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# **WESTWARD GEOPOLITICAL ORIENTATION AND PUBLIC OPINION: EXPLAINING VISIONS ACROSS POST-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES**

## **SUMMARY**

The article provides an analysis of different geopolitical and geoeconomic options of post-communist countries and confronts the character of post-communist regimes with the public opinion on basic geopolitical and geoeconomic orientations of the countries concerned. The post-communist regimes in mid-1990s are assessed in terms of democratisation and economic liberalisation. It is stressed that westward geopolitical and geoeconomic options were much demanding in respect of political and economic reforms and western-style adjustments and adaptations of behaviour of political and economic elites and different groups of citizens. Eastward options were linked up with associations with Russia and Eurasian countries. Statistical analysis concerned with the public opinion in nineteen post-communist countries indicates the importance of inherited higher economic development level and progress in democratisation for the public support of the westward (i.e. EU) orientation.

**KEY WORDS:** post-communist countries, geopolitical orientations, public opinion

## **1. Introduction**

*“Any European state may apply to become a Member of the Union. It shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the assent of the European Parliament, which shall act by absolute majority of its component members”* (Article 49 of the Amsterdam Treaty).

September 2001 has certainly become an important temporal maker in the geography of public opinion. On Thursday September 13th 2001, some swift repor-

ters in Brussels and Prague spoke about shadows that were cast by the horrible terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington D.C. on the fifth European Union – Ukraine summit held in the Crimean sea resort of Yalta (*Hospodářské noviny*, 2001, no. 178). A place that was made famous by the April 1945 meeting of the leaders of the victorious powers at the end of the Second World War who sealed the fate of post-war Europe and already headed at long-lasting geopolitical and geoeconomic division of the continent. However, there have been more symbolic messages implied in the recent reports on the Ukrainian summit that relate to the major theme of this paper concerned with the geography of public opinion on European integration. First, the reports indicated that an important debated issue at the summit was a “new division of the continent” in three or even more categories of states. A seemingly new division of the continent in terms of different options that the post-communist states have in the process of eastern EU enlargement or, at least, in further political and economic associations with the enlarged EU. In other words, it seemed that the Ukrainian political elite did not believe that the above-quoted article 49 of the Treaty on European Union could have any significance in the case of their country. Second, in spite of this, it appeared that the Ukraine political representation expressed her wish to upgrade the current framework of Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU in an attempt to strengthen weak economic relations and allow Ukrainian products easier access to the EU market. Third, the reports also indicated that the current Belgian EU presidency gave at the summit considerable emphasis to the need to progress in democratic consolidation, economic liberalisation and restructuring of Ukrainian economy in order to enable a more realistic vision about the orientation of this large east European state towards the western core of the continent represented by the EU and some of the associated candidate countries.

Looking at these very recent reports on geopolitical visions, orientations and opinions after a decade of post-communist transformation of the space of largely Soviet Heritage, we may establish that it is seemingly also necessary to look a little back in time at mid-1990s and re-assess:

- (i) *different options* that the countries have had in their basic geopolitical and geoeconomic considerations in the first years after the collapse of the former Soviet orbit in 1989–1991,
- (ii) *post-communist regimes in terms of democratisation and economic liberalisation* realised by the political elites in the mid-1990s, and
- (iii) *visions and opinions of the public* (i.e. the electorate) in the post-communist countries concerning basic geopolitical and geoeconomic orientations of the countries in the mid-1990s when “new divisions” in the eastern part of Europe emerged.

Accordingly, we attempt in this paper to confront different geopolitical and geoeconomic options with the character of post-communist regimes in mid-1990s and will look more specifically at the public opinion on basic geopolitical and geoeconomic orientation in the countries concerned. The structure of the paper is as follows. First we seek in section two of the paper to indicate different options

the countries had with regard to their geopolitical and geoeconomic orientations. We also assess in section two the character of the post-communist regimes in mid-1990s in terms of democratic consolidation and liberalisation of internal and external economic relations. In section three, we provide a statistical model in order to indicate a number of factors explaining differences in orientation on the EU integration as expressed in the public opinions of the post-communist countries concerned. Finally, in a concluding section we draw major conclusions resulting from our analytic explanatory effort and we also reflect on importance of geography of public opinion on European integration.

## **2. Geopolitical transition and options from the West (European Union) and the East**

The recent reports from the Ukraine indicate that the post-1989 geopolitical transition (Taylor and Flint, 2000) of some of post-communist countries in the fast area of Soviet Heritage is still not finished. In view of the unfinished process of geopolitical transition the following four points have to be stressed.

First, geopolitical considerations were particularly constraining in this part of the world after 1945 since the Soviet Union largely dictated political and economic changes in this eastern part of the continent. Yugoslavia followed since 1948 an independent course of the Soviet-dominated orbit, and later also followed by Albania (Archer, 1994). However, geopolitical constraints have changed or significantly relaxed since the revolutionary events in 1989–1991 and the fast area of the set of more than twenty-five old, new or restored post-communist polities and economies has become affected by significant geopolitical crosscurrents. From the perspective of geopolitical and geoeconomic transition, we may say that the post-communist countries have been cross-pressured. Each of the post-communist countries is in a location that exposes it to significant international crosscurrents. Some of the currents are positive for democratic consolidation and economic liberalisation, other currents are negative or ambiguous.

Second, different geopolitical and geoeconomic settings within the post-communist part of the continent provide different opportunities and constraints, although not determinative. However, after the fall of communist regimes, the political elites have had the difficult task to design new geopolitical codes suitable to the old, new or restored post-communist states. The task of developing basic components of operating code of the post-communist elites in foreign political and economic relations has appeared difficult. External pressures have been mediated through internal political and economic processes, and democratisation initiatives and creativity of domestic political elites. The character of political and economic regimes that the post-communist elites have been willing and able to create in 1989–1995, has significantly determined specific geopolitical and geoeconomic positions of the countries concerned. It must be noted that the war-driven fragmentation of former Yugoslav federation significantly complicated democratisation and economic liberalisation processes in all successor states except Slovenia (EBRD, 1999).

Third, since the revolutionary period of 1989–1991, the important deliberated and durable impulses have come from the west, i.e. from the EU and have been largely supportive for democratisation and economic liberalisation in most of the post-communist countries (Dostál, 1997, 1998a, 1998b). By far the most powerful incentive has been the prospect of EU accession. With Emerson (1997), Lane and Ersson (1996), Preston (1997) and many other observers of the current role of the EU in redrawing the political and economic map of Europe, we must underline that the EU is a key institutional vehicle able to make the dynamics of European integration persistent and strong. Accordingly, there is little surprise in the strong democratising impacts of the EU on the transformation process in the space of post-communist countries. From the east, there has been a less structured and predictable cross-pressure. But, nonetheless, the eastern cross-pressure has been producing some constraints on the process of post-communist political and economic transformation and seems to be felt in those countries located closest to Russia. It also seems that the influences from Russia have been largely arising as side effects of internal turmoil in the country (see Sapir, 1992; Vasiliev, 1994).

