

NEWSLETTER 4 INTAS Project 97 - 2025

The Role of Regions in Transforming Post-communist Societies: The Cases of Belarus, Georgia, Russia and the Ukraine Compared

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Minsk, Sunday morning, the 3rd of November 2002



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Editorial

Sunday, the 3rd of November we walked through the text illustrated in the picture. It anticipated how Minsk, the capital of Belarus, is taking part in global society. Indeed a region or a town serves as a focus for understanding a particular part of world society. This part can be read as the surface of the text. The modern settlements in Minsk are contrasted by a line of historical houses. The two lines are separated and it seems that the modern part of the picture is telling another story than the restored time-honored part. For observers from a middle European context the wideness of Minsk is enormous. The axes of planimetric space organisation (how Belyi describes it in Petersburg) form the syntax of the text: the movement and flux of traffic on the avenues predominates in all directions. The cluster of the old houses looks like an island. The same feeling befalls us by walking to the central station of Minsk. A piece of history in a city, which seems to be too big for the people living here. There is a lot of space and a big reserve of time in Minsk.

But in the course of the four days, we learned how this text of Minsk could be read in the perception from the countryside. Villages of Belarus were strongly present in Minsk. In the Opera children in traditional costumes brought to town by buses from the countryside have been the most fascinated spectators. Every day the rural society is playing its role on market places between the agglomerations of the town. Students told me how people in villages are living their own life according to the traditional values. We do not understand Minsk without its rural context. It's obvious by observing the people and groups on the street, in the surroundings of schools and University.

But we got to know much more during our visit. The modern text of agglomerations interprets the history of the old clusters of houses. In Zurich there is the inverse case: the old town, the past, tells the story of the whole city including the agglomerations outside. In Minsk the modern capital is simultaneously the defended and reconstructed past against the destructions by the war. You can feel it by walking through Minsk and decode it in the old restored buildings. They are

reduced to a side-story of the modern city in contrast to typical middle European cities like Zurich, where the old town remains the main story. The path from the present town to its past, is quite different. Each part of World Society is a lecture of the surface structure of an endless text, which leads to its deepness of the past. But both are present in the architecture of towns in a particular form. – In Minsk the old buildings have not necessarily to be visited since the past is present by one fact: the construction of the modern text has been simultaneously the survival of the continuity as society and its history. The paradox can be explained by the fact that the depth structure is here more present in the surface of the text than in West European towns.

It was an interesting coincidence that our conference place was a hotel with the name "Orbite". Indeed, a city forms a third text – a "superstructure". It is readable as the expectations and values to become a future part of world society's text. And again a city is a fascinating walk since the future projects of the past are readable, in Minsk for instance in the "sugar palace" architecture of Stalin. It was surprising that the first McDonalds' in Minsk are visible but seem to be side stories in this context. And once more my impression was that Minsk is a silent text. Waiting predominates running. Minsk is a waiting hall. Our place for the seminar has given an excellent arena for our discussions about the question: How will the New Independent States create their own future text of World Society?

Our colleagues from Minsk characterised the atmosphere as a statement and claim: Belarus – a society awakening. It contrasted to the situation of Georgia, the location of the second meeting in May 02, assessed as a society of survival. The hospitality and spirit of Minsk was excellent because Mr. Prof. Rotman and his team prepared a profound and impressive platform and frame for our work and progress. We decided to continue our research proceeding to projects.

Zurich, 20th of February 2002-12-07

Coordinator
Dr. Hans-Peter Meier-Dallach

1. Regional Responses to Global Change in Eastern Europe: Belarus, Georgia, Russia and the Ukraine – joint proposal

The role of regions in postsocialist transformation needs a step by step procedure of comparative research. In a first part we will work out a preliminary theory for understanding the common and contrasting situations of the countries. In a second part an outline describes the tasks and steps of the project for the countries concerned.

1.1. Preliminary theory

During the workshop discussions a lot of informations and descriptions helped to understand the nation specific differences of the role of regions. The regions have to be described as parts of the whole society. Before this background the role of a region and its contribution to the civic development gets understandable. The comparative look at the four societies makes obvious that they are in very different situations, which can change rapidly. We tried to characterise the actual situations according to a scale: beginning and ending with the two smaller countries Georgia and Belarus.

Georgia: a formation in the stage of struggle for survival

People are confronted with strong existential problems; the private life is a struggle to survive. The wider and official level of public and political life is a separate reality. Civil society or democracy are abstract concepts or norms without reference to the daily life. The Georgian “formation of survival” is reflected in observations and empirical data showing a strong focus on poverty and distrust to official help and solutions. In this formation the meaning of region and of its role are very different than in the other societies: dependent from the primordial problems to cope with existential needs. The pressures inherent to daily life displace questions of institutional reforms.

Ukraine: a formation in the stage of promises and of blocked actions

Similar to the Georgian case the society of the Ukraine is a new nation but not looking back to a consolidated state. Also in the Ukraine the daily struggle for life for most people and regions is still very important. The country is strongly influenced by the neighbourhood to Poland (Western part of regions) and by the EU vision to proceed to a civic society with decentralised structures. But as soon as actions should be started and efficiently carried out to attain this goal, the authoritarian style of governance is simultaneously revitalized. The cleavage between visions and actions are evident. Visions without getting reality are an experience still remembered from the former regime. In situations of social tensions and crises the turn back to more security and less risky visions are probable. In the Ukraine there are regions disposed to this backlash. The collective memories are playing their role.

Russia: the authoritarian formation too big for being controllable

In Russia a trend toward a revival of traditional state-centred relationships and nationalism is evident, as survey data confirm. The predominance of an overwhelming central state has been revived lately despite some resistance from regional authorities, business, media, and fragments of civil society. Confronted with the apathy of the majority of the population this historic legacy is evidently hindering the potential for more civic development. Nevertheless, there is an obvious limit to the effective top-down authoritarian control. Russia is a continent of diversity. The capacity to control all the local and regional dynamics mobilised by modern influences is restricted. To understand whether and how the prevailing authoritarian trend can be counteracted we must study what are the main acting forces in local communities, local elite, and local business.

Belarus: a formation waiting but awakening

Belarus seems to be an exceptional case contrasting to the formation of survival, i. e. Georgia. Belarus is far away from constructing grand visions. It plays rather the role of a stakeholder of collective goods like education of people, life perspectives for the majority. Belarus' regional system is not strongly contrasted by cleavages. The new expansion of the EU, the border situation and the expectable discrimination is not changing this perspective. Belarus seems to be like an island with an introverted style to cope with coming developments. The political regime is inherited and accepted insofar as it guarantees the "stoique society". The interesting point will be its potential, if Belarus will awake and respond to its border common to Russia as well as to Poland and the EU.

1.1.1. Understanding societies means reading their texts

Understanding the people within their contexts should be the starting point of a project as Levada pointed out. Qualitative methods and direct observations are necessary for understanding people and societies. We propose the conception of a society as a stratified text. Its lecture and decoding of meanings provide understanding of social realities and processes on different levels. The advantage of this method is that we can start on the most concrete level, for instance by interpreting the text constituted by the physical elements and their images, for example of a town like Minsk. The town is a text with a surface structure including the present situations, locations and events. But simultaneously the town on the surface level is telling something about its depth structure: buildings are readable as informations about the past. Simultaneously some buildings or events are communicating the superstructure, the symbols indicating expectations towards the future.

But perceiving the things is only a portal for understanding the essential parts and fragments of texts, those told by individuals, by groups and people of a society. In fact, each day or period produces an endless web of texts of people. Social science tries to understand them on different levels of abstraction: qualitatively and by quantitative measures and operations.

The short abstracts of the four societies above are qualitative interpretations about the situations, events and developments on the actual surface. It is evident that these actualities are connected to the past, the depth structure, the collective memories of the four societies. In the Ukraine, for instance, the Western regions fill their texts telling about the actual nation with other elements of the past than do the Eastern parts. The depth structure has strong impacts on the surface and can be even get the first ranked stratum of a text. Nostalgic reactions, a turn back from the surface of the present to the depth of lost past, are very important examples in societies with a pessimistic outlook to the future. Especially in Georgia the trust to international Western organisations is stronger than to the own actors. The visions of the latter become imported expectations, that is a superstructure, which is more attractive than the promises offered by the own administration. Or the deepness of past is guaranteed by institutions like the Orthodox Church enabled to mediate orientations in the present or for the future.

