

## PRINCIPAL SPACE-RELATED TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES DEMONSTRATED BY MAPS OF THE ATLAS OF EASTERN AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

### **Peter Jordan**

Ph.D., Associate and Honorary Professor  
Austrian Academy of Sciences  
Institute of Urban and Regional Research  
Postgasse 7/4/2, A-1010 Wien, Österreich  
e-mail: peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at

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### **Abstract**

#### **Principal space-related transformation processes demonstrated by maps of the atlas of eastern and southeastern Europe**

The article highlights some principal transformation processes in the post-Communist transformation countries of Central and Southeast Europe. This comprises (1) environmental change, (2) growing spatial disparities, (3) democratic transformation with a focus on administrative decentralisation and (4) the consequences of a rise in national and ethnic consciousness. As its main source this article is based on the Atlas of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, edited as a thematic map series since 1989 by the author of this article.

### **Key words**

transformation, Central Europe, Southeast Europe, environment, spatial disparities, administrative decentralisation, national consciousness

## **1. Introduction**

This paper highlights some main directions and problem areas of the transformation process. It refers spatially to all former Communist countries of Europe, but focuses on the transformation countries of Central and Southeast Europe. Maps of the Atlas of Eastern Europe serve as the main source of spatial reference and spatial differentiation. The Atlas has been published in 26 instalments since 1989 and portrays in this way very well the spatial dimension of transformation.

Major directions and problem fields to be highlighted are (1) environmental change, (2) the problem of growing spatial disparities, (3) democratic transformation and the problems accompanying developing democratic structures as well as (4) the "second national awakening" and conflicts arising from exaggerated national consciousness.

Other important thematic fields of the transformation process like economic transformation, the change of modal split in transportation or the suburbanisation processes around larger cities are just marginally mentioned.

## **2. Goals and concept of the Atlas**

The Atlas of Eastern and Southeastern Europe (Jordan 1989) is published, first by the Austrian Institute of East and Southeast European Studies, now by the Austrian Academy of Sciences, since 1989 succeeding the Atlas of the Danubian Countries (Breu 1970-1989).

It is a scientific thematic map series published in individual numbers and attempting to highlight spatial effects of current transformation processes in the transition countries of Central, East and Southeast Europe. This is done partly by survey maps in smaller scales (1:1.5 mill., 1:3 mill., 1:6 mill.) rendering a topic in a transnational and comparative way, partly by case studies of individual countries or parts of countries in relatively large scales (down to 1: 200,000). Survey maps of larger regions like Central and Southeast Europe or Central Europe offer, compared to a wide choice of national cartographic products of partly excellent quality, but confined to a state territory, the added value of comparable presentation across country borders. The usual variety in data structure and cartographic methods is in this way supplemented by harmonized data sets and methodologically homogeneous presentations. This is combined with a rather detailed spatial resolution, for reasons of map scale not achievable by school, hand and world atlases. So far, 26 issues or instalments have been published in the framework of this atlas. They are composed of at least one map and an accompanying text book in German and English, but include partly several maps. 13 of the instalments are devoted to larger regions enabling comparison across country borders, two more are right now in elaboration. Two instalments are also available as an interactive internet version accessible via [www.aos.ac.at](http://www.aos.ac.at).

## **3. Environmental change**

When looking at the main types of environmental changes that occurred from the late 1980s to the late 1990s, the most obvious is the vanishing of the former

gradient in environmental pollution from the "Black Triangle," the former GDR, southern Poland, and the Czech Republic, due to the relatively successful restructuring of industry and agriculture, as well as the application of new production and environmental protection technologies in the most advanced reform countries of East Central Europe. In contrast to Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia, environmental pollution in the east and southeast of Europe (mainly Ukraine, Moldavia, Romania, and Bulgaria) has not been reduced significantly since the late 1980s. Apart from this general pattern, the comparison between the two temporal cross-sections as portrayed by two instants of the Atlas (Nefedova et al. 1992, Hartung et al. 2003) reveals a number of minor and more local developments, which, however, tell a lot about local and national approaches towards economic restructuring and environmental protection.

### 3.1 The situation in the late 1980s

#### 3.1.1 Large-scale air pollution

The representation of large-scale air pollution on the map (Nefedova et al. 1992) is based on the concentration of sulphur dioxide ( $\text{SO}_2$ ), since comparable data were available across the whole region only for this indicator. Various other indicators such as dust or nitrogenoxide concentration were used additionally to define peaks of pollution.