The two directions of pressures and influences have provided a framework of basic geopolitical and geoeconomic options that the post-communist countries have had in the Soviet Heritage space. For each of the post-communist country one can indicate a number of fundamental options that respective political and economic elites have had available in their task to create basic political and economic aspects of post-communist regimes (democratisation and economic liberalisation) and associated geopolitical codes. However, more complex analyses concerned with fundamental political and economic decisions of governing national elites have to incorporate basic geopolitical and geoeconomic orientations of public opinion in the post-communist countries involved. Because sentiment describing political opinions and mass interest articulations obviously support and strengthen or weaken and undermine the geopolitical and geoeconomic efforts of the national political elites and as such can provide or withdraw necessary fundament on which political stability of each state is based (see also Deutsch, 1957).

## **2.1. Different geopolitical and geoeconomic options**

One way of assessing the extent to which western or eastern cross-pressures have influenced the geopolitical and geoeconomic orientation of post-communist countries is to draw attention to basic options that emerged in the beginning of the 1990s. In principle, there have been the following more or less realistic options for integration:

- 1) a country may decide to follow the high route aiming at a fully-fledged EU membership in relatively short term;
- 2) a country can consider a less demanding form of integration, such as an agreement on free trade with the EU;
- 3) a country may decide to re-establish political and economic relations in the space of the former CMEA or in a smaller area of former Soviet Union;

- 4) a country can consider to adopt development strategies of so-called Asian Tigers or Oil Producers;

There obviously are also other basic options, but they seem less realistic and relevant when we are concerned with the post-communist countries in Europe and post-soviet Eurasia. It is clear that the first two options are associated with a westwards orientated design of geopolitical codes. The other two options represent eastern orientations.

It has appeared since the beginning of the post-communist transformation that the first and the second option have been largely acceptable for political and economic elites in a majority of the countries concerned. The first option has materialised in the form of Europe Association Agreements (EAA). During the period December 1991 – June 1996 there were signed EAAs of the EU with ten post-communist countries (EC, 2000). The EAAs cover geoeconomic issues of trade, cooperation areas including industry, customs, transports, and environment. The agreements also cover geopolitical issues of political dialog, legal approximation and some security areas. Importantly, they aim to establish in short term a free-trade area between the EU and the associated country on the basis of reciprocity, but applied in an asymmetric way, it is more rapid liberalisation on the EU side than on the side of associated country. Trade between the EU and the associated countries increased significantly, not least because these economies re-directed their trade from the former CMEA countries. As early as in 1994, the EU has become the most important export market originating in the associated countries, absorbing more than half of their total export. The EAAs have recognised the geopolitical and geoeconomic intention of the associated countries to become members of the EU. This objective has been later confirmed by the applications of individual countries (see also Mayhew, 1998). However, it must also be noted that when the political representations and elites of the ten associated post-communist states decided to follow this geopolitical and geoeconomic option of an intensive European integration it also inevitably implied considerable disciplining impacts. At the EU summit of Copenhagen of June 1993 the political representations of the 12 member states agreed that accession can take place as soon as an associated country is able to assume the obligations of membership and satisfy the economic and political conditions required. The obligations are well-known as “Copenhagen criteria” and specify in a general formulation what candidate countries must achieve:

- (i) stability of institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities,
- (ii) the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces of the EU, and
- (iii) the ability to take on the obligations of full EU membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

In short, by the mid-1996, it was clear to both the political elites of the post-communist countries and the public that for some countries this option is already a realistic one. On the other hand, however, it also became clear that eventual membership necessarily implies far-reaching adjustments and adaptation of political and

economic institutions and also of behaviour of the political and economic elites and different interest groups of citizens (see further Preston, 1997).

The second option is by definition much less demanding in respect to political and economic reforms and western-style behavioural adaptations. This option is one that has been open, for example, to the Ukraine, as we mentioned above, and to some other post-soviet states (EC, 1999). The EU signed Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with most of the New Independent States (NIS). The PCAs do not provide for preferential trade treatment, but give the NIS most-favoured-nation status that was accorded to the former Soviet Union in 1989. All NIS are eligible for the generalised system of preferences that offers tariff reductions or duty exemptions. The PCAs do not hold out any prospect of accession to the EU, but include agreements on trade, competition policy and investment, and also on democracy and human rights. The PCAs were concluded with Russia, the Ukraine and Moldova in 1994, with Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus in 1995 and initiated with Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

The third option open for post-communist countries has been the re-establishment of political and economic relations in the space of the former CMEA or in a smaller area of former Soviet Union (EBRD, 1996; Kumar, 1996). For a majority of the political and economic elites of post-communist countries this option appeared as little realistic. The creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 basically opened this option for a large number of the post-soviet states (Dostál, 1993: 111–112). Already in the very beginning of the existence of the CIS, Vavilov and Vjugin claimed that “the republic leaders view the creation of the CIS as a cover and an opportunity to win time to strengthen their own power and be first to introduce national currency, using the free rider effect to their advantage” (1993: 104). It was clear that the CIS never could resemble the former COMECON (CMEA). Since then, indeed, the CIS did not develop as an effective geoeconomic and geopolitical compact. The CIS has been used as a more general framework for economic discussions and taking multilateral measures in such organisational forms as Interstate Economic Committee (October 1994) or the Interstate Monetary Committee (May 1995). However, discussing modalities on the establishment of a Payments Union (September 1993) have been limited to bilateral dealings (Kaiser, 1997). In 1994, the Kazak leader Nazarbayev made an unsuccessful attempt to initiate so-called Euro-Asian Union. However, the CIS framework facilitated, in October 1996, a summit in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) attended by Russia, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan “to warn the Afgan Taliban that any incursion into CIS territory would be firmly resisted” (Kaiser, 1997: 58). On the one hand, this illustrates certain flexibility of the CIS framework. On the other hand, it also shows that this option can seemingly only provide weak and little formalised ways of multilateral geoeconomic and geopolitical cooperation. Instead, bilateralism appears to provide more room for cooperation in major parts of the post-soviet space. Interestingly, much later in October 2000 and under the Putin presidency, Russia, Kazakstan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan agreed on formation of an Euro-Asian economic

community. It is also illustrative to note that in the autumn of 2000 some other states of the original CIS have attempted to build an economic association in the southern rim of the former Soviet Union rich in natural resources. This geoeconomic compact is intended to facilitate geoeconomic linkages from the oil, natural gas and some other rich resources in regions in post-soviet Central Asia and the Caspian Sea region towards the western industrialised countries including the EU (*Hospodářské noviny*, 2000, no. 118). This emerging geoeconomic compact appears to include Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Ukraine and Moldova.

Fourth, there is the option of a largely independent geopolitical and geoeconomic position. Any adoption of such a position would only be realistic if the economic base of the country concerned would be very strong. There are basically two variants of this option. The variant of Asian Tigers would be based on rapidly increasing productivity supported by high level of flexibility and adaptability of labour force and a very active role of state in its import-substituting and export-orientated industrialisation strategies and trade policy (Dicken, 1998). It seems that the political and economic elites of the countries concerned did not and still do not have capacities to follow this very demanding geoeconomic and geopolitical option. Interestingly, this variant is also close in some respects to so-called “Chinese way” of economic reform and development (Bosworth and Ofer, 1995: 39–43). It refers to “China’s strategy of pursuing economic reform without political change” and thereby avoiding “a daunting ‘dual revolution’, attempting and historical transformation of the economy while at the same time trying to build stable and effective democracies out of the ruins of a single-party dictatorship. Therefore it is possible to view China’s continuing dictatorship as a form of government well-suited to the implementation of economic policies that an electorate would not choose for itself, or that an unstable democracy could nor successfully undertake” (Walder, 1995: 975). But, one can ask how stable can China’s “developmental dictatorship” be and what specific conditions are in the large China and that are to be missed in the post-soviet countries. It seems that the success of sustained economic growth is in China, because it has undertaken extensive *de facto* privatisation combined with a long-term tendency to disperse industrial ownership across local jurisdictions served to heighten the interest and experience of local cadres in economic activities. Further, it is claimed that the Chinese family emerged from the period of Mao collectivism with a much higher capacity to sustain small-scale entrepreneurship than the Russian family. At a more general level, the Chinese case suggests that a transformation economy “must alter incentives not merely for individuals and firms but for government agencies and government officials themselves, for the behaviour of the latter can have enormous economic consequences” (Walder, 1995: 978). In short, however, it seems that specific Chinese culture, the Chinese diaspora, the impacts from Hong Kong have served as valuable sources of knowledge and investment and as important bridges to the world economy. This points out to quantitative and qualitative resources that no one of the post-soviet countries has at its disposal. Moreover, the so-called Chinese way is obviously incompatible with the westwards political and economic transformations that are anticipated by the status of the EU membership.

