

**INDEPENDENCE
ABSTRACTS**

**WARSAW EAST EUROPEAN CONFERENCE 2018
15th annual session**

THE MAIN FOCUS of the Warsaw East European Conference 2018 will be put on the notion of INDEPENDENCE in a broad sense, ranging from national, economic or energy independence to name just a few. Conference Round Tables will be dedicated to Poland's banking system transformation, the upcoming NATO summit and an overview of current situation in Central Asia, Ukraine and the Caucasus.

Threats of authoritarianism, cultural processes, transformation, historical memory, energy security, minorities, civil society development – are just some of the issues presented by speakers from more than 15 countries. The conference builds upon the highly successful meetings where educators, researchers, experts and students are engaged in rich and productive dialogue regarding the latest history of the region.



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ABSTRACTS FROM THE WEEC 2018

Between Semi-Presidentialism and Parliamentarism: Constitutional Changes in Current Georgia

ZVIAD ABASHIDZE (GEORGIA)

Ivane Javakhsivili Tbilisi State University

Since independence in 1991, Georgia has experienced frequent changes of political institutions through its constitutional changes. Initially, Georgia became a Parliamentary country which soon changed to the semi-presidentialism of the French model. After the coup d'état of 1991-1992 the country formally became parliamentary again, according to the first Constitution of 1995, but post-soviet Georgia transformed into a presidential system similar to the USA type with certain differences of its own original analogue.

The Rose Revolution of 2003 brought the country to super-presidentialism with the introduction of the office of Prime-Minister and Cabinet, but with the president as head of the executive branch. Constitutional changes in 2010 turned the Nation again into a strange hybrid between Parliamentarism and semi-presidentialism. Another change from the Constitution of 2017 converted its parliamentarism into the German model. Changes have still not been put into practice and we are waiting for their realization scheduled for 2023.

According to the Juan Linz theory, presidential systems in new democracies push the political system to an authoritarian regime because of the possible concentration of power in the hands of a powerful president.

The paper discusses this thesis and argues that, with Georgia as an example, in the case of weak parties and a conflicting party system, parliamentarism seems very comfortable for ruling parties in terms of keeping the power for a long time in the hands of the powerful prime-minister/ruling party. Therefore, in such a

case, relatively strong, popular elected president would play an important role in the system of checking and balance, since the post of a popular elected president is not fully depended on the ruling parties positions. Sometimes, parliamentarism seems very suitable for possible authoritarian system. The best example is the current system in Turkey under Recep Tıpe Erdoğan's government, where the parliamentarism became the base of his long term office.

Therefore, the paper is arguing in favor of a parliamentary system with a relatively strong, popularly elected president for post-soviet states for achieving two goals:

1. It seems a relevant system for avoiding authoritarianism from one side;
2. And keeping the effective government and political institutions from the other.

The arguments are based mostly on the Georgian case with a significant quantity of comparative examples, especially from East-Central Europe.

Foreign Trade of the Belarusian People's Republic

ANDREI CHARNIAKEVICH (BELARUS)

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The Belarusian People's Republic was proclaimed at the final stage of World War I, for the major part of Belarus that was in a deep socio-economic crisis while under the German occupation. The economy of the territory suffered huge losses. Undoubtedly, the proclamation of the Belarusian People's Republic in 1918, had a strong political resonance and ideological influence on Belarusian society. The author analyses the efforts of the Belarusian government at foreign trade transactions and the financial capabilities of the Belarusian movement.

Review of Ownership Change in the Transitional Albanian Economy 1991-96

PETRIT DOLLANI (ALBANIA)
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The paper aims to describe and examine the earliest stages of ownership change in Albanian economy, at the very beginning of the transition from centralized state ownership toward a free market system. The author discusses the most important legal acts that paved the way for this process and their implementation into practice. Initially, agricultural land privatization was introduced, followed by trade facilities and dwelling houses. The next stage included the privatization of small and medium enterprises and mass privatization, partially carried out through auctions and vouchers. The paper identifies some achievements and failures of this process, seen from a critical perspective.

Independence - A Path from Pluralism to Nationalism

Laura Valeria Gheorghiu (ROMANIA)
University of Graz

Independence is a nice word to be used by politicians, teachers or ambitious students. Behind the curtain, it holds prison some radical processes, to be discussed only by niche researchers or, much too late, by historians. Definitely, 2018 is a bright year for many Central and Eastern European nations who got their independence after the first WW. Within the political parlance, this is the glorious accomplishment of a century long fight. But my attention looks to the society and, consequently to the institutions. Because, by and large, the society is the subject to accept or have imposed on it a new institutional culture, with all the legal, political and even emotional consequences.

Trying to “read” the cases of Transylvania and Banat from this perspective, any honest research must notice the switch they have had to perform from a Central European legal culture to a Eastern, “backward” (Daniel Chirot) one, through to their unification with the Kingdom of Romania. The same can be said after the “independence” of Romania in 1958, as a consequence of the retreat of the Soviet Army from Romanian territory. Therefore, one essential question comes up: how much independence is a real liberation and how much is working against the hopes? I start by trying to label the concept of “independence” in terms of in – dependence, that is legal alphabet, rules, customs and integration. This approach triggers the remark that the initial pluralism (hidden or official) is replaced by a national (-istic)

discourse, aimed at swallowing, translating, and assimilating. Sometimes it may be for the better, sometimes not, depending on the difference in “cultural age” between the initial “dominance”, the indigenous culture and the new polity.

The conclusion is that independence may be considered an imagined remedy to an unusual question, since it simply replaces majorities together with their cultural profile instead of accommodating real life solutions for medium and long terms. Therefore, it usually brings nationalism or other discriminatory frameworks meant to change identities (impossible) and to reconsider history (utopic question). I am not against the wish of independence, but will argue it is an outdated project with debatable consequences.

Mikheil Saakashvili's Legacy in Georgia: a Critical Review of his Role in the Country's Transformation between 2004-2013

GIVI GIGITASHVILI (GEORGIA)
Ecorys Polska, Warsaw

Recent high-profile political currents in Ukraine around Mikhail Saakashvili have once again put him in the international media spotlight. The stripping of his Ukrainian citizenship, followed by the illegal crossing of Ukraine's border in September 2017 and his subsequent forceful expulsion from Ukraine received critique domestically as well as from Ukraine's western partners. These events have reinforced interest again in the career he has had over the last decade and a half, which have made him arguably one of the more prominent, yet also controversial figures of 21st century post-Soviet politics. His rollercoaster political path with its ups and downs have made many people eager again to speculate and anticipate what the next phase of his political path will be. However, in this analysis, we take a step back from recent political events in which Saakashvili has been embroiled. Instead, we will examine the track record of accomplishment and failures of his decade-long rule in Georgia following the Rose Revolution of 2003, after which he ruled the country as President between 2004-2007 and 2008- 2013. In the light of explicitly contentious assessments of and growing interests towards his political legacy in Georgia, we will attempt to provide an objective, sober and balanced analysis of his two tenures in power. To this end, we will analyse the main promises of Saakashvili's ascendance to power in 2004 and the role he played in the transformation of the state, economy and democracy of Georgia. Doing so, we will scrupulously examine the reforms that were implemented under Saakashvili's rule as well as the changes that took place in the country. At the same time, we will also analyse the structural

shortcomings associated with these changes. Process-tracing method will be used to do empirical analysis and evaluation of the main outcomes of his presidency. In order to make causal inferences, we will mainly rely on secondary sources (English and Georgian), and international indexes, such as Bertelsmann Transformation Index, Freedom House Nations in Transit Index, Transparency International Corruption Perception Index etc. Our analysis will seek to answer the following research questions:

How did Georgia's transformative processes of democratisation, modernisation, economic development and state building develop under Saakashvili's presidency?