The map shows a compact zone of increased air pollution from the south of the former GDR, across former Czechoslovakia, southern Poland, and Hungary, to the north of former Yugoslavia, western Romania and Bulgaria. Isolated patches of increased, high or very high air pollution can be found in eastern parts of Romania and Bulgaria, as well as in parts of the former Soviet Union. Within this compact zone some regions stand out by high and very high concentrations: the south of the former GDR, where thermoelectric power production based on local brown coal, and the chemical industry contributed most to pollution; northern Bohemia (Čechy), where similar polluters were also responsible for massive damage to forests in the Ore Mountains (Erzgebirge/Krušné hory); southwestern Poland and northern Moravia (Morava), especially Lower Silesia (Dolny Śląsk) with its copper smelting plants, and the Upper Silesian Industrial District with its comprehensive heavy industry based on black coal mining; the Horná Nitra basin in Slovakia, where the polluting effect of a thermoelectric power station burning brown coal was multiplied by temperature inversions in winter; the industrial axis through northern Hungary (from Bakony across Budapest to Miskolc and Ózd) with aluminium huts in the west, chemical production concentrated in Budapest, and iron and steel mills in the northeast; the central part of Slovenia, especially from coal mining and thermoelectric power production in Trbovlje and Soštanj, with impacts reaching as far as southern Austria; some mining and industrial regions in Bosnia (Bosna) and Serbia (Srbija), as well as in Romania, with lignite mining and burning in the Motru basin, steel mills and black coal mining in Hunedoara and Petroșani, respectively, and the industrial agglomerations of Bucharest (București) and its surrounding areas, including Pitești with its oil refinery, and Ploești with its petrochemical industry; finally the lower Marica basin in Bulgaria with its large thermoelectric power stations burning brown coal.

### 3.1.2 Air pollution in larger settlements

Air pollution in larger settlements frequently differs from large-scale air pollution due to local industrial, communal and traffic emissions, as well as specific meteorological situations including location in basins, and prevailing wind directions. Therefore, this indicator is shown separately on the map.

Most polluted in this respect were all the cities of Upper Silesia (Górny Śląsk) including the Czech part, as well as Cracow (Kraków), due to its heavy industry (Nowa Huta) and its location in a basin, which prompts temperature inversions in winter (Trafas 1991). The most polluted capitals were Budapest and Prague (Praha); Budapest due to its chemical industry and its location in the wind shadow of the Buda Mountains (Budai-hegység), which impedes proper ventilation; Prague due to its diversified industry and its location in the rather narrow valley of the Vltava river. Chişinău, the capital of Moldavia, rounds out the list of the most polluted larger cities in the east.

Relatively better in air quality were Leipzig, Dresden, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade (Beograd), Bucharest, Sofia (Sofija) and Kiev (Kiiv). Least polluted capitals in the countries thematically treated were Berlin and Vienna (Wien).

### 3.1.3 Water pollution

Water quality as it is shown on the map is the result of the harmonisation of divergent national classifications. Some of them were based on chemical, and others on biological indicators.

Generally speaking, in the western parts of the map section river pollution was almost only low in mountain regions, that is, near to the source, while in Belorussia, Ukraine, and Moldavia good water quality was also typical for lowland sections of rivers, due to the overall lower levels of industrial intensity and agricultural land use. Extremely polluted larger rivers include the Elbe, the Oder (Odra), the Vistula (Wisła), the Drava (from the Yugoslavian border), and the Sava.

Water quality among large lakes was poorest in Lake Balaton, especially its western basin, and with some of the Masurian lakes in Poland. Water pollution was relatively low in Lake Ohrid (Ohridsko Ezero/Liqeni i Ohrit), Lake Prespa (Prespansko Ezero/Liqeni i Prespës/Megále Préspa) and Lake Scutari (Skadarsko jezero/Liqeni i Shkodrës).

Comparing water quality along the southern Baltic coast, along the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria, Romania, and the Odessa region of Ukraine, as well as along the eastern Adriatic coast, the Adriatic coast ranked best, while the Baltic coast ranked lowest. Very heavy pollution, especially in the large bays of the southern Baltic, the Bay of Szczecin (Zalew Szczeczinski/Oderhaff), and the Bay of Gdańsk (Zalew Gdański), was caused primarily by their large and heavily polluted confluents, the Oder and the Vistula; and by the shallow water of these bays. Along the section of the Black Sea coast shown on the map, heavy and very heavy water pollution was concentrated in the vicinity of large ports including Burgas, Varna, Constanţa, and Odessa (Odesa), and around industries on the coastline, such as the Năvodari oil refinery north of Constanţa. The comparatively favourable conditions along the eastern coast of the Adriatic can be explained by rather limited settlement and

industrial density, a low intensity of agricultural use, a lack of larger polluted rivers, a system of sea currents providing the eastern coast of the Adriatic with less contaminated water from the eastern Mediterranean basin – water polluted by the large rivers from the Po Plain (Pianura Padana) is exported along the (Italian) west coast – and by the relative deepness of the eastern coast (partly over 100 m), as well as by the occurrence of submarine sources (vrulje) augmenting coastal waters with clean water from the carst hydrologic system. Thus, the water quality along the eastern Adriatic coast is by far superior to that along the western (Italian) coast.

#### 3.1.4 Damage to forests

The map discerns between damage to forests caused by air pollution and damages caused by careless industrial use, neglecting regeneration, age and species structure.

Damage by air pollution was most intensive in the Ore Mountains at the border between the former GDR and Czechoslovakia, in Lusatia (Lausitz) (GDR), in the uplands and mountains around the Upper Silesian industrial district (Beskids (Beskidy), Jeseník), in central Slovenia, in the Romanian Jiu Valley, and in eastern Serbia, as well as in the Balkan Mountains (Stara planina) north of Sofia. Careless industrial use was most obvious in the Ukrainian and Romanian Carpathians, as well as in Belorussia.

