

**Center for Program Evaluation  
and Social Development**



**Social  
Research  
Reports**

**Volume 21**

**June 2012**

Expert Projects, 2012

SOCIAL RESEARCH REPORTS

ISSN: 2066-6861 (print), ISSN: 2067-5941 (electronic)

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*Social Research Reports*, 2012, vol. 21, pp. 5-22

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# **GEOPOLITICAL PROCESS IN EASTERN EUROPE AFTER IRON CURTAIN – ENERGY ISSUES. A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Elena-Cristina BICHIR<sup>1</sup>

## **Abstract**

Starting from geopolitical events that influenced the emergence of the Iron Curtain and continuing with geopolitical developments that occurred after the communist period, this paper analyses, from a sociological perspective, the controversial topic of energy in Eastern Europe. I am firstly briefly reviewing some of the important events of modern history, which finally, after the Second World War, led to drawing the Iron Curtain on the geopolitical map of the world, and to the division of Eastern Europe into political spheres of influence, i.e. the Anglo-American and the Soviet one. Secondly, I believe it is relevant to mention how the concept of „Eastern Europe” appeared and developed. Then, it is worth focusing on the period from 1989 to 1991, which is important for the revolutions that took place in Eastern Europe, which actually ended the European coexistence between communism and democracy. This paper has a solid theoretical basis, which allows a theoretical convergence between sociological and geopolitical literature. Both Mackinder’s (1904) and Mahan’s (1918) geopolitical theories, with their concept of spatiality, and the theory of social constructivism are relevant to the sociological problem studied, as well as to the controversial topic of energy in Eastern Europe. The concepts of these theories allowed me to develop both a quantitative imaging modality of representation of the triangle «power- energy resources – space» in a certain period of time, through the mapping (cartographic) method, and a qualitative analysis approach, through the category patterns used in analysing the behaviour of socio-political actors, where patterns were designed based on their relevance to the reality studied. Thus, this article examines the way Russia uses the „energy weapon” to bring to terms with Eastern European states, especially with Ukraine, and the relationship of dependence of the East European states on Russian energy, within a wider frame of reciprocal interdependence.

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*Keywords:* Iron Curtain; Eastern Europe; '89 Eastern Europe revolutions; the triangle power-energy; resources-space; cartographic method; Russian „energy weapon”.

## Introduction

Social and geopolitical map of the world has changed after each of the major political challenges that mankind was forced to accept and even to find solutions to, so many times now, as it was for instance with the discovery or conquest of territory, and the experiment of new social and political systems. Mankind was even forced to witness a reconfiguration of influence centres all over the world. Structure of global society as we know it today was possible with the start of the Industrial Revolution and technological development in modern times, which are social and historical processes based on energy resources and access to energy resources, primarily oil, then natural gas and then nuclear energy. Great technical inventions, including the steam engine and internal combustion engine, set the ground for the technological development, for the former uses wood and coal as energy source and the latter is based on the principle of internal combustion, using gas or liquid hydrocarbons. Here the role and importance of energy resources in setting up a powerful industrialised society, as well as the main argument in favour of an analytical approach, from a sociological perspective and including elements of geopolitics, when referring to the energy topic in Eastern Europe. An issue that cannot be neglected is that mankind is about to exhaust some of the world's energy resources through a continuously increasing consumption, based on the energy dependence, which developed during the last century, as a side effect of the Western world dependence on technology and industry development.

### *Geopolitical Process in Eastern Europe after Iron Curtain – Energy Topic*

This is a current theme in the macro-social context of the geopolitical changes that took place on the world stage, including post-communist Eastern Europe, and everything is gravitating around the important role energy resources play in interstate relations. Thus, I propose an analysis of this topic from a sociological perspective, integrating elements of geopolitical analysis. The geopolitical processes occurring in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the controversial topic of energy in Eastern Europe are a sociological problem. This is because they provide a framework for analyses of identity and interaction of socio-political actors, in order to capture interests and restrictions as a result of actors' identity and their positioning on the world stage, i.e. as world powers, regional powers, producing countries, consuming countries and transit countries, all these aspects having a strong influence on state regional and global policies

with respect to energy security, while focusing on national interests, which are continuously changing.

Moreover, it is worthy remembering how Russia uses „energy weapon” to bring to terms with the Eastern European countries, especially Ukraine, a member of CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), and how dependent the Eastern-European countries are on Russian energy. The Russian policy with respect to the management of foreign relations with Europe, especially with Eastern Europe, centred on energy resources (oil and natural gas) has a direct influence on and determines both the adjustments of partner states energy policies and the generation of certain regional energy policies.

The plan developed by Russia and Vladimir Putin (on his capacity as newly elected president - in the spring of 2012), which is to build a new economic and political alliance, as the Eurasian Union, between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, with other former Soviet states being invited to join the union by 2015, shows reverberations of the Soviet Union revival, after a first attempt represented by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Within the Eurasian Union energy relationships and partnerships would developed based on the status of „Member State”, which means the Member States benefiting from the advantage of lower prices for energy resources. Of course, for the time being negotiations are taking place and citizens of former Soviet Union are invited to cast their votes in a referendum for integration into the union, a first example being the Republic of Moldova. The purpose of establishing a Eurasian Union could be to counter-balance the European Union power and actions, in both political and economic field.

Contemporary financial crisis, which spread over Eastern Europe and Russia as a consequence of economic, social and political relationships, which are part of the globalisation process, fits the general framework of ongoing geopolitical changes and affects energy co-operation. External debt crisis led to adjustment of energy prices, either for oil and gas or for electricity, in order to recover costs, which led to further deepening the poverty for the population of these states.