Why did Saakashvili's initial high support in 2004 dramatically decrease by the end of his second term in office in 2013?

Overall, could Georgia's development under Saakashvili and the legacy he left be served as an example for countries in the region?

Ways to Georgian Independence – Dissident Movements and its Periodicals

ALEKSANDRA GRZYŁAK (POLAND)

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From the very beginnings of Soviet rule in Georgia, the communists were not very popular throughout Georgian society and treated as occupants. Almost all active forms of resistance ceased to exist after the bloody suppression of the August Uprising of 1924. The massive purge of the Georgian intelligentsia that followed deprived the nation of its patriotic elites.

Only in the early 1970s, did things started to change. In 1972, the key position of the First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party was passed to the former Minister of the Interior – Eduard Shevardnadze, who began his rule with a broad campaign against corruption, overgrown bureaucracy, nepotism, and the so-called “second economy” (black market). Mass disbelief in the possibilities of the Soviet economy, censorship and social pathologies, as well as the failure of Khrushchev's reform to challenge the old elites – all this resulted in the emergence of legal, organized forms of opposition – dissident movements. The first such group in Georgia was the Initiative Group for the Defense of Human Rights, established in 1974, by the two most famous Georgian dissidents – Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava. Already, since 1972, they were passing on information on the situation in Georgia to the Moscow based “Chronicle of Current Events”. The Initiative Group was distributing Russian samizdat in Georgia – literature as well as materials connected to the defense

of human rights. Thanks to the Group's activity, articles by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Sakharov and Yuri Orlov appeared in Georgia.

The second half of the 1970s was a period of development of Georgian samizdat – journal “Okros Sacmisi” (Golden Fleece) and the “Georgian Gerald” were established. Another periodical was “Samreklo” (The Bell) – published by dissident Republican Party – Wachtang Dzabiradze, brothers David i Levan Berdzeniszvili, Wachtang Shonia.

After mass arrests of members of these first groups, a new generation of Georgian dissidents emerges Irakli Tsereteli, Tamar Chkheidze, Taniel Gviniashvili and Gia Chanturia, with new energy and power. In the time of perestroika especially the stairs in front of the Supreme Council building became the arena of constant meetings, protest and hunger strikes. Georgian dissidents were substantially divided most of all as to the level of radicalism, strategies of conduct and visions of the future of Georgia. They agreed only in one point – Georgia should become an independent state.

In the outcome of their action – the most radical part of the movement won the election and the country would soon fall into a dangerous internal war. Soon, also due to conflict in Abkhazia the dissident rule was replaced by a post-communist elite.

E-participation as a New Form of Civic Activity in Ukraine

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Building an e-democracy is a two-way process of interaction between the authorities and the public. On the one hand, state institutions should ensure the normative regulation of the e-participation of citizens, consistently implement the system changes, promote and inform the communities about the updated mechanisms of influence. On the other hand, one should pay attention to the readiness and ability of people to take advantage of online mechanisms, since the formation of political engagement involves assimilating democracy, acquiring political culture and political vocabulary, and gaining experience of participation in political life.

The main subject of this text is to analyze the Internet technologies for implementation of civic participation within the context of the creation of e-democracy in Ukraine. The article attempts to answer the following research questions: First, what is the impact of ICT on political processes – particularly on civic activity and the development of civil society? Secondly, what are the features of technological accessibility and inclusion for

different segments of society? Finally, what are the advantages and disadvantages of new plebiscitary mechanisms in Ukraine?

The author considers practices and projects of online participation in Ukraine and provides the following opposition: a rationale of cyberspace opportunities and a refutation of mobilizing resources of the Internet. Based on secondary sociological information the interdependence of the development of information technology, the transparency of public authorities and levels of involvement of citizens are traced.

Poland's Sustained „March to a Market Economy”: The Choice between Competing Visions and Plans

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This paper is a study in contrasting economic philosophies. It describes the economic program instituted by Minister of Finance Leszek Balcerowicz in 1989 and the series of incentives initiated within Poland to attract foreign direct investment. The paper then discusses the changes in economic and social policies brought about by Minister Mateusz Morawiecki as important policy perspectives brought by the election victory of Law and Justice (PiS) in 2015. The paper then discusses key aspects of the Polish market and outlines both opportunities and challenges for the future.

The Faces of Eastern European Nationalisms in the Interwar Political Publications of Józef Mackiewicz

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The genesis, forms and geopolitical, political and social effects of expansion of nationalism in the interwar period is one of the leitmotifs in Józef Mackiewicz's political publications and prose. The presentation constitutes an attempt to synthesize dispersed reflections of the Vilnius writer on the subject. Although it is manifested in separate national symbolic universes on a political level (symbols, historiography, collective memories, literatures), the phenomenon of nationalism is characterised by relative coherency and the recurrence of components on ontological and psychological levels. Mackiewicz included in such universal characteristics of nationalism, among others, the primacy of imperial ideas, internal and external expansiveness, postulates of cultural autarchy, the use of a lone wolf strategy in foreign policy, infantilization of political discourse and a tendency to pacify free opinion. He analysed any threats connected with the above,

among others, upon examples of conflicting Polish and Lithuanian nationalisms (e.g. the case of structural similarities in ND ideology and the programme of Lithuanian Nationalists referred to as “LTS”). Mackiewicz gives a particular meaning to geopolitical optics superseded by the prescribed interwar period of national narrations and mythologies. The writer, who referred to his nationality as “anti-communist” and considered “Eastern Europe” as his country of origin, perceived the fate of the eastern bloc region beyond national divisions and considered common locations jammed between Berlin and Moscow as a factor unifying various national interests. He thought that a remedy for eastern (communism) and western (German imperialism) threats should include a project of common integration, with its milestones, apart from the identity of geopolitical interests, being common turns in history and numerous cultural affinities. However, a sine qua non condition assumed defection of nationalistic fever and flaring national emotions, which could not become appropriate grounds for political realism. In the times when countries of Central and Western Europe rarely spoke with one voice and were not guided by any community project and transnational identity, Mackiewicz's forgotten voice seems to be particularly worth mentioning.

The Roots of Civil Society in the Actions of the Religious Underground in Belarusian History

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Various members of the Evangelical Christian Baptists comprised an illegal community, whose forms of communication corresponded with the preconditions of an independent interest group or a non-government organization and whose missionary task included pedagogical aims. Mutual support, a broad network of contacts, contacts with foreign countries, collective practices, solidarity, publicity, and self-organization – all of these characteristics of Evangelical Christian Baptists emphasise the difference between them and the activities of political dissidents.

The Impact of Values of Support for Populism on Values of Democracy in Poland and Ukraine: a Comparative Analysis

OLEKSANDR KASHYNSKYI (UKRAINE)
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The values of supporting populism really has an impact on the values of democratic support in Ukraine and Po-

land. In the case of Ukraine, this may be one of the main drivers of the inhibition of democratization, and in the case of Poland, this reduces the level of democracy, albeit not substantially. The existence of some dissatisfaction with representative democracy in the societies of Ukraine and Poland affects the support of populists, which in turn increases the impact on the level of democracy in general in the countries. However, in the case of Poland, dissatisfaction with democracy is not critical and changes in the level of democracy are negligible, but their is a tendency. In Ukraine, without the establishment of a consolidated democracy, the society has also become disillusioned with democracy, which may be due to the incorrect representation of democracy by Ukrainian populists. However, both in Poland and in Ukraine, the tendencies towards the crisis of representative democracy as a consequence of public support for populists are also due to the fact that the values of those groups of society that are less involved in the political process in the case of Poland have not fully institutionalized, and in the case of Ukraine, there is almost no social group which has been institutionalized in the form of political parties. Therefore, in both cases, social groups have chosen to participate in the political process with populist parties.

Independence by Muslim Communists: "Narimanovshchina" – the Downfall of National Communists in Azerbaijan

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Independence by Muslim communists. "Narimanovshchina" – the downfall of national communists in Azerbaijan.