#### 3.2 The situation in the late 1990s

After the collapse of the Communist system, the environmental situation in east central Europe improved remarkably. The main reason for this improvement was what could be called "passive sanitation," that is, the closing down or conversion of the heaviest industrial polluters, as well as de-industrialisation of agriculture in at least some of the countries. In addition, some active measures against further pollution were taken, such as the application of filters at thermoelectric power stations, or their replacement by nuclear power stations, as was the case in Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Active sanitation, however, was definitely responsible for only a minor part of the improvement. Shortage in financial capacities, as well as a still less-developed environmental consciousness were the major reasons for the limited use of active sanitation measures. The condition of the environment was still considered a less pressing problem than economic restructuring by the vast majority of the population. The opinions that economic restructuring will automatically result in a reduction of environmental problems, and that international support is needed for environmental sanitation were also held by many. Environmental movements and parties had, in general, lost their former vigour.

A new threat to the environment had emerged in the dramatic growth of road traffic, which was increasingly replacing railroad transportation.

##### 3.2.1 Large-scale air pollution

What was indicated on the 1980s map as a compact zone of increased air pollution has been dissolved into individual patches on the map showing the state of the late 1990s (Hartung et al. 2003). The "Black Triangle" over the southern GDR,

Czechoslovakia, and southern Poland had lost much of its force, but was still the largest contiguous area of at least "increased" air pollution in the whole map area. However, while air pollution in the countries of East Central Europe (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia) was decisively lower in the late 1990s than in the late 1980s, the situation further to the east (Belorussia, Ukraine, Moldavia) and southeast (Romania, Bulgaria) had not improved very much. The former concentration of pollutants on the western part of the map section had therefore been replaced by a more even distribution.

### 3.2.2 Air pollution in larger settlements

Air pollution in larger settlements had decreased in many cases. In the Czech Republic, only Prague and the industrial towns of Northern Bohemia were still heavily polluted, but their levels of pollution were less than they had been in the late 1980s. In eastern Germany, due to de-industrialisation, the pollution of Leipzig, Chemnitz, and Dresden had been at least slightly reduced, and significantly reduced in Halle. All the larger urban centers of Upper Silesia demonstrated values well below those in the late 1980s; only Katowice and Cracow stood out as still having "high" pollution. Budapest, which has had the heaviest pollution of all capitals in the late 1980s, now had remarkably better values. The reduction of heavy industry also positively affected air pollution in the towns and cities in the rest of Hungary's former industrial belt from Bakony to Miskolc. In Romania, former centers of urban air pollution including Bucharest, Ploești, Brăila, Galați, and Giurgiu were much less prominent, while others such as Huneoara, Baia Mare, and Onești remained at the same levels. In contrast to the improvements in at least parts of Romania, the situation in Bulgaria was not better than before; in Sofia and its surrounding areas it had even taken a turn for the worse. Pernik, an industrial town southwest of Sofia, was identified as the nadir of the whole map section in terms of air pollution in larger settlements.

While air pollution in Chișinău had improved from a dangerous situation, the larger cities of the western and central Ukraine, including L'viv, Kiev, and Žitomir had higher pollution values than before.

### 3.2.3 Water pollution

In contrast to air pollution, river pollution had not been significantly reduced. Still heavily polluted rivers included the Vistula, the Oder, and the Warta of Poland; the Elbe, the upper course of Spree, the Elster, the Mulde, and the Saale in the southeastern regions of the former GDR; the Dye, the Jihlava, and the Morava in southern Moravia; the Váh and the Nitra in western Slovakia; the Danube, the Tisza, the Rába, and the Körös in Hungary; the Sava and the Drava in lowland Croatia; and the Danube and the lower courses of all its major Danube tributaries, including the Jiu, the Olt, the Vede, the Argeș, and the Ialomița in Valachia. Significant improvements in river water quality were confined to the Sava and Drava rivers in Slovenia, and the Mur, Salzach, Traun, and Inn rivers in Austria.

While the water quality of Lake Balaton had not improved significantly, in spite of the construction of a canalisation network, the formerly heavily polluted Masurian lakes now displayed much better levels of pollution.

The coastal waters of the southern Baltic Sea were less polluted than before, especially along the Pomeranian coast outside the large bays. The bays also demonstrated a slightly improved water quality. At the Black Sea coast, the former heavy pollution in the vicinity of larger ports had been smoothed. The eastern Adriatic coast had maintained its low pollution level.

#### 3.2.4 Damage to forests

In the map showing the situation in the late 1990s, damage to forests are not differentiated by particular causes. High intensity damage was still present in northern Bohemia from the Ore Mountains to the Sudeten (Sudety), and in eastern Bohemia (Orlické hory), as well as in a wreath around Upper Silesia, including a zone from Częstochowa to Radom.

### 4. Growing spatial disparities

Spatial disparities at the sub-national level, i.e. of regions and sub-national administrative units are reflected by several maps of the Atlas, especially by maps on the central place system (Grimm, Friedlein, Müller 1997), population development (Kupiszewski 1992) and migration (Kupiszewski 1993), socio-economic transformation (Jordan, Nefedova et al. 1994) as well as transformation in agriculture (Knappe et al. 2004).