1.1.2. World society as a project of communication

Social science deals primordially with human beings. Therefore, the choice and design of methods have a civic aspect. How do people participate in the creation of the texts articulating the life of a society? Reading and expressing people's texts in an

open and qualitative way is the best method. As we mentioned earlier (Newsletter 2, 7) monographic studies, case studies and qualitative analyses are important approaches in every society. But they are crucial for societies in ambiguous situations, where the three strata of texts (Weltanschauung or orientations) are in a state similar to a volcanic emission. At this point a simple definition of “world society” is possible which is fruitful for our work. Firstly, world society is an endless text of life stories as initial elements, which is shaped by the depth-, surface- and superstructure of the home societies, and finalised in regard to a picture/idea for all societies, the biggest of all possible ones, that is of the mankind. Secondly, “world society” in this meaning is essentially a project of communication. The social and cultural sciences are the moderators.

1.1.3. The stages of civil society within the state-society matrix

Civil society is basically not a norm but a life experience and practice under specific socio-cultural conditions. The **basic stage of civic society** means that individuals, families and groups become active in coping with their existential problems. It is the opposite to the state of learned helplessness in face of the existential situations. Man/woman is becoming a player within a particular context. This basic state is the initial of civility and is a precondition of it. As we have seen in Georgia this basic stage of civic society is the most important. The text of people’s experiences and practice from Georgia about this situation is more relevant than teaching books about human rights and institutional reforms. Furthermore, in all four countries learned helplessness is a strong barrier to “basic civic activities”. The Eastern part of world society should contribute substantially to the function and role of this level of civic society. Getting active is the first step to avoid exclusion.

Civic society is a process starting from the stage of basic civic activity to higher stages within the society-state matrix. The process means that the activities are amplified by a kind of public spirit. From the basic stage they become flows of activities, participation and engagement on the higher stages. A positive process is a diffusion of activity through all stages, from the private domain to the state level increasing the inclusion and participation of people. A process of diffusion can be blocked on different stages, i. e. reproduce or generate the exclusion of people. Each of the four countries can be described by the positive diffusion as against the blockade of flows from the basic to higher stages. Which are the different stages?

The **Public stage** includes, firstly, **informal** channels and groups like neighborhoods or spontaneously formed collectivities and masses and, secondly, **formal** organisations and associations (mainly the NGO’s).

The **Institutional stage** of civic society is anchored in basic institutions of a society, which are linked with the past and the “longue durée”: for example the church. In each society there are some institutions especially relevant for continuity, for instance schools.

The **Economic stage** of civil society is formed by economic activities, small and medium enterprises, cooperatives, economic organisations and infrastructures.

The **Political stage** of civic society includes the social and political organisations, unions and political parties with their organisations.

The **State stage** of civic society contains the governments, administrations, para-state organisations and firms.

1.1.4. Spatial levels of civic participation

A deficit in theory of civil society is the fact that it treats society in an abstract context-free reality. This bias is rooted in the normative approach to civil society: individuals are beings (like “monads”) with rights, freedoms and needs independent from their involvement into local, regional or national contexts and societies. These local and spatial contexts are yet basic for understanding the processes in civil society. In our discussion, there has been consent that the local regional space in the four transition countries is the most promising field of research. On this local level the basic stage is taking place, the diffusion of activities and participation from private to local public circles, to institutions, economic organisations, or to the government is the most probable. Very important are observations of new factors promoting the diffusion. For instance, in Russian regions the interest of small economic business can enforce public security and civic relations with the local administration. The economic stage can push the diffusion of public spirit to institutional and state sectors. It seems that on local level the processes to civic public relations could be the most successful. Here people can imagine becoming a player instead of feeling as an excluded or as a spectator.

But another process is as well important. If men/women become players of (local) society, they are telling a new story about this society. The image of society is seen in terms that are more active and the spatial surrounding, the municipality or the region get a focus of positive feelings and identifications. This awareness of local society is a symbolic capital for the local regional society, when problems have to be solved. In contrast to the local and regional level the civic process on national level is blocked in all four countries in different manners. Moreover, transfers from the local and regional processes to the national level are not probable in the next years since the political “game” is heavily influenced by the depth-structure of the past.

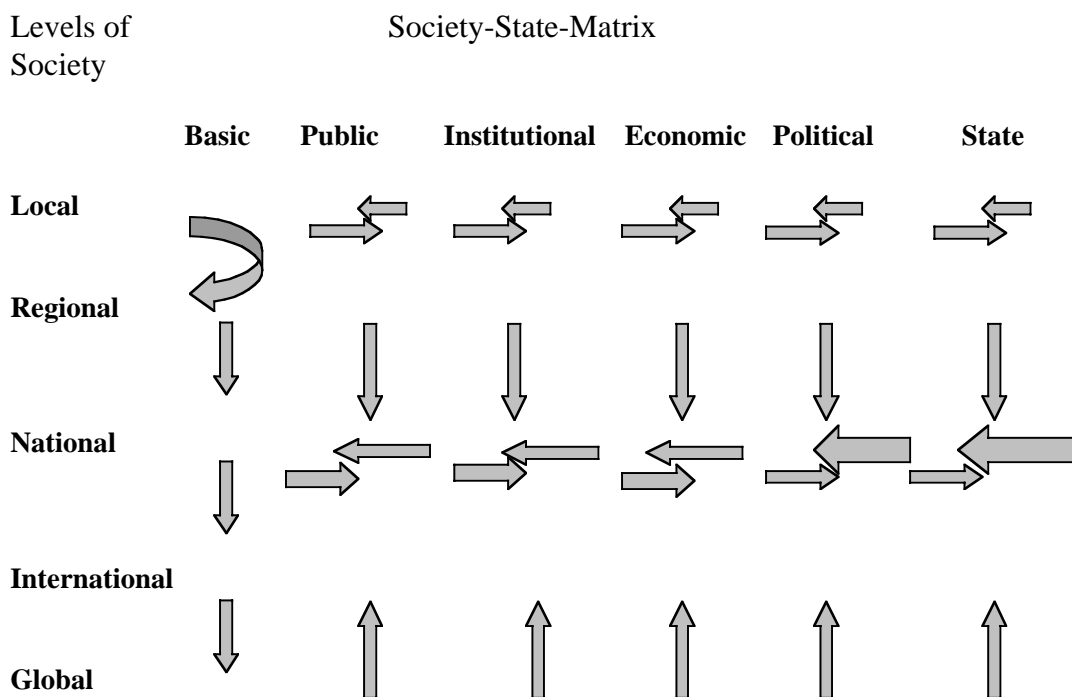
The society-state matrix in the four nations has a specific international level with different surroundings. Georgia, for example, is an intersection space of international interests, but Georgian people surely don't feel to be a player. Very important projects, like the pipeline to the Black Sea, the border problems to Chechnya, are determined from outside. In the opposite situation is the big Russian power using its status – with Moscow as the super-center – for strong symbolic identities and identifications. How do people of the four nations participate on the global level? What pictures and texts will they create in the next years, which roles would they like to play in the world society? It is evident that this level is symbolically most relevant since the modern global society serves as a provider of expectations; in other words: it is shaping the superstructure of the texts on national levels. How do people in the four countries respond to this influence? The hypotheses, which we have to work out and to prove, are for instance: the nostalgic reaction becomes the perspective for excluded; the utopic vision is non realistic on the national level; the gap between promises and actions remains; the patchwork strategies continue to be the best ones; the local regional context will reach an embryonic stage of civic society.

The description of the positive flows and the blockades is based on the following matrix as a formal guideline. It is essential to characterise the different levels by starting with examples, cases or by events. Relevant are the assessments of bottom up flows that means of transfers from the local levels to the higher ones. Jumping may be the interesting play, for instance to be engaged locally but overjumping the nation into international domains (by NGO supports).