Finally, there is also the variant of Oil Producers. The evidence suggest that in wealthy oil and gas producing countries the political and economic elites can base the geoeconomic linkages on a narrow spectrum of exports, avoid the complexities of large scale industrialisation and industrial labour force, and reduce or eliminate the need for taxation, and other complex burdens of an advanced country with “a diverse and interrelated economy that becomes increasingly difficult for authoritarian regimes to control” (Huntington, 1991: 65). In rich oil producing countries revenues accrue to the state and can in part be redistributed and used in a trade-off between state support and democracy. It is also clear that in the former Soviet orbit there is still not a country that has had the capacity and opened natural resources enabling the political and economic elite to choose this specific option.

## **2.2. A “westward” transition: democratisation and economic liberalisation**

Preceding overview of the basic geopolitical and geoeconomic options available to the post-communist political and economic elites clearly indicates that there is in fact only one successful option open. It is the so-called “westward” transition (see also Dostál, 1997, 1998a, 1998b) which is the first option discussed above. The option involves that a high route of the post-communist transformation is chosen aiming at a full-fledged EU membership in a relatively short term. It is clear that this implies in accordance with the so-called Copenhagen criteria that the political and economic elites of the countries concerned are willing and able to pursue more or less simultaneously democratisation and economic liberalisation.

Many observers of the early post-communist transformation (cf. Gelb and Gray, 1991; Aslund, 1994) have claimed that there is a general positive (i.e. facilitating) impact of genuine democratisation on the process of liberalisation of internal and external economic relations. There is such a general impact because “a free economy is embedded in a democratic political order, characterized by the free competition of political forces and ideas” (Kornai, 1990: 23). This claim underlines the need for legitimacy of the post-communist successor regimes. Democratisation gives the measures of economic liberalisation the necessary legitimacy and increases the credibility of the general economic liberalisation. There is a special attitude among the citizens towards the state institutions and policies when the successor regime has a large degree of legitimacy, “meaning that the regime is accepted as valid in a moral sense” (Lane and Ersson, 1994: 194). Thus, post-communist regimes having a considerable degree of legitimacy can easily introduce far-reaching economic changes and ask the citizens to accept economic sacrifices associated with the transformational slump (cf. Linz and Stepan argue that “the issue for modern democracies is not the creation of a *market*, but the creation of an *economic society*” – 1996: 435). The logic of these arguments implies that a coherent regulatory institutional environment and the rule of law are required to transform etatist-socialist command economies into economic societies and market economies. This is exactly the main combination of institutional demands underlying the Copenha-



gen criteria. It is clear that a key priority has to be the creation of democratic regulatory state power.

Constitutional engineers of emerging post-communist political elites of the countries concerned have been taking over or adjusting communist constitutions or drawing new constitutions (cf. Lane, 1996). However, in all post-communist countries concerned the old, adjusted or new constitutions establish basic legal and regulatory infrastructure and, importantly, rules of the game between legislature, executive and head of state. We assume that the consolidation of democracy can be measured and will show a positive relationship with a general institutional measure indicating difference in the set of post-communist countries in terms of their progress in economic liberalisation. We use as a measure indicating the progress in *de facto consolidation of democratisation* the well-known data on the *de facto* respect for political rights and civil liberties from the 1993, 1994 and 1995 provided by Freedom House surveys (variable DEMO9395). The scores on political rights and civil liberties have been compiled by a large team of Freedom House associates. The concept of political and civil rights is indicated by the basic proposition that “freedom is the chance to act spontaneously in a variety of fields outside the control of government and other centres of potential domination”. Democratic political rights are seen as providing room for the free participation of citizens in political affairs, i.e. for choosing policy-makers who will make “binding decision affecting the national, regional and local community” (Ryan, 1993: 77). This is in accordance with the well-known conception of democracy developed by Dahl (1982) who emphasises both participation and contestability as the very minimal ingredients of any democratic order. Operationally, the concepts of political rights and civil liberties are applied on an inter-subjective basis in the Freedom House team to classify countries annually on two complementary scales. The overall annual score of democratisation for each country is derived from two summary scores, each varying from 1 to 7 (cf. Ryan, 1993). Thus, the individual scores of eleven items on a checklist of political rights and thirteen items on one of civil liberties (cf. Freedom Review, 1995) were summed up and re-scaled in the survey to obtain two arrays of the data indicating the two sub-dimensions of democratisation. We added the two data arrays in order to obtain a single summarizing scale taking simultaneously into account the differences in both the scope and intensity of democratisation throughout the twenty-five countries in 1993, 1994 and 1995. We standardized the summarizing scale DEMO9395 around its average and expressed the scores in units of the standard deviation, describing the overall variation in the set of the twenty-five countries (see score DEMO9395 in Table 1).