After the Soviet occupation of Azerbaijan in April 1920, the country underwent major sovietization. The troops of the XIth Red Army brought totalitarian reigns of terror and repressions. Despite formal independence the country was subject to the decisions of Russian Bolsheviks. In order to take over the country, the Soviets proclaimed a local puppet-government on April 28, 1920 which comprised of local communists, with the prominent local politician – Nariman Narimanov – as chairman.

The local administration quickly discovered that its political vision contrasted with the Bolsheviks' expectations. The differences between the central authorities and the local government grew quickly and the conflict escalated rapidly. The main problem was the introduction of the Soviet political and economic regime in Azerbaijan and the vision on what was the best path towards socialism for the Azerbaijani people.

Narimanov thought that by sovietizing the country he would help to make a civilization breakthrough not only in Azerbaijan, but also in Iran and Turkey. We can say that having intended to utilize communist ideas to his own goals, he himself was being used instead as a personification of an Eastern chieftain. The fates of Nariman Narimanov and a Tatar communist Sultan-Galiev confirm that they both badly misinterpreted the real assumptions of the Bolshevik policy. They were both allured by an illusion that they could build independence based on foreign ideology. And they both paid for this mistake with their lives. In the 1930s they were both expelled and proclaimed public enemies' because they had criticised the methods of sovietization. Their last names were used to create false examples of "national deviation of communism" – sultangalievshchina and narimanovshchina.

The analysis of events right before and soon after the annexation helps to understand why the experimental proclamation of the Azerbaijani Socialist Soviet Republic (1920-22) was doomed right from the beginning. The paper describes the social and political processes of the 1920s and the role played by Nariman Narimanov, one of the most renowned Muslim communists.

The Grand Duchy of Lithuania in State Ideology

ALIAKSANDR KRAUTSEVICH (BELARUS)
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Between the 13th – 18th centuries the Belarusian nation was part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The stats show that the ethnic composition was predominantly Belarusian based on the usage of the Belarusian language. In Belarus, the semi-official historiography traditionally presents the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as the Lithuanian state conquering Belarusian land and Belarus being freed by Russia from the domination of Lithuanians and Poles in the late 18th century. Since the late 80s of the 20th century national historiography was actively developing and presenting the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a predominantly Belarusian state. With Lukashenko's coming to power, national historians started to be persecuted, dismissed from work, their books were not published in the state publishing houses. However, through the resistance of historians, and with the help of private publishers and internet, Belarusian society was persuaded to think of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a Belarusian state. Therefore, recently (in 2017) Lukashenko and the Belarusian government had to accept that fact. The history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania has become an important part of the state ideology of the Republic of Belarus.

Czech Perceptions of Security as a Case of Vulnerability of Central European States

NATALIIA KRYVORUCHKO (UKRAINE)
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Changes in the security system after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union brought positive changes in perception of safety in the minds of CEE countries. After the crisis of transformation in the 90's, and joining NATO in 1999 CEE states (an exclusion was Slovakia, which had an institutional problem that was linked with Russia's capital) achieved new levels of security and foreign policy. The researcher's analyses and data certify the high sense of security, the lack of fear to express their own opinions and the right to make their own decisions. But on the other side, the citizen's perception of security has become more dependent on messages, declared by political representatives or written by popular journalists. For this reason, information about security perceptions is an invaluable instrument of manipulation or predicting the social and political development of each country. The knowledge of society's perception of security topics is particularly important for understanding societies with faster rates of economic development and the desire to forget the era of communism in all its forms. Research of security perception is a very important process, because it involves many parallel mechanisms of social interaction, social structure and social threats; together with knowledge of political or ideological preferences.

The paper describes and compares the most common security fears in the Czech Republic from the beginning of independence to nowadays, in other words 1993-2018. According to analysis of the programs of the main political parties in the CR we examined how public discourse was changing under the influence of different visions of political actors. We tried to understand how Havel's epoch of idealistic development of state was replaced by the Klaus pragmatic era and the passed to the era of populists. And explain the role of the economic indicators of GDP in the perception of safety and stability of the state.

The paper ends with the considering of consequences of these changes to security perception for the state and community. Even if the real or hypothetical threats have an objective basis, their impact may be destabilizing, causing political disorder and economic decline in Czechia or any other country of CEE.

Skubiszewski and Giedroyc: Discussions on Polish Eastern Policy between 1989-1991

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One of the most common statements about the nature of the Polish Eastern policy between 1989-91 indicates that the ideological basis for it was the concept of the ULB, created in the environment of the Parisian "Kultura" (Giedroyc and Miosroszewski). But from the analysis of the intellectual biographies of the main creators of foreign policy (first of all, Krzysztof Skubiszewski) and Jerzy Giedroyc we can see radically different beliefs of these persons. Criticism of the policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the "Kultura" during these years (89-91) is also extremely important, which is usually ignored. The study shows different understandings of political realism: for the circle of Giedroyc, Poland's active cooperation with its eastern neighbors was important, as was historical and territorial reconciliation for the future of the country. Skubiszewski proceeded to take the orientation of Poland towards the West, and the territorial settlement in the East was treated as an auxiliary for this orientation. It is noteworthy that under different initial grounds, both concepts converged on recognizing the eastern border of Poland. The study shows that the identification of Skubiszewski with the ULB concept is an erroneous interpretation.

Kremlin's Kids. Internal and International Importance of Russia's Second-generation Elite

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One of the richest and most influential Russian oligarchs, Genady Timchenko, in an interview with the Russian agency TASS, said: "You cannot leave too much to your children. They should be brought up, given a good education, and then – they should become independent. " In practice, none of the Russian oligarchs or influential politicians apply this principle.

Since the collapse of the USSR, a generation of young, twenty/thirty-year-olds, educated and rich Russians – children of the Russian power elite – have grown up. The leaders of Russia are reluctant to talk about the professional activity of their relatives because family systems reflect many pathologies of the Russian political and business system; they show social inequalities, an unfair distribution of wealth or a lack of respect for the law in Russia. This paper is an attempt to diagnose the significance of the "Kremlin's Kids" in Russia and abroad, i.e. the next generation of influential Russians.

The “Polish Nation” and “National Belonging” as a Research Problem. The National Idea and its Legal Formula Encoded in the Document of Pole’s Card (Karta Polaka): Ideology, Theory, Practice and its Implications

PAWEŁ ŁADYKOWSKI (POLAND)
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The presentation explores sources of the idea of the nation as it is encoded in the legislative framework of the Pole’s Card and its implications for the processes of identity making beyond the eastern borders of the Polish state. Given the problems with defining the role of the historical Polish Diaspora on the East, the question of the conceptualization of national belonging is significant and has practical consequences at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels. The argument of the paper is twofold:

- 1) On the one hand, the document of the Pole’s Card reflects a specific inclusive – “cultural” – conception of the nation. In this conception, which has been forged by Polish policymakers, the conditions whereby the national belonging can be achieved are widely conceived.
- 2) On the other, the administrative decision-making process and the diplomatic practice of granting the Card prioritizes and executes the exclusive conception of nation with its limited ethnic, religious (Roman Catholic) and linguistic background.

In this way, the document of the Pole’s Card becomes a legal device for establishing new social distinctions in the societies of Poland’s eastern neighbours. By discussing this case on the ground, this paper hopes to demonstrate the ways in which the new creative notions of the Polish nation are being forged.