1.1.5. Charts of flow of civic activities

Each country can be characterised by a chart of flows and blockades, promoting factors and hindering ones. In Georgia the first type of a basic civic society on a subnational level, for instance in a district of Tbilisi, is evident. The public range is restricted to a neighbourhood. In the Central Asiatic countries the basic activities are based on clans. They form a private hermetic society mostly isolated from official political structures. They are living their own folkways and even migrating and crossing national borders. These clan-like basic societies demonstrate the “society of survival” within the world society (vertical flow). Private civic communities have played an important role in former socialist formations. The separation from the public space and from the sphere of state was compensated by the central role of private circles and by the role of families. A Polish sociologist described Poland as “confederation of private circles”. It is quite clear that this kind of isolation is constituting a “society of atomization” based on private activities. This state is relevant for all four countries and it is an object of social critics in the Western welfare states (individualisation, atomisation).

Figure 1: Society-State-Matrix



The chart of flows of civic activities illustrates a development on a local/regional level where the promotion factors dominate the hindering ones (horizontal). In each of the four countries we have to identify case regions revealing this process as well as the hindering and promoting forces. The analysis of regional/local flows has to be opened to the dynamics on national and international levels. We suppose that the flow on national level is strongly hindered by structures of the state and the political system, i. e. the hindering factors predominate (obviously in all countries in a particular way). The transfer effects between the spatial levels have also to be considered. The processes of the local/regional levels can trigger forces for civic developments and/or counterforces on the national level. Mainly in international locations, metropolises, or in border

regions international influences, factors and forces can become the most important mobiliser for developments.

1.1.6. National profiles: Promoting and hindering factors

In the last workshop at Minsk an assessment of the positive factors as against the hindering factors for civic flows has been summarised for each country.

Georgia

As expected, the assessment of the Georgian situation was the most critical and the list of negative factors is much more elaborated than the listing of positive factors. The situation of survival combined with poor education is restricting the creation of a public space. The particular geography and multiethnic situation is hindering a nation wide communication. The distrust on national level is evident.

Factors hindering civic development of society in Georgia

- Severe poverty and unemployment (not engagement of the majority in social events of the country) and economic problems that lead to “survival morality” and lack of personal responsibility
- High rate of corruption (almost every tenth citizen names corruption the most important problem for Georgia) among all levels
- Lack and even absence of real, observable examples of democratic values and way of life
- Lack of civic education – knowledge and awareness on human rights, legislation, rules of conduct and applicable everyday habits approaching others
- Lack of free will – unavailability of fair elections on both - local and central government levels
- Ethnic conflicts and large numbers of unwillingly displaced in big cities;
- Lack of sophistication of laws and lack of regulations in country’s legislation – i.e. taxpayers law, etc.
- Lack of communication between regions and centre, between government and people
- Distrust towards government and apathy among population
- Lack of transparency and responsibility among government members

The positive factors are linked with a tolerant image of man and a tradition to live in difficult situations. It seems that the depth of past, that is experiences of borders, struggles and the continuity are active in Georgian personality and hospitality. The most specific feature in the Georgian chart of flow is surely the role of international influences and the presence of international NGO’s.

Factors contributing to development in Georgia

- National Georgian character – soft, tolerant, forgiving
- Unified will to improve the situation – it is valued as awful by the entire society
- National will to join western society – higher trust towards international than to national institutions
- Strong – even formally strong non governmental sector in the country.
- Large numbers of various NGO’s
- Coming young generation with relatively different values and attitudes

Ukraine

The Ukrainian assessment emphasises the factors well known combining the existential problems with forms of passive attitudes and behaviours among people. Simultaneously it is striking how ambiguous the role of the NGO's is evaluated.

The factors hindering civic development in the Ukraine

- Social apathy among people
- Lack of tolerance in public and political life
- Helplessness
- The degree of corruption of NGO's is high in the big centers of the country
- Lack of local and regional elites
- Lack of civic control of the state

In the Ukraine the local and regional level is very important for civic developments. There are positive resources and the question is how the new border situations will influence the local and regional dynamics.

Factors contributing to development

- There are more than 4000 NGO's in the Ukraine. The network of NGO's is important, especially in small towns
- The course of the Ukraine to NATO and EU has positively influenced the situation.

Russia

The assessment of Russia reflects a turn away from "Idealfaktoren" (ideal factors) normatively linked with terms like democracy and civic society. Since 1999 the explanatory power of such concepts is decreasing. Russian situation is influenced much more by "Realfaktoren" (real factors) inherited from the past and characterising the state-society relations: central power, authoritarian rule and police state due to the Chechen war and terrorist attacks. The normative concepts of civic or democratic institutions are used as facades for the real developments and power relations. The proposal is to focus on the society – state relations on the local and regional level.

The factors hindering civic development in Russia

- The tradition of a big overwhelming state
- The weak and shrinking of public spheres, both social and political; restrictions to the individual public space; restrictions to the media
- The privatization of the state agencies by corresponding bureaucracies
- The unity (indivisibility) of power and property due to the predominance of the rent-seeking business
- The lack of a responsible citizen
- The social apathy
- Weakness of society, weak mechanisms of properly social integration
- Chechen war and public attitudes toward it

Factors contributing to development

- The size and diversity of the country which is impossible to be controlled from above
- The elements of civic institutions, civic attitudes at the local and regional levels
- New trends in the business community, seeking transparency, the rule of law and social responsibility

Belarus

The Belarus situation is seen rather harmonic. The question what is hindering as against favouring civic society is ambiguous. A drive for change is missing here or not supported by life chances. The relatively good material situation and the relation to the Russian federation determine the status quo – the “waiting position”. Could we call these factors as hindering conditions or could they play the role of an own particular way to a civic society? It is interesting that the Belarus case could be approaching the Chinese combination of welfare and order. One of the most interesting questions here is the “awakening” and the effects on the society–state relation in future. How will the new border situations and the international influences work?

The factors hindering civic development in Belarus

Material conditions:

- Economic state is relatively acceptable, salaries are paid, rent for flats are tolerable, there is food in the vitrines, the rate of unemployment is low, reconstructions have been started everywhere
- People has a high level of education
- Regional cleavages are not dramatic and the villages have retained their cultural traditions

Relation to Russia and to the past:

- There is a positive relation to Russia rooted in the past experiences
- Russia needs Belarus as an alliance partner, as a buffer zone between EU and Russia
- People is accepting the traditional authoritarian dictatorship
- The opposition is not strong and fragmented, a fight between different fractions
- A political elite is missing

Factors contributing to civic development

- Possible crises and/or worsening of life situations could trigger upheavals
- The educated youth develops ambitions to participate more in public matters
- The cataclysm of life orientations is creating a vacuum to be filled

1.1.7. Human needs and public goals

An attractive manner to understand local societies is to decode the manifest and latent individual needs and the public goals in their texts. In Georgia, 85% say that the environmental situation worsened in the last ten years. But only 2% consider the environmental as main problem. Poverty and the gaps between rich and poor, wars and conflicts, unemployment, economic problems and drugs are more relevant issues in this ranking. In order to understand this displacement of a public issue we have to discern the needs of people from the public goals. The higher the pressure of needs for the existential survival the less it is possible to push other than existential problems in higher priorities, for instance ecological ones. Also the values of civic participation or democracy are displaced by existential needs, for instance housing conditions, water supply, food and work. Therefore, we have to understand and measure on the one hand the needs of people, and on the other hand, the degree of how these needs attract public goals respectively displaces them. The crucial dilemma of civic values is that they are strongly displaced by social needs. Even the demand for education can be displaced in poor situations, as Genov observes it in Bulgaria.

For that reason civic participation could start by improving situations by doing small things for the existential conditions of needs and social public goods. Civic values are not abstract norms but means for proceedings in individual and public situations. These small steps are important in cases where the existential needs displace the other ones from the individual and public agenda. For the research a topic is primordial. Civic processes can be prepared by projects for solving existential problems. In the course of doing the project, by actions, optimistic awareness can develop, a feeling to become a player while ambitious reform projects of institutions are raising structural pessimism. Our questions are

- How do regions set their public goals? How are these attracted or displaced by the need preferences among individuals and groups?
- Which degree of awareness of civic participation is available in local situations?
- Which are the projects favouring this process in a municipality or region?