## **Research Purpose**

Research purpose of this article is to analyse the way in which Russia uses „energy weapon” in managing the energy relationship with East European states, especially Ukraine; the dependence of East European states on Russian energy within a wider interdependence frame; and the energy controversies arising on the global geopolitical map.

Before analysing, from the sociological perspective, the geopolitical developments with respect to energy resources and the developments in Eastern European countries beginning with 1989, when Iron Curtain fell and communist regimes collapsed losing power, I believe it is a suitable moment to mention that in the period after 1989, a controversy transition process marked by 20 years of changes took place in both Eastern and Western Europe. Trying to give an answer to the

question: „*What followed after communism and what is beyond globalisation, a communism with a changed face or a new political and social system?*”, I had to perform a brief analysis of the roots of „Eastern Europe” concept and how it was „invented”, as per Larry Wolff’s book (2000).

In Wolff’s vision, we find an early definition of Eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War, when in 1946, Churchill said that the world map would be redefined by the Iron Curtain, which was to divide Europe in two, East and West, thus separating the Soviet influence by the Western one, with the curtain extending from Stettin to Trieste, from the Baltic Sea to the Adriatic Sea. (Wolff, 2000: 15-16) This socio-political experiment had been prepared in Europe before it actually started and it was preceded by a meeting between Stalin and Churchill, in 1944, when they delimited on paper the spheres of influence in the Eastern Europe, which was to become communist, with totalitarian regimes, and the Soviet Union would get „90% in Romania, 75% in Bulgaria, 50% in Hungary, 10% in Greece” (Wolff, 2000: 16).

Iron Curtain remained during the Cold War, dividing the map of Europe in terms of both territory and civilisation, until the period from 1989 to 1991, when revolutions broke out in Eastern Europe, communism was replaced by democracy, and every part of Europe, be it Eastern or Western, was to follow a particular development and political path. The sign that the communist and totalitarian regimes were eradicated was the Soviet Union collapse in 1991, and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. Once they vanished, there was no motivation for The „Cold War”, as it was characterised by what they called „cold conflicts”. This is because, even during the Cold War, the great powers of the time, i.e. the U.S. and the Soviet Union, in order to avoid direct confrontation and the disastrous effects of such a confrontation, they involved in the process some „third parties”, states that served the interests of one party or the other, and through which the geopolitical influence of great powers was exerted.

Although the curtain has disappeared, a shadow of it is still there, since the two Europes could not become a whole with all geopolitical changes that took place between 1989 and 1991, despite current attempts, because for 50 years they have had different developmental stages, one being richer than the other and having a greater potential to recover and to shift, while Eastern European countries went through a controversial process of transition.

The essence of Wolff’s thesis (2000) refers to the invention of Eastern Europe by Western Europe, a process that began in the eighteenth century, during the Enlightenment, and generated by the Enlightenment thinkers, who started from the term „civilisation” as opposed to the notion of „barbarism”, used to characterise the Eastern European states. (Wolff, 2000: 19) In Wolff’s view (2000), invention of Eastern Europe is reminiscent of Renaissance ideas, from that time when literature presented to readers the barbarian lifestyle of Germans, Sarmas and Dacians, as opposed to the social and economic development of the European cultural centres of the time, such as Rome, Florence, Venice or later, Paris, London, Amsterdam. (Wolff, 2000: 19-20) The author has identified this process with a semi-orientalisation one, since Europe has identified inside her occidental

structure an Orient of Europe as Eastern Europe, emphasising that the idea of European „unity” or „whole” appeared throughout the Enlightenment, too, when it was established that the two Europes are placed at opposite poles in terms of civilisation, culture and economy.

As shown in Wolff’s research (2000), the process of inventing Eastern Europe belonged to the Enlightenment and it was the symbiosis between philosophy and geography of the eighteenth century. It consisted in combining imaginary meanings with description of real situations, based on research and discovery travels into unknown lands meant to help classify European countries along an east to west axis. (Wolff, 2000: 465) In Wolff’s (2000) opinion, the process of inventing Eastern Europe consisted of several stages: „entering, possession, imagining, mapping, advising and populating Eastern Europe” (Wolff, 2000: 467). Thus, in the eighteenth-century Eastern European mapping was a key element in discovering and getting knowledge of the region, which was less explored by Western Europe. (Wolff, 2000: 197)

Closing this parenthesis in which I mentioned Wolff’s thesis (2000) and continuing to analyse the process of Eastern Europe „creation”, I would mention two important moments in the history of mankind, the two treaties that symbolised the end of the two World Wars and the beginning of negotiations for the redistribution of spheres of influence, at global level, while bringing new global geopolitical changes; they are the Treaty of Versailles (June 18, 1919) and the Treaty of Yalta (February 4-11, 1945).

On the eve of World War I (1914-1918), in 1914, the geopolitical map of the world was dominated by European hegemony and European imperialism, manifested in both economical form and in a new form for the time, the colonial imperialism, characterised by the overseas territorial expansion and the formation of colonies and dominions. Kingdom of Great Britain extended their dominance over states transformed into dominions such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Southern and Eastern Africa, Antilles, Ceylon, India, and the French Empire dominated the African area, including Maghreb, French West Africa, French Equatorial Africa and a Far-Eastern block, Indo-Chinese Union. (Milza, Berstein, 1998: 49) Along with Britain and France, there are some other states such as Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Denmark that acquired colonies. Following the colonisation process, „social map of the world” (Giddens, 2001: 68) was divided into states or companies of First World, Second World and Third World. This classification presented by Giddens (2001) and its second element, i.e. the Second World societies are of great importance for the theme of the paper, since in Giddens’ vision (2001) the Second World included communist states of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany and Hungary), and this occurred after the Russian Revolution in 1917, and disappeared in the early ’90s.