Independence or Autonomy: The US Peace Initiatives and the Allied Stance on the Czech and Slovak National Problem (December 1916 – March 1917). Reflections and Interpretations

KRASIMIRA MARHOLEVA (CZECHIA)
Charles University, Prague

The paper explores the reflections and interpretations of the Allies’ attitude to the Czech and Slovak national problem at the end of 1916 and in early 1917. In my presentation I will first evaluate how the German and US peace initiatives in December 1916 and the following Allied diplomatic discussions were assessed by the Czechoslovak resistance movement abroad. Then, I will explore the interpretations of the Allied peace note on the 10th of January 1917, and of the American

president’s “*Peace Without Victory*” speech (22nd of January 1917), by official circles and public opinion within the belligerent Great Powers as well as by Czech and Slovaks abroad and in Austria-Hungary. The paper relies on archival sources, published documents, periodical press and secondary literature related to the topic.

The Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage as a Communicative Platform for East European Countries

TATSIANA MARMYSH (BELARUS)
University of Warsaw

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is one of the significant cultural and national identification resources. It is a basis for cultural diversity and sustainable development in modern society as well. In this is the connection to the necessity of its safeguarding being in the background of the national model of development for the culture sphere in Belarus. Moreover, there is a deep understanding of the importance of the ICH on different levels of countries representation by other East European countries. It allows us to present the sphere of ICH safeguarding as a platform for cultural, educational, scientific, socio-economical, political dialogue and gives the opportunity to emphasize the integration potential of ICH.

The safeguarding of ICH is one of the priority directions of official cultural policy in Belarus. First of all it is expressed on a legislative level. The attention to the safeguarding of ICH is paid to the perspective plans of the country’s development. The revitalization, safeguarding and development of the ICH are enshrined in the National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus up to 2020. The subprogram “The Heritage” in the government program “The Culture of Belarus” (2016-2020) is aimed at supporting activities in the heritage field. The State List of Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Belarus and the Inventory of the ICH are being formed. One element of the ICH of Belarus (The Kalyady Tsars (Christmas Tsars)) has been added to the List of ICH as being in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. ICH is included in the tourism business and becomes one of the innovative positions for the development of internal tourism. Belarus became a platform for sharing experiences and best practices on the safeguarding of ICH and for discussing their possible challenges, related to this process are the participants from the East European Countries at the UNESCO Training for the Specialists on the Safeguarding of ICH (2011), the Meeting of the Working Group of the Council for Culture under the EurAsEC Integration Committee, established on the

basis of the ICH problem (2012); the Capacity-Building Seminar “Identification and Inventorying of the Intangible Cultural Heritage as a Powerful Factor of its Safeguarding” etc.

Intangible cultural heritage is not only an instrument of culture, but also an instrument of “soft power” in politics because it serves to build a dialogue between countries. For example, Belarus and Poland are preparing a joint cross-border nomination (“Bartnictwo”) for submission to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Creating a Modern City: Gentrification or Revitalization in the City of Łódź

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When in 1989 communism collapsed in central and eastern Europe the new life of the then freshly post-communist countries started. This event has brought changes to all socio-economic aspects of life, and has also meant the new life of cities. As the structure and politics changed it was natural that urban planning would follow, city planning would fall under different administrations and new tasks of local government could be seen as “creating the new cities”. The main aspiration of the freshly formed system was a structure similar to the West, which resulted in the processes of privatization and reprivatization.

Processes that might have already occurred, and were being dealt with, in the West happened with delay in these countries, so it is not surprising that not until recently cities of Eastern and Central Europe weren't bothered by the “west” terms in city development, such as revitalization and gentrification.

Half a century later the term ‘gentrification’ came to Poland, and other post-communist countries. In this paper the focus will be primarily on the city of Lodz, where gentrification is happening under the mask of revitalization. In 2016 the city council of Lodz officially started the process of revitalization, under the name “Program Rewitalizacji Lodzi 2026+”

Revitalization per se, is not a bad thing for Lodz, or any other post-industrial city which has lost its primary function – in this case 19th and 20th century manufacturing, it can be said that it is even necessary. However, the question is can this revitalization happen without gentrification following?

To understand the phenomenon the term gentrification should be explained. Through history, since the term “gentrification” was first coined by Glass in 1964 to describe the influx of middle-class people displacing lower-class worker residents in urban neighborhoods, an

example of which is London (Glass, 1964), the definition has been changing. In the late 80s gentrification was considered making neighborhoods more elite and prestigious (Ley 1981, 1986, Chenu, Tabard 1993), while later in the 90s it was considered as a positive process of making neighborhoods better, with the negative side effect of the possible displacement of lower income residents (Cameron 1992, Bailey, Robertson 1996).

Gentrification is understood today as a phenomenon consisting of: (1) reinvestment of capital; (2) rise in the social and material status of a neighborhood; (3) changes in the townscape; (4) direct or indirect displacement of lower-income residents by wealthier groups (Davidson and Lees, 2005). Neighborhood improvement (or revitalization), however is not synonymous with gentrification. Neighborhood reinvestment can occur and improve the quality of life for existing residents without the widespread displacement associated with gentrification.

In Lodz, as in many other cities with ongoing development and massive revitalization plans in recent years, gentrification has come hand in hand with revitalization, not only in public investments, but also private ones. Why is this the case? According to the city council revitalization plan for Lodz, the primary idea of the “revitalized neighborhoods” is to bring in new investments and build up business. In a city such as Lodz, with rather low land costs all around the city, including the city centre, this often brings investments such as from corporations and office buildings. The area is “revitalized” by default, as the private investors care about the property and surroundings. In the process, market value of the plots and structures gain value, often following the opening of new restaurants, bars and other higher-end activities which serve new users of the area. Displacement of existing inhabitants happens naturally. This gentrification process does not solve the problem, with displacement of locals, the existing problems are just transferred to another area, while the “revitalized part” becomes exclusive and not available for future social investments. Existing social networks, neighborhood services and local businesses are disrupted in the community. Gentrified parts of the city suffer for not having any public typology architecture in urban plans, such as hospitals or schools. Community transitions to an exclusive community, inaccessible to lower income households. What is the model for revitalization of cities such as Lodz in central and eastern Europe to avoid gentrification? Is the model for improving these cities actually following the pattern of the “western” metropolis? This paper deals with the processes of gentrification and revitalization in a post-industrial city, using the example of Lodz, and provides insight into existing processes and opens a discussion for solutions when it comes to city development and urban planning.

Energy Prometheus: a Key for Eastern European Independence

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On May 9, 1950, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, Robert Schuman, presented a plan to create an economic organization in Europe aimed at creating and regulating a strategic market for the raw materials – coal, steel and iron. The idea behind the Schuman initiative was to create conditions that could prevent conflicts resulting from limited access to strategic raw materials. Establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community was aimed at developing trust in mutual relations between individual member states. The project initiated the economic integration of Western Europe, which, due to a ‘spill over’ process, included cultural and political spheres besides the economic one. The long-term result was the establishment of the European Union – the organizational phenomenon that already brings together 27 countries of Europe, guaranteeing stability and prosperity on the continent.

The similar role of coal and steel in the geopolitical area right after the end of the Second World War is now fulfilled today by energy sources – primarily gas and oil. Just like at the dawn of European integration – access to raw materials and control of their use – diversification and transmission of energy resources is now a factor guaranteeing stability in eastern Europe. The European Union aware of the challenge posed by access to energy sources – their diversification and transmission reliability – is trying to create organizational mechanisms to guarantee it. The creation of the Energy Union and the adoption of the so-called 3rd energy package are aimed at expanding the common principles of energy policy within the Community and its Eastern neighbors.

The energy policy of the Energy Union can be used by the Polish government to expand the zone of stability and prosperity behind the eastern border of the European Union. Promoting a common energy policy among Eastern European countries can be an effective tool for attracting the adoption of the principle of democracy and rules of law and free market. The geopolitical situation fosters this goal due to the use of energy resources by the Russian Federation as a tool of blackmail and political pressure against neighboring countries. Poland should support the energy independence of these countries and strengthen their ties with Western civilization, on a principle similar to the Doctrine of Jerzy Giedroyc’s and Jozef Pilsudski’s Prometheus political project. Convincing the countries of the European Union and Eastern Europe for cooperation in the field of energy should become one of the priority objectives of Polish foreign policy. Formulating and implementing the Pol-

ish idea of ‘energy prometheism’ could have the same effect as the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community – promoting an area of stability, this time behind the eastern border of Poland. This goal lies in the deepest interest of the Polish state.