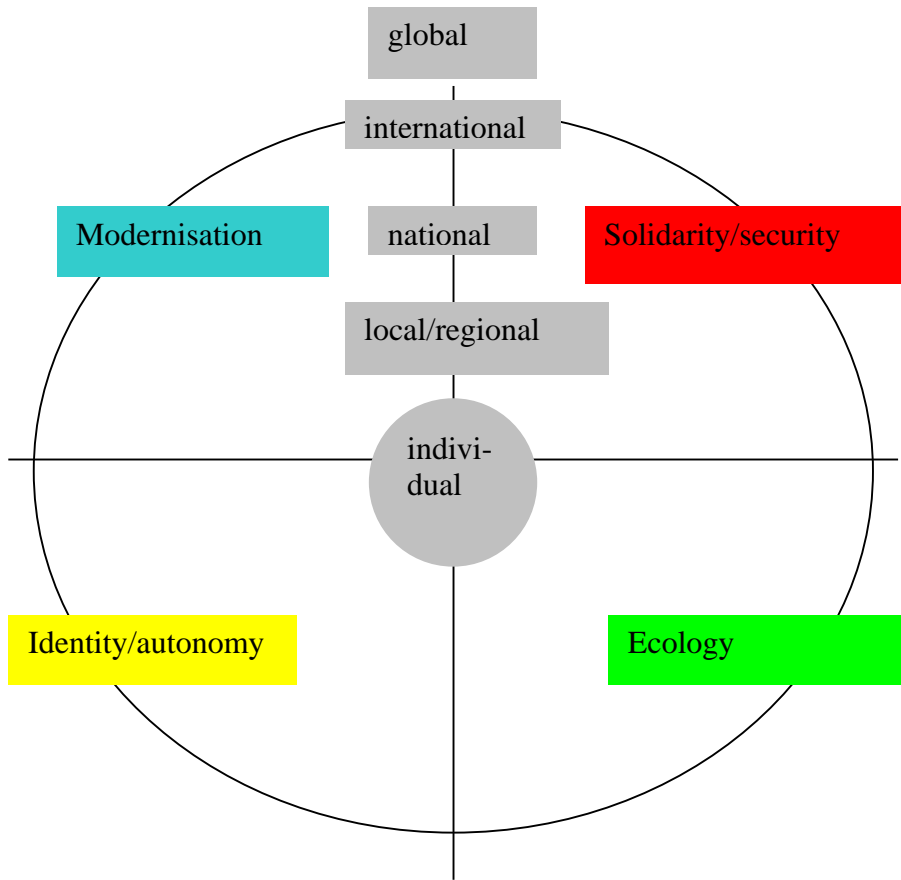
1.1.8. Understanding the values and images

Public goals and individual needs in postsocialist countries are concentrated in the social sector including social solidarity, security and equality. Trends to this focus can be observed in all societies where the existential situation is worsening (like also in Western societies). From that reason it is hard to push other sectors of value, for instance modernity or ecology, as first ranked public goals. They are displaced as public goals by the existential needs. In situations of poor conditions the value sector identity and autonomy is strategically interesting. These values allow to set borders in places, where the own poor or rich can be integrated against their foreign counterparts outside. In Russia nationalist feelings are strengthening among the youth. But also in many Western countries the threats to loose relatively privileged positions mobilise trends for closer borders, stronger selections of migrants and a return to the nationalistic or ethnic identity. The civic dealing with borders can be blocked by existential constraints within a context. Tolerance between ethnic groups decreases under the pressure of poor existential situations.

Again the process of civic development, the chart of its flows, is not defined as value in itself and for itself. It is rather a question of how to define and implement the sectors of modernization, social security, cultural identity and ecology with its needs and goals in a particular context. The installation of a homepage for a town can be imported from Minsk or created by people from place. A nature park can be used by the inhabitants as source for economic activity or administered as an enclave from a center.

The concentration on the basic stages of the civic dimension is chosen consciously. But there shouldn't be a restriction to it since the civic dimension can develop as a value in itself by proceeding with needs and goals. In the postsocialist countries this evolution can be observed, analysed and understood along the paths of the chart of flows. It is essential to see them as correlates of needs, goals and values of the four sectors. These values are shaping the images of man, society and state, which are stressed in postsocialist nations between the vacuum created by the loss of socialist eschatology and the challenges for (new) orientations. Civic activity means also to find the new elements for the orientation in the multilevel society from the local village to the global arena.

Figure 2: Understanding needs and goals in sectors of values from the individual, regional, national, international to global level



2. Work programme for the joint project

2. 1. Title: **Regional Responses to Global Change in Eastern Europe. Belarus, Georgia, Russia and the Ukraine compared.**

2. 2. Objectives

Goals and steps of the project

In the following the main targets and steps of the project for the four countries are summarised (see figure 3).

A) Theoretical guidelines and frame of reference

The theoretical frame of reference and guidelines summarised under point 1 serve as a first input into the project of the four countries. In general it emphasises the following assumptions for the different countries:

- Civic society is in its basic stage and develops in embryonic forms on the local/regional level.
- The shaping of civic trends and developments follows specific stages within the society-state matrix.
- In each country common and specific factors favour the flows or hinder the diffusion of civic processes; preconditions of the factors working for or against a civic trend are the social stratification, for instance losers versus winners, and the elite.
- Civic patterns are developing through the strive for the existential goods for individuals and the struggle for public goals in a specific context; needs and goals are negotiated within sectors of contradicting values, i. e. social security, modernisation, identity, ecology.
- It is of specific interest how the civic process on national scale is influenced by the top down flows, for instance from global or international values, on the one hand, and by the bottom up flows from the local/regional level. Most interesting is how these contradicting influences shape the images of man and society and the outlook to the future. (See the paper in appendix IV).

B) Country-specific literature and material

The actual database and literature to the topics of the project are collected and reanalysed as a starting background for all steps of the projects (priorities for needs, attitudes, identifications, participation and value orientations). A part of informations serves as the base for the description and final selection of regions and locations for the empirical research.