Giddens (2001) analysed the period between 1989 and 1991, which is important for the paper since dealing with the developments and revolutions in Eastern Europe, which led to the end of European coexistence between communism and democracy. In this period the Second World dissolved, too, with the collapse of



the Soviet Union and the end of Cold War. (Giddens, 2001: 69) Revolutions that started in 1989 in Eastern European countries, until then under communist domination, i.e. in Hungary (February), Poland (June), Bulgaria (November), East Germany (November), Czechoslovakia (November), Romania (December) have triggered a chain of changes of social and geopolitical map of the world.

With the end of World War II and the beginning of Cold War energy resources, especially oil, become tools for disputing world domination and obtaining world power. In the post-war period, during the Cold War, i.e. from 1950 to 1990, international energy market was marked by six post-war oil crisis. Nationalisation of Anglo-Persian Company (1951), Suez Crisis (1956) and the Six Day War (1967) are the first three post-war oil crisis, which are part of hydrocarbons era, the third stage in the history of oil, in which civilisation was strongly influenced, in Yerghin's view (2007), human society becoming a „hydrocarbon society” and man becoming a „hydrocarbon man”. (Yerghin, 2007: 12) Yom Kippur War (the first oil shock in 1973), the panic created by Iran revolution and the events that followed, the second oil crisis between 1979 and 1981, and the first Gulf War (invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990) are the other three post-war oil crisis that Yerghin (2007) considers to be part of the struggle for world domination.

After 1990, Europe began to restructure and Eastern Europe as well as Central Europe (Mittleuropa: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary) appeared along with Western Europe, while the latter started a debate in terms of mental mapping, since the mental map of Europe also began to undergo changes, as a response to the Iron Curtain ideology coming from the Polish, Czechoslovak and Hungarian intellectuals. (Milza, Berstein, 1998: 33) In 1991, post-communist Eastern Europe was characterised by several socio-political events, such as the establishment of CSI – Commonwealth of Independent States, which had to face consequences, from the military, economic and political perspective, of the Soviet Union dissolution. Thus, in Giddens' view (2001), former Second World countries and Russia have tried to create their own market system, as a counterweight to the Western one, in their tendency to become First World countries. The researchers Milza and Berstein (2000) consider the CIS was created in order to solve the problems related to sharing the Soviet heritage, adopting the market economy with its negative effects of unemployment and rising prices, as well as the revival of nationalism and ethnic conflicts, with the war in Yugoslavia on top of all these. (Milza, Berstein, 1998: 179) Shortly after the collapse of Soviet Union, which occurred in 1991, Russia along with the 14 ex-Soviet satellite states (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tadjikitan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan) have kept the Soviet organisation under the title Commonwealth of Independent States.

Under the circumstances, Russia becomes the most important element in the CIS and its interests are expressed by the principle of „near neighbourhood”, contrary to the European one and called „new neighbourhood”, in an effort to regain dominance over the ex-Soviet states. In Brzezinski's view (2000), after the USSR collapsed, Russia had three geostrategical options, the common element of which is its central concern in its status with respect to the U.S.. The options are: the „advanced strategic partnership with America”, the „near abroad” concept as



a „form of Moscow-dominated economic integration,, or „restoring imperial control by creating a counterbalance to American and European power” and a „counter-alliance, an Eurasian anti-US coalition meant to reduce American influence.” (Brzezinski, 2000: 113-114) Rand Corporation Report (2009) presents the tools of Russian expansion, referring to the „near abroad” - the „near neighbourhood”; the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC); Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO); the networks of oil and gas pipelines (Kazakhstan supplies oil to China, Turkmenistan offers gas to Russia). (Oliker, Crane, Schwartz, Yusupov, 2009)

The energy controversy in Eastern Europe was triggered by the fact that some ex-Soviet states, members of the CIS and having pro-western orientation, such as Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia (now an ex-CIS Member State) were included in the European „new neighbourhood” that caused Russia to use oil and natural gas as a geopolitical instrument to put pressure in order to regain influence over these three states, located in the „common area”. (Păbâră, Berbeca, 2009: 7) Thus, Russia started to use energy resources as a weapon against the East-European countries and later against the European Union member states, thus affecting European energy security. Along with these CIS member states, Azerbaijan showed signs of Western orientation, while on the other hand there were also pro-Russian states such as Belarus, Armenia and Central Asian states.

Adopting energy weapon as the main element of Russian foreign policy is reinforced by the Russia’s adoption, in 2009, of an energy policy for the period between 2010-2030. Energy disagreement between Russia and Ukraine reached its peak between 2005 and 2009, when it became what was called „gas dispute”, with Gazprom and Naftogaz failing to come to agreement over the price of natural gas supplied by Russia to its counterpart Ukraine. Thus, Russia made a reduction of gas supplies to Ukraine, claiming the Ukrainian gas debts. An equally important element is that Ukraine and Belarus are transit countries for Russian gas exports to Central and Western Europe.

