbors increased in the Czech Republic by 15 percentage points. In Slovakia, this rate has dropped from a very high level (77 percent) to a more moderate 47 percent. This rate is the lowest in Poland, while in Ukraine it is almost as high as in the Czech Republic.

Country / Year	Percentage of people that would not like to have Roma as neighbors	
	1999	2008
Czech Republic	40	55
Hungary	-	39
Moldova	-	48
Poland	39	33
Slovakia	77	47
Ukraine	53	52

Table 7. Source: Atlas of European Values 2008

The V4 countries are generally perceived as less tolerant than “old” EU member states championing their ideas of equality and freedom, but the V4 are also more nationally and ethnically homogeneous, which could affect some of the indicators. Nevertheless, tolerance has mostly improved over time. Moldova and Ukraine are more ethnically diverse, and this factor still creates problems. The transfer of experience and good practices from the V4 countries could thus be helpful.

¹⁹ “Survey data explorer - Results from the 2011 Roma survey,” European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, accessed August 5, 2016, <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-results-2011-roma-survey>.

Religious minorities

While one can hear or read opinions claiming that religion is an increasingly weaker factor in modern social life, in reality, *God is still not dead* in Central and Eastern Europe. Religion in Moldova, Ukraine and the V4 countries is not a decisive element in state policy or social moods, but its presence or its lack thereof can mirror social attitudes, choices, prejudices and the so-called national mentality. Poland is traditionally perceived as a strong Catholic country, but paradoxically this is the result of Stalin's decisions of transforming the Polish territory and population. Before World War II, about 65 percent of Poland was Catholic. After the war, it was over 96 percent. The dominant religion in the V4 countries is Roman Catholicism – in Poland it reaches 87.6 percent, while in the Czech Republic almost 80 percent of respondents claim not to be religious or have not specified their religion. Between 1980 and 2008, the number of believers in Slovakia and Hungary was constant. In Poland, the Czech Republic, and Moldova, it has decreased slightly and only in Ukraine has it increased.

SLOVAKIA			CZECH REPUBLIC		
5,397,036	100%	Total resident population	10,436,560	100%	Total resident population
3,347,277	62%	Roman Catholic	4,662,455	44.7%	not specified
725,362	13.4%	no religion	3,604,095	34.5%	no religion
571,437	10.6%	not specified	1,082,463	10.4%	Roman Catholic
316,250	5.9%	Evangelical	51,858	0.5%	Evangelical
206,871	3.8%	Greek Catholic	39,229	0.4%	Czechoslovak Hussite Church
98,797	1.8%	Christian Reformed	20,533	0.2%	Orthodox

HUNGARY			POLAND		
9,937,628	100%	Total resident population	38,511,824	100%	Total resident population
3,691,389	37.1%	Roman Catholic	33,728,734	95.95%	Roman Catholic
2,698,844	27.1%	not specified	2,733,843	7.1%	refused to answer
1,806,409	18.2%	no religion	929,420	2.6%	no religion
1,153,454	11.6%	Calvinist	156,284	0.44%	Orthodox
215,093	2.2%	Lutheran	137,308	0.39%	Jehovah's Witnesses
179,176	1.8%	Greek Catholic	33,281	0.09%	Greek Catholic

Table 8. Source: 2011 Population and Housing Census

Country / Year	Percentage of people saying they are religious		
	1980	1999	2008
Czech Republic	42	43	32
Hungary	57	59	55
Moldova	-	91	83
Poland	96	94	88
Slovakia	78	82	81
Ukraine	-	75	86

Table 9. Source: Atlas of European Values 2008

Discrimination on the basis of religion is less of a problem than on the basis of ethnic minority status in the Visegrad countries, according to Eurobarometer.²⁰ Czechs and Slovaks claim that there is low discrimination on the basis of religion in their countries, but in Poland and Hungary more people believe that discrimination on the basis of religion is widespread. These perceptions could be explained by the fact that former Czechoslovakia was strongly secularized, while religion plays a more significant role in Hungary, but especially in Poland.

Country	Discrimination on the basis of religious beliefs	
	“widespread”	“rare”
Czech Republic	17%	69%
Hungary	29%	49%
Poland	27%	47%
Slovakia	15%	68%

Table 10. Source: European Commission Special Eurobarometer Nr.437, 2015

Interestingly, many more people in the V4 countries would prefer to have Muslim rather than Roma neighbors. The most tolerant toward Muslims are Hungarians, and Czechs are the least – just like in the case of immigrants. The attitudes towards Muslims have mixed cultural, historical and contemporary origins. Hungary has had a long history of wars with and occupation by the Ottoman Empire, which in turn had an influence on the development of the Hungarian national identity. Poland during its history has had less exposure to Muslims: the Polish army had its own small units

²⁰ “Public Opinion,” European Union, accessed August 5, 2016, <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2077>.

of Tatars that in the historical memory created a symbol of the “good” or “our” Muslims as opposed to the “bad” Tatars of the Golden Horde and the Ottoman Turks. Such historical images as well as the current media portrayal of refugees, migration and fundamentalist terrorism – often blurring these into one – all play a role in shaping perceptions about and prejudices toward Muslims in the Visegrad countries.

Country / Year	Percentage of people that would not like to have Muslims as neighbors		
	1980	1999	2008
Czech Republic	22	15	29
Hungary	18	-	11
Poland	20	24	25
Slovakia	26	25	21

Table 11. Source: Atlas of European Values 2008

In Ukraine and Moldova, the situation is more complicated. Religious institutions were heavily persecuted by communist authorities, and societies are much more secularized. But after the collapse of the Soviet Union, religious life was revived and religious affiliation was often a national declaration. For example, in Ukraine a Catholic could also be considered as a person of Polish descent. Followers of the Ukrainian Orthodox – Moscow Patriarchate are aware that the authorities of the church are located in the capital of a foreign – currently hostile – state, and the Ukrainian Orthodox – Kyiv Patriarchate could be perceived as a true national Ukrainian church.

Overview of social exclusion

Emerging full of contrasts at the beginning of the 1990s from a homogeneous socialist culture, the secular, irreligious, and yet socially conservative countries of CEE were rapidly faced with the reality of western values: political freedom, tolerance, the freedom of beliefs, the tolerance of sexual identity, the understanding of and openness toward the disabled. This was the fundament of a free and tolerant civic society. As Marquart-Pyatt and Paxton claim: “Political tolerance, or the willingness to grant political rights to disliked groups, is a pivotal democratic value believed to undergird healthy and successful democracies”²¹. This was a tough lesson that the CEE countries had to learn quickly.

Embedding the entire range of values was difficult because of the historical background. During the transformation period, the CEE societies fought for total democ-

²¹ Sandra Marquart-Pyatt and Pamela Paxton, “In Principle and in Practice: Learning Political Tolerance in Eastern and Western Europe,” *Political Behavior*, Vol. 29, Issue 1 (2007): 89.

racy, for people's rights, and for the rule of the majority. However, "the minoritarian aspects of democracy are especially difficult to understand among those who have long been oppressed by unresponsive minority elites"²². That is why tolerance does not automatically appear together with independence and democracy. Social inclusion is a vast concept. It includes various kinds of social categories, e.g. women, the elderly, the young, the disabled, the LGBT communities, the population of rural areas. The following section focuses on two of these: the LGBT communities and the disabled.