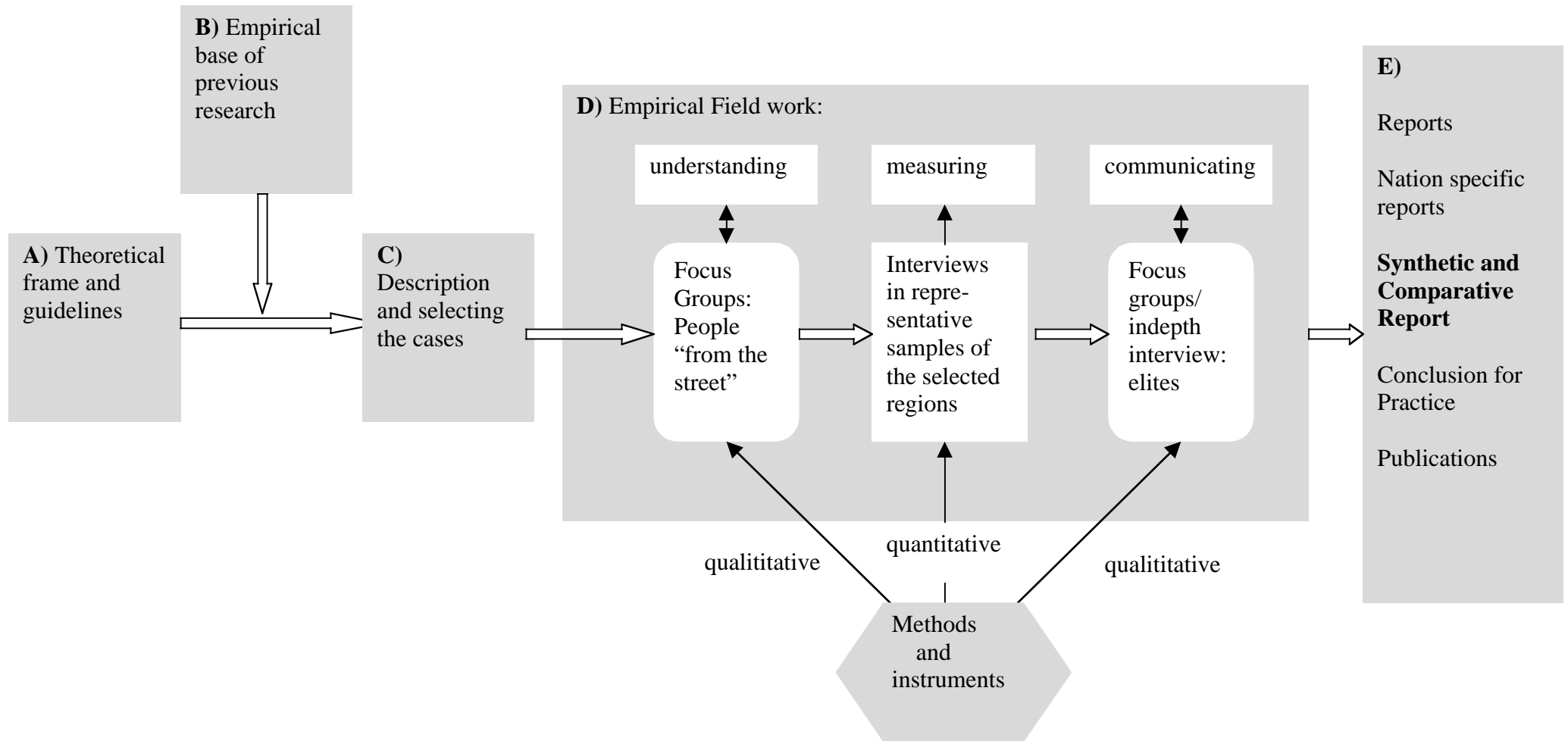
C) Selection of case regions

In each country the test regions and locations for the fieldwork are selected according to the following criteria

- Urban - rural disparity (relevant in all four countries).
- Exposure to international influences (border regions to EU) against regions representing the historical core of a country (representing the memory) (*relevant in Belarus and Ukraine*).
- Positive developments of civic processes (maybe compared with negative cases), which are significant for the process on national level (*relevant in all four countries*).

We have to revisit and to coordinate the proposal for the selected regions already accepted in the final meeting in Minsk with the selection definitely proposed by the four countries (see selection by countries in Appendix I).

Figure 3: Phases and steps of the joint research project



D) Empirical field work

In the selected regions of each country the fieldwork concentrates:

firstly, on qualitative interviews conducted with focus groups representing the regions. The selection of people is guided by common criteria. The first qualitative step is concentrated not on elite but on common people (“from street”). The results should give insight to “grass root – perspectives”.

secondly, on standardized questionnaires in samples of the population in the regions/locations allowing the test of the hypotheses about the shaping of civic trends in population inherent to the theoretical guideline.

thirdly, on a second wave of qualitative interviews with focus groups representing the elite of the regions. The interviews base on the insights from the quantitative questionnaires, the preferences and the outlook of common people. So the results of this part have a communicative and mobilising function (in the sense of “dialogue research”). The conclusions allow comparing the outlooks from people and elite, the similarities, differences and contradictions. The guidelines for the focus group analysis and the questionnaires are elaborated in the manner that core topics for all countries (comparative part) allow to include questions, which are for each country of specific interest. The questions concentrate on the topics linked with civic processes (point A), that are perceptions, identifications, needs, values, assessments of public goals, images of society and outlooks to the future. The results of the nation specific research steps are summarised in the nation specific reports and papers.

E) Synthetic comparative report and conclusions

The synthetic comparative report is including the results along the analytical path, the qualitative and quantitative fieldwork, in a process of elucidating the processes. Methodologically this understanding means interpreting all “texts” which are generated and available during the steps, pursuing its meanings and rediffuse it back to the contexts. An open minded strategy is necessary to consider the particular situations of the countries as well as the comparative aspects. The synthetic report contains a chapter of conclusions for the problem of civic society in regional contexts, which are communicated to public and political decision makers in the different countries. The synthetic report is to be edited as a book publication.

2.3. Scientific and Technical Description

2.3.1. Network and personal resources

The network involved into the project is visible in figure 4. The partners of the INTAS network project 97-2025 (in bold letters) are the core group carrying out the research of the joint project. (Partners involved in the former network project see Appendix I).

For the joint project **new partners and co-operations** are included in the NIS states as well as among the Western European partners.

NIS states: In the Russian Federation the empirical work will be done by the Russian Center for Public Opinion Research (VCIOM), Prof. Yuri Levada and his team. The Sociological Institute of the State University of Perm participated in the former project and will co-operate during the joint project by Nadezhda Borisova. In Belarus contacts between the Institute for Legal Studies & Legal Practice, René Schaffhauser, and the Faculty of Law in Minsk initiated a joint case study about the implementation of law in Minsk. In Georgia the co-operation between GORBI and the Sociological Institute, Georgian Academy of Science and of the State Department of Statistics is planned for the joint project. The established and enlarged network of the NIS partners is the most important personal and institutional resource looking back to a dense and continuous communication and co-operation in research questions.

Middle East Europe: Poland as a border nation to Belarus and Ukraine will participate in two ways. Firstly the Polish part is contributing directly to the empirical fieldwork in the neighbour regions of Belarus and Ukraine. Secondly the Polish partner plays the role of a mediator between the older and new nations of the EU. In further cooperation Poland will bring in its experiences in transformation as well as the cultural knowledge and sociological resources from a Western Slavic outlook. The Polish partnership bases on persons and academic institutions of the Bialystok center.

Western Europe: Three partners will join the project playing the role of a scientific and practical support group for the project. The SDC (the official Swiss state organisation of the Department of foreign affairs) is interested in questions how to applicate the results of the joint project for development and help strategies in the NIS in the next years. The World Society Foundation has substantially helped to initiate and support research in Eastern Europe (see Appendix II) and will give further theoretical, methodological and infrastructural inputs into the project. Prof. Nicolay Genov, the director of the Institute for Eastern Europe in Berlin, is as an excellent expert of Eastern developments, he also will be a partner for the project.

