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HIDDEN PARALLELS TRANSFORMATION RESEARCH AND EUROPEAN STUDIES IN DIALOGUE¹

For a long period of time European studies and the transformation research were dealing with Eastern Europe from different points of view. This is anachronistic. The problems of political and socio-economic development in the East and in the West are tightly intertwined. Already during the systemic transformation the politics, economy and societies in East-Central and Eastern Europe were strongly influenced by the EU. The allegedly specific East-European phenomena have become all-European ones. This fact can be observed with respect to the quality of democracy, the increasingly transnational character of European societies, as well as the return to the inter-governmental decision-making process at the EU-level.

Scientists often distinguish three groups of countries in the post-socialist area. The hub of the first group is Russia, the country that – as a self-contained entity – has often been a core subject of the traditional so-called ‘East European studies’. In spite of all the difficulties following the demise of the Soviet Union, the political leaders of Russia managed to maintain strong ties with a small circle of states (e.g. with Belarus or Kazakhstan). The second group is comprised of the countries of East Central Europe (that is the Baltic states, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia) which, slowly but surely, have stopped being the subject of interest of East European studies. Their membership in the EU and their political aversion to Russia has led to the situation whereby the most important coordinates of their political development are being determined in Brussels and in cooperation with the other members of the EU.

The third group is formed by a not-insignificant number of post-socialist states whose social and political development has followed other, less clear pathways. The political order of these countries is hybrid. Their socialist heritage,²

¹ The German version of article was published in “Osteuropa” 2013, Februar–März.

² K. Jowitt, *The Leninist Legacy*, [in:] *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction*, ed. K. Jowitt, University of California Press, Berkeley 1992, p. 284–305.

forms of traditional systems of power, specificity of political cultures, as well as social-legal institutions exist simultaneously, side by side. In these countries, such as Georgia, Ukraine or Albania, there is neither any perspective of integration into the [West-European] economic and political structures in the short run, nor any signs of a rapprochement with Russia.

Nevertheless this division into categories can be justified only from the point of view of the transformation research studies. Their most important research branch is focused on the politics in the post-socialist area. European studies, if they are not too much concentrated on European integration problems, have an eye on the whole of Europe and are able to perceive the relationship between the specificity of the transformation process in post-socialist states and the processes taking place in Western Europe.

With respect to European Studies, three ways of analyzing the political development in post-socialist Europe can be distinguished. The first reflects a broader view on the evolution of political systems in Europe, indicating that transformation is not a phenomenon visible only in the former socialist countries. And only should the transitions from dictatorship into democracy in the late 1970s in Southern Europe be mentioned here, but also the political orders in Western Europe have been enormously changed by the European integration process, particularly by the Treaty of Maastricht. An in-depth look proves that the rapprochement of the East Central European countries to the European Union (EU) as well as the later alienation of Russia from the EU, have been strongly interrelated with this transformation process.

Secondly, European integration and economic globalization have led to a trans-nationalizing of post-socialist societies. Whoever ignores this aspect of political analysis misinterprets social reality in Eastern and East Central Europe. The latter is no longer influenced by the classical population movements such as emigration and immigration. This kind of focused migration still exists, which can be illustrated for example by the case of the Russian Germans immigrating to Germany. However, it is shuttle migration which has become most popular in contemporary Europe. As a result, the systems of values tend to converge very quickly throughout the whole of Europe, leading to minimization of the differences between East Central and Western Europe.

Thirdly, the financial and debt crisis that Europe and the world have been experiencing since the collapse of the *Lehman Brothers* bank in 2008 have influenced the political orders in Western and Central Europe in a structurally similar way. After the Central-European countries had passed through the economic phase of the transformation, they initially found themselves on a growth path. The crisis however forced the governments to face the problem of how the public system should be financed and the welfare state stabilized. This challenge has not been met through the apolitical internal-market method, but through ceding the most important political decisions to the European Council. In less than

a month the common economic area was transformed into the inter-governmental crisis management organization. This reconstruction gives new possibilities for cooperation with the not-yet-integrated transforming countries, particularly with Russia. In a sense, the EU had to follow Putin's credo that market forces have to be tamed by the state in order to prevent the economic and social disintegration of the European society and of the societies in Europe.

1. The national state: isolated autocracy or open-to-integration democracy

Usually, the collapse of communism is dated on November 9, 1989 or on December 31, 1991, and the Treaty of Maastricht on the day of its signing on February 7, 1992, or at the moment of its entry into force on November 1, 1993. Both events however had their long-standing history. As we know today, even their most important participants did not follow any settled plan. Mikhail Gorbachev did not strive at all to cause socialism or Soviet Union to fail, and François Mitterrand's and Helmut Kohl's European politics were focused on overcoming the East-West conflict and on finding a new role in Europe for the suddenly re-united Germany. Jacques Delors was following the pragmatic Monnet-method based on situation-dependent searching movements.³ It is often forgotten that the Treaty of Maastricht was not a historical necessity. In a referendum in France it was accepted by only a narrow majority of 51%.⁴

Therefore, it would not be inappropriate to state that the term "transformation", which is used to describe the situation in Eastern Europe in 1990s, should be expanded to the whole-European area. It is not only Eastern Europe that has been experiencing profound upheaval for over 20 years. The West-European countries also went through a phase which ended with them being in vastly different political circumstances. East of Oder a "threefold transition" took place, during which the systemic change was determined by interactions between social, economic and political factors.⁵ West of Oder the nation-states' borders have mostly disappeared. Because of these facts the social and economic-political control capability

³ M. Gorbatschow, *Erinnerungen*, Siedler, Berlin 1995; F. Mitterrand, *Über Deutschland*, Insel Verlag, Frankfurt am Main–Leipzig 1996; J. Delors, *Erinnerungen eines Europäers*, Parthas Verlag, Berlin 2004; H. Kohl, *Erinnerungen 1990–1994*, Droemer Knauer Verlag, München 2007.

⁴ The number of supporters in the (positive) voting on the implementation of the Treaty of Maastricht and the (negative) Lisbon referendum was about the same.