Problems concerning tolerance toward LGBT groups is still present in the CEE countries but with significant differences. According to data gathered by the Fundamental Rights Agency, among the V₄ countries, the Czech Republic is the most tolerant place for LGBT persons as opposed to Poland. While all Visegrad countries had to implement the EU directive that forbids discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the field of employment, the existence of such legislation is the most known in the Czech Republic and the least in Hungary.²³

Question	Answer of LGBT	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Slovakia
In the last 12 months, in the country where you live, have you personally felt discriminated against or harassed on the grounds of gender?	Yes	15%	15%	17%	14%
In the last 12 months, in the country where you live, have you personally felt discriminated against or harassed on the grounds of sexual orientation?	Yes	36%	45%	57%	52%
Do you avoid holding hands in public with a same-sex partner for fear of being assaulted, threatened or harassed?	Yes	42%	65%	66%	66%
In the country where you live, is there a law that forbids discrimination against persons because of their sexual orientation when applying for a job?	Yes	59%	31%	46%	45%

Table 12. Source: Survey data explorer – LGBT Survey 2012

²² James Gibson, "The paradoxes of political tolerance in processes of democratization," *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, 23:2 (1996): 10.

²³ "Survey data explorer - LGBT Survey 2012," European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, accessed August 5, 2016, <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-lgbt-survey-2012?mdq1=theme&mdq2=3507>.

Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia are not shining in tolerance toward LGBT minorities, but in Ukraine and Moldova, the situation looks worse. According to the Social Progress Index 2016, the Czech Republic ranks 31st concerning tolerance toward homosexuals. Ukraine ranks 94th and Moldova only the 105th. The former Soviet republics have much bigger problems with tolerance toward sexual diversity than the Visegrad countries. It could be argued that hostility toward homosexuals in Ukraine and Moldova on the one hand, and for example, in Poland on the other hand, appears for different reasons. In Poland, the Catholic Church has a strong influence in a mainly conservative society, and homosexuals are viewed negatively on cultural and religious grounds. In Ukraine and Moldova, the Orthodox Church is much more conservative²⁴. Moreover, in these former Soviet republics, homosexuals can be perceived as a manifestation of the “rotten West”.

Tolerance toward homosexuals		
Country	Rank	Calculated score (0-100)
Czech Republic	31	45.93
Hungary	45	35.06
Moldova	105	5.81
Poland	56	26.82
Slovakia	52	29.15
Ukraine	94	8

Table 13. Source: Social Progress Index 2016

People with disabilities have taken a long and difficult way to emancipation from the beginning of the 1990s. Their struggle was not as visible as that of the LGBT, but no less important. Disabled people were in a strange situation, because before the transition, the socialist states provided relatively good social care, but kept them in a social bubble, “ghettos for disabled”. Since then, the governments and the NGOs have carried out tremendous work for disabled people, but many challenges still remain. In the V4 countries, the financing of social programs for disabled people has developed, yet, there is a perception that disability is still an important factor in social discrimi-

²⁴ See more at: Adam Hug, ed. *Traditional religion and political power: Examining the role of the church in Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine and Moldova* (London: Foreign Policy Centre, 2015), accessed October 20, 2016, <http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/1707.pdf>.

nation. According to European Commission's Eurobarometer 2015, more than half of the Hungarian respondents said that discrimination on the basis of disability is widespread, while in Poland, the result was 29 percent. Respondents were also asked about discrimination at work on the basis of disability: 57 percent of Czechs said that disability puts one candidate at a disadvantage; in Poland it was much less – only 34 percent.

Discrimination on the basis of disability		
Country	"widespread"	"rare"
Czech Republic	38%	57%
Hungary	54%	37%
Poland	29%	49%
Slovakia	39%	53%

Table 14. Source: European Commission Special Eurobarometer, Nr.437, 2015

Country	Employment discrimination on the basis of disability
Czech Republic	57%
Hungary	45%
Poland	34%
Slovakia	39%

Table 15. Source: European Commission Special Eurobarometer Nr.437, 2015

Addressing existing challenges

Considering the above picture, the question arises concerning the best way to tackle intolerance and discrimination in Central and Eastern Europe. The V₄ countries have already gone through a large part of this journey. Attitude towards minorities has improved and the V₄ countries enjoy its outcome. More tolerance in society guarantees more freedom and stability for the state. Problems are not considered as taboo. People and organizations can openly speak about them. They also educate and take steps to find solutions. Transferring such experience to Moldova and Ukraine would be wise, and NGOs' activities hold a lot of potential in this regard.

In the V₄ countries as well as in Moldova or Ukraine, NGOs play a significant role in anti-discrimination actions, promoting tolerance and the protection of human

rights in societies. EU members have more opportunities to obtain funding, while they can apply for resources from other international donors and can often obtain financial support from their national institutions.

The number of registered NGOs and local branches of international organizations is significant: in 2010, the Czech Republic had approximately 115,000 registered NGOs, Poland 80,000, Hungary 65,000, and Slovakia 37,409.²⁵ At the same time, there were only about 66,000 NGOs in Ukraine and 8,500 in Moldova²⁶. Statistically, only about 10-20 percent of these are active. They work in different fields, of course, but many deal with issues like gender equity, opportunities for the Roma, human rights, defending the rights of foreigners, hate speech, anti-discrimination, or tolerance.

Such examples worthy of more attention are the Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture in Slovakia²⁷ which concentrates on research, advocacy and education; the Association for Legal Intervention in Poland²⁸ which provides free legal advice to socially excluded people, especially minorities, and immigrants; the Hungarian Civic Liberties Union²⁹ which educates citizens about their basic human rights and freedoms; the Association for Integration and Migration in the Czech Republic³⁰ which defends the rights of foreign nationals through legislative work and actions against racism, and the list goes on. Some of these organizations even cooperate with the government or local authorities, and engage volunteers in their projects. Since the refugee crisis started, most of them focus mainly on this group and on educating societies on the topic.

Good examples are to be found concerning the integration and inclusion of the Roma, e.g. the social campaign “One of many” in Poland by the Foundation of Social Integration PROM³¹, the project “Roma Public Policy” strengthening relations between the Roma and pro-Roma organizations in Slovakia by Milan Šimečka Foundation³², the internet portal Romea.cz³³ which provides information about Roma events all over the world, or projects by NEKI in Hungary³⁴ which also provides legal support for the Roma.

25 “Countries,” NGO Partnership Portal, accessed June 13, 2016, <http://www.ngonorway.org/countries>.

26 “Nations in Transit,” Freedom House Portal, accessed June 13, 2016, <https://freedomhouse.org/reports>.

27 “Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture,” accessed August 15, 2016, <http://cvek.sk>.