**Coordinator: cultur prospectiv
Hans-Peter Meier-Dallach**

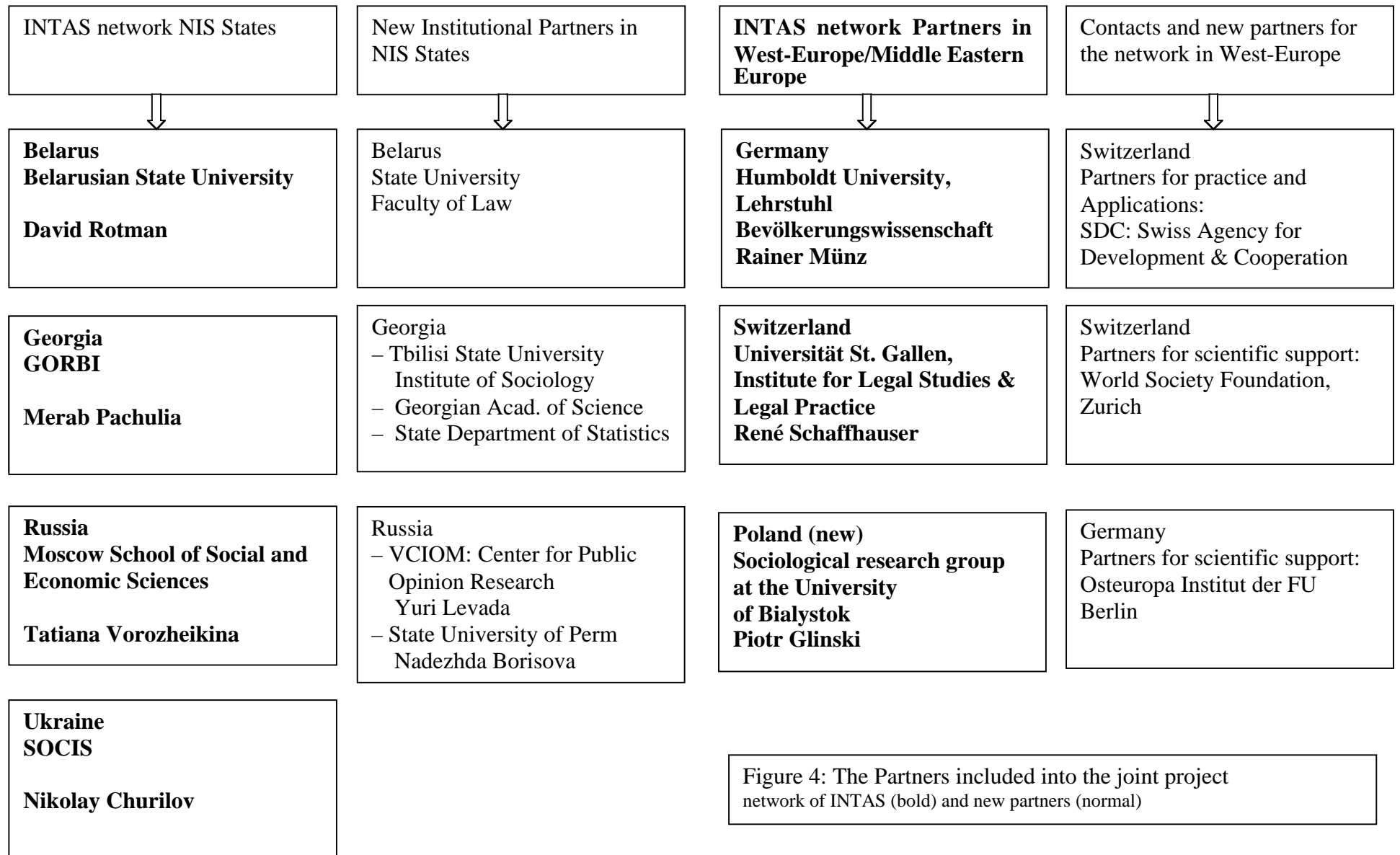









Figure 4: The Partners included into the joint project network of INTAS (bold) and new partners (normal)

2.3.2. Time schedule

Phases and steps 32 months: 8 periods à 4 months	First year: Preparation of Fieldwork			Second year: Fieldwork			Third half year: Reports	
	period I	period II	period III	period IV	period V	Period VI	Period VII	Period VIII
A Theoretical guideline								
B Previous research								
C Description/ Selection of cases								
D Empirical Fieldwork								
E Reports								
Milestones for communication and products								
joint workshops/ individual or group meetings	Joint meeting I	Individual contacts co- ordinating the instruments				Joint meeting II		Joint Meeting III
electronic reportings (Mail/ homepage)		Essential feedbacks for fieldwork		Final decisions		Preliminary results		
Newsletters including the working papers			Detailed work plan			First results/ interpretations		
Publishing and diffusion		Articles in Newspapers				Nation specific reports	Comparative report	Concept for books and diffusion

Appendix I: Selection of case regions

Belarus

Macroregional differences:

- (1) **Western region** including the regions Brest and Grodno with common borders to Lithuania and Poland, which have joined the EU. These regions have some cultural differences from the other regions of our country as the Catholic centres are situated there and historically the population of the regions is closer to Lithuania and Poland. We also offer to include the so-called Western part of the Minsk territory, where one can trace the same cultural peculiarities.
- (2) **Eastern region** including Gomel, Mogilev and Vitebsk. These regions have common borders with Russia and the Ukraine and consequently preserve Eastern-Slavic cultural traditions and the Orthodox creed. As in the Western region a part of the territory of Minsk can be included to the second case study.
- (3) By making the above macroregional division almost the whole territory of the country is covered with exception of **Minsk and the village areas close to it**. We offer to consider it to be the third area, and to conduct the research there as well.

Selection:

When conducting both qualitative and quantitative research, we offer to compare the situation in rural and urban parts in every of the selected regions separately and then make comparisons between them.

In every of the selected regions we can conduct the following work:

- 1) Questioning of the population by the method of standardised interviews, 1000 respondents per region, totally 3000 respondents, taking into account gender and age structure, education, and relationship between the urban and rural dwellers.
- 2) Focused interviews. In every region we offer to conduct 8 focus-groups with the population. Totally 24 focus-groups for three regional studies.
- 3) Concerning the focus-groups with elites, it seems to be impossible to realise them in the conditions of the country as the contact with the representatives of elite is rather hard to realise, and individual personal contact with the representatives of elite is preferable for us. Thus we prefer to conduct individual in-depth interviews with people from the elite. We offer to conduct 30 in-depth interviews in every of the three selected regions, every group of 30 will include 10 representatives of political elite, 10 representatives of cultural and 10 representatives of economical elite. Totally we will conduct 90 in-depth interviews in the republic.

Summary: We offer to conduct a quantitative poll with 3000 respondents. Organise 24 focus-groups and conduct 90 in-depth-interviews.

Georgia

Three case regions are proposed for selection:

- Tbilisi
- Western Georgia (Kutaisi),
- Eastern and central Georgia (Gori))

Russia

The selection of the five regions is open and will be decided in step C according to the evaluations in step B.

Ukraine

Four case regions are proposed for selection:

- > Lviv oblast, as capital of Galchyna, border region to Poland, region with a strong historical memory;
- > Donetsk oblast, as a capital of Donbass, urban region with a distant historical memory;
- > Crimea, as a region with a different kind of autonomy in comparison to the rest of Ukraine; pro-russian orientation in mass conscience
- > Kiev City, as political centre, numerous NGO's with republic status

Appendix II: Country-specific informations about the teams in the NIS

Belarus

Center for Sociological and Political Research (CSPR) at the Belarusian State University

Team leader: David Rotman

Team Vice-Director: Lidia Novikova (Doctor of Philosophy, Sen. Lecturer)

Head of the republic questionnaire network: Larisa Sohlaeva (Doctor of Philosophy, Sen. Lecturer)

Head of the department of Data Processing: Ludmila Solovieva

Leading researchers: Larisa Filinskaya (Doctor of Sociology, Sen. Lecturer); Irina Levitskaya; Natalya Veremeeva; Oksana Ivanuto; Victor Pravdivets; Inessa Degtjarik; Diana Bulyenko; Svetlana Sidorenko; Anzhelika Kolobutina

Translator: Anna Markovich

CV Team leader

Director of the Center is Professor David Rotman. Professor Rotman is the author of the conception about operative sociological research as an independent branch of sociology; he develops methodological approaches in organisation and conduct of electoral sociological research. He created a number of original techniques for electoral sociological research. Professor Rotman is author of a number of scientific works in the sphere of political sociology, sociology of youths, sociology of deviant behaviour. More than 20 professionals working in the sphere of sociology, political science, economy, psychology, organisation of polls and data processing build up the staff of the centre. The centre has a developed network of more than 200 trained interviewers, who live in all the regions of the republic, thus the centre is able to conduct polls all over the republic in very short terms. The centre provides a client with a complete technological cycle of research works – from the development of the programme of research up to the presentation of the analytical reports. The CSPR applies various methods of data collection – polls, expert interviews, in-depth interviews, focus-groups, content analysis of press, auditing of retail trade etc. The centre has collected an empirical database since 1990 and can trace the change in the social-political situation of the country back to this date.

The Centre has partnership relations with the sociological research centres in the NIS countries and Western Europe – Berlin Research Center (Germany, Berlin), Institute of Advanced Studies (Austria, Vienna), Eastern-Ukrainian Fund for Social Research (Ukraine, Kharkov), Russian Center of the Public Opinion Studies (Russia, Moscow), Company SOTSIC Gallup (Ukraine, Kiev), Center for Sociological Research at Moscow State University (Russia, Moscow) etc. At present the centre is involved in the study of life style, health and living conditions in the NIS countries in the framework of Copernicus (Brussels). CSPR has conducted researches for the UNO representation in Belarus, worked for UNICEF. The Centre participated in a number of INTAS and TASCIS projects.