A principal issue to be derived from these maps, but anyway also known from many other sources (e.g., Gorzelak 1996, Fassmann 1997, Heller 1998) is the divide into "winners" and "losers" of socio-economic transformation in the spatial (regional) sense.

Winners of transformation are in the first line metropolitan cities and large regional centres. Due to their favourable infrastructure, easy accessibility, diversified economic structure and rich human capital they succeeded to attract qualified and strategic investment from the very beginning of transformation. Their winner role is reflected also by population growth, mostly, however, directed to the urban fringe and not to the urban core resulting in the very typical effect of suburbanisation. The only major exception in this latter respect is Tirana, which reports a population increase (affecting also the urban core) from about 300,000 in 1990 to currently about 900,000 (qualified estimates, Doka 2005).

A positive effect on regional centres can best be observed in larger countries, where besides the primate city other centres have space enough to play a major role. This is certainly true for Poland, where besides the capital Warsaw (Warszawa) also Poznań, Wrocław, Cracow (Kraków) and Gdańsk show a very positive development. Another good example is Romania, where apart from the capital Bucharest (Bucureşti), certainly at the very top of the country's socio-economic development, also regional centres like Timişoara, Cluj-Napoca, Braşov, Sibiu, Craiova, Iaşi and Constanţa have been rather successful.

In smaller countries or countries with a rather dominant metropolis only one or a few regional centres apart from the capital were more prosperous. In the Czech Republic this can actually only be said of Brno, the "secret capital" of Moravia (Morava); in Hungary for Pécs and Debrecen; in Serbia for Novi Sad and Niš; and in Bulgaria for Plovdiv, Varna and Burgas. Cities like Košice in Slovakia, Maribor in

Slovenia or Rijeka and Split in Croatia suffer already from their rather limited or economically peripheral catchment.

A second type of winners are western border belts, when they border a country in a better socio-economic position. They profit from border trade, daily commuting to the neighbouring country with higher wages, shopping and excursion tourism from this other country, the outsourcing of industrial productions due to the gradient in labour costs and other kinds of public and private trans-border co-operation. Typical examples in this respect are the Hungarian and Slovakian border regions towards Austria, the Czech border regions towards Bavaria and Austria, the Romanian border region towards Hungary, the Serbian Vojvodina as the border region towards Hungary, the western Ukraine east of the Polish border.

A next type of winners are rural regions with tourism. They profit from (besides agriculture) a second source of income. The effect is stronger, when tourism is not mono-seasonal. Examples for this type are the Tatra Mountains (Tatry) in Poland as well as in Slovakia with both a winter and a summer season; the Masurian Lakes (Pojezerze Mazurkie) in Poland, where rural tourism based on an attractive lakeside scenery flourishes; the Adriatic coast in Slovenia, Croatia and Montenegro, which succeeded to recover after a longer break caused by the post-Yugoslavian wars and crises due to a turn towards quality tourism; the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, which (much in contrast to the Romanian) succeeded in restructuring Socialist welfare tourism; Romanian Transylvania (Ardeal) and Bukovina (Bucovina), where cultural monuments (of the Saxons in Transylvania, the Moldavian monasteries in Bukovina) as well as sentimental and ethnic tourism (mainly in Transylvania) flourish.

A last type of winners are rural regions along communication corridors and economic development axes between larger centres. They profit from their location and participate in the success of the centres. Most frequently, however, socio-economic development along these corridors is spatially not homogeneous, but confined to pockets or urbanised zones. It may also happen that human capital is due to selective out-migration already exhausted so that the basis for economic development is missing. Typical cases in point are the corridor between Budapest and Vienna, the Slovenian main transportation axis from Trieste via Ljubljana to Maribor and further to the Hungarian border, the main Croatian transportation corridor between Zagreb and Rijeka, the Morava corridor in Serbia between Belgrade (Beograd) and Niš or the Marica corridor from Sofia via Plovdiv to Edirne in Bulgaria.

Apart from old industrial regions with heavy industries, for which it is difficult to be converted and modernised (e.g. Upper Silesian Industrial Region (Górny Śląsk) in Poland, Ostrava-Karvina Region in the Czech Republic) the main loser is the rural space, if it is not favoured by the above-mentioned factors, i.e. if it has no potentials for tourism or other tertiary activities. In terms of area, these are large parts of the transformation countries.

As general reasons for the at least relative, but frequently also absolute and accelerated socio-economic decline of the rural space the following may be mentioned:

- Rural space receives less investment than urban and especially metropolitan regions, since investment into urban centres offers higher and faster returns of the invested capital. This is due to their better infrastructure, more diversified



economic structure and better provision with human capital. This means less innovation and modernisation in the rural space.