⁵ C. Offe, *Das Dilemma der Gleichzeitigkeit. Demokratisierung und Marktwirtschaft in Osteuropa*, "Merkur" 1991, Nr. 4, p. 279–292; K. von Beyme, *Systemwechsel in Osteuropa*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1994.

of the governments of these states has been weakened, and an alternative concept of democracy and legitimacy on the EU-level was promoted, although it is far from being consolidated yet.⁶

Already in 1987 Gorbachev, while using the ‘common European home’ metaphor, tried to make the Europeans aware that the political and economic future of the continent lay in its integration process.⁷ What at that time was perceived as an idealistic rhetoric, now should be called ‘vision’. All of the East Central European countries, including the three Baltic states, which were still Soviet republics at that time, de facto abandoned the idea of sovereign national states and decided to carry out an economic and social transformation supervised by external technocratic authority. The role of the European Commission, that in the mid-1990s established the Copenhagen Criteria for the candidate countries, could hardly be described any other way.⁸ Therefore the *candidates* – by no means only the *countries* – which were experiencing the critical phase of state-building at that time, wanted to avoid resolving their conflicts inwardly and to strengthen their new political orders. For example, there were only a very small number of countries where the political parties emphasized the interests of the transfer recipients – pensioners, unemployed, etc. – so strongly that they neglected the idea of economic consolidation. This situation led to impoverishment of the political discourse and to the dissemination of populism in many East European countries.⁹

But the West European integration also had an influence on Eastern Europe. Understandably, in the majority of East Central European countries there existed, from a distance, hostile attitudes towards Russia as a legal successor of the Soviet Union. After all, the fact that in 1944–1948 the Soviets took power over the states of East Central Europe was only in a very few cases welcomed by the people of that area. Gorbachev and Yeltsin formally resigned from the claim to carry out this power. Nevertheless Russia, as being a former leading part of the Soviet Union, still aims to carry out hegemonial politics. This is why there still prevails a very strong belief in Russia’s neighboring states that these countries should protect themselves against Russian power politics. In contrast, the EU and the West European states have served as a counter-model to this situation of political clientelism.

⁶ F.W. Scharpf, *Governing in Europe: Effective and Democratic?*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999; P.G. Kielmansegg, *Integration und Demokratie (mit Nachwort zur 2. Auflage)*, [in:] *Europäische Integration*, red. M. Jachtenfuchs, B. Kohler-Koch, Springer, Opladen 2003, p. 49–83.

⁷ ⁶ M. Gorbatschow, *Perestroika. Die zweite russische Revolution. Eine neue Politik für Europa und die Welt*, Droemer Knaur München 1987.

⁸ The official content of the Copenhagen Criteria is available on: *Beitrittskriterien (Kopenhagener Kriterien)*, Europa, <http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/accession_criteria_copenhagen_de.htm>.

⁹ M.A. Vachudova, *Europe Undivided. Democracy, Leverage, and Integration Since 1989*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005; T. Beichelt, *Nach der Osterweiterung: Ist der Zusammenhalt der Europäischen Union gefährdet?*, [in:] *Das Erbe des Beitritts. Europäisierung in Mittel- und Osteuropa* red. A. Kutter, V. Trappmann, Nomos Verlag, Baden-Baden 2006, p. 75–98; C. Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007.

The EU itself followed an oft-criticized but nonetheless clear policy towards the post-socialist area. The countries which decided to strive for integration with the EU were given the opportunity to do that, even if their attempt – as in the case of the Baltic states – was met with Russian resistance at the beginning. The countries, however, where integration with the EU was domestically disputed, obtained at most the possibility of foreign partnership. The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was introduced in 2002 by the European Commission President Romano Prodi with a famous set phrase ‘everything but institutions’.¹⁰ Therefore, implicitly the EU and its members granted Russia the right to pursue her own interests in the ‘near abroad’ area. In other words, the EU followed an integration policy towards one half of post-socialist Europe, and a traditional policy of foreign affairs towards the other half.

Whether desired or not, the ambitions to build the common European home were abandoned for a long time because of this step. The Russian political elites in the last two decades did not always choose a course that was leading away from the West and the EU.¹¹ Even Vladimir Putin, whose current actions are characterized by an anti-Western narrative, had tried, using a variety of methods, to develop a Western or European perspective for Russia, especially after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.¹² On the other hand, thanks to its wealth of natural resources Russia does not have to consider integration with Western Europe as its only political option. The other choice may not give much chance for deep economic and social modernization, but it offers a sufficient potential to stabilize the Russian state and to satisfy the economic and political interests of the elites.

The EU’s ‘demarcation efforts’ appear to have had fatal consequences for countries such as Ukraine or Georgia. They can choose only between two less-than-attractive geopolitical options: dependence on Russia’s natural resources and oligarchic economical structures on the one hand, and the European Neighborhood Policy on the other. In the second option, the conditions are being defined by the EU, which does not give the partner countries any crucial incentive to fulfill these conditions, because it explicitly excludes the possibility of their accession to the EU any time in the near future.¹³ The often unclear social and political conflicts in many EU-neighboring countries are intertwined with the lack of a foreign

¹⁰ Europäische Kommission: *Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, Brussels: COM(2003) 104 final.

¹¹ S. Fischer, *Rußlands Westpolitik in der Krise 1992–2000. Eine konstruktivistische Untersuchung*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2003.

¹² L. Shevtsova, *Putin’s Russia*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C. 2003.

¹³ J. Kelley, *New Wine in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms through the New European Neighbourhood Policy*, “Journal of Common Market Studies” 2006, no. 1, p. 29–55. See also: *Inklusion. Exklusion. Illusion. Konturen Europas: Die EU und ihre Nachbarn*, “Osteuropa” 2007, Februar–März, 2–3, especially C. O’Donnell, R. Whitman, *Das Phantom-Zuckerbrot. Der Konstruktionsfehler der ENP*, *ibidem*, p. 95–104.

policy perspective. Nevertheless, in the East Central and at least in parts of Southern Europe the EU has significantly consolidated and reinforced the two most crucial trends from 1989–2004: the epochal change of economic and political systems on the one hand, and European integration on the other. In comparison to the largely unsuccessful – economically and politically – transition in Eastern Europe proper (e.g. Belarus, Moldova or Ukraine) the integration process in East Central Europe appears to be a success story. It was, *inter alia*, the chance for integration with the EU, given to the East Central European countries more than a dozen years ago, that helped them pass through the economical “Valley of Tears” and to recover.¹⁴ A clear distance between the EU-candidates and other post-socialist countries was also visible in the political sphere, i.e. in the way civil rights were protected, long before the EU enlargement.¹⁵ In this respect it can be stated that the Copenhagen Criteria had a positive impact on the consolidation of democracy.