Georgia

Georgian Opinion Research Business International GORBI

Team leader

Merab Pachulia – Director of GORBI

Team

Ann Petriashvili – Project manager (GORBI)

Paata Zardiashvili – Project manager (GORBI)

Dodar Kapanadze – Consultant, State Department of Statistics of Georgia

Amiran Berdzenishvili – Consultant, Tbilisi State University

Additionally involved academic institutions and persons:

Tbilisi State university – Department of Sociology: Dr. Iago Kachkachioshvili, member of Georgian Sociological Association and of Georgian Academy of Sciences;

Georgian Academy of sciences: Dr. Amiran Berdzenishvili;

State department of statistics of Georgia: Dodar Kapanadze

CV Team leader

Merab Pachulia is trained in social science quantitative research methods and has a long and successful history of performing social science re-search projects for international clients. Over the past 10 years he was in charge of over 250 public opinion and market research projects. His client list includes major corporations such as the World Bank, the European Union, the World Health Organization, Research International, USA, Oxford Research International and Opinion Research Business. He has also worked in close collaboration on joint projects with the Intermedia Survey Institute, the Berlin Public Opinion Research Center, United Nations International Crime Research Institute and Gallup UK. In 1995 and 2000, Mr. Pachulia was hired as an expert by the United Nations in order to investigate public opinion about crime in Georgia and in Azerbaijan. He has also worked throughout Georgia, the Caucasus region, and central Asia, offering clients a full line of research strategies including survey research, group discussions, in-depth interviews, and desk research, as well as a vast array of market and consumer research.

Professional Achievements:

- Internship at British Academy of Sciences

- Recipient of Soros Foundation Fellowship

- Recipient of IREX Fellowship

- Author of over 50 articles published in newspapers and magazines.

- Participant in professional conferences in Bulgaria, Italy, UK, Germany, Austria and USA.

Russia

Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences

Team leader

Tatiana Vorozheikina

Team

Malkhas Saldadze

CV Team leader

Tatiana Vorozheikina has an interesting biography as a researcher and professor. The proposal of the network is an important new starting point for her and the institute. She specialised in

comparing countries, especially South American cases with Eastern European developments. Prof. Vorozheikina recently completed a project sponsored by The World Society Foundation in Zurich and was acknowledged by the “Peter Heintz Awards Guest Lecturership“ in Zurich in 1999. Tatiana Vorozheikina is a researcher at the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences, which is a Russian-British private university, started in 1995 offering MA programmes in Political Sciences, Law, Sociology and Social Work. In the 1990s, she concentrated increasingly on Russian studies from a comparative perspective. During the network project the cooperation was extended to Prof. Levada and its Centre for Public Opinion Research in order to proceed empirically for comparisons of Russia to other partner countries.

Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research (VCIOM)

Team leader

Yuri Levada, the Director of VCIOM.

Team

Lev Gudkov

Alexei Levinson

Alexei Grazhdankin

Perm State University

Nadezhda Borisova

Ukraine

SOCIS Ltd.

Team leader

Nikolay Churilov

Team

- Oleksandr Stegnyy, Director Deputy of the Center, PhD (History)
- Oxana Bandurovich, Senior Manager of the Center, PhD (Sociology)
- Yaroslav Ivanov, Manager of the Center

SOCIS Ltd. is a social research organisation in the Ukraine, founded in 1988. SOCIS is one of the leading social survey enterprises in the Ukraine, conducting research both in the Ukraine and abroad. SOCIS provides high quality results with high-speed data processing. In 1994, SOCIS was affiliated as a Gallup International associate member. Nikolay Churilov, President of SOCIS, and Olexander Stegnyy, Head of the Department of Social and Political Surveys, were participants of the INTAS Project "Regions in Ukraine" (94-3938) and published a book based on empirical results of this project in the Ukraine and contributed to the book (Meier-Dallach et al. Eds. 2002). Both scientists also work at the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Science (department of social and political processes). They gained experience in international research projects (e.g. "Consolidation of Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe"). An important resource for the project is the Monitoring Project SOCIS–Omnibus conducted since 1994: monthly nation-wide monitoring of public opinion concerning social-economic and political problems. Sample size: 1200 respondents; the sample is representative according to sex, age, place of residence.

Germany

Humboldt University, Lehrstuhl für Bevölkerungswissenschaften, Berlin

Team leader

Rainer Münz

Team

Rainer Ohliger

CV Team leader

Rainer Münz, Professor for Demography at Humboldt University, Berlin, demographer and sociologist, and Rainer Ohliger, historian, were involved as cooperation partners within the INTAS project "Regions in the Ukraine". Rainer Münz is a specialist in migration and ethnic issues. He is author and editor of some fifteen books and numerous articles in scientific journals as well as in leading newspapers. Rainer Ohliger is research assistant within the interdisciplinary research group "Comparison of Societies" funded by the German Research Association (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft). Currently he is in the state of finishing his Ph.D. on 20th century ethnic migration between Romania and Germany. Rainer Münz' and Rainer Ohliger's interest in questions of regionalism and regional identities originally stems from their research on questions of ethnic minorities, ethnic migration and the demographic impact of population redistribution by way of international migration. One of their more recent projects centred on ethnic migration in Eastern and Central Europe with a special focus on ethnic German minorities in the CIS countries, Poland and Romania.

Rainer Münz did research on questions of regionalism and the role of minorities in Austria. Rainer Ohliger has special expertise in questions of regionalism and ethnicity in Romania with a particular focus on Transylvania. Currently both are collaborating on an article about "History, Memory and Regional Cleavages in Ukraine" using the data of the INTAS project "Regions in the Ukraine".

Coordinator

Institute cultur prospectiv, Zurich

Team leader

Hans-Peter Meier-Dallach

Team

Therese Walter

CV Team leader

Studies of Sociology, Economy, Social Psychology (University of Zurich); postgraduate grant in Poland at the University of Varsov; studies in sociology and learning of the Polish and Russian language; Founder and Director of the Institute cultur prospectiv, Zurich: Research projects about culture, environmental problems, regional and urban sociology, technology assessments and sociology of risks. President of the Council of the World Society Foundation, Zurich.

Initiative for and management of international projects and interdisciplinary cooperation in Western Europe:

→ COST-project "New Technologies and Rural Development" in cooperation with Swiss, Danish and Norwegian groups promoted by the Swiss Office for Education and Science

- Risk-Analysis from an international comparative perspective in cooperation with Universities of Germany and the German Ministry of Health
- „Contrast spaces and regional partnerships in leisure traffic“ in Germany and Switzerland promoted by the German Ministry for Education and Science

Initiative for and management of international projects and interdisciplinary cooperation in Eastern Europe:

- Projects in Eastern Europe Countries, for instance, the “Evaluation of international humanitarian aid in the region of Chernobyl” as a mandate of the „Swiss Corps for Help in Catastrophes (SKH)“
- The first Warsaw Conference “Global Society and Eastern European Development” (1992) with groups from Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Bulgaria, Rumania, Burjatia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia funded by the World Society Foundation and the Swiss National Foundation for the Promotion of Research
- Concept and Management of „Politics and Media – Forum 96: Civic Journalism“; first Swiss-Polish conference as a mandate of the Swiss Government (EDA)
- Concept and Management of „Politics and Media – Forum 97: Civic Journalism w praktyce“; second Swiss-Polish conference as a mandate of the Swiss Government (EDA)
- Coordination of the INTAS-Project “Regions in the Ukraine: Dynamics, Movements and Politics” with the Institute of Sociology of the University of Kiev and the Humboldt University of Berlin funded by the INTAS Brussels
- The second Warsaw Conference “Post-socialist Transformations and Civic Society” (1996) with groups from the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Belarus funded by the World Society Foundation and the Swiss National Foundation for the Promotion of Research
- INTAS-Network project „The Role of Regions in Transforming Postcommunist Countries. The Cases of Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine Compared” with groups from Belarus, Georgia, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Germany and Switzerland funded by the INTAS Brussels
- Concept and consulting for the programme “Change management as a transversal theme” in Serbia as mandate of the Swiss Agency for Development (SDC).