28 “Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej,” accessed August 15, 2016, <http://interwencjaprawna.pl>.

29 “Társaság a Szabadságjogokért,” accessed August 15, 2016, <http://tasz.hu>.

30 “Sdružení pro integraci a migraci,” accessed August 15, 2016, <http://www.migrace.com>.

31 “Fundacja Integracji Społecznej PROM,” accessed August 15, 2016, <http://www.fundacjaprom.pl>.

32 “Nadácia Milana Šimečka,” accessed August 15, 2016, <http://www.nadaciamilanashimecku.sk>.

33 “Romea.cz,” accessed August 15, 2016, <http://www.romea.cz>.

34 “Nemzeti és Etnikai Kisebbségi Jogvédő Iroda,” accessed August 15, 2016, <http://dev.neki.hu>.

Good practices in tackling hate speech

What useful experience have the V4 countries gained in fighting discrimination? What can be transferred to Eastern neighbors? We will try to bring some particular answers by presenting good practices on tackling hate speech, a problem that in recent times is becoming increasingly serious across the region. The base of hate speech is racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance, and the promotion, the justification, and the spreading of such ideas on various platforms (including publications, radio and TV broadcasting, songs, movies, banners, billboards, graffiti, etc.).

In the CEE region, resulting from historical experiences, the ethnic and social composition of societies, hate speech has its own characteristics: e.g. anti-Semitic hate speech is widespread, though there is no significant Jewish minority in the region, and it is the remnant of the past. Anti-Semitic labels are now used against people, groups and phenomena which mostly have nothing to do with Jews. Hate speech targeting the Roma is also significant and originates not only from small groups of radicals, but is present also in mainstream media and even in the statements of some politicians. It shows that discrimination against the Roma is a real problem in this region, and European and national programs addressing it are not functioning well. Similarly, homophobic harassment, offensive language, hatred, jokes in everyday life toward LGBT people are also very widespread³⁵.

To tackle such hate speech problems, it is necessary to implement a wide range of educational programs and activities combating stereotypes, which are the sources of xenophobic attitudes. Education should start in the early school level. Public campaigns should lead to an effective inclusion of the Roma or LGBT groups within the society.

Projects conducted by the Council of Europe and by organizations in the V4 countries present some good practices. The “No Hate Speech Movement”³⁶ is based on national campaigns of EU member states³⁷, where national governments are engaged and aim to reduce the acceptance of hate speech. The Movement is also a hub for organizations and initiatives from Europe dealing with offensive contents. Another project, “HejtSTOP”³⁸ tries to remove hate speech from online platforms but also from public spaces in Polish cities. Association “Project: Poland” created a website

35 Miłosz Hodun, “Hate speech: European Union – Central Europe – Poland,” *4liberty.eu Review*, No.2 (2015), accessed August 30, 2016, https://issuu.com/4liberty.eu_review/docs/web_4libertyeu_02_sklad_single_page.

36 “No Hate Speech Movement,” accessed August 15, 2016, <http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org/>.

37 Websites of this action in the V4 countries: “Koalicja Przeciw Mowie Nienawiści,” <http://beznienawisci.pl/>; “Mladí proti nenávisťi,” <http://www.protinenavisti.cz/>; “Bez nenávisťi na internete,” <http://beznenavisti.sk/>; “No Hate Speech Mozgalom,” <http://nohatespeechmozgalom.hu>, accessed August 15, 2016.

38 “Projekt Hejt Stop,” accessed August 12, 2016, <http://projekt.hejtstop.pl/>.

where everyone can report offensive graffiti geo-locating them on a map. After reporting, “Project: Poland” contacts local authorities, the owner or landlord and with the help of the local community, businesses and activists try to remove or paint over the hate speech inscription.

“Hate Group Map”³⁹ is a project conducted by the Hungarian Athena Institute. It gathers information about extremist groups in Hungary. These groups are considered dangerous due to their ideology, spreading hate speech but also by the possible threat to democracy and even the lives of citizens. The task of “Hate Group Map” is to update a map and list of groups, providing confirmed, relevant and actual information. In Hungary, the significant anti-hate influence has affected the “Budapest Pride”⁴⁰ initiative, focusing on the LGBT community while actively promoting the idea of tolerance and opposition to hate speech. In the Czech Republic, “HateFree”⁴¹ aims to bring and share information, provide space for stories of victims and attackers of hate crimes.

These examples of combating hate speech show that many models of solutions work effectively. The greater process of spreading tolerance and anti-discrimination is built from countless small and micro activities, basic education, everyday talks, and little gestures. The society itself creates a whole spectrum of conducts – the good and the bad – and hopefully good ones can prevail over bad ones. Focus must be on improving good conducts in every society, and thus solutions from the V4 countries could have an impact on Moldova and Ukraine, too. This process, however, cannot be imposed from the outside. It is a lesson that every society must learn.

Concluding thoughts

Intolerance is a destructive power which can quickly abuse individual and civic liberties⁴². To prevent this danger, we must encourage an environment, where tolerance could develop in the most natural way. The most important condition for such developments is the education of citizens. Not propaganda, but wise and open education can teach people to ask questions and find answers. Through that process, the values of tolerance and equality can become embedded in the society. Using social media, modern online tools, the involvement of activists and local communities can bring very effective results. But when thinking about transferring these practices to

39 “Hate Groups Map,” Athena Institute, accessed August 12, 2016, <http://athenainstitute.eu/en/map/>.

40 “Budapest Pride,” accessed August 12, 2016, <http://budapestpride.com/>.

41 “Hate Free Culture,” accessed August 12, 2016, <http://www.hatefree.cz/>.

42 Sandra Marquart-Pyatt and Pamela Paxton, “In Principle and in Practice...”.

Ukraine and Moldova, we must keep in mind the local conditions – Prague is different from Chisinau, and Cracow is not Kharkiv. Anti-discrimination initiatives implemented too rapidly can be counterproductive. Let's not underestimate this. Ukraine and Moldova have the right to develop their own solutions regarding cultural diversity, tolerance, and anti-discrimination. The V4 countries should be ready to support them but cannot dictate their actions.

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Accountability, Transparency and Corruption in the V4 Countries, Ukraine and Moldova

by Anton Pisarenko and Olena Vlasiuk

Corruption is a common problem for almost every country regardless of its wealth, history, and socio-cultural background. According to the information of the International Monetary Fund, 2 trillion USD is lost to bribery and corruption every year, which equals 2% of the global GDP.¹ Corruption in the region of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is one of the top problems when it comes to the development of a democratic political system. The development of the political systems of the Visegrad countries (V4) on the one hand, and those of Ukraine and Moldova on the other, corresponds to two waves within the broader process of democratization and integration into or approximation to the European Union. Given the fact that anti-corruption reforms were among the requirements of the EU integration process, the same classification may apply also to corruption itself. The Visegrad countries were in the first wave of countries combating corruption within the Central and Eastern European region, and Ukraine and Moldova come now as the second. Nevertheless, correlation between existing levels of corruption and anti-corruption initiatives in the V4, Ukraine, and Moldova shall not be addressed by simply transferring the experience of the V4 to their non-EU partners, and it should be considered as a more complex phenomenon.