Nevertheless it turned out that the political situation in the pre-accession period changed after these countries joined the EU. Particularly in Poland, Hungary and Romania, a temporary visible retreat from democracy could be observed. In Poland this trend seems to have been overcome after Jarosław Kaczyński’s government fell from power in 2007. In Hungary, on the contrary, the process of democratic impairment is still proceeding in connection with the activity of the second government of Viktor Orbán that was formed in May 2010.¹⁶ Since coming to power, the national-conservative government, which now has a two-thirds majority in Parliament, reformed public service broadcasting. The unpopular (with the government) journalists and editors were dismissed. The government established a Media Supervision Agency, which obtained enough competences to reduce the pluralism of opinions.¹⁷ Besides that, Orbán’s government initiated a policy which is considered to be unusual in the democratic world – let alone the member states of the EU – that is, the systematic policy of giving Hungarian passports to the Hungarian minorities living in neighboring countries. Moreover, a constitutional reform and a new election law were enacted, aimed at ensuring the leading position of the national-conservative parties in the Hungarian political scene.

¹⁴ *Transition Report 1999. Ten Years of Transition. Economic transition in Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic states and the CIS*, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, London 1999.

¹⁵ A. Karatnycky, A. Motyl, A. Schnitzer, *Freedom in the World: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 2000–2001*, Transaction Publications, New Brunswick 2002.

¹⁶ *Quo vadis, Hungaria? Kritik der ungarischen Vernunft*, „Osteuropa” 2011, Dezember. About the regression in Poland under Kaczyński government: *Quo vadis Polonia? Kritik der polnischen Vernunft*, „Osteuropa” 2006, November–Dezember.

¹⁷ M. Vásárhelyi, *Angriff auf die Pressefreiheit. Die Medienpolitik der Fidesz-Regierung*, „Osteuropa” 2011, Dezember, p. 157–166.

In Romania, on the contrary, a political dispute escalated between Traian Băsescu, who had been elected president in 2004, and the government of Victor Ponta, who had been nominated by Băsescu in April 2012 and a bit later appointed prime minister. Soon afterwards Ponta's government initiated the procedure for Băsescu's impeachment. The democratically questionable part of the dispute began when the Romanian Constitutional Court denied the legality of the impeachment procedure and the government responded by repealing, by decree, the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Court, which was clearly guaranteed by the constitution. Ponta's actions can be therefore interpreted as a large-scale attempt to violate the independence of the judicial branch.¹⁸ Their ambiguous character is even more striking when we realize that Ponta's government, which was officially established on December 9, 2012, is based on a parliamentary majority composed of, *inter alia*, the former collaborators of the secret police *Securitate* and of the members of the ruling Socialist Party, who are seriously suspected of corruption.¹⁹

Therefore it could appear to be an obvious conclusion that the democratic deficiency is caused by the fact that the process of transformation in the post-socialist countries has not been completed yet. However, it is not that simple. At least since Robert Dahl's statements we know that there is a principal difference between the ideal image of democracy and its forms of realization.²⁰ Hence, it is not very instructive to compare the defects of young democracies with a theoretical model. It is much more revealing to compare them with the established democracies of the 'old' EU.

This comparison yields interesting results. Many of the EU political actors have, for over twenty years (recall that the Copenhagen Criteria were drawn up in 1992), shared a belief that the new member states have to adjust their democratic standards to those characteristic for West and South Europe. Yet this point of view does not reflect the reality. It should be rather stated that the quality of democracy is in some dimensions considerably worse in the so-called 'established democracies' than in the EU new member countries.²¹ This situation is taking place in the field of (political) freedom, (political) equality and the control of government – that is, with regard to all relevant dimensions of democracy. For instance, according to different indicators the freedom of media in Italy

¹⁸ D. Ursprung, *Machtkampf in Rumänien. Der Regierung, der Präsident und die Justiz, "Osteuropa"* 2012, September, p. 3–14; A.U. Gabanyi, *Politisches Lehrstück. Die Staatskrise in Rumänien, "Osteuropa"* 2012, September, p. 15–36.

¹⁹ "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung", 10.12.2013. See again D. Ursprung, *Machtkampf...*, and A.U. Gabanyi, *Politisches Lehrstück...*; B. Magyar, *Autokratie in Aktion. Ungarn unter Orbán, "Osteuropa"* 2011, Dezember, p. 89–104.

²⁰ R. Dahl, A., *Polyarchy. Participation and Opposition*, Yale University Press, New Haven–London 1971.

²¹ T. Beichelt, *Prinzip "Worst Practice"? Demokratiedefiziente Regimeelemente und die Wechselwirkungen mit der EU-Ebene*, "FIT Discussion Paper" 2012, 1), <www.europa-uni.de/de/forschung/institut/institut_fit/publikationen/discussion_papers/2012/FIT-Paper_Beichelt.pdf> [.....].

and France is significantly lower than in the majority of transforming countries (political freedom). The same should be said about the political equality, among others of the specificity of election systems in France and Ireland, which strongly distort the will of voters. Moreover, the French or British systems of government would never be able to meet the Copenhagen Criteria because of their low degree of control over violence.