Swiss partner

Institute for legal studies and legal practice at the University of St. Gallen

Team leader

René Schaffhauser

CV Team leader

René Schaffhauser (1945), Dr., Titular Professor for public law at the University of St. Gallen, Director at the Institute for legal studies and legal practice at the University of St. Gallen has together with middle-European partners already organised several seminars, for instance:

- in Kosice / Slovakia with the Juridical Faculty at the University Pavol Jozef afárik and the School for Public Administration and Finances Ludwigsburg: Seminar „The Delegation of Tasks and Finances to the Municipalities and their Financing“ (November 2000)
- in Bratislava / Slovakia: Seminar „Position and Tasks of the State by Supporting the socio-economical Development of the Regions: Experiences in Switzerland - Developments in Slovakia“ (March 2000)

- > in Lodz / Poland with the School of Public Administration (SPA) Lodz: Seminar „Regionalisation and Decentralisation“ (September 1999)

He took part or gave lectures at different seminars in middle-European countries, for instance:

- > Lecture: „Direct democracy in Switzerland“ at the Faculty for Economics at the Matej Bel University Banská Bystrica / Slovakia (February 2001)
- > Seminar on a Draft of a Code for the Administrative Proceeding for the Russian Republic (Seminar of the Fund „Konstituzia“ and the Fund Tschernomyrdin for Supporting and Developing the Middle Classes, November 2000, Moscow)
- > International Congress in Bialystok / Poland: „Ethical Standards in the Administration of Poland, Germany and Ukraine“ (Introductory lecture, leader of a Working Group; March 2000).

He was the head of a board of examiners in February 2001 at the University Matej Bel Banská Bystrica / Slovakia. Seminars have been held at the Matej Bel University Banská Bystrica / Slovakia, together with Dr. Katarina Miková: „Intercultural communication in State and Administration“ (about 6 days in three parts).

Appendix III: Scientific References

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Georgian team

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German team

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Swiss partner

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Links to the new partners and to homepages of the network project
World Society Foundation
www.wsf.unizh.ch

INTAS
www.intas.be

Osteuropa Institut FU Berlin
www.oei.fu-berlin.de

Institute for Legal Studies and Legal Practice, Prof. Schaffhauser
www.unisg.ch/org/irp/web.usf/

Swiss Agency for Development (SDC)
www.deza.admin.ch

Humboldt Universität Berlin, Lehrstuhl Bevölkerungswissenschaft
www.demographie.de/forschung/index.htm

cultur prospectiv
www.culturprospectiv.ch/regions

Publikation "Postsocialist Transformation and Civil Society in a Globalising World"
www.novapublishers.com/detailed_search.asp?id=1-59033-138-9

Appendix IV: The NIS as a paradigm of World Society?

One of the main conclusions of research on the developments of the countries after the break down of the Soviet Union is that one-way evolutions for all cases along the same trace are not supported by observations. Although the „transition-research“ reveals some crucial factors and problems common to most countries, the present situations and conditions are diverse and even particular in the specific countries. It is a paradox that a former OneWorld vision that of the Soviet system, changed in the last ten years into a picture near to a Babylonian world. Each country as a whole and moreover as a local, regional and metropolitan part shows its own situations, trends and outlooks for further development.

However, the NIS-area covers a macro region of World Society, which fulfils the main theorems of an emerging global society in a specific way:

The modernity values claiming to become the primary orientation of evolution to civil societies (mainly the economic and technological aspects) worked as strong triggers for the collapse of the Soviet Vision of World Society; the former model of modernisation became illegitimate insofar as efficiency of the societies is concerned.

The capacity to cross the borders between the Western hemisphere increased radically by the inventions of the new tele-communicative technologies and mobility. The diffusion of modern life styles relying on a high degree of welfare contrast to the collective orientations on a scarce welfare situation in the Eastern populations.

The Vision of Soviet system was oriented to social security on a low but equitarian level of welfare. This orientation is still very important (lower strata, peripheries and in older groups) in most countries. But among the groups and elites on the winner side this collective orientation is loosing. The innovation is an adaptation of Western orientations of individual consumption, freedom and welfare.

The three trends are the hard factors demonstrating how to become integrated into the World Society of the Western type: maximation of efficiency, close connections to the centres, mainly US and Western Europe, economic democratisation in the sense of individual achievements of welfare and life style attributes. In this sense the evolution is clearly a one-way adaptation of the Western model of modernity. It is this value, which today is connotated as „global“ and „universal“ in public opinion.

Is this path of development universal? Surely the Asian region in the Far East is showing that these trends are evident and transformed the Asian countries. But research shows also the limits of these trends. Specific traditions of countries are hindering or favouring the processes towards a Western pattern. Asia is a macro region changing the meaning of World society in a specific manner. Even Western Europe is far from being and feeling a copy of the World Society Vision which is defined and headed by the Western master nation of World Society: the United States.

The NIS-area is the most interesting field of another process. How will emerge in this area a new part of World Society? The insights into the situations of our and other cases allow defining factors, which will be important in future:

All states of the NIS region experience a twofold activation of memory.

- Firstly, after 10 years of rupture to the period of Soviet-unity and -dependency this memory is reinterpreted under different outlooks. Overwhelmingly negative evaluations are mixed or contrasted with neutral or positive reassessments. Nearly in all countries, even in the Eastern part of Germany, nostalgic reactions are obvious. The security model on a low level of welfare contrasts to the attractions by an individual but more risky life style.
- Secondly in all countries the pre-Soviet memory is open in a twofold manner. The forgotten and/or displaced national or regional history under the Sovietregime is a thesaurus of feelings, identifications and images of the own nation and society. The two memories influence each other. The experience of the loss of the socialist eschatology created in the communist period is answered by the search for a revival of religious eschatology and/or

ethnic identity (see Rotman, Vorozheikina). The increasing role of the pre-communist memory is more than a change of ideologies. Institutions like churches or the army redefined as a national force will become central actors (see Churilov).

So the making of a World Society in the NIS area is a process in contradiction. On the one hand, the Western model of World Society is diffusing into the area and will be adopted. On the other hand the memories are intervening in the NIS-area. Therefore, it is the depth of adaptation on which the research should concentrate. Frequently the new global values are adopted very rapidly but remain on the surface. Like using English for internet communication leads to the paradox that one feels the richness of the own mother language. We could call this surface a formal adoption, which is far from a real adoption. A surface adoption co-exists frequently with a more or less strong influence of the memories. Their influence can lead to the rejection of the values (for instance by the so called „anti-globalists“) and/or to a more or less radical modification. Last, but not least the memory stimulates the offer or the invention of an alternative vision about the meaning of globality in the own context. These processes taking place „under the surface“, i. e. in the deep structure of a culture, are the reasons why the World Society in the NIS area will be diversified in future. The cultural variety will intervene much more than in Western Europe, in Central Europe or even in the winner nations of Asia.

Our common research project starts with the insights into the nation specific studies in a broad field, mainly of the INTAS networks: Belarus, Georgia, Russian Federation, Ukraine. As a frame of reference will serve the empirical results and theoretical considerations, the scenarios of development of a world wide civic society. However, our hypotheses are specified according to the following questions:

- Does the NIS-area become a new or alternative paradigm of World Society? Which are the main contrasts to the Western, Central European and Asian cases?
- How can the starting conditions and situations of the different countries be described (firstly in the four network nations, secondly in all other countries)?
- Are there groups or couples of nations with similar conditions, for instance the small Baltic nations, Russia or parts of Russia, Ukraine, Moldavia, Caucasian states, the Asian parts?
- How can the evolution lines for the different cases, groups and situations be judged and/or forecasted? Which values and orientations are needed to describe and evaluate the lines (efficiency – non-efficiency, openness – self-reliance, democracy – authoritarian, charismatic regime etc.)?
- Which role does the diffusion and adoption of the Western World vision and patterns play (according to the three factors – see above)?
- How do the dynamics of memories intervene and shape the emergence of World Society Visions in the particular countries, groups or regions?
- Which plays and players (politics, institutions, movements) are reflecting and/or steering the evolutionary paths?

This project is a long termed investment into a new field of comparative research using the results of previous insights and investigations based mainly on single nations. The project should proceed in a step by step strategy focusing on ongoing or planned research activities in the countries. In the following projects we focus on specific problems, which are important at the present. Each country project involved to the „umbrella project“ from the beginning. In the first line the Georgian project „How Georgians view democracy?“ serves as a focus for all the four countries, which will co-operate and regularly exchange the results and further steps. It is very important to start with country specific questions. To impose an ambitious super-structure should be avoided at the beginning. But through the ongoing and interactive research process a common result will be achieved at the end of the project.