- Much in contrast especially to Alpine regions in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and France, but to rural space in Western Europe in general, rural space in transformation countries receives much less, if any subsidies from European or national sources. Rural economy is therefore almost exclusively determined by market prices and income in agriculture as compared to income in other branches of the economy. Transformation countries, who are European Union (EU) members, will only in the longer run receive an amount of subsidies from EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) comparable to what is received by "old" EU members. Very likely also, the overall amount of CAP subsidies will be reduced after the programme period 2007-2013. Usually this resulted in a decline in agricultural land use and production.
- The agricultural markets of transformation countries were forced to open themselves towards the world market. This resulted in the intrusion of powerful competitors from the EU and from overseas not only in the sector of agricultural production in the narrower sense, but also with foodstuff produced on the basis of agricultural products. Prestigious world trade marks are preferred by consumers and replace domestic offers. Partly even surplus productions in old EU members (e.g. of potatoes, sugar beet) which would have to be destroyed are offered in transformation countries at dumping prices reducing in this way the market chances of local producers even more.
- Due to the fact that restitution to former owners and their heirs has been the main method of post-Communist land reform, the average agricultural enterprise is small and economically weak. Much in contrast to old EU members, also administrative, social and economic supportive structures are missing. This makes small agricultural producers dependent of monopolists, when they need seeds, fertilisers, machines or want to sell their products.
- Migration flows are directed towards better economic prospects. This means in general selective migration from rural to urban space leaving older, less qualified and less active, also politically structure-conservative people behind. This means a decline of market production in favour of subsistence and a further reduction of potentials for innovation.

Where agriculture had to a high extent been collectivised in the Communist period (all countries to at least 85%, except Poland and Yugoslavia, only 22% and 32% resp., Taschler 1989), the administrative centres of large state and collective farms had not only acquired economic, but also educational, health care, social and cultural functions for the rural population. The dissolution of these large enterprises meant also the closing down of these extra-economic functions and very often no adequate replacement by central functions of villages and communes. This contributed to a reduction in quality of life in rural space.

## **5. Democratic transformation**

From two maps plus accompanying texts showing the administrative subdivision of Central and Southeast Europe as of 1 January 1989 (Jordan, Slawinski 1989) compared to 1 January 2007 (Jordan 2008) it can be concluded that at the local level (NUTS-5, partly NUTS-4) self-government has been established in all countries. In the successor states of Yugoslavia it had already existed in Communist times (Yugoslavia had developed a specific system of self-administrative Socialism). In Bulgaria it has been established in 1988, in all other countries in 1990 and later.

When it comes to discuss the regional levels (NUTS-2 to NUTS-4), it can be summed up that only Poland has self-government at the NUTS-2 (province) level. The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia and Romania have self-governing units at the NUTS-3 (region) level, Slovakia with a very specific solution: two administrative bodies at the same regional level are responsible for the same territory. Bulgaria has self-government only at the lower regional level (NUTS-4, the level of districts or very large communes). In Estonia and Latvia is no self-government at regional levels, although administrative regions exist. Slovenia has not implemented administrative regions so far.

## 5.1 Major problems accompanying decentralisation in accession countries

### 5.1.1 Danger that socio-economic disparities grow

Regional disparities have always been more distinct in the eastern parts of Europe than in the West. They have in the Communist period been somewhat disguised by an industrial location policy not corresponding to market principles, but have again gained momentum in the transformation period. Decentralisation stresses disparities, since it widens the financial autonomy of subnational administrative bodies. Subnational bodies must rely on own financial resources more than before, transfer payments from the national level decrease. Economically sound and active units have sufficient own resources and income, peripheral and economically weak units lack sufficient own resources.

### 5.1.2 Lack of qualified and trained personnel especially at the local level

Lack of qualified and trained personnel is one of the most frequent arguments of "centralists" against decentralisation. The quality of public services indeed declines, when they are executed by insufficiently trained personnel. This is a huge problem mainly in small communes and in rural areas. They suffer from brain drain and an unfavourable demographic structure (over-ageing), a lack of money. This impedes also the participation of these administrative units in EU structural funding and pre-accession programmes, since participation is based on the elaboration of good projects (and there is nobody able to do this).

National governments, associations of communes, political parties, educational institutions do a lot to improve this situation by offering training courses, but real improvement needs time.

### 5.1.3 Lack of civil participation

Democracy and self-government needs the engagement for public and community affairs not only of some officials, but of a wider public. Readiness to engage oneself in public and community affairs is, however, weak, especially with older people and in the rural space. This is due to bad experiences in the Communist period, also due to another heritage of the Communist period, to the still prevailing idea that "the state is caring for everything; I must not engage myself", due also to a lack of emotional contact and loyalty towards political parties. They are young institutions, have only to a minor extent a permanent clientele and lack the power of mass mobilization. Mediation from abroad could help. This is a wide field for NGOs, since neutral actors are required, not associated with parties or other political forces.

#### 5.1.4 Lack of coincidence between administrative and cultural regions

Regional identity is important for the acceptance of an administrative unit by the citizens, for making them engaged for the region. Regional or cultural identity is constituted by a common history, common traditions and can be accentuated by certain ethnic, linguistic and religious characteristics. But distinct regional and cultural identities only partly exist. Only some countries are composed of a complete set of such identities: Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, Latvia and Lithuania. In others only some parts of the country can boast of such identities: Slovakia, Bulgaria, Estonia. Among the countries in question only Poland has utilized this potential for its most recent administrative reform.