Therefore the diachronic comparison of the transforming 'new' countries and the 'old' EU countries indicates that the former have not only caught up with, but even surpassed the latter according to some criteria of democratic quality.²² Upon closer examination we must come to the conclusion that, especially in the southern countries of the EU (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Greece), there exist considerably more deficits in particular aspects of freedom, equality or control than in East Central Europe. In this respect the thesis formulated by Andrew Janos few years ago, according to which East Central Europe is generally a 'backward' area, turns out to be obviously out-of-date.²³ This thesis, from a political point of view, can be considered correct only for the non-members of the EU, as well as – which is confirmed by all the indicators – for Romania and Bulgaria. On the other hand, such countries as Estonia should be considered – despite unfavorable initial conditions – to be a strikingly West European area by most indicators.²⁴

The countries suspended between the EU and Russia are today in a totally different situation than at the beginning of their transformation. Future EU enlargements are becoming more and more improbable, with the exception of a very limited circle of pre-ordained candidates. Although the institutional proceedings remain almost the same, as for example laid out in Article 48 of the Treaty on the European Union (TUE), the political context has clearly changed significantly. It is mostly the successful new members, such as Poland, that advocate for EU enlargement for other countries, such as Ukraine. Their positive experience plays a significant role there.²⁵ However, further EU enlargement is negatively perceived by almost all other states, as well as by the European Commission, because the conditionality principle, which was perceived as the most impor-

²² *Ibidem*; I am referring there mainly to the following indicators: Freedomhouse <www.freedomhouse.org/regions>, Bertelsmann Transformation Index, <www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/>, as well as to the „Democracy Barometer“, <www.democracybarometer.org/links_de.htm>.

²³ A.C., Janos, *East Central Europe in the Modern World. The Politics of the Borderland from Pre- to Postcommunism*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2000.

²⁴ T. Beichelt, *Prinzip "Worst Practice"?*..., p. 34.

²⁵ E. D. Stratenschulte, W. Priesmeyer-Tkocz, *Weniger ist mehr. Die Östliche Partnerschaft der EU, "Osteuropa"* 2011, November, p. 7–26; S., Gerhardt, *Polska polityka wschodnia. Die Außenpolitik der polnischen Regierung seit 1989 bis 2004 gegenüber den östlichen Nachbarstaaten Polens (Russland, Litauen, Weißrussland, Ukraine)*, Materialien und Studien zur Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung 16, Herder-Institut Verlag, Marburg 2007.

tant principle during the 2004 and 2007 EU-accessions, could no longer be used in a proper way. The debt and financial crisis have weakened the decision-making capability of the EU, while the actions of particular politicians, such as Berlusconi in Italy, Sarkozy in France, Kaczyński in Poland, Orbán in Hungary and Ponta in Romania have seriously discredited the image of the EU countries. Nor is it probable that the supposed democratic deficits in the EU member countries would be officially condemned by the European Council, nor effectively admonished by the European Commission. This fact is not officially discussed, because it undermines the credibility of the EU whenever it tries to point out the democratic deficits in the countries potentially interested in joining the EU. The end result is that, owing to all these circumstances the EU leaders have implicitly given up over the last couple of years on treating further significant EU enlargement as a realistic option.

The impact of the EU on the democratization and consolidation processes in the post-socialist countries has been not only changed, but it has even become a problem in some areas. Democracy indicators show that the low turnout in the elections to the European Parliament and in the important EU referendums tend to reduce the quality of democracy. It is also easy to prove that the bureaucratization of politics, stimulated by Brussels, gives the people additional proof that there is no sense in having much respect towards national governments and elites.²⁶ The democratic development in post-socialist Europe can no longer be treated as a subject of transformation research. The erosion of democracy in the established EU-countries is not just a theoretical possibility, but in particular states and in particular areas is already a reality. Contrary to what was hoped in bygone years, the EU can no longer be perceived as a political power that contributes to stimulating the democratization processes. The lessons coming from EU integration are much more ambivalent. Democratization and Europeanizing can be even perceived as two competing political purposes.

2. The economic level: Pan-European trans-nationalizing

Another field where European studies can enrich our knowledge about the post-socialist area is that of society. Also in this case the ultimate aim is to make former judgments formulated on the basis of transformation research studies more relevant. One of them was an opinion about the general backwardness of East and Central East Europe. According to Kenneth Jowitt, this backwardness was derived from the Leninist past. It could initially be interpreted as a thesis that undermines the importance of the pre-socialist era²⁷, but actually Jowitt's explanation

²⁶ T. Beichelt, *Prinzip „Worst Practice“?...*, p. 25–28.

²⁷ See K. Jowitt, *The Leninist...*

takes seriously into account the events preceding the Russian Revolution of 1917, and it refers for instance to the over-centralized bureaucracy and an underdeveloped educational system.²⁸ These theses served in the early 1990s as an explanatory approach aimed at clarifying the reasons for the low level of development and weak organizational capacity of the societies in East Central and East Europe.²⁹ The major thesis was that the Soviet system had created the phenomenon of *homo sovieticus* and built societies which were inclined to apathy and authoritarianism.³⁰

The diagnoses about the true character of the societies in the post-socialist area have become more and more differentiated. Firstly, "Eastern Europe" has been divided into several sub-regions, with the criterion of varying achievements in economic transformation being the main criterion of this division. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) drew up a famous "Transition Report" that documented different paths of development which could be observed at the beginning of the economic reforms.³¹ The Visegrád-countries were the front runners of economic development, the post-Soviet states were described as "laggards", and the West Balkans was a region characterized by civil war.³² At that time no economic transformation could actually be considered.

Because the categories and indicators of EBRD or other institutions aimed at studying the transformation process were not always clear, they failed to notice many significant trends. The authoritarian turn in Slovakia under Vladimír Mečiar was initially ignored, as were the successful transformations in Estonia and Latvia in the 1990s. The processes taking place in Russia under Boris Yeltsin were assessed positively, while opinions about Slovenia were initially strongly influenced by the fact that it was situated in the turbulent post-Yugoslav area. The *mental maps* of the West Europeans were determined by historical thinking. This was particularly noticeable when, on their tenth anniversary the upheavals of 1989 were summed up. It was revealed by Timothy Garton Ash who focused on the thesis of the 'historical regions' in Europe, pointing out that the borderline between the countries where the transformation had succeeded and failed was situated exactly on the historical border between the Habsburg empire on the one hand, and the Ottoman and Russian on the other.³³

²⁸ M.M. Howard, *The Leninist Legacy Revisited*, [in:] *World Order after Leninism. Essays in honor of Ken Jowitt*, eds. V. Tismaneanu, et al., University of Washington Press, Seattle 2006, p. 34–46.