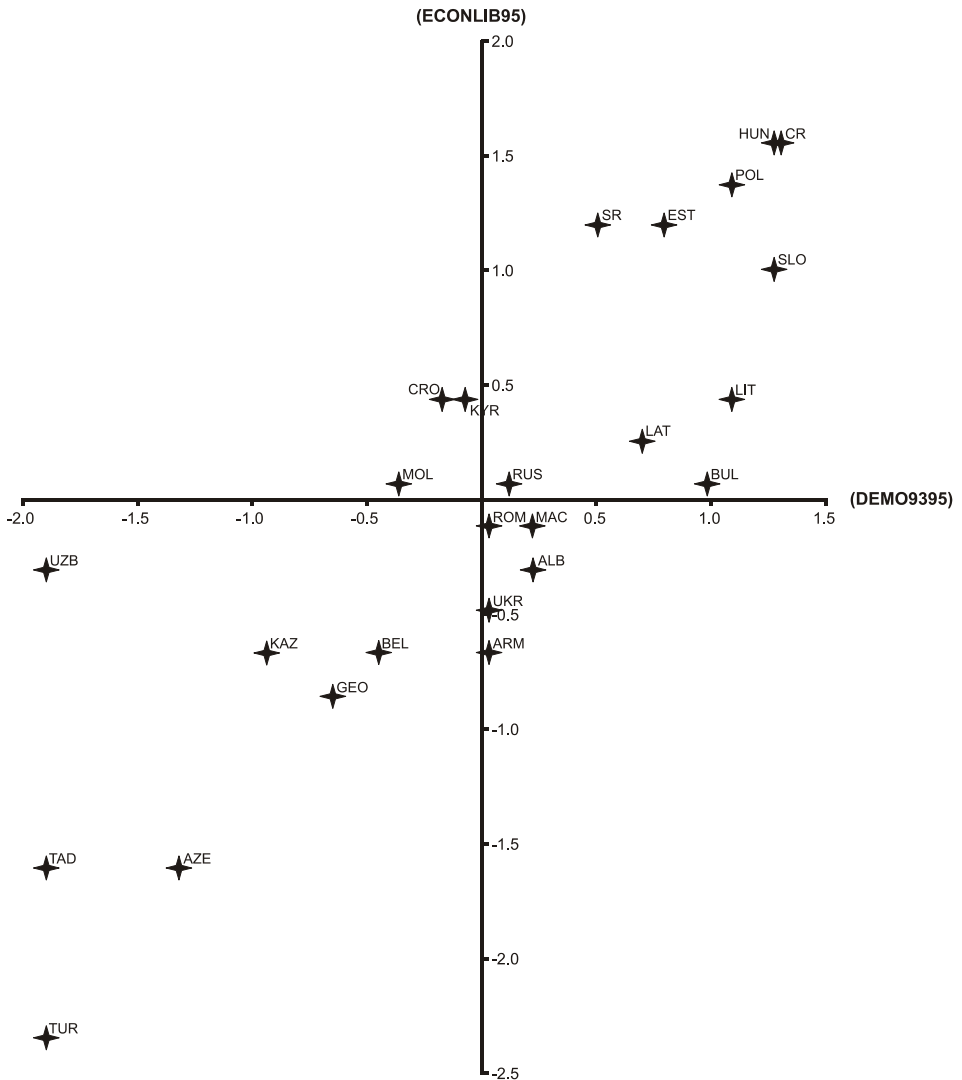
We conceptualise economic liberalisation as a process of *de-etatisation* of the post-communist national economies. The overarching role of the state as owner of large and small enterprises, director of the allocation of production factors and regulator of prices and domestic and foreign trade relations is being reduced in the process of liberalisation of internal and external economic relations (Kornai, 1990, 1995). Accordingly, we use the results of mid-1994 and mid-1995 comparative surveys made by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD,

1994: 10ff, 1995: 11ff). The comparative approach of EBRD is wide enough to cover major subfields of economic liberalisation ranging from (i) large and (ii) small privatisation and (iii) enterprise restructuring to (iv) price liberalisation and competition, (v) trade and foreign exchange system, (vi) banking reform and securities markets, (vii) non-bank financial institutions and (viii) effectiveness of legal rules on investment. The EBRD team fulfilled the arduous task of giving numbers for each of the eight separate checklist item, allowing for quantification of the economic liberalisation in each of the subfields. Obviously, also these indications are not purely mechanical and reflect necessarily the judgment of a team of experts referring to individual countries annually. We combined the original scores ranging from 1 to 4 on each of the subfields for 1994 and 1995 and standardized them in order to obtain a single dimension ECONLIB95 economic liberalisation across our set of twenty-five countries. Also the ECONLIB95 scores are standardized around their mean and expressed in standard deviation units.

It is evident that the main argument of a clear correlation between the process of democratisation and economic liberalisation is not in the case of the twenty-five post-communist countries *a priori* watertight, and should be checked factually. We accept this crucial institutional imperative as a *base-line* hypothesis for our statistical examination. Accordingly, we argue that viewing the democratisation and the economic liberalisation in the dynamic terms of a *gradual regime change* instead of a “qualitative jump”, allows for *empirical* identification of the positions of the twenty-five countries on the dimensions of increasing democratisation and economic liberalisation. Further, we have again to point out that relative positions of individual post-communist countries on the two dimensions clearly show (see Figure 1) whether the political and economic elites were able to build up in mid-1990s more western-style political and economic regimes compatible with the first two geopolitical and geoeconomic options discussed in section 2.1, or whether the progress in democratisation and economic liberalisation was slow and more associated with the other two “eastern” options.

It is not accidental to place the dimension of democratisation in Figure 1 horizontally. Because, as we explained before, the scope and intensity of democratisation must be sufficient to make economic changes of the post-communist regimes credible, both in the sense of the necessary legitimacy in the countries concerned and in the sense of external credibility of the introduced institutional changes for foreign investors (cf. Aslund, 1994; Bosworth and Ofer, 1995; EBRD, 1996). Thus, we can conceptualise the economic liberalisation as a process that is to a great extent dependent on the democratisation process. There is a clear positive correlation between the measure indicating that 72 percent of the variation on the axis of ECONLIB95 is statistically determined by the variation on the axis of DEMO9395 (Pearson correlation coefficient  $r = 0.846$ ). Although we have used cross-sectional data, this evident relationship is in accordance with the claim of our institutional imperative that democratisation is supportive for the post-communist institutional transformation of the internal and external economic relations. The high correlation between the two dimensions appears in the overall pattern in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Democratization and Economic Liberalization in Twenty-Five post-Communist Countries



In the upper-right quadrant are the countries that have realized high levels of democratisation. These countries also appear to have progressed in economic liberalisation. The two ex equo highest ranking countries on the dimension of democratisation during the period 1993–1995 are Hungary and the Czech Republic.

These countries had also realized the similar highest level of economic liberalisation in 1995. The countries that belong to this group of countries are also Poland, Estonia and Slovenia. The political elites of these post-communist countries have chosen the high route of European integration summarised above in the first geopolitical and geoeconomic option. It is little surprising that the Economic Council in Luxembourg in December 1997 endorsed EU Commission recommendations to open negotiations with the five countries (and Cyprus). The actual negotiations take the form of a series of bilateral inter-governmental conferences between the EU member states and each of the candidate countries. Following detailed examinations of different chapters of the *acquis communautaire* (so-called screening) negotiations are proceeding with the candidate countries, chapter by chapter. It must be noted that this negotiation process demands high levels of compatibility and often similarity or identity in details of democratic and economic institutions, norms and procedures between the EU and the candidate countries involved (Mayhew, 1998; Preston, 1997; EC, 2000).

It is interesting to establish in Figure 1 the evident diversity in positions of the other five post-communist countries that also signed Europe Association Agreements. There is a great distance between Slovak Republic and Romania. It appears that the political elite in Romania was in mid-1990s significantly lagging behind the other four members of this group. This unfavourable position suggested that the geopolitical option of a high route European integration chosen by the Romanian political elite seemed to be less realistic than initially expected. It also appears that also Bulgaria, Latvia and Lithuania were significantly lagging in the economic liberalisation process. It is apparent that in the Slovak Republic the scope and intensity of democratisation does not correspond to the progress in economic liberalisation. It seems that Slovakia inherited from the period of post-communist Czechoslovakia (1990–1991) many of basic economic reforms. Indeed, it appears that despite some deterioration in the *de facto* respect for the political rights and civil liberties in this country, the Slovak political elite conceived the economic measure already introduced as largely irreversible.

Russia's position in Figure 1 is close to the average scores, yet on the positive sides of the two dimensions of early institutional transformation. However, both Vasiliev (1994) and Hanson (1996) have argued that Russian transformation of inherited political and economic institutions is highly problematic. Compared to the CIS economies, Russia's early transformation looks better. But, compared to the post-economies in East-Central Europe and the Baltic, Russia is looking unsuccessful, and this is raising questions on whether in this largest post-communist state the necessary "critical masses" of democratic and market measures have effectively been introduced. It is clear that in mid-1990s there were bleak prospects for the countries with an average progress in democratisation and economic liberalisation that they would have capacity to follow the high route of European integration, i.e. the first option discussed earlier. Instead, the public in these countries could anticipate reluctant progress in a westward transformation of the post-communist regimes concerned.