EU-Belarus Relations: the Policy of Sanctions vs Policy of Engagement

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It is difficult to explain relations between Belarus and the European Union dynamic. Most likely, they are more suited to the description of “cyclical”, as the relations between Minsk and Brussels, as a rule, go through several identical cycles. In general, these cycles include: the deterioration of the political situation in Belarus, related to election fraud or the crackdown of a peaceful demonstration, which leads to the growing numbers of political prisoners in the country. Politically motivated court decisions cause condemnation and imposition of sanctions from the side of the European Union. The release of political prisoners causes the approval of the European Union and the mitigation of its attitude to sanctions. As a rule, after that there comes a short period of liberalisation in the country, which again leads to social protests and demonstrations, which again end up with crackdowns and detentions, after which the cycle is repeated. It was the same case in 2004, 2006 and 2010. Thus, for 25 years of the existence of an independent Belarus its relations with the European Union have not made huge leaps.

However, there was a change of scenario after Presidential elections in 2015 and parliamentary elections in 2016. After these elections the EU did not impose any new sanctions, but rather lifted existing ones. Even after the last mass crackdown of 25 March 2017, the EU did not return the sanctions. The European Parliament just condemned the actions of the Belarusian authorities and warned about the possibility of imposing new sanctions if the Belarusian authorities did not conduct an objective investigation of all cases of illegal detention and violations of human rights. It should be noted that the actions of Belarusian authorities after the crackdown also were different. In particular, the questionable ‘White Legion’ case, which was initiated before 25 March 2017 was ceased and all detained were released. Thus, the appearance of political prisoners was avoided this time. Moreover, Alexander Lukashenko, who has not shown a lot of interest in developing EU-Belarus relations for a long time, is more often talking about the importance of deepening its cooperation with the EU. What is more, last year Lukashenko for the first time

was invited to the Eastern Partnership Summit 2017 in Brussels. Therefore, for the first time in history EU-Belarus relations have entered a new phrase.

The EU's sanctions were not efficient for the improvement of the overall situation with the rule of law and human rights in Belarus. However, the alternatives do not seem to offer greater chances of success. First of all, the numerous violations of human rights and the autocratic tendencies of the government would have been difficult for the EU to accept silently, especially given that the country lies right on its eastern border. Failing to respond strongly would have been interpreted as a silent acceptance of such behavior, undermining the credibility of the EU as a normative actor and democracy promoter.

The main factor that explains the change in the relations between Brussels and Minsk is the Ukrainian crisis 2014 and the role that Belarus managed to take in attempts to solve the crisis. After the Russian-Georgian case 2008, the Ukrainian case became one more example of Russian interference in the territories of post-Soviet countries under the pretext of protection of the Russian-speaking population. This position could not be ignored by Belarus, where the majority of the population speaks Russian. Therefore, the Belarusian leader, the most reliable Russian ally for many years, tries to take a neutral and balancing position on this issue. This diplomatic step allowed Minsk to become a platform of negotiations for the settlement of the Ukrainian crisis, gathering together not only Russian and Ukrainian presidents, but also European leaders. The Belarusian hospitality of hosting the peace talks was appreciated by the EU and caused an improvement in EU-Belarus relations, which has been further developed over the last few years. However, the question is whether this time EU-Belarus relations will reach a new level of cooperation or it will just end as usual. It is also interesting how Russia will react to this improvement in EU-Belarus relations and how far it will allow them to go.

the degree to which the parties' responses to the crisis overlapped and the extent to which there were clear differences between them. It will be broadly argued that both parties supported the Euromaidan opposition movement in Ukraine in 2013, and both parties viewed Russia's interventions against Ukraine in 2014 (with the seizure of the Crimean peninsula and support for an uprising in two of Ukraine's eastern provinces) as representing a direct threat to Poland and Europe's security. This reflects a traditional Polish view of Russia as representing a strategic competitor within the Eastern European neighbourhood. There were, however, some distinct differences in outlook between the two parties. For the most part, PO was committed to trying to resolve—or at least contain—the crisis by using diplomacy and working through various European and international institutions. Furthermore, the PO foreign minister, Radosław Sikorski, publicly expressed the view that Ukrainian opposition leaders should reach a compromise with Yanukovich's government. PiS, in contrast, advocated a rather stronger response to what they perceived as Russian aggression, and criticised the government for not doing more to support the Ukrainian opposition movement. This indicates that Poland's prevalent (or even hegemonic) strategic culture significantly shaped the two parties' responses to the crisis. Both harboured negative images of Russia and instinctively supported the opposition movement. Yet there were also distinct differences. PiS viewed the crisis in rather more Realpolitik terms and were more inclined to offer direct material support for the opposition movement; PO, in contrast, were rather more willing to use diplomacy and work through multilateral institutions. This suggests that the dominant strategic culture does not fully determine policy-makers' choices, and that there may even be several strategic subcultures vying to influence the policy-making community.

Poland's Strategic Culture and Partisanship in Response to the 2013 Ukraine Crisis

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The paper analyses the responses of Poland's two largest political parties (PiS and PO) to the political and security crisis that has engulfed Ukraine since 2013. It has been argued that one potential way of assessing the extent to which a particular strategic culture has become entrenched within a community of policy-makers is to examine whether a consensus exists between the main political parties in relation to the state's principal security policies. Hence the paper will seek to gauge

Sources of Belarusian Statehood and Independence in the Narrative of Political Elites after 2014

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After the collapse of the USSR, the essence of Belarusian historical policy and memory culture has been the exploitation of nostalgia for the Soviet period and the cultivation of the myth of victory and the Great Patriotic War (often in isolation from the wide-European context of the memory of the II WW). Ruling elites for a long period of independence were supporters of the Soviet-Russian historical narrative and vision of the state and national identity. The counter-elite had a completely different vision, in which Belarus is found in the

sphere of European civilization, as an independent democratic state. These two visions fought with each other for a long period of Belarus's independence. The situation changed dramatically after Russia's aggression in Ukraine in 2014. Russian policy has influenced the Belarusian establishment, which for the first time in many years began to change its approach to ideology and historical policy and narrative. The changes affected the state ideology, which didn't change its form, but started to introduce more non-Soviet elements. There were also changes in the perception of Belarusian statehood and independence, which – in the official interpretation – ceased to reach only the times of the USSR, and began to be associated even with the legacy of the Belarusian People's Republic or the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Then began a process, which Belarusian researchers called "soft-belarusization". The changes in the historical narrative of Belarusian elites, as well as their translation into the current policy, are considered by me to be extremely important for the development of the country. That is why I would like to present changes in Belarus's historical policy and ideology after 2014.

The Modern Situation in Applying Economic Sanctions the US and the EU against Russia and Belarus

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The objective of this paper is to research a common situation in the US and the EU of applying economic sanctions against Russia and Belarus. The modern situation in the US and the EU of applying economic sanctions is considered from the context of comparing these measures against Russia and Belarus. The focus of the paper is aimed at evaluating the situation in general, rather than evaluating the effectiveness of economic sanctions and measuring their impact.

New Trends in Teaching and Official Representations of History in Belarus

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Recently, certain changes have become more evident in the official attitude to historical interpretations. The present regime is beginning to use the deeper past and to approach the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the same way as the representatives of the Belarusian national school of historians did. It can be particularly seen in

history school books. Even about the proclamation of the Belarusian People's Republic one starts to speak out more positively. However, these changes are observed mainly through history teaching in schools. Although the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is of vital importance for strengthening Belarusian national identity, there is still little demand for it in the official policies of memory, where it is not widely used.