Russia states it maintains monopoly power in energy through its energy strategy developed in 2009 but the dependence of the Eastern European states on Russian energy, as well as Russia being dependent upon the transit countries and consumer countries show an obvious interdependence, proved by the difficulties Russia encountered when trying to manage unilaterally, by itself alone, the Russian energy system, leaving out those countries that offer to Russia transit and storage of energy resources. Also, Russia needs energy markets, because a significant part of the Russian economy is based on resource exports. There is a double dependence, a mutual relationship between states possessing energy and those consuming energy and importing it. The former suffer from the curse of natural resources, needing energy marketplace, while the latter are in need of natural resources in the industrialisation process, in order to benefit of the welfare brought by this. In Stiglitz’ opinion (2008), these countries do have wealth consisting in a geographical opportunity, which is the source of an economy that does not derive from a sustained activity in which raw materials are highly processed and then capitalised; and they are continuously facing the major danger of resource exhaustion, leaving the countries completely helpless. (Stiglitz, 2008: 122)

## Research Methodology and Basical Theoretical Framework

Both Mackinder's (1904) and Mahan's (1918) geopolitical theories, with their concept of spatiality, and the theory of social constructivism are relevant to the sociological problem studied, the controversial topic of energy in Eastern Europe. The concepts of these theories allowed me to develop both a quantitative imaging modality of representation of the triangle «power – energy resources – space» in a certain period of time, through mapping (cartographic) method, and a qualitative analysis approach, through the category patterns for analysing the behaviour of socio-political actors, where patterns were designed based on their relevance to the reality studied.

With respect to the geopolitical theories used at this stage of the work I have to mention that they start from spatiality considerations, with motivation growing increasingly complex as time goes on, and they are generally the synthetic expression of the historical context of when they were designed, and of the state development policies and power centre configuration policies at global level. It should be noted that these theories contain in their structure a tendency to create elements of generality that have so far maintained the form of analytical models. Regarding imaging representation, it is empirical expression of how sea power theory and the theory of geographical pivot (Eurasia) project their conceptual models onto the geopolitical map of the world, at a certain historical moment, so that theories can explain inter-state relations, generated by the incentives of exercising power in a given frame (space-time-power).

The meaning of the concept of power as used in this work is provided by Giddens (2001), and in author's vision the power is the ability of socio-political actors „to impose their own interests and concerns, even when others oppose.” (Giddens, 2001: 368) I propose the adoption of space-time continuum, and space is seen as a three-dimensional component, of geographic type, which characterises the continents, regions, states, territories, while having in this work and from a sociological perspective a quantitative meaning represented by maps. But I can not lose sight of another aspect, as important as the quantitative one, namely the qualitative dimension, since space takes non-vectorial shapes, if it is to consider the social space, cultural space, religious space, economic space. I then include these types of qualitative space forms (qualitative from methodological point of view) in defining the meaning I will adopt throughout the analysis, because they will contribute to offer full significance to the quantitative assessments and to highlight more powerfully qualitative analysis aspects.

It is important to mention the geopolitical formula of Mahan's (1918) maritime power theory, because in Mahan's view, „Who rules the world, controls and dominates the seas and oceans” (Mahan, 1918: 27-28). Regarding the interpretation of energy topic, from the perspective of of Mahan's (1918) maritime power theory, „Who controls the commercial space, controls production and then selling space” for seas and oceans define a commercial space, among others a

commercial space for energy resources, too, thus influencing in an implicit way, through possession of resource transport routes, both resource production and their marketplaces. We can say that the world powers that dominate and control the transport ways (trade routes, oil and gas pipelines), control the areas of energy resource mining and production, which include producing states, thus determining both the volume of energy resources and their price.

Basically, Mackinder (1904) provides a global examination of the relationship between the type of maritime power and land (continental) power, for starting from Mackinder's (1904) geopolitical formula: „Who rules Eastern Europe commands the Heartland, who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island, and who rules the World-Island commands the world” (Mackinder, 1943: 596) we can reach to the following formula: „who controls the transit, dominates the transit space, which is important due to strategic considerations”. Land power is located in the heart of Eurasia, the pivot area or the centre of the World-Island, and who controls this area, controls the world. The objective of Mackinder's theory (1904) is to protect against or even prevent a power or a coalition of powers to dominate the heartland or pivot area. Another noteworthy aspect is that Mackinder foreshadows in his theory the consequences of the Cold War, i.e. dividing the world into spheres of influence and power centres. Henry Berenger, being concerned with the social and geopolitical transformations in early twentieth century, and under the influence of Mackinder's theory, wrote in a diplomatic note to Clemenceau dated December 12, 1919, in the eve of the Franco-British conference in London, regarding the Western Europe and Asia Minor future, about the fact that „Who will have the oil, will have the domination”. He wrote: „The domination of the seas through oil, the domination of the air through light gasoline, of the continents through gasoline and kerosene, the domination of the world through financial power .... the nation that will be the owner of this precious fuel will see billions.[...]” (<http://www.150deanidepetrol.ro/scurt-istoric.html>)

As for the theoretical qualitative aspect, this is covered by the social status analysis and the analyses of modifications preceding geopolitical changes. Sociological theory, namely social constructivism, in turn, comes to strengthen both quantitative and qualitative analysis, by studying the behaviour of socio-political actors. March and Olsen (1998), that are constructivist researchers, follow in their analyses „the logic of appropriateness” that answers the question: „*How should an actor behave in a certain situation?*”, focusing on explaining a particular behaviour through certain rules and identities, norms promoted by a certain class of actors (social groups, states, organisations). (Goldstein, Pevenhouse, 2008: 174-175)