In the lower-left quadrant are the countries that have made little progress with democratisation and also have realized only modest levels of economic liberalisation. It appears that Turkmenistan shows the lowest rankings of the twenty-five post-communist countries on the two institutional dimensions and that also Tajikistan and Azerbaijan have still very low levels of democratisation and economic liberalisation. We have to point to the position of Uzbekistan. It is particularly interesting to see that this less-developed national economy has been making some progress in economic liberalisation thereby avoiding a pursuit for a corresponding level of democratisation. According to the Freedom House surveys, this country is classified as *not free* together with Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan. It seems that the Uzbek successor regime has made some attempts to follow to some extent the above discussed “Chinese way” of institutional reform, i.e. moving forward with some economic reforms yet blocking the process of democratisation (cf. also Bosworth and Ofer, 1995, 39–43). However, it is clear that also in Uzbekistan the progress of economic liberalisation is relatively modest. Its score on the measure ECONLIB95 is still well below the average of the twenty-five post-communist countries examined. However, as we already indicated above in section 2.1, it does not seem that these countries have had an other option open than to take part in the rather loose and often chaotic geopolitical and geoeconomic cooperation within the general framework of the CIS.

### **3. Explaining westward (EU) orientation in public opinion**

We have emphasised above that various geopolitical and geoeconomic options are not realistic in the view of the realised progress in democratisation and economic liberalisation. We have also stressed the importance of some structural characteristics of the various groups of the post communist countries. In this section we are concerned with the geography of public opinion and turn attention to the last group of questions with regard to the geography of public opinion and geopolitical visions of the public in the post-communist countries in mid-1990s. We can expect that the public in the countries concerned will have different basic orientations and feelings. We also can expect the public to show considerable realism and prefer geopolitical opinions that do not need to be in line with the geopolitical options chosen by the respective political elites. A certain part of the public can be inclined to believe that the future of their country lies in closer links with the EU, another part of the public can believe that the future the country lies in closer relations with Russia. We assume to identify the basic structure of this major geopolitical and geoeconomic division that tends to indicate how the post-communist polities have become affected by the two geopolitical crosscurrents.

Furthermore, the empirical relations and associated questions are translated into a causal order of numerous variables used in a multivariate model explaining the most important geopolitical and geoeconomic orientation in the public opinion, i.e. the westward orientation in the public opinion on the European Union. Unfortunately,

we can not use data that would show the public opinion in all twenty-five post-communist countries that we assess in terms of the democratisation and economic liberalisation processes. We can analyse public opinion data representing geopolitical visions and orientation in nineteen post-communist countries (see Table 1). However, given the composition of this smaller set of countries we still claim that the set is representing well the larger set of the twenty-five countries (see also Dostál, 1997, 1998b). Obviously, it is characteristic of this variable-oriented approach (cf. Ragin, 1987; Gould, 1970) that the same explanation must be applied to all of the nineteen

Table 1

Country	POP	DEMO9395	ECONLI95	EDEV	PEREU7
<i>Former Czechoslovakia:</i>					
Czech Republic (CR)	10.3	35	3.44	1.43	44
Slovak Republic (SR)	5.3	27	3.22	0.94	38
Poland (POL)	038.4	33	3.33	0.70	46
Hungary (HUN)	010.3	35	3.44	0.78	27
Romania (ROM)	022.8	22	2.44	-0.62	40
Bulgaria (BUL)	08.9	32	2.56	1.14	34
<i>Former Soviet Union:</i>					
Estonia (EST)	1.5	30	3.22	0.97	42
Latvia (LAT)	2.6	29	2.67	0.54	31
Lithuania (LIT)	3.7	33	2.78	0.07	25
Belarus (BEL)	10.2	17	2.11	0.41	6
Ukraine (UKR)	52.1	22	2.22		15
Moldova (MOL)	4.4	18	2.56	-0.80	n.a.
Russia (RUS)	148.0	23	2.56	1.17	12
Kazakstan (KAZ)	16.7	12	2.11	-0.29	4
Kyrgyzstan (KYR)	4.4	21	2.78	-1.25	n.a.
Uzbekistan (UZB)	20.3	2	2.33	-1.04	n.a.
Turkmenistan (TUR)	3.6	2	1.11	-1.87	n.a.
Tajikistan (TAD)	5.2	2	1.56	-1.53	n.a.
Georgia (GEO)	5.5	15	2.00	-0.05	11
Armenia (ARM)	3.3	22	2.11	0.36	4
Azerbaijan (AZE)	7.1	8	1.56	-0.78	n.a.
<i>Former Yugoslavia:</i>					
Slovenia (SLO)	2.0	35	3.11	1.22	52
Croatia (CRO)	4.7	20	2.78	0.54	27
Macedonia (MAC)	2.2	24	2.44	-0.84	39
Albania (ALB)	3.3	24	2.33	-1.67	46

POP = population size in millions

DEMO9395 = measure on political rights and civil liberties 1993–1995

(Freedom House assessment, see text)

ECONLI95 = measure on economic liberalisation in 1995 (EBRD assessment, see text)

EDEV = a standardized principal component score on inherited level of economic development and modernization (see Dostál, 1998a; 1998b)

n.a. = not available

PEREU7 = percentage of positive answers on future ties of the country to European Union (autumn of 1996; *Central and Eastern Eurobarometer*, no. 7)

countries of post-communist Eurasia. In other words, we have to assume that the variables and relations specified in the causal order of the general explanatory model have approximately similar meaning in each country concerned. The assumption about the similarity of a number of fundamental variables and their relations across all political, economic, and ethno-cultural cleavages in the vast region makes it possible to derive the above-formulated general questions concerning the conditions and processes of the current stage of the post-communist transformation in the region.

### **3.1. Public opinion variables and structural conditions**

Public opinion data on European integration are provided by Eurobarometer surveys. The Eurobarometer surveys are conducted on behalf of the European Commission (Reif and Inglehart, 1991; Niedermayer and Sinnott, 1995). Representative national samples of the public were interviewed in the autumn of 1996. Standard sample size of the surveys was approximately 1,000 persons per country of the population aged 15 years and older. Over 19,000 inhabitants have been interviewed face-to-face in the 19 member states. Most of the questions are driven by policy considerations rather than scientific concerns. Despite this, there are clear advantages attached to the Eurobarometer data. In autumn 1990, Central and Eastern Eurobarometer started when surveys of nationally representative samples undertaken by the EU in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Subsequent surveys were extended to include also some of post-Soviet states and most of successor states of the former Yugoslavia. However, in 1997 the survey has been restricted again to include the ten countries in the post-communist region that are currently applying for EU-membership. In each of these countries, a sample of around 1,000 respondents were also interviewed in the period 25 October – 30 November 1996 (see Central and Eastern Eurobarometer, 1997, no. 7).