Studies of the Belarusian-Polish Borderland in Belarus (1991-2018)

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Interest in the issues of the Belarusian-Polish border zone appeared in the mid-1980s; after the establishment of the sovereign Belarusian state triggered active research by frontier historians, sociologists, linguists and etnolagami. In the late 1990s, the largest research center in Belarus for this subject became Hrodna State University. During the period 1995-2008, they studied the problem of the consciousness of the inhabitants of the Polish-Belarusian border area; border history and models of its protection, population mentality, and historical and cultural monuments in the border zone. In the last decade there have been monographs that have summarized the studies and significant pages in history of the edges that have been restored, including those from Soviet times which included a number of taboo subjects: the repression of the population in the region in 1939-1941, the formation of state border policy of the Soviet authorities in relation to the Catholic church and others. In the field of ethnology, anthropology and sociology analyses of the Belarusian-Polish frontier in the early stages, there still remains an unexplored number of important problems and issues, including the material culture of the inhabitants of border areas, customs, folklore; fragments presented in the works of the Belarusian scientists historical memory of the population. Belarus does not conduct thorough interdisciplinary work, which could be presented to the region as a single space, which has a unique history, traditions, unique culture and historical memory

Stages of Political Change and their Importance in the Process of Democratization of Georgia

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After the dissolution of the Soviet Union all Post-Soviet states initiated systemic changes. During the exploration phase, Georgia faced the choice of changing the system

to an undemocratic or democratic one – which reflected the choice of targeting its policy towards the East or the West. Georgia directed its systemic transformation towards democracy. The aim of the paper is to present the division of these political changes into stages divided by the Author. For the research, the Author used the historical method, desk research, and the method of qualitative research analysis, that is interviews that she carried out during the research project in Georgia.

The Soldiers of the Belarusian People's Republic in the Footsteps of the Slutsk Rebels

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The most heroic episode in the struggle for the Belarusian People's Republic – the Slutsk uprising, when, in November – December of 1920 the first Slutskaya Infantry Brigade during that month was fighting with the Red Army. It is impossible not to agree with Professor Oleg Latyshonak that the “Slutsk uprising was the crown in the Belarusian independence movement as a completely independent performance of Belarusians in the defense of their country's independence.”

A vital role in the ideological preparation of the Slutsk uprising was played by Slutskaya general *Zemskayagymnasium*, founded in July 1917 on the initiative of Radoslaw Ostrovsky. Among the soldiers of the Slutsk uprising were graduates and students of the so-called “Slutsk Athens” – Slutsk gymnasium students.

In September 1917 on the initiative of the pupils Sergei Buse and Yankee Rakutsko a Belarusian cultural and educational organization called “Fern Flower” emerged. In summer 1920, it had a membership of more than 300 people.

An important point on the historical map of the Belarusian national life in Slutsk is the building of a commercial school where the Belarusian National Committee of Slutsk and the educational organization “Fern Flower” were situated, Belarusian performances and lectures were held. Through the efforts of intellectuals, politicians and public figures the spiritual soil of national recovery was prepared.

This commercial school building has survived to the present day (Lenina street, 104). It is a monument of architecture of “brick style” with Art Nouveau features. A seven-year school and later a teacher training college was situated here in 1920-1930 th., and since 1961 – the cannery.

The beginning of the uprising is considered to be November 14, when the first Belarusian Congress of Slutsk started. It was attended by over one hundred delegates. Congress declared Slutsk a part of the BNR and decid-

ed to defend it by force of arms. The congress formed the Belarusian Council of Slutsk headed by Uladzimir Prakulevich.

The Council of Slutsk uprising headquarters was located in the house of the Belarusian and Polish political and social activist Edward Vaynilovich on Syanatarskaya Street, opposite the famous gymnasium. This large, two-floor house was one of the most beautiful buildings in Slutsk. It was destroyed by the Bolsheviks. Today a central urban boiler is situated here (Kamsamolskaya street, 2).

With the support of the local population, the Council of Slutsk over three days formed a volunteer team of the first Slutsk troops of the Belarusian People's Republic in the regiment of 1st Slutsk and 2nd Grozovsky. The quantitative composition of the Slutsk brigade has been estimated differently from 1200 – 1400 to 7000 – 10,000 people. a very large number of volunteers enrolled in the Belarusian army influenced the quantity of assessments, but the organizers could equip only a part of them.

The first fight between the rebels and the Department of the 16th Army took place on November 27 near the village of Vasilchitsy (13 km south from Kapyl).

Within a month of fighting the Slutskaya team had completed more than ten military actions against regular Soviet troops. These were mainly partisan sabotage, after which rebels usually left a 30-kilometer neutral zone, which separated the Polish and Soviet army.

In the last week of December divisions of the Red Army stepped up retaliatory operations against Slutsk residents. The Soviet military leadership sought restraint from the Polish command in the neutral zone's “anti-laws” military formations. After the presentation of the Polish ultimatum, part of the Slutsk brigade on December 30, 1920 passed the river Lan near the village of Sinyavka and was disarmed and interned. Thus ended the active phase of the Slutsk anti-Bolshevik resistance.

The fate of Slutsk rebels who did not die in battle, and later voluntarily or involuntarily fell into Soviet territory, was tragic, they were repressed. The Soviet secret police rudely dealt with the rebels families.

At the beginning of the 1990s, on the initiative of the Belarusian People's Front, in some places associated with the Slutsk uprising, memorials have been established.

Memory crosses are in the towns of Hrosava and Semezhava in the Kapyl district. Unfortunately, the memorial sign in the Red Slabada (formerly – the town of Vyzna) was dismantled by order of the district administration in 1999.

The memorial sign to Slutsk rebels was established in the village of Staryja Darohi by historian, collector and public figure Anatol Bely on the roof of his own private museum “Heritage”. The museum of A.Bely contains unique materials of the history of Slutsk events of 1920. Two models of the rebels monuments are exhibited

here. In different years they tried unsuccessfully to be established in Slutsk.

On November 27, 2016 in Kapcjouka near Grodno a symbolic monument on the grave of Andrew Yakubetski, a Belarusian military, culture and education figure, and a member of Slutsk uprising was erected.

Memorial places of Slutsk rebels can be considered the crosses of the memory of victims of the Soviet totalitarian regime, which were established on Kapylschyna – in Kapyl, as well as in Charnahubava and Vyni. Events of the Slutsk uprising took place, mainly on the territory of today's Kapyl district. Many of the rebels' birthplaces were here. For example, one of the main leaders of the uprising, Pavel Zhauryd was born near Kapyl in the manor of Tsyatserauka. On Kapylschyna in the 1920s – 1930s a significant part of the participants of the Slutsk uprising were among those repressed.

The memory of the Slutsk uprising in modern Belarusian society is definitely present. The following things tell about this: the presence of historical research, the popularization of them through the Internet, the celebration of Heroes Day on 27 of November, memorials on the places directly related to combat activities of the Slutsk brigade (Semezhava, Hrozava), some relics in private collections and museums. However, this memory is associated with certain places and stories that are invisible and unclear to most people in Belarus. One of the most important tasks – is to make the memory of the the Slutsk uprising visible to the whole society and preserve it for the future of the nation.