#### 5.1.5 Lack of coincidence between administrative and functional regions

If functional regions in the sense of gravitational zones or catchment areas of cities at several spatial levels do not coincide with administrative regions, this means not utilizing possible synergetic effects which result from the fact that the same centre is not only the administrative centre, but also the centre of social and economic spatial structures. There is not really a "lack" of such coincidence, since most countries have adapted their administrative regions to functional regions very well. But there are some exceptions: Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Latvia, partly also Poland.

#### 5.1.6 Self-government has only exceptionally been established at the NUTS-2 level

The NUTS-2 level is the most important recipient of EU structural funding. It is within the intention of this funding structure that funds should be received by administrative units governing themselves and deciding themselves on the use of these funds and not by authorities dependent on the central government or on other subnational units. However, self-government at this level exists only in Poland. In other countries only planning units have been established at this level. They are no juridical persons. In some countries they depend on regions with self-government (Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania), in others on the central government (Slovakia, Bulgaria). In Croatia and the Baltic countries even planning units do not exist so far.

One may raise the question, why it was so difficult to implement self-government at the NUTS-2 level? One answer is that central governments are afraid of a "federalisation" of the country and of strengthening centrifugal forces going eventually as far as regionalism, ethnic particularism and even irredentism. This may apply to the Czech Republic (as regards Moravian regionalism), Slovakia (as regards the large Hungarian minority), Slovenia (as regards the strong regional identities), Croatia (as regards mainly Istrian regionalism), Romania (as regards the large Hungarian minority), Bulgaria (as regards the large Turkish minority). A second explanation is that an additional administrative level should be avoided, especially in the smaller countries, since it consumes expenses and needs another layer of civil officers. A third explanation is that representatives of the administrative levels already established are afraid of losing competences, financial resources and do not want to be subordinated to higher units.

### 5.1.7 Share of competences between the administrative levels

In the course of implementation of a comprehensive new administrative system it is not easy to arrive at the optimum share of competences from the beginning. Most desirable would be precise and exclusive attributions and the avoiding of overlapping and shared competences. For the optimum share, however, there is no general rule. It depends on the size of the country, the size of subnational units, population density, settlement structure, economic structure and administrative traditions.

### 5.1.8 Lack of horizontal networks

While vertical connections exist (between units at different levels and between subnational units and the national level), horizontal networks are very frequently missing. They would be desirable and useful between cities of similar rank, between cities and their catchment area, between rural communes across regional boundaries, between regions and communes at both sides of an international border. Horizontal networks would a.o. promote a better share of functions, a concentration on and better utilization of comparative advantages and exchange of know-how.

## 5.2 Driving forces in decentralisation

Driving forces for decentralisation in general and administrative regionalisation in particular are quoted below roughly in the sequence of their importance at the average of the countries investigated.

- Cities and economically prospering regions: They are clearly the winners of decentralisation. They dispose over ample resources of their own, which they can use for their own purposes and projects in a decentralised system. They are not as dependent on state transfers (which decline) and dispose over sufficient human capital, since they gain from brain drain. They are therefore also able to elaborate good projects that are funded.
- Political elites ready to comply to the requirements of EU integration and accession.
- Regional and local media: Diversification (especially of electronic) media is high in almost all countries. A plenty of regional and local broadcasting and television stations create a regional and local consciousness and engage themselves for regional and local interests.
- Conservative and liberal political parties: They are not bound to a centralistic ideology or background.
- Other political actors with a regionalized or localized organisational structure of their own or aiming at regionally or locally diversified political goals, e.g. culture associations, farmers' associations, fishermen's associations, chambers of commerce.
- Good coincidence between administrative and functional regions.
- Good coincidence between administrative and cultural regions.
- Ethnic minorities, if they are not regarded (by the central government or by the majority population) as a threat to national integrity.

## 6. Rise of national/ethnic awareness and resulting problems

Several maps of the atlas are devoted to the representation of national/ethnic structures (Kocsis 1990; Jordan, Schappelwein, Tarhov 1993; Jordan et al. 1995; Wolf, Förster 1999; Jordan, Kocsis et al. 2006). Accompanying texts highlight political and societal backgrounds, characteristics of national/ethnic identities as well as ethnic conflicts, especially minority issues. The most recent map of this series (Jordan, Kocsis et al. 2006) shows ethnic consciousness in Central and Southeast Europe according to the census round of 2000 and by administrative units at the NUTS-4 level.

Generally speaking, national/ethnic awareness has gained ground after the fall of Communism. This can partly be explained as a reaction to this a-national and (at least by declaration) internationalist ideology and as filling the ideological vacuum it left behind. It is partly also due to the economic and social transformation crisis, in which governments and political leaders were in the habit of appealing to national/ethnic consciousness in the hope of releasing additional resources.

Other reasons, typical not only for the former Communist countries, but also for Western Europe, are:

- Globalisation does strengthen the need to preserve one's own and the group's identity, to find support in a cultural group, to remain special.
- The decentralisation and regionalizing process under way in the EU and beyond its borders (towards a "Europe of regions") favours cultural minorities as the manifestation or representatives of regional identity.
- The European Union and the Council of Europe declared the cultural diversity of the continent an essential trait of the European identity and are prepared to go to considerable expense to maintain it (see the complicated and costly EU official language regulation).