Regarding the importance of actors on the geopolitical map of the world, the socio-political or state actors remain the main players, being motivated by particular national interests. The social constructivism also identifies the role and presence of non-state actors, such as international organisations, regional organisations, non-governmental organisations, multinational companies. (Secrieru, 2008: 31-32) Constructivists consider that the national interest of a state actor depends on state identity, an aspect which allows the definition of the status of that State, as high power, regional power, consuming country or energy-producing

country, transit country for pipeline or oil-ducts, and which includes specific actions and behaviours, understood as a way „to affirm and reproduce their identity” (Secieru, 2008: 35). The whole process of building the national interests based on defining of their state identity is continuously changing due to the historical, social and geopolitical context, to the internal and external developments, and to interstate interaction. Thus, the international environment is characterised by what constructivists call „systemic anarchy”, where the subjective meanings, as perceptions, interests, norms, rules and mission of these meanings in international relations highlights its adaptability, the international environment representing the sum of material capacities of a state and the ideas associated with them, i.e. the meanings assigned by state actors. Regarding the interaction between actors and the international environment, constructivists see the relationship between actors and the environment as a „mutual co-determination” (Hall, 1996: 27-29) because state identity and national interests are affected by the environment and they in turn influence it, which allows observing the evolution and eventual changes to a state’s foreign policy, i.e. the constraints that the international environment exert on a state policy and the influence of state actions on the international environment. (Hall, 1996: 37-38)

Regarding qualitative analysis, category patterns for analysing behaviour of socio-political actors were designed based on their relevance to the reality studied. Adapting the „energy weapon model” (Stegen, 2011: 6505-6513) developed by Stegen in four steps (states Consolidation of resources, states control over transit routes; Implementation of Threats, price hikes, disruption, target state of acquiescence and concession) my goal is to analyse the way in which Russia uses energy weapon and transforms energy from mineral resource, which is part of the environment, into an instrument of political power. Thus, category patterns used to analyse socio-political behaviour of Russia, Ukraine and other Eastern European countries with respect to the controversial energy topic are: the role of energy resources in foreign and home policy, control of transit routes, of oil and gas pipelines, implementation of threats, rising oil and natural gas prices, delaying energy distribution to consumers.

The cartographic representation method allows quantitative imaging representation of the triangle «power - energy resource – space», in a chosen time. Mapping method was used to examine energy rich regions, their distribution, and the graphical representation of the energy balance of the East European states. I performed a specific analysis by using sociological and geopolitical concepts, due to the fact that the energy resource issues in Eastern Europe belong to these disciplines. For the analytical approach, cartographic material such as thematic political and administrative maps was used. It is suitable for the representation of natural energy resources and to support social and geopolitical dimension. In order to most pertinently support the analytical approach I used official statistical data, presented as graphs.

## Result

For qualitative analysis, category patterns used to assess socio-political actor behaviour were adjusted based on their relevance to the reality studied; they include the role of energy resources in foreign and home policy, control of transit routes, of oil and gas pipelines, implementation of threats, rising oil and natural gas prices, delaying energy distribution to consumers.

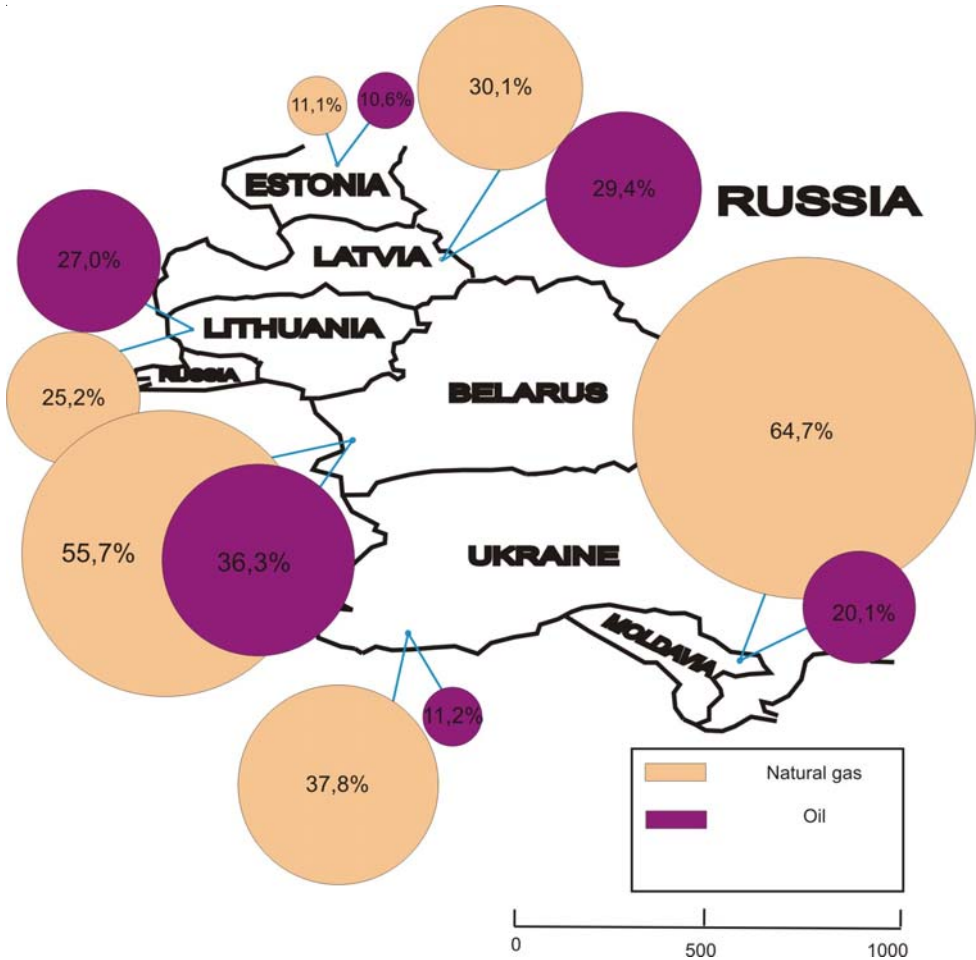
Mapping method was supported by data from official statistics, presented as graphics combined with politico-administrative thematic maps, which complement analysis visual impact through imaging representation. Finally, we decided to present four maps, which are representative for the analytical approach of the entire paper: primary energy supply in Eastern Europe states, distribution of transit routes between Russia and Eastern Europe, the energy balance in Russia, the energy balance of states in the CIS. Maps themselves are quantitative analysis tools of the mapping method, while simultaneously supporting the qualitative analysis, which is organised in terms of methodology in three category patterns, which I will briefly present at this stage, somehow parallelly, because these two types of tools, qualitative and quantitative, have been designed based on their complementarity.