²⁹ See also: J. Szücs, *Die drei historischen Regionen Europas*, Verlag Neue Kritik, Frankfurt am Main 1990; A.C. Janos, *East Central Europe...*

³⁰ J. Lewada, *Die Sowjetmenschen 1989–1991. Soziogramm eines Zerfalls*, Argon, Berlin 1992.

³¹ *Transition Report 1996. Economic transition in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union*, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, London 1996; *Transition Report 1999...*

³² The Baltic states no longer belonged to the category of 'states of post-Soviet features' at that time, and were instead perceived as the countries of Central Europe which succeeded in carrying out a transformation process.

³³ T.G. Ash, *Zehn Jahre danach*, "Transit" 1999/2000, 18, p. 5–16.

NATO and the European Union were the institutions that most tended to ignore this way of reasoning based on the category of cultural spaces. These institutions can be joined only by nation-states. The first official membership applications were submitted in the first half of the 1990s, and both organizations had to take a position. Already in 1997 NATO began negotiations with Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic about the conditions of their access. In the same year the European Commission recommended starting the negotiations about EU accession, in the first instance with the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia. It was not very surprising that Russia was not able to enforce her position and to prevent NATO's Eastern enlargement. Far more surprising was that NATO and the EU initially discarded Slovakia from the group of potential new member states, while the EU invited Estonia and Slovenia, although the situation in their neighboring countries was unstable.³⁴

Thus, on the one hand a clear signal was given, which consisted of a mix of threats and incentives ('conditionality'), which were supposed to give the candidate countries an impulse to keep up their political, economic and social reforms. This method was later to be praised in the political studies as the most significant instrument of democratization.³⁵ On the other hand, the approach of the Commission – which was by the way revised shortly thereafter – meant that the East Central, South East and East European countries were supposed to be treated differently. This incentive was supposed to function as a hard-to-underrate stabilizing factor during the state formation processes that had begun with declarations of sovereignty in 1989, and after 1991 had led to the dissolution of the multinational Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. However, this mechanism was implemented through administrative, not political means.

These processes were followed by important social changes in the new countries east of the Oder. At the beginning of the 1990s it was the idea of nation building that stood in the spotlight and was reinforced by the ethno-territorial wars in the Balkans. But also in East Central Europe ethno-nationalism and nation building were perceived as inseparably linked to each other.³⁶ We know

³⁴ Russia was destabilized by the First Chechen War and was signalling that the Russian minorities in Latvia and Estonia were playing a prominent role in its 'near abroad' doctrine. S. Fischer, *Rußlands Westpolitik in der Krise 1992–2000. Eine konstruktivistische Untersuchung*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2003. Slovenia had unresolved border disputes with Croatia which was still, until 1995, at war with Serbia.

³⁵ H. Grabbe *The EU's Transformative Power: Europeanization Through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2003;– M.A. Vachudova, *Europe Undivided...*

³⁶ E. Gellner, *Nationalismus in Osteuropa*, Passagen-Verlag, Wien 1996; R. Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed. Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997.

today that indeed in some of the East Central European states – particularly in Slovakia, Poland and Hungary – there were periods of time when the parties promoting ethno-national and populist slogans were able to win elections. Undoubtedly this trend should not be underestimated. On the other hand, it should be stated that this was not exclusively an East Central European phenomenon. Similar tendencies could be also observed in such countries as Austria and Denmark, as reflected in the activities of such parties as Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs in Austria and Dansk Folkeparti in Denmark. Therefore, many specialists in the field of European studies tend to rightly interpret East Central European nationalism through the broader prism of studies on national determinants of policy-making processes.³⁷

Meanwhile, we know a lot about the political sociology of the new member states. On some fields the post-socialist states have certain features in common, and which distinguish them from the ‘old’ EU countries. For instance, Michael Hölscher stated that the economic culture in post-socialist Europe is more competitive and success-oriented than can be observed in Western Europe. Simultaneously, a disproportionately high number of people advocate the idea that state interventionism should protect their domestic markets.³⁸

Other surveys on political culture and public opinion suggest that the new EU members have a special position in the EU. But it is sometimes overlooked that there are also many similarities. Thus it has been noted that:

the democracy in [...] all West European regions [is] an almost universally accepted model of order [and] it is also advocated by the vast majority of people in the East Central European countries.³⁹

Taking a look at various tables from the just cited publication of Oscar Gabriel helps us understand that there is no fundamental difference anymore between the quality of democracy in West and East Central Europe. After all, in five out of ten new EU members (Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia) the level of satisfaction with democracy is almost the same as in France, Spain and the United Kingdom.⁴⁰ Also, with regard to such non-political factors and cultural practices as language skills, lifestyle or knowledge

³⁷ H. Case, *Being European: East and West*, [in:] *European Identity*, eds. J.T. Checkel, P.J. Katzenstein, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2009, p. 111–131; D. Dakowska, N. Hubé, *Le public européen ne se divise pas en deux catégories – Ambivalences des attitudes et diversités des points de vue*, [in:] *L'Europe des Européens. Enquête comparative sur les perceptions de l'Europe*, eds. D. Gaxie, et al., Economica, Paris 2011, p. 111–128.

³⁸ M. Hölscher, *Wirtschaftskulturen in der erweiterten EU. Die Einstellungen der Bürgerinnen und Bürger im europäischen Vergleich*, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden 2006, p. 177–181 and 227–238.