Advantages attached to Eurobarometer data are considerable. The existence of the comparable data across a large number of countries in western and eastern Europe allows us to pursue cross-sectional statistical analysis at the macro-level of countries, establish similarities and differences between countries and indicate systematic properties that seem to rise them. In short, analytical possibilities are large. Thus, in this paper we present macro-level analyses tracing differences in opinions of the citizenry in the nineteen post-communist countries. Given the complexity of public opinions on the anticipated new EU enlargement, we use the wide lens of multivariate LISREL (linear structural equations) analysis (see Saris and Stronkhorst, 1984). We construct an explanatory (causal) order of structural conditions such as population size, level of economic development or intensity of trade relations with Russia in the countries concerned that seem to influence the opinions in the eastern polities on the major geopolitical orientations in the autumn of 1996.

The dependent variable in our statistical examination is derived from answers of the public in each of the nineteen post-communist countries to the question “*as things now stand, which of the following do you see (our country’s future) most closely tied to?*” (Central and Eastern Barometer, 1997, no. 7, Annex 26 and 27). The vari-

able is percentage of answers saying that the country's future lies in the European Union (dependent variable PEREU7). In other words, we may assume that this variable indicates in the set of nineteen countries the westward geopolitical orientation of the public on close ties with the EU member countries, i.e. with the core of the continent. We also present as a second public opinion variable the percentage of the public that saw the geopolitical orientation on Russia (variable PERCRUS7).

Figure 2: Orientation of Public Opinion on the European Union and Russia (1996)

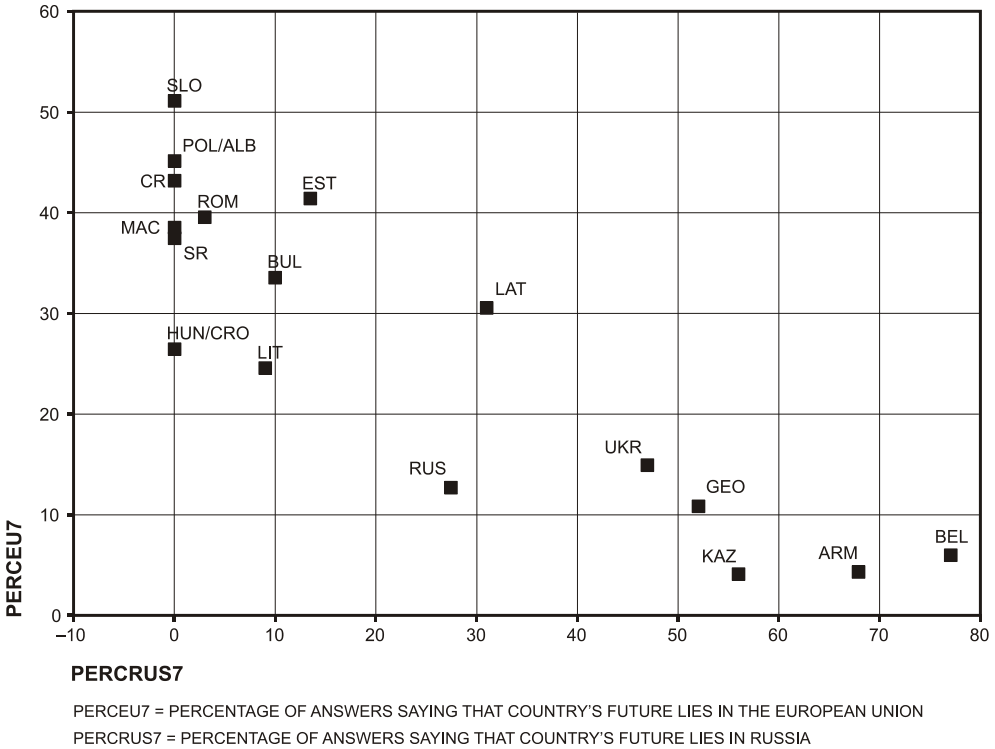


Figure 2 shows a scatter diagram between the variable PEREU7 and the variable PERCRUS7. The scatter diagram is documenting the systematic negative relationship between the two opinion variables. Accordingly, at least three preliminary, yet important, conclusions have to be drawn. First, the strong negative correlation between the two variables indicates the significant inverse relationship between the westward geopolitical orientation in the public opinion orientated to the EU and the eastern one directed to the relations with Russia. This is little surprising, but the intensity of the competition between the two basic orientations in the post-communist Euro-Asia is extraordinary (Pearson correlation coefficient of  $-0.869$ ). Second, we may distinguish in Figure 2 three major groupings of countries. In the lower right hand quadrant, there are Belarus, Armenia, Kazakstan, Georgia and the Ukraine. Only in Ukraine and Georgia a small share of the public of about 10 per-



cent saw in the autumn of 1996 the future of the country tied to the West (i.e. the EU). This is especially obvious in the case of the Ukraine. In the upper left hand quadrant, there are the post-communist countries that showed considerable progress in the processes of democratisation and economic liberalisation (Slovenia, Poland and Czech Republic). But, Figure 2 also clearly indicates that these leading EU candidate countries are accompanied by other post-communist countries which were lagging behind in the western-style post-communist transformation (Albania, Macedonia, Romania, and Slovak Republic). The geopolitical views in these countries were clearly orientated westward in spite of the less convincing results of the western-style transformation realised by the political elites in the countries concerned. There is also an intermediary grouping of countries of the three Baltic countries and Bulgaria. It seems that the relatively stronger geopolitical orientation in the Baltic region is due to the large shares of Russian and Ukrainian minorities and in the case of Bulgaria there seems to appear the effect of historical orientation of this country on Russia. It is also interesting to point to the position of Hungary and Croatia. The public opinion in these two countries is more divided. In Hungary and Croatia the public saw considerable importance in firm ties with the United States (22 respectively 39 percent). It is a clear effect of the specific geographical setting of the countries in or close to the war-driven ex-Yugoslav states (also 29 percent of the Macedonian sample gave primary importance to ties with the USA). In order to include Russia in the comparison we gave the country on the horizontal dimension its score on the geopolitical orientation of the Russian sample towards the CIS. It is necessary to note that the Eurobarometer sample was taken in European Russia. In consequence, it is little surprising that there was still in the autumn of 1996 a westward directed public opinion of 13 percent.

In our statistical model we use seven structural variables in the nineteen countries that are seen as independent variables explaining the variation in the westward geopolitical orientation (variable PECEU7) across the countries. A first structural condition (variable EDEV) is the economic level of development represented by a principal component score indicating development level inherited from the former communist regimes by the end of 1980s (Dostál, 1998b). We assume that this structural condition will have a positive effect on the westward oriented public opinion. A second structural variable to be examined in terms of its effects on the model is the population size (LOGSIZE). There have been claims underlying the importance of the population size expecting that the small post-communist countries would be more in favour of EU integration because they would strengthen their geopolitical and geoeconomic positions (Avery and Cameron, 1998). Given the enormous differences in population size, varying from tiny Estonia (1.5 million inhabitants) to Russia (148 million inhabitants), the variable has been transformed in order to obtain more normal distribution. Thus, the right tail with large population sizes is drawn in towards the mean, whereas the small sizes at the left of the distribution are moved away from the mean. This transformation implies that smaller population sizes will have stronger impacts in the overall distribution on this explanatory dimension. Third inherited structural condition to be examined in terms of its effects in our statistical model is the former dependence

of the nineteen countries on their trade within the former Soviet geoeconomic bloc. We assume that the collapse of the CMEA geoeconomic bloc and the final disintegration of the federal formations have led to serious adverse impacts on recent economic performances in the countries involved, due to a harmful decline or even collapse of interrepublican trade (cf. Maschits, 1992; Sapir, 1992; Michalopoulos and Tarr, 1994). We can assume that the heritage of a heavy dependency on intra-bloc export can have negative impacts on the institutional transformation as well as on the economic results of the transformation. As Michalopoulos and Tarr (1994) and Fischer, Sahay and Vegh (1996) have pointed out, the transformation economies have to significantly increase their trade with advanced market economies and show that they can produce sufficient competitive goods and services. We have chosen 1990 intra-bloc exports as percentage of GDP (variable INTRAEX) to specify in statistical terms this important developmental condition inherited from the statist-socialist past. Thus, we assume a clear negative effect of this explanatory variable on the westwards orientation in the public opinion (variable PEREU7).