Thus, I examined the way Russia uses the „energy weapon” to bring to terms with Eastern European states, especially with Ukraine, and the relationship of interdependence between East European states and Russia with respect to energy. I used the following qualitative and quantitative investigation tools: category pattern 1 - role of energy in domestic and foreign policy and the 3 maps - primary energy supply in Eastern Europe states; the energy balance in Russia; energy balance of the CIS states; category pattern 2 - control over transit routes, gas pipelines and oil-ducts, and transit route map for Russia and Eastern Europe; category pattern 3 - threat implementation, rising oil and natural gas prices and delaying energy resources to customers.

Regarding the role of energy resources in foreign and home policy, Russia is aware of its energy power and considers the energy resources (oil and natural gas) an „energy weapon”; Russia uses it in the management of Russian foreign policy and of energy relations with Eastern European states, particularly with Ukraine, with Gazprom playing an important role as Russia’s main export company for natural gas. In spite of CIS Energy Council being established even since 1992, it is Russia that dictates in energy policy of CIS Member States. Ukraine is the only exception for it is still trying to maintain control over parts of the gas pipelines that cross its territory. Although the CIS 2020 economic development strategy envisages the creation of a common and unique energy market for CIS countries, Russia is co-ordinating the actions and decisions. If this is the objective and it is consistently fulfilled, then I wonder why Eurasian Alliance was constituted. Besides it is a counterbalance to the EU’s action, could it be a future energy

market for its members? Although Russia is not energy-dependent, since its consumption is covered from its own production, thanks to its mineral resources, however its economy depends on medium size states, as they are transit countries and consumer countries, which means they are a market for the energy resources produced in Russia.

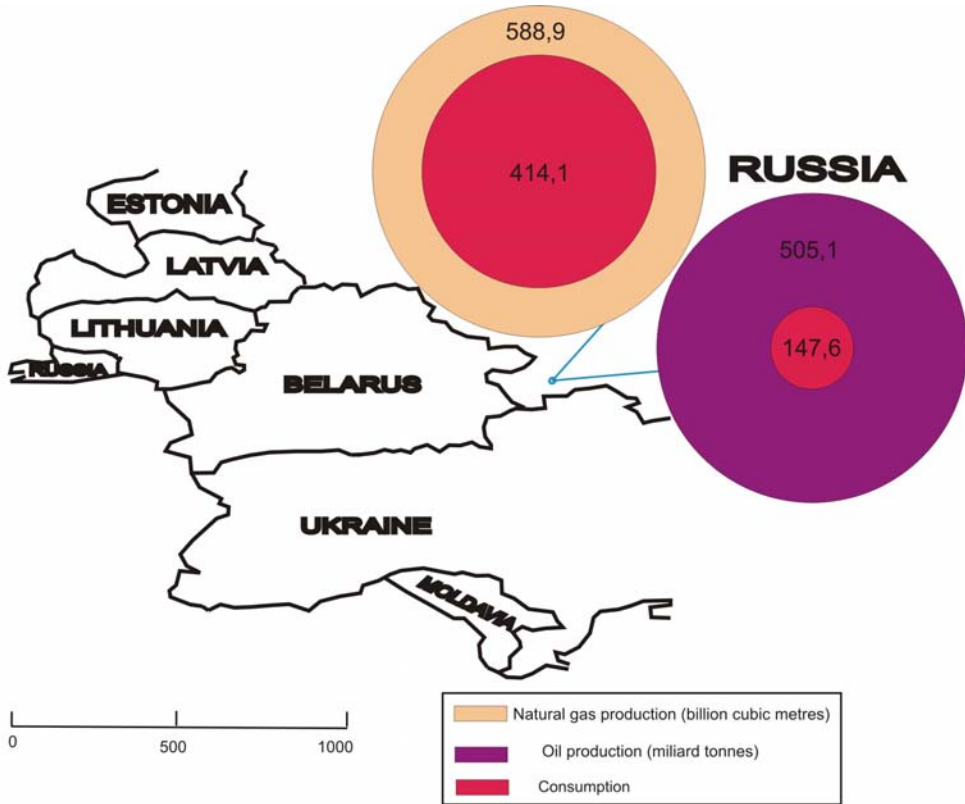
Map 1. Primary energy supply in Eastern Europe states 2009



Source of statistical data: [www.iea.org](http://www.iea.org), Map Author: Bichir Elena Cristina