Mikheil Saakashvili's Legacy in Georgia: a Critical Review of his Role in the Country's Transformation between 2004-2013

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Recent high-profile political events in Ukraine around Mikhail Saakashvili have once again put him in the international media spotlight. The stripping of his Ukrainian citizenship, followed by the illegal crossing of Ukraine's border in September 2017 and his subsequent forceful expulsion from Ukraine received critique domestically as well as from Ukraine's western partners. These events have reinforced interest again in the career he has had over the last decade and a half, which have made him arguably one of the more prominent, yet also controversial figures of 21st century post-Soviet politics. His rollercoaster political path with its ups and downs have made many people eager again to speculate and anticipate what the next phase of his political path will be. However, in this analysis, we take a step back from recent political events in which Saakashvili has been

embroiled. Instead, we will examine the track record of accomplishment and failures of his decade-long rule in Georgia following the Rose Revolution of 2003, after which he ruled the country as President between 2004-2007 and 2008-2013. In the light of explicitly contentious assessments of, and growing interests towards, his political legacy in Georgia, we will attempt to provide an objective, sober and balanced analysis of his two tenures in power.

To this end, we will analyse the main promises of Saakashvili's ascendance to power in 2004 and the role he played in the transformation of the state, economy and democracy of Georgia. Doing so, we will scrupulously examine the reforms that were implemented under Saakashvili's rule as well as the changes that took place in the country. At the same time, we will also analyse the structural shortcomings associated with these changes. a process-tracing method will be used to do empirical analysis and evaluation of the main outcomes of his presidency. In order to make causal inferences, we will mainly rely on secondary sources (English and Georgian), and international indexes, such as the Bertelsmann Transformation Index, Freedom House Nations in Transit Index, Transparency International Corruption Perception Index etc.

Our analysis will seek to answer the following research questions:

1. How did Georgia's transformative processes of democratisation, modernisation, economic development and state building develop under Saakashvili's presidency?
2. Why did Saakashvili's initial high support in 2004 dramatically decrease by the end of his second term in office in 2013?
3. Overall, could Georgia's development under Saakashvili and the legacy he left be served as an example for other countries in the region?

National Independence versus Societal Trauma: Can an Enslaved Nation Be Independent?

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Historical events may have dramatic and long-lasting effects on large groups of affected people. In some cases, entire nations have suffered the effects of what is referred to as societal, collective or cultural trauma. It is hardly surprising that the six years of a very brutal war, followed by over 40 years of communist rule would produce in the Polish society effects akin to those of severe trauma in individuals. In psychology, societal trauma encompasses various forms of traumatization that social groups experience as a result of historical events

that may cause emotional or physical injuries to many or most members of the community. These injuries are then passed down to the next generation even if the immediate causes of the trauma have been removed.

Societal and intergenerational traumas have been observed as a result of genocide, wars, slavery or systematic abuse of cultural, ethnic or religious groups. I argue that the exposure of Polish society, already traumatized by World War II and either Nazi or Soviet occupation, to communist rule resulted in societal trauma whose effects did not disappear with the collapse of the system in 1989.

Polish society, like all other societies that have been subjected to authoritarian rule, became highly dysfunctional. The societal response to trauma translated into behaviours that allowed people to survive political and psychological abuse and to adapt to it. While sociologists looking at post-communist societies often focus on the traumatogenic effects of change, especially the transformation to market economy after 1989 (cf. Sztopka 2004, 2010), I am more interested in the traumatic outcomes of adaptation to the anomie of life in communist times. To repeat Gessen's (2017) question about Russia: "How do societies absorb trauma?" She suggests that Russians took on the habit of suffering, repeating the damage generation after generation, longing for someone to take responsibility for them and tell them what to do. Poles suffered differently but they too came out of the traumas of the 20th century seriously damaged, a particular version of *homo sovieticus*, with more complexes, more victim mentality and with a specific flavour of messianic tendencies added by the influence of the Catholic church. Like all survivors of trauma, they have been shaped by their experience and cannot shake off its influence even though the Soviet Block crumbled 30 years ago and Poland has become a member of the EU and NATO, something my generation did not believe would happen during our lifetime. External independence, social freedoms and democratic order are not enough for a nation to prosper when people are internally enslaved by the damaging influence of historical trauma. They believe in conspiracy theories that support their victimhood, they need to find targets for their pent up anger and feeling of inadequacy. They tolerate dishonesty in their leaders, they hate those who are different – in skin colour, religion or political views. They suffer from addiction to alcohol and drugs. They need to feel special and will follow those leaders who tell them that their past sufferings make them special. Orwell summed up the essence of dictatorship in the motto to his novel *1984*: "He who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past." (Orwell 1946). The return to the past in Polish politics makes perfect sense from the social psychology point of view. Until we address traumas of the past, and

this includes Polish involvement in both heroic deeds and atrocities, we risk perpetuating the cycle of abuse and repeated victimization (cf. Stroinska et al 2014). The healing will not happen until we tell ourselves that it is OK to seek 'therapy', reset our values, apologize to those we hurt, and start seeing ourselves as survivors rather than eternal victims. Unfortunately, so far, Polish language does not even have a fitting equivalent for the word *survivor*.

The Political Elites of Belarus in the 19th-20th Centuries: Origin, Composition, National Self-Identification

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Representation of the most important theories of the formation of political elites, characterizing the most important scenarios for the exchange of elites in the context of systemic changes. The structure, social and national origin of political elites in Belarus at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The influence of political repression in a totalitarian state on the exchange of elites and their mentality. Sources of recruitment of new political elites in the western regions of Soviet Belarus after September 17, 1939.

The political elite of Soviet Belorussia after World War II. Aliens from the east and locals. Group "partisans". Influence of competition between various elite groups on the nature and direction of the development of Soviet Belarus. The national identity of the elite of Soviet Byelorussia and its relation to the idea of creating a new national community – the Soviet people. Comparative analysis with other republics of the Soviet Union.

The political elite of Soviet Byelorussia during the "stagnation" of Leonid Brezhnev. Competitive groups of elites: "partisans", "Minsk industrial group", "Brezhnev's clients". The influence of rivalry between groups of elites on the nature of development of Belarus. Party nomenclature and economic elites. Intergenerational reproduction of the nomenklatura elite. Comparative analysis with other republics of the Soviet Union.

Belarusian political elites after "perestroika" and the proclamation of independence of Belarus in 1991. Partial reproduction within the generation of the political elite through the conversion of political capital into economic capital. Part of the former political elite transformed into a new economic elite. Partial vertical reproduction as the result of professional progression from the sub-elite. Construction of the presidential administration. Comparative analysis with other countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Regional elite of Belarus. Comparison with the Polish regional elite.

Opposition elite as a political counter-elite in Belarus.

Other Days, Other Ways: the Transformation of the Romanian Labour Market and Social Security System in the Context of Globalization and Workforce Migration

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The Romanian labour market struggles with the deep impact of transformations and democratization due to globalization and workforce migration. Romanian labour legislation is forced to seek legal solutions for the new, atypical forms of employment, and in the same time, for the challenges raised by the globalization of industrial production and the migration of the workforce. Also in the last decade there has risen the concept of flexicurity in the labour relations, launched by the EU, which also affects the Romanian labour and social security legislation. The relation between labour and social security legislation is profound, as a modern social security system is needed to provide adequate income support, encourage employment and facilitate labour market mobility.

Workforce migration is one of the greatest of the contemporary problems in the field of labour relations and employment, based on the fact that about 2,5 million Romanian citizens are working abroad, and the freedom of the movement of the workers is one of the main values and targets of the European Union. In this context, the transformation of the Romanian labour law and social security law has to be flexible enough to suit the new requirements. At the same time we have to observe, that the transformation of the labour market is happening in a much wider context of economic and social transformation of the whole Romanian society.

In our presentation we propose to track these problems, to analyse these transformations of the Romanian society, from the perspective of the labour market, workforce migration and globalization.

The Independence of Cultural Representation: A Case Study on the Use of Space in a Cultural Festival

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The study presents the spatial policies practiced in the cultural festival “Hungarian Cultural Days of Cluj”,

that can be interpreted both as part of the spatial self-representation of the participating/organizing community and as part of the city’s well-contoured cultural strategy presenting Cluj-Napoca in terms of a ‘city of events’, a dynamic, creative and multicultural place. Following an introductory conceptual chapter offering general considerations on the use of space in public events and the importance of (cultural) festivals both in community representation and settlement branding, the case study offers a general presentation of the event to be analysed, focusing on the specific spatial practices of the eight different editions of the Hungarian Cultural Days of Cluj and their possible interpretations.