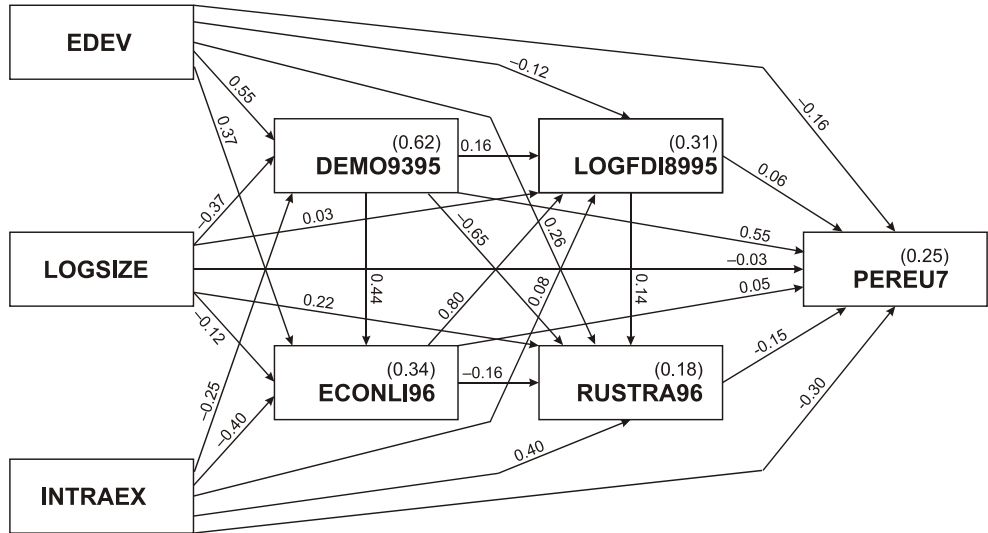
The other two structural conditions are the progress in the democratisation and economic liberalisation processes. We use in the model the scores that are discussed in section 2.2 and used in Figure 1. The last two explanatory variables relate to interstate relations. Another important variable indicating substantial progress in economic transition is the foreign direct investment (FDI). The internationalisation and globalisation following the geo-political and geoeconomic opening the post-communist economies implies, among other things, that they must be successful in *attracting* FDI. The advance of FDI largely depends on institutional conditions in the region (EBRD, 1995, 1996). The post-communist states have to reduce uncertainty and increase chances that the economic liberalisation will further proceed. We can assume that the post-communist countries *credible* for intensive inflows of FDI will be those which clearly progress in democratisation and economic liberalisation. Further, we assume that in the countries which are able to attract FDI-inflows the public opinion is more westward orientated. A survey of foreign investors carried out by the EBRD provides comparative data on cumulative FDI-inflows in 1989–1995 throughout the twenty-five economies (EBRD, 1996: 116). However, the cumulative flows of FDI into the post-communist Eurasia since 1989 remain concentrated on a limited number of economies in the region. In *per capita* terms, the main recipients are Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia. Accordingly, we use logarithmic transformation of the *per capita* FDI-inflow in 1989–1995 (in US dollars) in order to obtain a more normal distribution on this variable (LOGFDI8995). The last explanatory variable indicates the 1996 trade orientation on the Russian market (variable RUSTRA96). The measure describes the intensity of the trade relation (see EBRD, 1997).

### 3.2. Explanatory model (LISREL)

The LISREL model shown in Figure 3 determines 75 percent of the variation in the dependent variable PECEU7 indicating differences in the westward orientation

of the public across the nineteen post-communist countries (unexplained variance = 0.25). The outcomes of the LISREL procedure can be interpreted as follows.

Figure 3: Westward Geopolitical Orientation in the Public Opinion: An Explanatory Model (LISREL)



N = 19  
 DETERMINATION = 75 %

The standardized regression coefficients expressing the *independent* causal effects in the model indicate that a positive shift of one standard deviation on the variable LOGSIZE implies an average negative shift of -0.37 of standard deviation on the DEMO9395 dimension. This indicates that there is a significant negative effect of population size on the progress in democratisation. Thus, smaller countries proceeded faster than the large ones. Similarly, a shift of one deviation on the EDEV variable implies an average shift of 0.55 standard deviation on the democratisation dimension. The considerable positive effect of EDEV means that besides population size also the inherited level of economic development and modernization have been an important circumstance conditioning the democratisation process in the mid-1990s. It seems that in the less-modernized post-communist states there were little chances for a rapid western-style institutional transformation. There is also an independent negative effect of INTRAEX (-0.25), indicating that in the countries that were heavily dependent in the past on the Soviet-controlled trading bloc, the political elites were less inclined or able to progress in democratisation of the post-communist regimes. In sum, we may draw the general conclusion that the inherited level of economic development and modernization (EDEV) have had an

important supportive effect on the progress in democratic consolidation because it shows a direct positive effect of 0.55.

Now we can turn attention to the right hand side of the causal model. The four structural conditions statistically determine 66 percent of the total variation of the dependent dimension ECONLIB95 (unexplained variation = 0.34). It appears that the net negative effect of LOGSIZE is low (-0.12), while the inherited level of economic development and modernisation EDEV has a significant positive direct effect (0.37) on the scope and intensity of economic liberalisation. It is also clear that the former export orientation to the Soviet-dominated economic bloc INTRAEX has had a significant negative effect (-0.40). It is also documented in the model that the democratisation measure DEMO9395 had a considerable positive effect (0.44) on the ECONLIB95 measure. We must establish that the democratisation measure DEMO9395 plays an important *mediating* role in the model. The strong positive total effect of the measure EDEV, indicating the level of economic development and modernization, is almost entirely mediated by the DEMO9395 measure. Also, the lower negative total effect of former export CMEA orientation INTRAEX is in part mediated through the democratisation measure. This combination of negative effects seems to suggest that an intensive orientation on the Soviet trading bloc, which largely coincides with membership of the former Soviet Union, is a condition that has had retarding impacts on various institutional reforms of economic liberalisation.

Table 2: Effects of explanatory variables on the westward (EU) orientation of public opinion

variable	total effects	indirect effects	direct effects
EDEV	0.22	0.38	-0.16
LONGSIZE	-0.34	-0.31	0.03
INTRAEX	-0.58	-0.28	-0.30
DEMO9395	0.70	0.15	0.55
–	0.11	0.05	0.06
LOGFDI8995	0.03	-0.02	0.05
RUSTR96	-0.15	–	-0.15

These statistical outcomes in Table 2 make clear that in the set of the nineteen post-communist countries, the effect of the process of democratisation on the westward orientation in public opinion (the last dependent PEREU7) is positive and strong (0.55). The analysis also confirms the hypothesis that a considerable positive effect of the inherited level of economic development and modernization on progress in economic liberalisation is *mediated* through the democratisation process (DEMO9395). In brief, the process of democratisation appears to be a crucial intermediate factor that is supportive of the post-communist economic liberalisation and also for a clear articulation of the public opinion supporting the geopolitical and geoeconomic option in the countries concerned. We also may point out that

the FDI-inflow and the trade orientation did not have any convincing systematic effects on the public opinion in this regard. We must note that the countries with the heritage of an intensive former orientation to the Soviet-dominated geoeconomic orbit tend to proceed slowly in democratisation and in particular in economic liberalisation.