³⁹ O. Gabriel, *Politische Einstellungen und politische Kultur*, [in:] *Die EU-Staaten im Vergleich. Strukturen, Prozesse, Politikinhalt*, eds. O. Gabriel, S. Kropp, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden 2008, p. 181–214.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 193.

of pop culture there are no significant differences between West and East Central Europe.⁴¹

This shows, on the one hand, that the Iron Curtain was not able to break the interconnected social processes in Europe, which had lasted for centuries, or make them separate from each other.⁴² On the other hand, it indicates that social interactions have been strongly intensified after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The first years of systemic transformation were distinguished by significant, indeed in some countries huge, labor migration. The migrants focused mainly on Germany as the country with the strongest economy, as well as on England and Ireland as EU Members with only minor restrictions placed on migrant workers. As a matter of fact, however, the professionals and ordinary workers from East, East Central and South Europe are spread throughout all EU-member states.⁴³ The stronger the national economies were, the more attractive the labor markets in East Central Europe turned out to be. Nowadays the long term emigration has been replaced by the transnational circular migration. The better employment opportunities also result from growing sophistication and income inequality in almost all East Central European countries.⁴⁴ As a result, such economically successful big cities as Bratislava, Budapest, Prague or Warsaw have transformed into regions which also attract migrant workers from the post-Soviet area. Therefore the same problems associated with migration, that had been previously known above all in Western Europe, can now be observed in the new EU member states.⁴⁵

The lifestyles of many people have become increasingly similar to each other in all the member states of EU in the last 20 years. Of course, there are still important differences. In the new member states the welfare state institutions are generally weaker and the social security system offers services of poorer quality. Simultaneously, it can be observed that in these countries the same antagonisms are gaining in importance which have been known to the regional researchers for a long time: urban-rural conflict being much more virulent than in Western Europe, as well as the opposition between the centre and periphery, accompanied by cultural differences.⁴⁶

⁴¹ D.D. Laitin, *Culture and National Identity: "The East" and European Integratio*, [in:] *The Enlarged European Union. Diversity and Adaption*, eds. P. Mair, J. Zielonka, Frank Cass Publishers, London 2002, p. 55–80; *Eurobarometer Special Survey 243, Februar 2006*, , <http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_243_en.pdf>; *Eurobarometer Special Survey 251, Mai 2006*, <http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_251_en.pdf>.

⁴² N. Davies, *Europe. A History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1996.

⁴³ Ch. Barnickel, T. Beichelt, *Shifting patterns and reactions – migration policy in the new EU member states*, "East European Politics and Societies" 2013.

⁴⁴ S. Hradil, *Sozialstruktur und gesellschaftlicher Wandel*, [in:] *Die EU-Staaten...*, p. 89–123.

⁴⁵ Ch. Barnickel, T. Beichelt, *Shifting patterns...*

⁴⁶ F. Bafail, *Europe centrale et orientale. Mondialisation, européanisation et changement social*, Presses de Sciences Po, Paris 2006.

3. The governmental level: a return to intergovernmentalism

Germany's European policy followed a vision of an economically and politically united Europe, over decades and across party lines. This situation was obviously mainly connected with the fatal role that Germany played in the first half of the 20th century; Europe and European integration were considered to be a 'sheet anchor'⁴⁷ and a way to overcome German nationalism.⁴⁸ From the pan-European perspective, however, it was only one of the many driving forces stimulating the integration. Today it is also recognized that important impulses for European integration came from East Central and Eastern Europe after the end of the East-West conflict. Mikhail Gorbachev's idea of a 'common European home' has been mentioned already.⁴⁹ But the discourse on Central Europe, which was elaborated by the intellectuals from Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, has also played a very important role,⁵⁰ because it was aimed at making the Western European elites aware that there still existed a common cultural space in the centre of the continent which could not simply be ignored, especially in the situation when further political unification in West and South Europe was taking place.

While drawing conclusions from both previous chapters we should state that the conditions to create a politically united Europe are much better now than they were at the beginning of the systemic transition. Admittedly, the real 'Eastern Europe' should be excluded from this statement: Belarus, Russia and Ukraine are mostly concerned about their own internal problems. These countries represent autocratic political orders, which do not suit the democratic minimal standards of the Copenhagen Criteria. On the other hand, all European states, aside from Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina, today respect much more the political and human rights requirements of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) than they did 20 or 25 years ago. EU-Europe (with exception of above discussed deficiencies) has not only become a community of democratic countries, but also has tended to unite more and more people through social connections.

Therefore it could be deduced that the political organization of the continent could be said, with increasing certainty, to be grounded on its social foundation. This would be a significant progress from the theoretical point of view. The theory

⁴⁷ W. Loth, *Retungsanker Europa? Deutsche Europa-Konzeptionen vom Dritten Reich bis zur Bundesrepublik*, [in:] *Ende des Dritten Reiches – Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges. Eine perspektivische Rückschau*, red. H.-E. Volkmann, Piper, München–Zürich 1995, p. 201–221.

⁴⁸ H.A. Winkler, H. Kaelble, *Nationalismus – Nationalitäten – Supranationalität*, KlettCotta, Stuttgart 1993.

⁴⁹ M. Gorbatschow, *Perestroika...*

⁵⁰ J. Le Rider, *La Mitteleuropa*, PUF, Paris 1994; G. Konrád, *Antipolitik. Mitteleuropäische Mediationen*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1985.

of democracy has underscored in the last decades that the models of democracy which are based on participation of groups and individuals are normatively superior.⁵¹ Simultaneously, the growing social interpenetration within the EU, being interpreted as founded on the values of 'liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and of the rule of law'⁵² in the Preamble of the Treaty of Lisbon, must be followed by the possibility of engaging EU citizens in democratic participatory processes. Unfortunately, the reality is very different from this assumption. For instance, the French government under Nicolas Sarkozy decided to get rid of the Roma groups from Bulgaria and Romania, which was an illegal action from the point of view of EU law.⁵³ But also other groups of people, such as the numerous work migrants from Ukraine and other non-EU-countries are provided, on paper, with more social rights, guaranteed by such international legal documents as ECHR or the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, than they are really granted in reality in many parts of the EU.⁵⁴

It is true that the Treaty of Lisbon has established some institutional innovations which are supposed to increase the quality of democracy in the EU. We should mention here the multiple enhancement of the powers of the European Parliament (EP), the European Citizens' Initiative set out in Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), as well as the strengthening of national parliaments in Article 12 of the TEU. However, a closer look at EU policy since the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon reveals a different phenomenon. In fact, it is the European Council, which comprises the heads of state and heads of government, that has really gained in importance. It is nearly universally acknowledged as 'the most important decision-making body in the EU',⁵⁵ the powers of which have been increased to the prejudice of the Council of the European Union and of the European Parliament, that is of the institutions involved in the ordinary legislative procedure in accordance with Article 294 of the TFEU.