Most obvious and a matter of most tragic results was the resurgence of the national question in former Yugoslavia. Communist Yugoslavia, which was *de facto* a multinational state, but which in the interwar period understood itself also as nation state – namely, of the Yugoslavian nation consisting of the Serbian, Croat and Slovene peoples – went a way different from other Communist countries also in this regard. In a conscious break with the Yugoslavia of the interwar period which was under the hegemony of the Serbs, Tito's Yugoslavia sought a balance between the southern Slavic nations. The non-Slavic Albanians however, were not accorded an equal role.

Achieving this balance involved more than just establishing a federal system. Under the pressure of Tito's partisan movement which had also achieved victory over the Serbian nationalist Chetniks, the Serbs were stripped of their territorial possessions: (1) Regions referred to in Serbia as southern Serbia were upgraded to the Republic of Macedonia, its majority population was provided with all the trappings of a separate Orthodox nation (standard language, autocephalous Orthodox church); (2) Serbia was prevented from direct interference with sections of Serbia that contained large national/ethnic minorities (Kosovo, Vojvodina) because they were autonomous; (3) Bosnia-Herzegovina, whose population up to the 1961 census was predominantly Serbian (The Miroslav Krleža Lexicographical Institute 1993, 123), was granted the status of a republic with no special rights for the Serbs; (4) Montenegro, which had been an independent state prior to the formation of Yugoslavia, but which had integrated itself without reservation into Yugoslavia and

whose majority understood itself nationally as Serbs, was also established as an independent republic with "Montenegrins" as the titular nation; (5) 12 compact communes in Croatia bordering each other with Serbian majorities received no special status.

All these measures were tolerated by the Serbs. Flare-ups of Serbian nationalism (such as occurred in the first half of the 1960s when the Serb Aleksander Ranković was the General Secretary of the Communist League) were suppressed under Tito's authority. Nationalist demonstrations by Croats and Slovenes, which were grounded in the feeling that they were disadvantaged within Yugoslavia's disparity equalization system, for which they as the most economically capable always ended up footing the bill, were likewise held back by Tito.

What was lacking to go along with the suppression of national claims and nationalist upsurges through the power of the Communist dictatorship and despite relatively favorable economic conditions, was grappling with the history of the severe conflicts between the Yugoslavian nations (and also with Albanians), especially during the Second World War. They had caused severe mutual injury and continued to fester on as unresolved potential conflicts.

Once the economic situation began to deteriorate in 1980 (bottlenecks with fuel and consumer goods supply at the beginning of the 1980s), following the death of the unanimously popular Tito, the national consciousness of all of these resurfaced. This is also reflected statistically in the decrease in numbers of those who thought of themselves as supranational, in a purely civic sense as "Yugoslavians" – that is, who no longer considered their national/ethnic affiliation essential. Between the all-Yugoslav census of 1981 and that of 1991, this group dropped from 5.4 % to 3.0 % of the population (Savezni zavod za statistiku 1981; Savezni zavod za statistiku 1993).

The resurgence of a national consciousness meant for Serbs that they strengthened their claim to primacy in the whole state and intended to restrict the far-reaching self government of the autonomous Serbian provinces, especially Kosovo. Early in the 1980s, the idea of Greater Serbia was reawakened in the background, which considered all of the Orthodox southern Slavs except for Bulgarians, and all those who spoke the Štokavian dialect to be Serbs, and which held the belief, along the lines of the 1844 published "schemes" of Načertanje, that the Serbian people would only be capable of successful national development once they succeeded in dominating the rest of the southern Slavs. An important representative of the Greater Serbia idea was the Serbian geographer Jovan Cvijić (1865-1927), to whom the Serbian nationalists often made reference.

Among Croats and Slovenes the resurgence of a national consciousness strengthened the conviction that they did not have to share the fruits of their economic achievements with others. They also strove to live out their national cultures even more in their respective republics.

As the majority in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Bosniaks (at the time called "ethnic Muslims") strove for political dominance in this republic. The Kosovar Albanians demanded the status of a republic in Kosovo. The ethnic Macedonians increasingly viewed its minority-rich republic as its own nation state. Only Montenegro continued to cooperate closely with Serbia.

With these divergent aims, so at odds with one another, the resurgence of the national question became the driving force behind the collapse of Yugoslavia.

Nationalism and nationalist thinking culminated during the wars following Yugoslavia's collapse, but are still common in the whole of post-Communist Europe, but especially in Southeast Europe today and more deeply rooted than in many other parts of Europe. It is associated with the "youth" of these nations, who first sought to free themselves from the dominance of the superpowers and then to emancipate themselves from nationally different elites. It is associated with the Orthodox churches who, unlike the universal Roman Catholic Church, understand themselves to be national churches and after the fall of Communism regained influence in society. It is also very much associated with the inversion of the political position between these nations, who as Muslim converts backed the authority of the Ottoman Empire, and those other nations, who as Christians were discriminated against at that time and later represented the state nations. The latter accuse the former of betraying the common cause out of opportunism – an accusation that weighs heavily considering the keen historical consciousness in Southeast Europe. This, in fact, was the backdrop to some extent of all the virulent conflicts in the region today between Serbs and Albanians, Bosniaks and Serbs/Croats, Macedonians and Albanians.