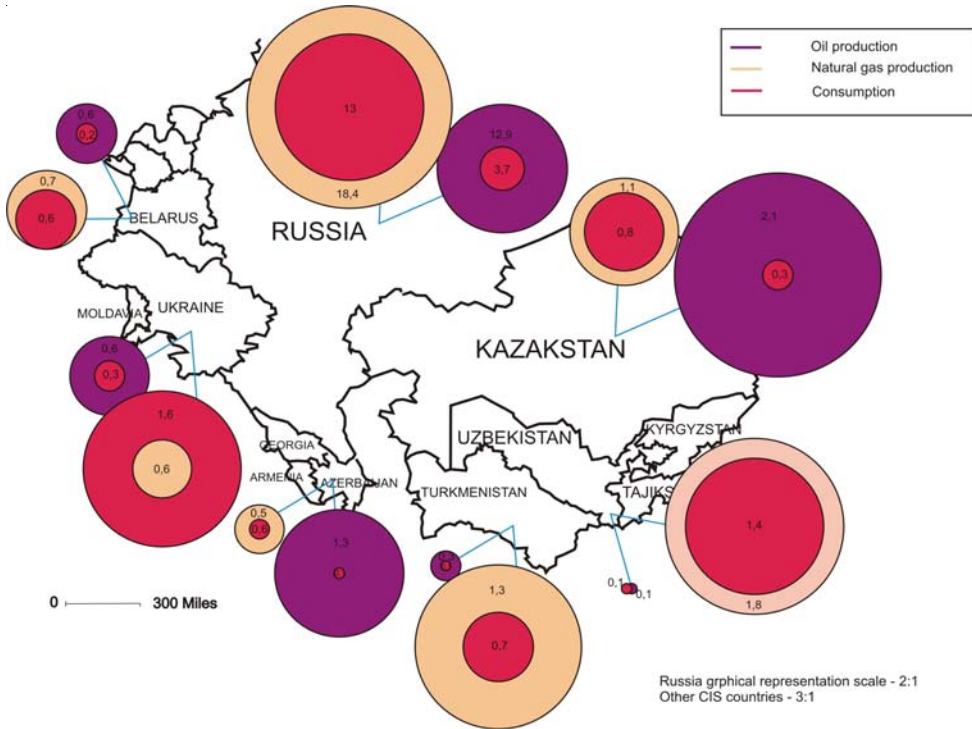
Map 2. Energy balance in Russia 2010



Source of statistical data: [www.iea.org](http://www.iea.org), Map Author: Bichir Elena Cristina



Map 3. Energy balance of Commonwealth of Independent States 2010



Source of statistical data: BP Statistical Review of World Energy Full Report 2011, Map Author: Bichir Elena Cristina

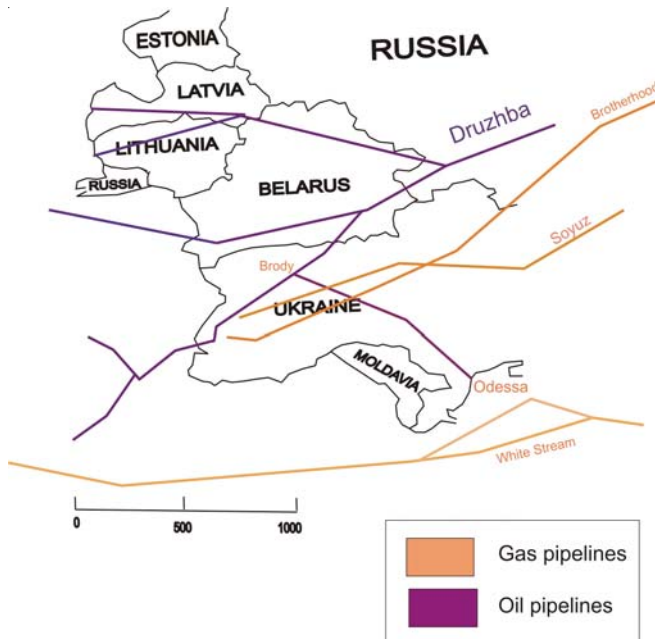
About control of transit routes, pipelines and oil-ducts controversies - all these are points of interest since they demonstrate once again the strategic importance of transport routes. It should be noted the overall arrangement of transport routes for oil and natural gas as they pass through certain areas, for the interest of world states with respect to energy is growing. We can see there are European areas crossed by already existing pipelines (Blue Stream, Brotherhood, Yamal, North Stream), as well as areas designed for them in Russia (South Stream Mozdoc, Altai) and even some projects belonging to the European States (Nabucco, Caspian, White Stream, IGI Poseidon)

Regarding Russia-Ukraine relationship, it shows a mutual dependence on energy, although the EU is interested in Ukraine to join the European energy market, because it is a transit state for Russian gas. A proof of this interest is EU investment in modernisation of Ukrainian energy sector. Transit pipelines in Ukraine, which are under Russian control, are Druzhba oil pipeline, and Brother-

hood and Soyuz gas pipeline. Those agreed by the West for being alternative energy routes are Odessa-Brod oil pipeline and White Stream gas pipeline (Azerbaijan-Georgia-Ukraine-EU).