Certainly, the concentration of decision-making powers in the hands of European Council has much to do with the European financial and debt crisis. This situation undoubtedly required quick decisions which were to affect all euro-area countries in different ways. Therefore, the direct representatives of these states,

⁵¹ D. Held, *Models of Democracy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996; M.G., Schmidt, *Demokratietheorie*, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden 2008.

⁵² *Treaty of Lisbon*, "Official Journal of the European Union", 17.12.2007, <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12007L/TXT&from=EN>>

⁵³ *Frankreich: Sarkozy will Roma ohne Papiere abschieben*, "Spiegel Online", 28.07.2010, <<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/frankreich-sarkozy-will-roma-ohne-papiere-abschieben-a-708999.html>>.

⁵⁴ O. Malynov'ska, *An der Kreuzung Migration aus, in und durch die Ukraine*, "Osteuropa" 2010, Februar–April, p. 427–442.

⁵⁵ *Europäischer Rat*, „EU-Info. Deutschland“, <<http://www.eu-info.de/europa/europaische-institutionen/Europaischer-Rat>>

i.e. the national governments and their heads of government, became the focus of events. On many specific occasions they were to establish the framework of proceeding for the Council of the European Union and the EP, under which these institutions were supposed then to work out particular details of the mentioned (and basically decided) issues. These processes can be understood not only from the empirical,⁵⁶ but also from the theoretical point of view,⁵⁷ only when we take into account that European integration is now experiencing one of its biggest crises.

However, at the same time it is almost impossible to ignore the fact that the heads of state and government, including the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, are systematically working on expanding their decision-making powers. This comes at the expense of other forms of participation. This was most clearly visible in a speech that German Chancellor Angela Merkel gave on 2.11.2010 at the Collège d'Europe in Bruges.⁵⁸ She suggested there that the traditional community method should be treated equally with the 'Union method'. Based on the latter method, she suggested that the essential competences should be transferred in future to the EU-level, stating that:

the member states are the guardians of the treaties. This means it is the member states which decide that the Union has competence for something, if they believe the problem can be better dealt with at European level. Consequently, the community method does not serve to transfer competences to European level, it is rather a method of ensuring that competences which have been transferred are exercised well, properly and efficiently. Where there is no community competence, the community method clearly cannot be applied.⁵⁹

When articulating the 'Union method' she intimated that, firstly, any further steps aimed at deepening the integration process – quite easy to imagine in the situation of the financial and debt crisis – would lie first and foremost within the competences of the member states. Secondly, Chancellor Merkel's speech in Bruges also contained an appeal for increasing the role of the Member State governments in the European policy-making process, by describing the Union method as 'a combination of the community method and coordinated action by the member

⁵⁶ T. Kunstein, W. Wessels, *Die Europäische Union in der Währungs- und Finanzkrise: Eckdaten und Schlüsselentscheidungen*, "Integration" 2011, H. 4, p. 308–322; T. Beichelt, N. von Ondarza, *Von der Schulden- zur Integrationskrise? Euro-Krisenmanagement und europäische Integrationsdynamik*, "MES-Perspektiven" 2011, Nr. 1, p. 15–21, <www.kuwi.europa-uni.de/de/studium/master/es/_Dokumente_und_Bilder/Aktuelles/MES-Perspektiven_1_2011.pdf>.

⁵⁷ F. Schimmelfennig, *Zwischen Neo- und Postfunktionalismus: Die Integrationstheorien und die Eurokrise*, "Politische Vierteljahresschrift" 2012, 3, p. 394–413.

⁵⁸ A. Merkel, *Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel anlässlich der Eröffnung des 61. akademischen Jahres des Europakollegs Brügge am 2.11.2010*, <www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Rede/2010/11/2010-11-02-merkel-bruegge.html>.

⁵⁹ A. Merkel, *Speech by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel at the opening ceremony of the 61st academic year of the College of Europe*, 2 Nov 2010, <http://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/ContentArchiv/EN/Archiv17/Reden/2010/2010-11-02-merkel-bruegge.html>.

states.⁶⁰ This last aspect has been especially criticized in the German public discourse, because it gives a strong impulse to transfer the responsibility for the EU integration process again to the nation states.⁶¹ Angela Merkel and her government have reacted to this criticism with a specific dual strategy. Verbally, they promote the idea of proposals for further deepening of the EU.⁶² In practice, however, the government is trying to keep the EU institutions, and even the German Bundestag, largely away from both the discussion about and the decision-making about such important issues as e.g. the establishment of the EU Fiscal Compact and of the European Stability Mechanism.⁶³

In the European context however, the German government is not playing a special role in the above-mentioned process. The skeptical attitude of Czech governments, as well as of its former President Václav Klaus about the traditional community-oriented institutions, such as the Commission and the European Parliament, have been known for a long time. Many utterances about the necessity of strengthening the nation-state, the Council and the European Council have also been made by the Hungarian government led by Viktor Orbán.⁶⁴ Similar reactions were typical for the government and presidency of the Kaczynski brothers in Poland.⁶⁵ A specific parallel can be observed in the opinions of all of the above-mentioned politicians. The representatives of exactly these countries, which in the 1980s formulated the ideas about overcoming the East-West confrontation through Europeanization, are calling now for re-nationalization of European politics.

The same observation can also be applied to the situation in the country where the metaphor of the 'common European home' was invented. After a period of tribulations during the Yeltsin era, President Putin has centralized political power in the name of consolidating the Russian state. All non-governmental institutions have been weakened and civil liberties, as well as the rule of law, have been curtailed.⁶⁶ In Belarus, the presidential dictatorship remains in power only

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁶¹ M. Sarrazin, S.-Ch. Kindler, "Brücke sehen und sterben" – *Gemeinschaftsmethode versus Unionsmethode*, "Integration" 2012, H. 3, p. 213–222.