In the case of Central and Eastern Europe, countries outside and inside the EU, the level of corruption is influenced by geopolitical factors. As James A. Lyons, a retired U.S. Navy admiral, mentioned in his article in *The Washington Times*, corruption may send Ukraine back into the Russian orbit.² The same applies to Moldova, which in turn means that combating corruption in the region is not only the indication of mentality transformation but that of the decisions made in accordance with a geopolitical choice.

Corruption has been a harrowing problem for CEE countries after the fall of the Soviet block and the collapse of the Soviet Union in particular, leaving the heritage of the culture of corruption deeply ingrained in the values of the political elites. The V4

1 "Corruption: Costs and Mitigating Strategies, May 2016," *International Monetary Fund Staff Discussion Note*, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2016/sdn1605.pdf>.

2 James A. Lyons, "A 'culture of impunity'," *The Washington Times*, July 10, 2016, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jul/10/corruption-may-send-ukraine-back-to-russia>.

countries succeeded first in identifying this problem. As a result of that, combating corruption in the V4 countries was a crucial issue in the late 1990s. The same process started in Ukraine and Moldova at least ten years later. After gaining independence in 1991, both countries faced a number of crucial social problems, which relegated combating corruption to be of lesser priority. Consequently, the level of corruption evolved, and nowadays this phenomenon has an endemic nature presenting a significant threat to business, international investment, and national security. The high level of corruption also influences social trust and satisfaction with the functioning of the political system. According to a survey, conducted by the Rating Group Ukraine in March 2016, Ukrainian citizens define corruption as the second most important problem in Ukraine following the conflict in Donbas.³ In Moldova, corruption was the fifth on the list of public concerns, after poverty, prices, unemployment, and crime according to the 2014 Barometer of Public Opinion.⁴ Transparency International currently ranks Ukraine as the 130th out of 168 countries in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI). In 2015, the CPI of the country reached 27 points out of 100 possible, which is 6 points less than Moldova's.⁵ Despite various common features in the historical and political backgrounds of Ukraine, Moldova, and the V4 countries, the latter are far ahead in the ranking. Considering the large scale of the problem, it is crucially important for Ukraine and Moldova to find effective ways to combat corruption. The successful experience of the CEE countries may help to find feasible solutions for increasing accountability and thereby reinforcing democracy in the countries of Eastern Europe. To reach this goal, it is essential to analyze the origins of corruption in the countries fighting against it, their former and present institutional frameworks, and the latest developments in this field.

This paper is a brief analysis of the existing theoretical literature on corruption, recent anti-corruption trends in the CEE region as well as the major challenges that the V4 countries, Ukraine and Moldova encountered while trying to combat this phenomenon. Particular attention is paid to the case of Ukraine and the changes taking place in the field after Euromaidan. The paper discusses the role of civil society in combating corruption. Ukrainian initiatives are introduced to highlight the importance of local initiatives and to showcase the fact that Ukraine has experienced a significant upsurge in these activities over the past few years.

3 "Dynamics of Socio-Political Attitudes in Ukraine: March 2016," Rating Group Ukraine, accessed October 30, 2016, http://ratinggroup.ua/en/research/ukraine/dinamika_obschestvenno-politicheskikh_vzglyadov_v_ukraine_mart_2016.html.

4 "Barometer of Public Opinion, November 2014" Institute for Public Policy, accessed October 30, 2016, http://ipp.md/public/files/Barometru/Brosura_BOP_11.2014_prima_parte-r.pdf.

5 "Corruption Perception Index 2015," Transparency International Ukraine, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://ti-ukraine.org/CPI2015>. The scale ranges from 0 to 100, where 0 means the highest level of perceived corruption, and 100 refers to the lowest level of perceived corruption.

Analytical framework

Corruption as a global phenomenon is the subject of substantial amount of theorizing and empirical research, which has produced many different explanations, typologies and remedies. Scholars seek the causes and the consequences of corruption in individual ethics and civic cultures, in history and tradition, in the economic system, in the institutional arrangements, and in the political system. The working definition of the World Bank is that corruption is *the abuse of public power for private benefit*. Such a definition is quite simplified, but it reflects an important notion that corruption appears when someone who represents the state and the public authority behaves according to private interests rather than public ones. This definition is also the one used most often in public surveys, which study citizens' and experts' perception of corruption.

Inge Amundsen stresses two sides of the corrupt act. On the one hand, there is the state and politics ("the corrupted"), and "the corrupters", that is, those who offer bribes and gain advantages. These suppliers are the general public, or – in other words – the non-state society.⁶ Corruption also happens without any state agency or state official being involved, for example, within and between private businesses, within non-governmental organizations, and between individuals in their personal dealings.

The level of corruption strongly correlates with the overall state of the society and its values. Less democratically developed political systems tend to be more corrupt-ed. As Lawrence and Huntington pointed out, "democracy – which entails political opposition, freedom of the press, and an independent judiciary – fosters potentially powerful corruption-reducing mechanisms".⁷

There are different types of corruption, but addressing the Ukrainian and the Moldovan case, where corruption is highly integrated into the political system, it makes sense to separate political (grand) corruption from the bureaucratic (petty) corruption. Political or grand corruption takes place at the high levels of the political system. It is when the politicians and state agents, who are entitled to make and enforce laws in the name of the people, are themselves corrupt. Bureaucratic corruption, on the other hand, takes place in the public administration, at the implementation end of politics.⁸ Political corruption has more systemic repercussions since legislators, who are empowered to make political decisions and set up the rules of procedure, initiate it. It may lead to institutional

6 Inge Amundsen, "Political Corruption: An Introduction to the Issues," *Chr. Michelsen Institute Development Studies and Human Rights*, 1999, accessed October 30, 2016, <https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/1040-political-corruption.pdf>.

7 Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington, *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* [New York: Basic Books, 2000]

8 Amundsen, "Political Corruption." 1999.

decay and tendencies towards authoritarian regimes. Moreover, whereas bureaucratic corruption normally can be dealt with through auditing, legislation, and institutional arrangements, the degenerative effects of political corruption cannot be counteracted by an administrative approach alone.⁹ Endemic political corruption, like in the Ukrainian and Moldovan cases, calls for radical political reforms.

The consequences of corruption vary and depend on the type of actions involved. Concerning Moldova and Ukraine, we can claim that the lack of quality in public sector leads to undermining state institutions and waning of the legitimacy of the state. Taking into account the presence of corruption in elections, we should mention such effects as distorted representation in parliaments and reduced accountability. Other key effects of corruption are the negation of the rule of law and diminishing trust in state institutions.