Implementation threats, rising oil and natural gas prices, and late delivery of energy to consumers – these are other leverage-elements that clarifies how Russia uses „energy weapon”. Russian-Ukrainian conflict known as „gas crisis”, which began in 2005 and lasted until 2009, is a prime example of the importance of energy for Russia and CIS. This is similarly proved by the armed conflict with Georgia, in 2008. Ukraine and Georgia’s Western orientation and NATO aspirations led Russia to use force instead negotiations. The ethnic unrest was a pretext used by Russia for the armed attack on Georgia and to accuse Ukraine that it supplied weapons to Georgia and that it made illegal exploitation of energy resources. Moreover, in the same period, another reason that fuelled the Russian-Ukrainian conflict was Ukraine’s not accepting an increase in energy prices. All this has led to disruption and delay in supplying energy to members of EU that are consumers and dependent of Russian gas and oil. That was used by Russia to put pressure on Ukraine in order to accept higher prices. In turn, Ukraine tried to offset the high prices of oil and natural gas, taking advantage of its status as a transit state, and demanding higher transit fees and negotiating certain conditions of transit for Russian energy resources. However, mutual dependency relationship is maintained between Ukraine and Russia, as the former depends on Russian energy, and the latter depends on the transit space to Europe.

Map 4. *Transit route distribution between Russia and East Europe*



Source: [www.iea.org](http://www.iea.org), Map Author: Bichir Elena Cristina

## Discussion

What followed after communism and what is beyond globalisation, a communism with a changed face or a new political and social system?

If looking from a macro social perspective to the socio-political actor struggle for energy resources, a struggle that is taking place in modern times, I observe that the capitalist system, by its nature, is characterised by crises and cycles. This was somehow acceptable given that there was no question about energy resource exhaustion all over the world, while the amount of energy was sufficient to provide. In terms of depletion of these resources and their exhaustion, the capitalist system is no more operational, as the way out of crisis and towards economic recovery requires an increase in energy consumption.

The post-communist brought about radical changes to the states in their transition to democracy in almost all spheres of social, economic, and political life, with big upheavals and social turmoil. In the name of an idealised democracy and special economic promises, these changes occurred unfortunately much too fast, development stages were skipped, without taking into account the time the societies needed to adapt.

As a result, after so many years since the events in question, whether more peaceful or violent, society reached no equilibrium, which is obviously the consequence of people non adapting to new conditions. In social field, more extreme or exclusive ideological structures arise, with law controlling situation in a rather formal way, while fuelled in a veiled way by some very spoken out heads of state, otherwise nicely lecturing on democracy. This state of affairs shows once again that not only communist societies were not prepared for these changes, but countries with traditional democracies could not adapt in due time to changes arising from opening borders, keen competition in labour force generated by waves of immigration, and the consequences of economic imbalances caused the banking system. That is why in a time when the economic crisis is continuously growing, many heads of states are less respectful of democratic norms when trying to find solutions.

We can only assume that this tendency will further deepen, with population increasing and energy resource and food decreasing. The ecological imbalances shouldn't be forgotten either, as people should consider some changes to their social and political strategies eventually, in order to meet new challenges. I believe that any decisions people in charge will take, will be rather restrictive and discriminating than emanating from deep democratic principles.

I estimate that in the context of drastic reduction of energy resources, the capitalist system will be replaced with dictatorship and not with democracy. Energy issue should be considered realistically, as it is a vector strongly influencing the social and political balance, for the benefit of mankind. And relatively dramatic scenarios should be considered with respect to fundamental elements of society, namely demography, freedom, social equality, access to knowledge and access to resources, including energy. From this perspective and in the context of

drastic reduction of energy resources, which no alternative solutions to effectively replace oil and natural gas, I can only anticipate a society full of restrictions. Under the circumstances, the structure of global society will have to adapt to the scenario in which mankind can not dispose at will of energy, either for industry or for households. This type of global society with a growing population will be ruled only by applying a powerful social control, increasingly high and performant, to communities and individuals, and evolving in a restrictive pyramidal society. Although in this paper I firstly decided to perform qualitative and quantitative analysis, from a sociological perspective, with elements of geopolitics, considering only a certain segment, which is the controversial energy topic in Eastern Europe, with geopolitical events that influenced the emergence of the Iron Curtain, and followed by the geopolitical developments after the communist period, at this stage I would extrapolate and present some general considerations about global energy system in the new era of post-communism and post-globalisation.

## Conclusion

The new changes on the geopolitical world map have turned Russia into a very important vector of world energy dynamics, mainly of European energy dynamics, both in terms of energy resources it owns and in terms of technologies and transport capacity, even if currently, from the economic and financial influence perspective, Russia seems just a „giant with clay feet”.

However, in the near future, Russia will become one of the most important geopolitical centre, due to its foreign policy, for its approach to China, India, Pakistan and to some Islamic countries will provide extensive support for processing and transportation of energy resources; both the central and south-eastern Asian region, including the Caspian region, and the Islamic space are showing a growing interest in Russia. Just a closer relationship with China could provide cheaper labour force to Russia, if compared to western countries, keeping in mind that China was the world’s second largest economy in 2011 and is estimated to become the first world economic power by 2030, that its financial resources places it in such a good position if compared with The US, while Taiwan joining China opens a way to highest technologies in electronics and robotics.

Russia, with its energy resources, with its being second largest oil supplier and the main hydrocarbons and natural gas exporter of the world, and with its strong political influence can develop, from energy perspective, a monopoly power in the Eurasian region, thereby controlling the entire energy resource market. This cosmopolitan prosperity future needs social stability, not only in Russia but also in the allied countries or in the countries of its area of influence. In this case „Achilles’ heel” is the internal social and political situation, for it is a fact that great empires have collapsed from the inside out. Russia and China, as well as Central and Southeast Asia states, together with Islamic space states, are countries with no democratic traditions. Putting pressure for getting changes, as it happens

in Iraq, Egypt, Libya and other countries, could lead to political and social instability and internal fragmentation of these powers, which would automatically produce large imbalances in energy market and energy trade.

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