⁶² About awarding Wolfgang Schäuble with the Charlemagne Prize in 2012 see e.g. *Der Karlspreisträger 2012 Wolfgang Schäuble. Rede von Bundesminister Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble*, <http://www.karlspreis.de/preistraeger/2012/rede_von_dr_wolfgang_schauble.html>

⁶³ See T., Beichelt, Ch. Calliess, *Nationale Parlamente in der Europäischen Union* (draft title), Bartelsman AG, Gütersloh 2013 (forthcoming).

⁶⁴ E. Bos, *Ungarn unter Spannung. Zur Tektonik des politischen Systems*, "Osteuropa" 2011, Dezember, p. 39–63; B. Magyar, *Autokratie in Aktion. Ungarn unter Orbán*, *ibidem* p. 89–104.

⁶⁵ P.O. Loew, *Feinde, überall Feinde. Psychogramm eines Problems in Polen*, "Osteuropa" 2011, Dezember, p. 33–52.

⁶⁶ R. Sakwa, *Putin's Leadership, [in:] Putin's Russia. Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, ed. D.R. Herspring, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, MD 2007, p. 13–36; N. Petrov, D. Slidder, *Putin and the Regions*, *ibidem*, p. 75–98; L. Shevtsova, *Russia – Lost in Transition. The Yeltsin and Putin Legacies*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC 2007.

through repression and forged elections,⁶⁷ and in the Ukraine the gap between the elected elites and society is deep.⁶⁸

All of these three countries have one important feature in common: strong authoritarian tendencies, accompanied by a process of political centralization. In the case of Russia, it is also important to underscore that the concentration of political power has been connected with the recovery of its ability to act effectively in both domestic and international politics. In this respect, the aforementioned attempt to strengthen executive power in East Central and Eastern Europe can also be seen as a reaction to the limited capacity to control the decision-making process during the systemic transformation. In the whole of Europe there is a prevailing tendency to reduce the role of social actors in their efforts to overcome economic or social crises. Instead of that – and here the EU resembles the authoritarian regimes of Eastern Europe more than it would like to admit – the rulers are mainly focused on empowering the capacities of government, administration and other quasi-executive institutions. A vision of democracy firmly anchored in society sounds today just as imaginative as the ideas of ‘anti-policy’ discussed by such dissidents as György Konrad in the mid-1980s.

4. Outlook

The findings of European studies and transformation studies can complement each other. The political developments in East Central and Eastern Europe were strongly influenced by the European integration process from the beginning of the systemic transformations in the former ‘Eastern Bloc’. This is true not only for the former candidate countries, which were forced to fulfill all the EU conditions for almost a decade before they were given the status of EU Member States. It is also true in the case of the Western Balkans as well as Eastern Europe, because NATO and EU are requiring states which cannot count on membership in NATO or the EU in the short term, to nevertheless adopt a position concerning them.

Because the perspective of joining the EU or of its enlargement is currently improbable, there is no option other than to observe whether, in the ‘European neighborhood’, there are political developments possible other than these envisaged by a realistic theory of international relations. According to this theory, the aforementioned countries – which are hardly capable of building any common political bloc – have been given no geopolitical option other than bandwagoning,

⁶⁷ *Der Fall Belarus. Gewalt, Macht, Ohnmacht*, “Osteuropa” 2010, Dezember; V. Karbavelič, *Faust in der Tasche. Wahlsimulation in Belarus*, “Osteuropa” 2012, September, p. 53–55.

⁶⁸ M. Ryabčuk, *Prekäre Autokratie. Stillstand und Wandel in der Ukraine*, “Osteuropa” 2012, September, p. 37–51.

that is rapprochement with one of the integrating centers: Russia or the EU.⁶⁹ However, from the point of view of the majority of these states, such as Georgia, Moldova or Ukraine, Russia is very unlikely to be perceived as an attractive partner, due to her rather destructive bullying and embargo policy. The EU, on the other hand, by its actions prevents them from making any crucial political steps to form an alliance dominated by Brussels. Instead, it promotes a policy of 'external governance'. The countries of the Eastern Partnership are supposed to be integrated through a system of incentives which in fact have been weakened with respect to their chances of joining the EU.⁷⁰

It should be emphasized that the efforts associated with the regime change in the post-socialist Europe have paid off. The progress in human rights and political freedoms is abundantly clear in comparison to the communist period. In some cases, these results are more ambivalent: Belarus and Russia have chosen a self-imposed isolation, which makes them unable to modernize, and Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina still have to come to grips with unsolved territorial and identity problems. It is noteworthy that all these outstanding issues are very similar to those that were on the Western European agenda at the beginning of European integration in the 1950s.

In any case, Adam Przeworski, one of the most influential scientists researching transformation processes, was wrong in his skeptical predictions about the evolution of systemic transformation. In his famous 1991 book, *Democracy and the Market*, he stated that the 'East' [meaning Eastern Europe] would take over the attitudes of the 'South' [i.e. countries which are permanently in need of development aid]: 'The East has become the South'.⁷¹ This blanket statement is untenable today.

The truth is that Eastern Europe proper remains a region with close ties between politics and the economy, with societies dominated by clientelism. In this situation, even a close cooperation with the EU as an institution promoting peace and modernization is highly improbable. The greater part of Central Europe is demonstrating more and more similarities to Western Europe and, with regard to the quality of its democracy, it surpasses many parts of Southern Europe. Political regimes which have emerged in the south aim to compensate the low productivity of their national economies, in comparison to the EU average, through various practices: in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania the ruling elites have made the public sector their own client; in Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal

⁶⁹ K.N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Waveland Press, New York 1979.

⁷⁰ S. Lavenex, F. Schimmelfennig, *EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood: from leverage to governance?*, "Democratization" 2011, No. 4, p. 885–909; S. Lavenex, *Concentric circles of flexible "EUropean" integration: A typology of EU external governance relations*, "Comparative European Politics" 2011, No. 4–5, p. 372–393.

⁷¹ A. Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market. Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1991, p. 191.

and Spain they decided to fall into a debt spiral; in France, Hungary and Italy the governments have tried to subjugate the media. Therefore, the time has come when we should begin to regard the problems with democracy in Eastern and East Central Europe not only as a consequence of the transition, but to analyze them in the context of trends affecting the whole of Europe. A framework of knowledge could be provided by the European studies, if they resign from their exclusive focus on EU integration problems.