In transition societies, corruption is usually a highly adaptive phenomenon. It does not always involve money, particularly in the post-Soviet space, giving life to *blat* – “[t]he social practice of using personal connections to circumvent formal procedures by soliciting personal favors for and from others”¹⁰ which is a common phenomenon in Ukraine and Moldova. However, according to Williams & Onoshchenko, “it does not appear that *blat* is important any longer in this post-socialist market economy. Most participants [...] adopted a more nuanced view of the relationship between the use of informal payments and *blat*. Rather than viewing money as a substitute for *blat*, they have adopted the view that although money is sufficient without *blat*, and *blat* is sufficient without money, combining money and *blat* is the most appropriate and effective way of getting what you want.”¹¹

From the V4 to the East: transferring anti-corruption experience to Ukraine and Moldova

Dealing with the measurement of success of combating corruption, one should obviously keep in mind the difficulties in obtaining objective results.¹² Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index alone provides probably the most comprehensive picture of the level of corruption in the V4 countries, Moldova and

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Colin C. Williams and Olga Onoshchenko, “Evaluating the prevalence and nature of *blat* in post-Soviet societies. A case study of the education sector in Ukraine,” *International Journal of Social Economics* Vol. 41 No. 9 (2014): 747.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Most research looks at Corruption Perception Index, which, in and of itself, does not actually measure corruption but people’s view of it, which may or may not accurately reflect the level of corruption.

Ukraine.¹³ The earliest Index listing Ukraine and the V₄ countries is from 1998. At this time, Ukraine ranked 68th (among 85) together with Bolivia, while Slovakia was the 47th, Poland the 39th, the Czech Republic the 37th, and Hungary topped the scale ranking 33rd. The following year's Index (Corruption Perception Index 1999) places both Moldova and Ukraine in the 75th place among 99, while the V₄ countries, having slightly moved, keep the order relative to each other. According to the latest Corruption Perception Index from 2015, the situation has changed significantly. Among the 167 evaluated countries, Poland is the 30th, Czech Republic is the 37th, Hungary and Slovakia share the 50th place, Moldova is the 103rd and Ukraine is the 130th. Comparing to the earliest Index, Hungary has lost its top position within the V₄, while Poland has become a less corrupted state. From sharing the same position, Moldova and Ukraine are now divided by 27 positions with Ukraine closing the list.

While being relatively successful in combating corruption, the V₄ countries still face challenges similar to those in Ukraine and Moldova, however, at a lower scale than the latter two. Among the most common forms of corruption in the V₄ countries, nowadays, one finds the low accountability of politicians, the influence on and control over the media, administrative corruption and corruption related to public procurement, but corruption in the health care sector is also common in all four countries. According to Freedom House's Nations in Transit 2016 Report, Hungary is the most corrupted state among the V₄, followed by Slovakia. All four countries show lower scores of corruption compared to the situation five years ago.¹⁴

According to Katarzyna Batko-Tołuć, in Poland, corruption is a silent problem: there is no significant petty corruption anymore, and there is no state capture. Meanwhile, Anita Koncsik, notes that in Hungary access to information has worsened over the previous years: the scope of the freedom of information act has narrowed, fees are charged to fulfill data requests and exemptions have been introduced.¹⁵ Such observations generally reflect the trends of corruption in the respective countries outlined by the TI results.

Although corruption is no longer considered the top problem in the Visegrad countries, the fight against corruption is still present in all countries within the re-

13 "Corruption Perception Index," Transparency International Ukraine, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi>.

14 "Nations in Transit 2016," Freedom House, accessed October 30, 2016, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/nations-transit-2016>.

15 Katarzyna Batko-Tołuć, programming director of the Citizens Network Watchdog Poland, and Anita Koncsik, researcher of K-Monitor Watchdog of Public Funds, participated at the workshop of the present project, titled *Embedding Democratic Values: Tolerance and Transparency*, organized on May 16, 2016, in Kyiv. For more information, see: <https://cens.ceu.edu/article/2016-06-04/embedding-democratic-values-tolerance-and-transparency>.

gion. Experience in combating corruption, in particular anti-corruption laws, are being transferred from the West to the East entailing a phenomenon of legal transplants. However, “[i]rrespective of whether a transplant is ‘imported’ or ‘exported’, it is likely to behave differently in the context into which it is being introduced, compared with the context within which it originates”.¹⁶ Grødeland stresses that anti-corruption efforts generated from the outside should be more successful if ‘imported’, that is initiated or welcomed locally, than if ‘exported’, that is imposed upon a national or local community from the outside. After the Ukrainian revolution in 2014, we can observe trends shifting from experience being exported by IGOs (mostly the EU) to Ukraine, a country that was run by a corrupted government and with governmentally controlled civil society, to being imported by the newly established authorities and recently developed anti-corruption initiatives.

The V4 countries passed the stage of contemporary Ukraine and Moldova in the late 1990s with the adoption of anti-corruption laws.¹⁷ When considering the transfer of experience from the V4 to Ukraine and Moldova, relativity matters. For example, when evaluating the impact of similar initiatives exercised in the late 1990s and in the early 2010s, one should consider that there are more tools available today, such as social networks and online tools, which might allow for more innovative solutions. In this sense, Ukraine and Moldova are now agenda-setting countries when it comes to combating corruption since their anti-corruption initiatives are the newest and the most innovative.

At the same time, a distinction shall be made between growing anti-corruption trends of internal nature and those stimulated and/or financed by foreign partners. Foreign financing of anti-corruption initiatives may backfire, and discredit them for a portion of the population. Since reducing the level of corruption remains part of the accession process to the EU, as was in case of the V4 countries, a part of anti-corruption initiatives and CSOs in Ukraine and Moldova are to some extent still third-party-driven fitting into the bilateral EU-Ukraine dialogue and cooperation framework. In this regard, the experience of the V4 dealing with such phenomenon might be considered useful for countries seeking membership in the European Union, such as Moldova and Ukraine.

While being relatively successful in combating corruption, the V4 countries are still ranked as more corrupted states than their western neighbors within the EU. Some countries, like Hungary, do not have any specific anti-corruption agencies un-

16 Åse Berit Grødeland, “Elite perceptions of anti-corruption efforts in Ukraine,” *Global Crime*, 11:2 (2010): 239, accessed October 30, 2016, doi: 10.1080/17440571003669241.

17 Such as the Law on free access to information of 1999 in the Czech Republic, the Law on Conflict of Interest from 1996 in Hungary, the first National Program of Fighting Corruption from 2000 in Slovakia, or the Anti-corruption Law in Poland in 1997, etc.

like Ukraine and Moldova. Contrary to the V4, a number of newly established anti-corruption bodies are present in Ukraine and Moldova (in the latter, up to four). Still, in itself, it is not an objective indicator of the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts. The V4 civil societies are better developed and more influential with a number of watchdogs and investigative journalism initiatives, providing good examples for Ukraine and Moldova to follow.