The strong national consciousness, based on very different historical views and often antagonistic, makes the relationships between neighboring countries, as well as political and economic cooperation in the region, most significantly in Southeast Europe, difficult. Most of these states have oriented themselves, if at all, to an external reference point (Brussels, USA) rather than trying to seek an intra-regional relationship. That makes it more difficult for Southeast Europe to overcome the status of the European periphery and to gain influence.

## **7. Conclusion**

As regards environmental change a general improvement can be stated. It is, however, more significant in economically prosperous countries and regions and shows a West-East gradient so typical also for economic power and economic transformation.

Spatial disparities grow especially between larger cities and rural space. Other regional winners of transformation are border belts towards economically more prosperous countries and regions with intensive tourism. Rural spaces left behind are characterised a.o. by a lack of young and active population, by insufficient transportation, social, health care and cultural infrastructures as well as by societal and political attitudes inclined to conserve existing structures and to avoid innovations.

Democratic transformation has proceeded differently in individual countries and was partly impeded by violent conflict. When the political landscape as represented by party systems and administrative decentralisation and regionalisation are taken as indicators for democratisation processes, also a West-East or Northwest-Southeast gradient can be observed.

After the rather a-national period of Communism the national idea has significantly grown in force resulting in conflicts between nations and in a recovery of minority problems. Vigour of the national idea as well as the political handling of national and ethnic conflicts may be regarded as indicative for the status of the transformation process.

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### **PRINCIPAL SPACE-RELATED TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES DEMONSTRATED BY MAPS OF THE ATLAS OF EASTERN AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE**

#### ***Summary***

This paper highlights some main directions and problem areas of the transformation process. It refers spatially to all former Communist countries of Europe, but focuses on the transformation countries of Central and Southeast Europe. Maps of the Atlas of Eastern Europe serve as the main source of spatial reference and spatial differentiation. The Atlas has been published in 26 instalments since 1989 and portrays in this way very well the spatial dimension of transformation.

When looking at the main types of environmental changes that occurred from the late 1980s to the late 1990s, the most obvious is the vanishing of the former gradient in environmental pollution from the "Black Triangle," the former GDR, southern Poland, and the Czech Republic, due to the relatively successful restructuring of industry and agriculture, as well as the application of new production and environmental protection technologies in the most advanced reform countries of East Central Europe. In contrast to Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia, environmental pollution in the east and southeast of Europe has not been reduced significantly since the late 1980s. Apart from this general pattern, the comparison between the two temporal cross-sections as portrayed by two instaments of the Atlas reveals a number of minor and more local developments, which, however, tell a lot about local and national approaches towards economic restructuring and environmental protection.

Spatial disparities at the sub-national level, i.e. of regions and sub-national administrative units are reflected by several maps of the Atlas, especially by maps on the central place system, population development and migration, socio-economic transformation as well as transformation in agriculture.

A principal issue to be derived from these maps, but anyway also known from many other sources is the divide into "winners" and "losers" of socio-economic transformation in the spatial (regional) sense. Winners of transformation are in the first line metropolitan cities and large regional centres. A second type of winners

are western border belts, when they border a country in a better socio-economic position. A third type are rural regions with tourism. A last type are rural regions along communication corridors and economic development axes between larger centres. Apart from old industrial regions with heavy industries, for which it is difficult to be converted and modernised (e.g. Upper Silesian Industrial Region in Poland, Ostrava-Karvina Region in the Czech Republic) the main loser is the rural space, if it is not favoured by the above-mentioned factors, i.e. if it has no potentials for tourism or other tertiary activities. In terms of area, these are large parts of the transformation countries.

From two maps plus accompanying texts showing the administrative subdivision of Central and Southeast Europe as of 1 January 1989 compared to 1 January 2007 it can be concluded that at the local level (NUTS-5, partly NUTS-4) self-government has been established in all countries. In the successor states of Yugoslavia it had already existed in Communist times (Yugoslavia had developed a specific system of self-administrative Socialism). In Bulgaria it has been established in 1988, in all other countries in 1990 and later.

When it comes to discuss the regional levels (NUTS-2 to NUTS-4), it can be summed up that only Poland has self-government at the NUTS-2 (province) level. The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia and Romania have self-governing units at the NUTS-3 (region) level, Slovakia with a very specific solution: two administrative bodies at the same regional level are responsible for the same territory. Bulgaria has self-government only at the lower regional level (NUTS-4, the level of districts or very large communes). In Estonia and Latvia is no self-government at regional levels, although administrative regions exist. Slovenia has not implemented administrative regions so far.

Several maps of the atlas are devoted to the representation of national/ethnic structures. Accompanying texts highlight political and societal backgrounds, characteristics of national/ethnic identities as well as ethnic conflicts, especially minority issues. The most recent map of this series shows ethnic consciousness in Central and Southeast Europe according to the census round of 2000 and by administrative units at the NUTS-4 level. Generally speaking, national/ethnic awareness has gained ground after the fall of Communism. This can partly be explained as a reaction to this a-national and (at least by declaration) internationalist ideology and as filling the ideological vacuum it left behind. It is partly also due to the economic and social transformation crisis, in which governments and political leaders were in the habit of appealing to national/ethnic consciousness in the hope of releasing additional resources.