Finally, we may stress the importance of the total effects of the explanatory variable on the variable measuring the westward orientation (PEREU7). Indeed, it appears that the democratisation variable has the most significant positive total effect in the model. It is important to emphasise that the progress in economic liberalisation seems to have no systematic effect, and the same applies to the measure on the FDI intensity. These results indicate that economic conditions of the transition did not have a significant impact on the formation of the westwards orientated public opinion in the mid-1990s. On the other hand, it is clear that the public opinion in the post-communist polities with an intensive heritage of COMECON trade did not tend to be orientated on the ties with the EU. This largely correlates with the distinction between the post-soviet countries and the other post-communist countries. Again, the total negative effect of the population size (-0.34) documents that the polities of the small countries tended in the mid-1990s to prefer the westward geopolitical and geoeconomic orientation.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The outcomes of the statistical examination concerned with the nineteen post-communist countries indicate that the structural conditions have weaker, yet still important effects on the public opinion concerning the westward geopolitical orientation. It appears that the public in those post-communist countries that inherited higher economic level of development and showed in mid-1990s also higher levels of support for the EU orientated geopolitical and geoeconomic options. However, it is clear that the progress in the process of democratisation provided favourable conditions for the westward orientation. It seems that major cross-presures in the post-communist space of Eurasia has been significantly connected with the capacities and willingness of the post-communist political and economic elites to follow the western-style modernisation and accept various disciplining implications of anticipated EU accession. The positive evaluation of democracy and free market economy and the belief in the benefit from intensive ties with the EU seem to exercise the most significant effects on the “new division of the continent” in the public opinion in a number of zones in the process of European integration. Therefore, it also seems that a strong and integrative sense of a larger European community based on “mutual sympathies and loyalty; of ‘we-feeling’, trust, and mutual consideration; of partial identification in terms of self-images and interests; of mutually successful predictions of behaviour, and of co-operative actions” as envisaged by Deutsch at al. (1957: 36) and some other observers of unifying and fragmenting tendencies in Europe still has to emerge in the public opinion.

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## **ZAPADNA GEOPOLITIČKA ORIJENTACIJA I JAVNO MNIJENJE U POSTKOMUNISTIČKIM ZEMLJAMA: OBJAŠNJENJE GLEDIŠTA**

### SAŽETAK

Autori daju analizu različitih geopolitičkih i geoekonomske mogućnosti postkomunističkih zemalja te suprotstavljaju karakter postkomunističkih režima javnom mišljenju o osnovnim geopolitičkim i geoekonomske orijentacijama zemalja o kojima je riječ. Postkomunistički režimi sredinom 1990-ih ocjenjuju se u odnosu na demokratizaciju i liberalizaciju unutarnjih i vanjskih ekonomskih odnosa. Naglašava se da su prozapadne geopolitičke i geoekonomske mogućnosti vrlo zahtjevne što se tiče političkih i gospodarskih reformi te prilagodbe i adaptacije ponašanja političkih i gospodarskih elita i različitih skupina građana na zapadnjački stil. Prozapadne opcije uključuju geopolitičke tranzicije s ciljem potpunog članstva u Europskoj uniji ili manje zahtjevnog oblika integracije kao što su sporazumi o slobodnoj trgovini i političkom partnerstvu. Proistočne geopolitičke opcije povezane su s udruživanjem s Rusijom i istočnoeuropskim zemljama ili s razvojnim strategijama tzv. Azijskih tigrova ili proizvođača nafte. Autori daju statistički model kako bi pokazali mnoge čimbenike koji objašnjavaju razlike u orijentaciji prema integraciji u EU kao što je izraženo 1996. u javnom mišljenju u postkomunističkim zemljama o kojima se govori. Statistička analiza 19 postkomunističkih zemalja pokazuje da je javnost u onim državama, koje su naslijedile višu razinu ekonomskog razvoja, pokazala veći stupanj podrške zapadnoj orijentaciji (tj. prema EU). Napredak demokratizacije osigurao je povoljne uvjete za zapadnu geopolitičku orijentaciju. Intenzivne geoekonomske veze s bivšim trgovačkim blokom kojim je dominirao Sovjetski Savez, znatno je umanjio orijentaciju prema zapadu u javnom mišljenju postkomunističkih zemalja. Analiza pokazuje da se na temeljni razdor (raskol) u zapadnoj i istočnoj orijentaciju sredinom 1990-ih može gledati kao na dugotrajnu geopolitičku i geoekonomske diferencijaciju kontinenta.

**KLJUČNE RIJEČI:** postkomunističke zemlje, geopolitičke orijentacije, javno mišljenje

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## **ЗАПАДНАЯ ГЕОПОЛИТИЧЕСКАЯ ОРИЕНТАЦИЯ И ОБЩЕСТВЕННОЕ МНЕНИЕ В ПОСТ-КОММУНИСТИЧЕСКИХ СТРАНАХ: ТОЛКОВАНИЕ ВЗГЛЯДОВ**

### **РЕЗЮМЕ**

В статье дается анализ различных геополитических и гео-экономических альтернатив будущего развития пост-коммунистических стран; характер пост-коммунистических режимов противопоставляется общественному мнению относительно геополитической и гео-экономической ориентации соответствующих стран. Пост-коммунистические режимы в середине 1990-х оцениваются с точки зрения демократизации и либерализации внутренних и внешних экономических отношений. Авторы подчеркивают, что западная геополитическая и гео-экономическая ориентация требовательна с точки зрения политических и экономических реформ, приспособления к западному образу жизни и адаптации поведения политических и экономических элит и различных групп граждан. Западная ориентация связана или с геополитическим переходом, цель которого полноправное членство в Европейском Союзе, или с менее требовательной формой интеграции, как, например, соглашения о свободной торговле и политическое партнерство. Восточная ориентация связывается или с сотрудничеством с Россией и другими евразийскими государствами, или с принятием стратегий развития так называемых Азиатских тигров или стран-нефтепроизводителей. Авторы вводят статистическую модель, с помощью которой выделяют факторы, объясняющие различия в общественном мнении (1996 г.) в разных пост-коммунистических странах относительно включения в Европейский Союз. Статистический анализ, включивший девятнадцать пост-коммунистических стран, показал, что в странах более высокого уровня экономического развития общественное мнение в большей мере поддерживает западную ориентацию (т. е. ориентацию на включение в ЕС). Прогресс в демократизации также представляет собой благоприятное условие для западной геополитической ориентации. Интенсивные гео-экономические связи с бывшим торговым блоком, в котором доминировал Советский Союз, ведут, как свидетельствует общественное мнение, к значительному ослаблению западной ориентации. Анализ показывает, что основной раскол на западную и восточную ориентацию в середине 1990-х годов можно интерпретировать как долгосрочную геополитическую и гео-экономическую дифференциацию континента.

**КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА:** посткоммунистические страны, геополитические ориентации, общественное мнение