Corruption in the EU's Eastern neighborhood

As Hitch and Kuchma¹⁸ pointed out, “no anti-corruption legislation existed during the Soviet Era when Ukraine was a Soviet Socialist Republic of the former USSR”. This fact, combined with a highly corrupted environment, both inherited by independent Ukraine have provided a basis for the further flourishing of corruption in the country. The same situation applies to Moldova. The period of independence in the two countries, however, shall not be seen as a linear process when it comes to combating corruption, since it contains cycles and drawbacks corresponding to the main social and political developments. Concerning Ukraine, the revolutions of 2004 and 2014 had the strongest impact on triggering anti-corruption initiatives while the times during the Yanukovich regime were a significant drawback. One of the main peculiarities of corruption in Ukraine and Moldova is that it has become a system-forming factor deeply rooted in people's mentality. Sometimes even those opposing corruption as a phenomenon accept the fact that it is easier to solve problems through corrupt practices if there is an urgent need.

According to the indicators of the Freedom House's Nations in Transit Report 2016, Ukraine and Moldova have the same, relatively very high level of corruption (6.0 out of 7.0), however, for Ukraine the situation has been getting better since 2014, while in Moldova the report published in 2016 indicates a worsening environment than observed during the previous years.¹⁹ Ukraine and Moldova also have low scores (27 and 33 points respectively) according to the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2015,²⁰ and high-level corruption is still widely practiced involving politicians and big businesses. It results in growing skepticism concerning any successful measures taken in order to combat corruption as well as in undermining trust in public institutions.

18 James T. Hitch III and Yuliya Kuchma, “Ukraine's New Anti-Corruption Law: Will it Really Stop Corruption in Ukraine?” *The International Lawyer*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (2011): 840.

19 “Nations in Transit 2016.”

20 “Corruption Perception Index 2015.”

Corruption in Ukraine

Corruption is not strictly a transition phenomenon: it occurs in different countries, and in some cases, it correlates with the economic development of the state. However, it is a central feature in transition because of its huge impact on the legitimacy and credibility of governments during the decisive times of building new political and economic institutions.²¹ The Ukrainian transition period has been accompanied by grand corruption from the very beginning. The roots of Ukrainian pervasive corruption can be tracked from the mid-1990s, when several big oligarchs gained control over the most profitable sectors of the Ukrainian economy, such as energy, metallurgy, mining, and the chemical industry. In order to protect their businesses, oligarchs in Ukraine started to get involved into politics, sponsor Ukrainian political parties, and support those candidates who would be reliable business partners. In such a way, being a high-ranking politician in Ukraine guaranteed 100 percent profitability for a particular business.²² One specific example of this scheme is the tremendous public-asset theft conducted by the former President Victor Yanukovich and a group of politicians affiliated with him who were collectively known as the Yanukovich “family”. In 2014, then-acting Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk accused the Yanukovich regime of having stolen 37 billion USD from the state during its four years in power.²³

Besides the massive negative economic effects of constant larcenies, corruption certainly affects the quality of political institutions in Ukraine and undermines people’s trust in the government. Democratic development requires transparent and legitimate institutions but such are still not provided in the case of Ukraine. According to Lipset, “legitimacy involves the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate or proper ones for the society. The extent to which contemporary democratic political systems are legitimate depends in large measure upon the ways in which the key issues which have historically divided the society have been resolved.”²⁴ Ukrainians (and Moldovans, as well) still consider political institutions to be highly corrupted. Political parties, in order to win elections, seek the assistance of big businesses, and

21 Robert Nowak, “Corruption and transition economies,” *Science* 48 (1996).

22 Anders Aslund, “Oligarchs, Corruption, and European Integration,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 25, #3 (2014): 64-65.

23 “Яценюк: предыдущие власти вывели в офшоры 70 миллиардов долларов,” (Yatsenyuk: the previous government has withdrawn 70 billion USD to offshores), *Українська правда*, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/02/27/7016506>.

24 Seymour Martin Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” *The American Political Science Review* 53, no. 1 (1959).

after being elected they ought to turn back the profit through public-procurement contracts, extortion, and corporate raiding.²⁵ The campaign spending of most political parties remain a secret to the public as the funds spent are gained unofficially or illegally.²⁶ For example, a recent corruption scandal in Ukraine was connected to the shadow accounting of the Party of Regions. According to the leaked documents,²⁷ the total spending of the party “on politics”²⁸ for the last six month of 2012 was 66 million USD. Unfortunately, in a country where political office may be easily bought, corruption depends only marginally on who is in power. It would be extremely difficult to come to power for those who are not ready to be involved in the old corrupt schemes.

The Euromaidan protest in 2013-2014 has put corruption under a new light in Ukraine helping to unveil old corrupted networks and schemes. One of the most urgent demands of the protesters was to combat corruption in the country. In fact, the popular series of leaflets on Maidan stated: “It’s not about Europe, it is about fighting corruption. Go out to the Maidan.”²⁹ The dramatic choice between the EU and the Russia-initiated Customs Union indeed was understood by Ukrainians as the choice between democracy and the corruption-led regime in Russia. The Euro-maidan aspirations were taken into account during the political campaign of the later elected President Petro Poroshenko, who announced that the promotion of intolerance to corruption should become a national idea for the period of his presidency.³⁰

Within the framework of the anti-corruption reforms, some institutional changes occurred, namely the establishment of the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption (NAPC). The new body was established by the law “On the Prevention of Corruption” adopted on October 14, 2014. On the one hand, the new law was adopted in accordance with international standards, which means that it protects the NAPC’s independence, the scope of its authority and its mechanisms of operation. However, as non-governmental organizations report, the establishment of the NAPC

25 Aslund, “Oligarchs, Corruption,”

26 *Ibid.*

27 “Черная бухгалтерия Партии регионов: фамилии, даты, суммы,” (Black accounting of the Party of Regions: names, dates, amounts), Українська правда, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://www.prawda.com.ua/cdn/graphics/2016/05/black-pr>.

28 Meaning spendings on the promotion of the Party of Regions’ interests including payments to the police, media etc., as well as the money used by party members for their personal needs.

29 “Strike Poster,” accessed October 30, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/strikeposter>.

30 “Програма Партії «Блок Петра Порошенка «Жити по-новому», м. Київ – 2014,” (Party Program “Petro Poroshenko Bloc “Living in a new way”, Kyiv 2014), accessed October 30, 2016, http://solydarnist.org/?page_id=874.

was rather slow and it raised well-grounded doubts concerning its transparency and impartiality.³¹

Currently, among the main and the most general challenges in combating corruption in Ukraine but also in Moldova, where anti-corruption initiatives supported by the EU and ones initiated locally are both widely present, are the absence of indicators defining anti-corruption goals, the lack of proper public discussions during the process of negotiating anti-corruption legislation, or the fact that anti-corruption activities overwhelmingly focus on the capital while addressing the regional dimension of the problem is underdeveloped. Furthermore, while the recent intensification of the fight against corruption popularizes the activities of the so-called anti-corruption industry, that is NGOs and civic initiatives working on the issue, it also contributes to its inefficient development and to the fact that its goals sometimes shift from combating corruption to sustaining its own existence.