Azerbaijan Foreign Policy over 25 years

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In 2016 Azerbaijan marked its 25th anniversary of post-Soviet independence. Over the past quarter-century, Azerbaijani foreign policy has been strongly influenced and shaped by the challenges and opportunities that have arisen as a result of its geography. An independent foreign policy has always been a guiding principle of Azerbaijan’s international relations, viewed as a central pillar of national security. Azerbaijan has pursued a balanced foreign policy, avoiding undue external influences and maintaining opportunities for cooperation with all regional and international actors. Today Azerbaijan is neither a member of NATO, nor a member of CSTO. Azerbaijan became member of Non-aligned movement. Azerbaijan’s foreign policy also has a very strong regional focus: the country attaches major importance to relations with neighboring countries (including trilateral partnerships, which are also considered a geopolitical necessity. Along with the above-mentioned key characteristics and principles of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy, it should also be highlighted that the restoration of territorial integrity remains a major priority for Azerbaijan.

The Structure of Government Elites within the Regime of Alaksandr Lukashenka

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The paper reveals the structure and trends within Belarus government elites in the period between 1994 and 2017. Belarus remains one of the least free and under-reformed post-Soviet countries yet it seems to have a strong functional bureaucracy. Seventy-eight percent of ministers and

state committee chairs are employed according to their professional career background. The share of appointees with specialized education rose from 71.9% to 86% during Lukashenka's presidency. So the author assumes, that in the case of unrest or political transition, a bureaucratic apparatus composed of specialized professionals could play a stabilizing role. This research also sheds light on the indigenization and westernization of Nomenklatura. The number of officials born in Belarus increased from 71.9% to 81.4%, and those from western Horadnia region increased from 4% to 20%. At the same time, the research revealed, that the Government continues to have an inadequate representation of women (<5%), parties (<11%); meanwhile, it has an increasing presence of professional military (from 15% to 20%).

The Rebirth of Polishness in the Baltic States as a Result of the Crisis and Collapse of the USSR: The Case of Lithuania

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In his speech, Marcin Wakar Ph.D. revealed how the policy of perestroika and glasnost influenced the revival of Polishness in the Baltic republics of the Soviet Union. On the other side, he would also like to present, how it affected the announcement of the declaration of independence by Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. In his deliberations, he will primarily use the example of Lithuania as a country in which the Polish minority has created the strongest organizational structures. The aim of the speech is to point out the process of their creation. The content of the speech was prepared based on scientific publications of other researchers, press articles, but most of all on his own archival surveys, questionnaires and interviews with representatives of Polish organizations in Lithuania.

Collective Trauma and Historical Policy

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The paper addresses the consequences of the collective trauma as seen from the post-colonial perspective. The responses to the long period of dependency and the devastating experience of totalitarianisms are analyzed as factors triggering historical policy in Central-Eastern Europe. The intensity of identity construction is considered as a compensation for its inferior status and for being an object of international relations.

OSCE Activity in Ukraine: a Challenge for the European Community

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The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is the largest and most inclusive regional security organization in the world that is functioning under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations (UN). Its unique feature is that it includes not only EU and NATO member countries, but also CIS and CSTO countries. The OSCE as a project was created during the Cold War to be a bridge between East and West. After institutional transformations it has become an autonomous organization, which includes field operations. Therefore it was an absolutely reasonable decision to involve it firstly in the conflict in Georgia and secondly in Ukraine. Military tensions in Caucasus and Eastern Europe have become unexpectedly challenging for the Organization, at the same time providing an opportunity to demonstrate its relevance.

The OSCE has become the only impartial actor trying to mediate between the conflicting parties.

Although its Special Monitoring Mission was established in Ukraine being approved by the consensus among all participant states, reality shows that some opposing parties aren't interested in the correct performance of OSCE functions. Being a consensus-based organization, the OSCE clearly faces the problem of East and West divide in the process of making decisions.

That could easily be noticed starting from the reaction of different countries on the international conflict in Ukraine. At the beginning Russia was not considered as a threat.

In January 2014 some Polish experts stated that "a direct armed threat now remains highly improbable". US experts emphasized that "no part of wider Europe is seen as a source of instability or direct threat to the US".

A strong response also came from Poland and the Baltic states in the spring. In early March 2014, they requested an emergency meeting of the NATO Council under article 4 to consult the case of the Russian threat.

The Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Bulgaria first of all wanted to safeguard their economic ties with Russia and avoid existing benefits, being heavily dependent on Russian energy.

Needless to say that they were also critical towards sanctions against Russia.

At the same time the USA, Baltic states and Poland were mostly focused on NATO and military reassurance. Germany managed to ensure 28 EU members spoke with one voice and argued for a strong OSCE role to defuse the crisis.

The first challenge for the international community was the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation which broke one of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act – the respect for territorial integrity. Secondly, confidence in a strong position of Western countries towards Russia was questioned leading to the reduction of trust to key democratic principles. Thirdly, the war in Ukraine is going to become a long-term frozen conflict in the Eastern part of the country, being a source of a possible threat for Ukraine itself and the whole European community.

The Big Hub: Azerbaijan's Infrastructure Projects

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Azerbaijan's economic interest used to be focused solely on its hydrocarbon resources and their distribution. In recent years, however, Baku has actively engaged in various infrastructural projects, significantly extending the scope of its partners. There are three crucial vectors of president Aliyev's policy in that field: European, regional and Asian. While the wish to maintain effective cooperation with Russia led to the failure of the previous European-oriented Nabucco project in 2013, current ideas in this direction have much better chances of being implemented. Additionally, because of its geographical position, Azerbaijan plays a vital role in facilitating Russian-Iranian economic cooperation. Finally, the only branch of the New Silk Road which bypasses Russia goes through Azeri territory, making cooperation with Central Asia states another substantial direction of Baku's geopolitical interests.

Political Approach to Decentralization in Post-Maidan Ukraine

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As one of their first decisions, the new leadership of Post-Maidan Ukraine adopted the Concept of self-governance reform and a territorial authority organization in Ukraine. The document presented a number of key directions of planned actions under conditions that when legislators admitted to the existing problems in the field of local self-governance system and were alarmed that the functioning of local authorities in the majority of territorial communities did not provide support for favourable living conditions needed for the self-realization and development of people, protection of their rights or qualitative public services. Therefore,

the article poses a question on the effectiveness of state policy on the implementation of major declarations of this concept and makes an attempt to analyze changes that have taken place in Ukrainian regions since 1 April 2014 (date of the Concept adoption). Particular attention is paid to case studies in three Ukrainian regions – Rivne, Dnipro and Zaporizzia. Such a selection of Ukrainian regions gives an opportunity to follow differences and similarities in regional approaches to reforming processes in western and eastern parts of Ukraine. To achieve that, the paper puts emphasis on the role of key political and social actors be it local authorities, non-governmental organizations, or Academia as well as on the level of their readiness for concerted efforts on the implementation of necessary changes. Finally, the article summarizes the first steps of national and international policies on transformation of Ukrainian self-governance and evaluates implemented strategies as well as the position of major actors toward the necessary changes in the nearest future. Additionally, a number of recommendations on further movement in a given direction with active participation of all interested sides of the process is given based on the author's field-work in these three Ukrainian regions. Last but not least, the survey makes an attempt to present the current state of EU-Ukrainian cooperation trends on the matter of self-governance and implementation of European good practices in Ukrainian reforming attempts as well as a willingness of Ukrainian actors to adapt to a European experience on the matter.

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