The operation of new official anti-corruption agencies also leaves a lot to be desired. Recent events of mutual raids of premises conducted by the Prosecutor General and the National Anti-Corruption Bureau in Ukraine indicate that state bodies, which are supposed to combat corruption, compete and apply selectivity rather than being cooperative.³² A similar situation can be observed in Moldova. According to Uțica, Moldovan CSOs and society at large remain highly disappointed with the selective approach of anti-corruption agencies, which speaks of the high level of political influence over their operation.³³

Furthermore, Shevliakov also outlines the strong paternalist ties between the citizens and the political class that, together with the low level of interpersonal trust within the Ukrainian society, weakens the socio-political foundations of integrity.³⁴ It places corruption among the problems that have the greatest potential to mobilize and unite the society during emergencies, while on a daily basis corruption poses one of the greatest threats.

Despite the massive information campaign concerning combating corruption, research conducted by the Kiev International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) in 2015 shows that people's ideas on corruption have not changed fundamentally since 2007. Some changes, presumably caused by several waves of financial crises and reforms

31 "National Integrity System Assessment 2015," Transparency International Ukraine, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://ti-ukraine.org/en/what-we-do/research/5449.html>.

32 "ГПУ пришла в НАБУ с обыском," (GPU came to NABU with a search warrant), Українська правда, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2016/08/5/7116929>.

33 Anita Sobják, ed., *Anti-Corruption In Moldova and Ukraine a V4 Handbook of Best Practices*, (Warsaw: The Polish Institute of International Affairs, 2015), accessed October 30, 2016, <https://publications.ceu.edu/sites/default/files/publications/anti-corruptioninmoldovaandukraine.pdf>.

34 *Ibid.*

targeting corruption, however, also occurred. According to KIIS, the general level of corruption in Ukraine remains very high.³⁵ Nearly 65 percent of citizens indicate that they encountered corruption in 2015, and 70.7 percent was involved in corruption personally, which however is 4 percent less than 4 years before.³⁶ Considering specific experience, some decrease can be observed in the studied manifestations of corruption, including extortion (22.3 percent compared to 25.8 percent in 2011), voluntary bribes (seven percent compared to ten percent in 2011), and using personal connections (12.8 percent compared to 15.3 percent in 2011). Interestingly, despite the decrease in actual corruption experience, the study shows that people perceive corruption in the state sector to be growing. This may be due to the active info-coverage of corruption disclosures in media.

As an overall trend, it can be seen that the actual behavior of citizens is rather passive: the share of those who submit complaints against corrupt officials, according to the results of KIIS, does not exceed two percent of the victims; and only one third of the population declares their readiness to confront corruption.³⁷ However, the proportion of people placing major responsibility for addressing corruption on ordinary citizens is steadily growing (from 15.8 percent in 2007 to 18 percent in 2011 and up to 24 percent in 2015), and, in addition, those who declare their willingness to stand for their rights in various ways when facing extortion are becoming more active.

According to data by PACT Inc., only one percent of the polled reported witnessing corruption to public prosecutor's office or police. 16 percent are interested in reporting, while six percent are just curious about how to do so. The research also showed a lowering percentage of people potentially willing to report corruption: 28 percent in April 2015 versus 22 percent in November 2015.³⁸

To sum up, the surveys have detected some changes in citizens' minds, which, however, have not yet developed in their behavior. Ukrainians are reluctant to act as whistleblowers on corruption. The reasons may be various, including unwillingness to solve the problems independently, the lack of knowledge regarding citizens' rights, or disbelief in punishment after the revelation of corrupt acts.

35 The research accounts for different sides of corrupt activities, such as personal participation or reports by other people and media or witnessing due to one's professional activity as an investigation officer, a journalist etc.

36 "Corruption in Ukraine: Comparative Analysis of National Surveys: 2007, 2009, and 2015," The Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS), accessed October 30, 2016, http://kiis.com.ua/materials/pr/20161602_corruption/Corruption%20in%20Ukraine%202015%20ENG.pdf.

37 *Ibid.*

38 "Citizen's Awareness and Engagement of Civil Society, Results of research conducted during November 2015 – January 2016," PACT Inc., accessed October 30, 2016, http://uniter.org.ua/upload/files/PDF_files/Publications/Presentation%20for%20web-site_March%2030_final.pdf.

The limits of transferability and the role of local initiatives

Anti-corruption initiatives are the outcome of collective efforts conducted by and attributed to a certain society (or a group within a society). That is why legal transplants created by the international community and transferred to a corrupt state are not always as efficient as in the originating societies. Whether foreign examples can be effective in the given country is increasingly dependent on the regional context as corruption becomes more authentic in every country.

While the Visegrad countries and their civil societies have much experience to offer, the “lessons learned approach” should be taken with caution in the context of Ukraine (and Moldova) where current challenges arise from these countries’ own historical background, economic situation, structure of employment, etc. Oleksandr Sushko argues that Ukraine is facing similar challenges as the Visegrad countries have faced before. However, a main point of consideration when dealing with the problem of corruption is that it is something that is part of the national culture. For this reason, legislation alone is not enough; the culture has to be changed too.³⁹ Channels of communication, re-evaluation of certain historic events, the level of wealth and the perception of success (after the fall of a “communist” dream) – these are only few elements to be taken into consideration while trying to understand and change attitudes towards the phenomenon of corruption in post-communist countries like Ukraine and Moldova. Solutions that would address the exact circumstances of Ukraine and Moldova can hardly be transferred from other countries, but their experience can still serve as a source of inspiration. Indeed, similar initiatives are to be observed across countries. The concept of the Ukrainian Reanimation Package of Reform initiative,⁴⁰ involving a coalition of NGOs working on the development and implementation of key reforms, for example, has much in common with the Czech initiative “Reconstruction of State”.⁴¹ Nevertheless, responding to the local challenges, domestic initiatives, and solutions need to be cultivated.

An active civil society, including social movements is a relevant actor contributing to this process and restricting corruption through articulating clear calls for actions. After the Euromaidan events, we can observe in Ukraine an array of civil initiatives aimed at controlling the ruling elites and fighting corruption. The issue of corruption is hotly debated in the Ukrainian media, in academic circles, and in the

39 “Embedding Democratic Values: Tolerance and Transparency,” Center for European Neighborhood Studies, accessed October 30, 2016, <https://cens.ceu.edu/article/2016-06-04/embedding-democratic-values-tolerance-and-transparency>.

40 “Reanimation Package of Reforms,” accessed October 30, 2016, <http://rpr.org.ua/en>.

41 “Reconstruction of State,” accessed October 30, 2016, <http://www.rekonstrukcestatu.cz/en>.

public campaigns of political parties. The role of CSOs participating in the overall process of combating corruption in transition countries like Ukraine and Moldova is difficult to underestimate – they make corruption visible, which raises awareness and potentially resistance in the society toward corruption. These initiatives may become good examples for other countries, including even the more transparent V4 countries.

The most significant accomplishment of the Ukrainian civil society in fighting corruption is launching a full-cycle electronic system of public procurement, ProZorro,⁴² in 2015. ProZorro was developed on the basis of an open-source software in partnership with the government, businesses, and civil society. Prior to its transmission to the state (that is, before 2016), the system technically belonged to Transparency International Ukraine.⁴³ The implementation of this electronic system has led to positive changes: Ukrainian citizens have received a monitoring tool that can be used to control the public procurement system and can influence its improvement, while the state procurers have demonstrated readiness for transparent action in the online regime. In 2015, more than 2,300 procurers used ProZorro to announce about 37,000 tenders with the target amount of 6.69 billion UAH, which amounted to 12.5 percent of the country's 534.75 billion UAH economy. ProZorro received an international recognition by winning the international Procurement Leader Award for creating and implementing an electronic system with a unique architecture.

Transparency International Ukraine initiated the program “They Wouldn't Keep Silent” encouraging Ukrainians to expose corrupt practices and analyzing reports of people who personally experienced this crime. People predominantly reported corruption cases in education institutions and while processing land contracts. People also expressed concerns about corruption occurring in hospitals, military registration and enlistment offices, and while processing foreign passports.⁴⁴ Because of this campaign, citizens received an opportunity to report corrupt activities online, where they can also get free legal consultations.⁴⁵

While Ukrainians are reluctant to act as whistleblowers, as mentioned previously, the demand for independent investigations, conducted by journalists, has increased significantly in the Ukrainian society after the Euromaidan protests. According to research conducted by PACT Inc. in November 2015 – January 2016, the majority of

42 “ProZorro,” accessed October 30, 2016, <https://prozorro.gov.ua>.

43 From 2016, the tool is operated by the state. It is accessible at: https://tender.me.gov.ua/EDZFrontOffice/menu/uk/announcement_detail;jsessionid=a09b774dec49b39b1f0781def454?id=EDZrDWnc9a.

44 “Ukrainians are Waiting for Corrupt High-ranking Officials to be Punished, 11.04.2016,” Transparency International Ukraine, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://ti-ukraine.org/en/news/oficial/5968.html>.

45 The site dedicated to this initiative is accessible at: anticorruption.in.ua.

Ukrainian citizens consider the media to be among the assistants of those fighting against corruption, and 12 percent are ready to share their experience with journalists.⁴⁶

One particular example of investigations conducted by journalists is “Yanukovychleaks”.⁴⁷ Immediately after the flight of the former President Viktor Yanukovich from Ukraine, a group of journalists and activists arrived at his residence in Mezhyhirya, where they found nearly 200 folders of documents thrown into a lake to be destroyed while people were escaping the compound. The journalists have rescued, systematized and investigated the enormous wealth of information about the former owners of the residence, which is now state-owned.⁴⁸ The recovered documents that revealed the illegal and corrupted history of the billion-dollar Mezhyhirya estate have been consequently published.

Slidstvo.info⁴⁹ is another famous investigative journalism project, aimed specifically at revealing grand corruption schemes in Ukraine. Two journalists, Anna Babynets and Dmytro Gnap, who managed to develop a project from an online resource into a weekly program on Hromadske.TV founded it in 2013. In April 2016, Slidstvo.info published a groundbreaking story concluding that President Petro Poroshenko created a company in an offshore zone in the British Virgin Islands, where he withdrew the assets of his own company, Roshen, in order to avoid paying sales taxes in Ukraine. The report was part of the so-called Panama Papers, an OCCRP-led international effort of exposing corruption that had ties to 12 other heads of state. The published materials led to hot debates on sophisticated financial structures created to avoid paying taxes to the Ukrainian state and affected Poroshenko’s popularity.

There are many more anti-corruption investigation projects in Ukraine. For example, the program Nashi Groshi (Our Money)⁵⁰ reveals the illegal use of public funds on the popular TV channel of Western Ukraine Zik. The initiative was created in 2010 when the legislation on tenders in Ukraine changed under the pressure of journalists and civil activists. Radio Freedom’s investigative unit, in partnership with the Ukrainian channel Ua Peshyi, launched Skhemy (The Schemes) – a weekly television program about investigations into grand political corruption. One of the biggest Ukrainian channels, “1+1”, broadcasts the program Groshi (Money) in which journalists devote their attention to the pervasive corruption in the country.

46 “Citizen’s Awareness and Engagement of Civil Society, Results of research conducted during November 2015 – January 2016.”

47 “Yanukovychleaks,” accessed October 30, 2016, <http://yanukovychleaks.org/en>.

48 “Про повернення урядової резиденції “Межигір’я” у державну власність,” (On the return of the government residence “Mezhyhirya” to the state ownership), Офіційний сайт Верховної Ради України, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/762-vii>.

49 “Slidstvo.info,” accessed October 30, 2016, <http://slidstvo.info>.

50 “Nashi Groshi,” accessed October 30, 2016, <http://nashigroshi.org>.

The list of investigative projects in Ukraine is impressively long as almost every big Ukrainian channel considers such projects a necessity to achieve high ratings. It has become much easier and more secure to conduct investigations into grand corruption in comparison to 2013 when Yanukovich was still in power, but journalists still report about legal obstacles that challenge their work.⁵¹ The aforementioned initiatives provide authorities with information about numerous corruption schemes, but indeed the official bodies tend not to prosecute those responsible for the implementation of these. Radical anti-corruption reform should coexist with a fair and independent judicial system.

Conclusions

The “frontiers of corruption” do not lie at the western borders of Ukraine and Moldova. The V4 countries are still ranked as more corrupted states than their western neighbors within the EU. However, the general level of corruption in Ukraine and Moldova remains very high even when compared to Slovakia and Hungary. The V4 countries succeeded in identifying corruption as a top problem in the late 1990s, while in Ukraine and Moldova corruption has its “finest hour” nowadays being highly integrated into the political system. Consequently, the experience of the V4 countries may help Ukraine and Moldova in their fight against corruption.

Corruption is a difficult mix of consequences of a certain mentality, political culture, geopolitics, and economic development. It shall not be addressed by simply transferring the experience of the V4 to their non-EU partners, and it should be considered as a more complex phenomenon. As corruption becomes more authentic in every country, the role of local NGOs and civil initiatives in exploring customized tools to combat corruption is growing. Although anti-corruption activities still focus overwhelmingly on the capital and addressing the regional dimensions of the problem is still underdeveloped, Ukraine and Moldova are now countries setting the agenda when it comes to combating corruption. Their anti-corruption initiatives are the newest and the most innovative, as showcased, among others due to the rise of investigative journalism networks in Ukraine successfully monitoring almost every aspect of public life and the successful introduction of the electronic system of public procurement ProZorro winning the World Procurement Award.⁵²

51 “Після перемоги Майдану в Україні з’явився запит на журналістські розслідування, 24.04.2015,” (The victory of the Maidan in Ukraine has led to the emergence of demand for investigative journalism, 24.04.2015), Інформаційне агентство УНІАН, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://www.unian.ua/society/1071301-pislya-peremogi-maydanu-v-ukrajini-zyavivsysya-zapit-na-jurnalistiski-rozsliduvannya-eksperti.html>.

52 “Prozorro – the best system in the world in the sphere of Public Procurement,” Transparency International Ukraine, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://ti-ukraine.org/en/news/monitoring-deklaracy/me-dia/6039.html>.

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