

## **ПОДОЛАННЯ «ДИЛЕМИ ОДНОЧАСНОСТІ» ЯК ЛОГІСТИЧНА МОДЕЛЬ ПОСТКОМУНІСТИЧНОЇ ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЇ І МОДЕРНІЗАЦІЇ КРАЇН ВИШЕГРАДСЬКОЇ ГРУПИ**

Стаття присвячена розгляду особливостей подолання «дилеми одночасності» як логістичної моделі посткомуністичної трансформації і модернізації країн Вишеградської групи – Польщі, Чехії, Словаччини й Угорщини. Дослідник звернув увагу на теоретико-методологічні та прогностичні особливості і зміст «дилеми одночасності». Аргументовано, що подолання «дилеми одночасності» у країнах Вишеградської групи стало можливим завдяки консолідуванню внутрішніх та зовнішніх факторів і стимулів політичної, економічної і системної трансформації, демократизації, лібералізації та модернізації. З іншої сторони, виявлено, що припущення про перешкоди між політично керованим впровадженням капіталізму та побудовою демократичних інститутів на основі гіпотези «дилеми одночасності» не пройшло остаточної емпіричної експертизи, внаслідок чого гіпотеза в теоретико-методологічному розрізі часто позиціонується як «виснажена».

*Ключові слова:* трансформація, транзит, модернізація, «дилема одночасності», Вишеградська група.

## **Overcoming the “Dilemma of simultaneity” as a logistic model of post-communist transformation and modernization of the Visegrad Countries**

The article is dedicated to reviewing the features of overcoming the “dilemma of simultaneity” as a logistic model of post-communist transformation and modernization of the Visegrad countries – Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. The researcher pointed out theoretical, methodological and prognostic features and content of the “dilemma of simultaneity”. It was argued that overcoming the “dilemma of simultaneity” in the Visegrad countries was possible by consolidation of internal and external factors and incentives, political, economic and system transformations, democratization, liberalization and modernization. On the other hand, it was found that the assumption of obstacles between politically controlled introduction of capitalism and the building of democratic institutions based on the hypothesis of the “dilemma of simultaneity” has not passed the final empirical examination, resulting hypothesis in theoretical and methodological context often to be marketed as “exhausted”.

**Keywords:** transformation, transit, modernization, the “dilemma of simultaneity”, the Visegrad Group.

In the course and as a result of the collapse of the USSR and the system of the “Warsaw Pact” Central-Eastern European countries, namely the countries of the so-called Visegrad group (since 1991) – Poland, Czechoslovakia (since 1993 – the Czech Republic and Slovakia correspondingly) and Hungary faced a whole mass of challenges, which had to be overcome on the way to reformation of the political and social and economic systems. As the experience showed the reforms of the post-communist countries of the modern Visegrad Group, especially since 1989, mainly have been multidirectional, but simultaneously, on the basis of what political and economic scientists argue that they have been following a logistic model of the so-called “dilemma of simultaneity”. Correspondingly, the subject of the current research is the model of overcoming the “dilemma of simultaneity” in the Visegrad countries as a variation of transformation and modernization approach, applicable to other institutional cases.

The proposed range of problems has been partially described in the scientific studies by such scholars as C. Offe<sup>1</sup>, J. Elster<sup>2</sup>, W. Merkel<sup>3</sup>, A. Pshevorskiy<sup>4</sup>, A. Umland<sup>5</sup>, V. Gelman and D. Travin<sup>6</sup>, H. Wiesenthal<sup>7</sup> and others. In fact, C. Offe was the first scientist who took it to the next level and gave an impulse to the emergence of discussions over transformation and modernization after the collapse of the communist regimes in Central-Eastern European and Eastern European countries. Considering over the problems which stood before the post-communist countries, he mentioned that the scale of the reforms in these societies had no analogues in the world history due to simultaneity of various modernization processes. Moreover, in early 90-s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, speculating over the future of the post-communist transformations, the scholar stated that they were of three-dimensional character.

<sup>1</sup> C. Offe, *Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transition in East Central Europe*, „Social research“ 2004, vol 71, nr 3, s. 501-528.; C. Offe, *Das Dilemma der Gleichzeitigkeit. Demokratisierung und Marktwirtschaft in Osteuropa*, „Merkur“ 1991, vol 4, s. 279-292.; C. Offe, *Dilemma odnovenemosti: demokratizatsiya i rinochnaya ekonomika v Vostochnoy Evrope*, [w:] Shtyikov P., Shvanits S., Gelman V. (eds.), *Povoroty istorii: Postsotsialisticheskie transformatsii glazami nemetskikh issledovateley*, Wyd. Letniy sad 2003, vol 2, s. 6-22.

<sup>2</sup> J. Elster, *The Necessity and Impossibility of Simultaneous Economic and Political Reform*, [w:] Polzajski P. (ed.), *Philosophy of social choice*, Wyd. IFiS Publishers 1990, s. 309-316.

<sup>3</sup> W. Merkel, *Die Konsolidierung postautoritärer und posttotalitärer Demokratien: Ein Beitrag zur theorieorientierten Transformationsforschung*, [w:] Süßmuth H. (ed.), *Transformationsprozesse in den Staaten Ostmitteleuropas*, Wyd. Nomos 1998, s. 39-61.; W. Merkel, *Plausible Theory, Unexpected Result: The Rapid Democratic Consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe*, „Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft“ 2011, vol 2, s. 11-29.; W. Merkel, *Restriktionen und Chancen demokratischer Konsolidierung in postkommunistischen Gesellschaften: Ostmitteleuropa im Vergleich*, „Berliner Journal für Soziologie“ 1994, vol 4, s. 463-484.; W. Merkel, *Theorien der Transformation post-autoritärer Gesellschaften*, [w:] von Beyme K., Offe C. (eds.), *Politische Theorien in der Ara der Transformation*, Wyd. Politische Vierteljahresschrift 1996, s. 30-58.

<sup>4</sup> A. Pshevorskiy, *Demokratiya i rinoch: Politicheskie i ekonomicheskie reformy v Vostochnoy Evrope i Latinskoj Amerike*, Wyd. ROSSPEN 1999.

<sup>5</sup> A. Umland, *Pochemu Evropejskomu Soyuzu sleduet predstavit stranam Vostochnogo partnerstva perspektivu chlenstva v ES*, „Geopolitika“, źródło: [http://www.geopolitika.lt/index.php/ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/file\\_download.php?artc=5685](http://www.geopolitika.lt/index.php/ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/file_download.php?artc=5685) [odczyt: 1 listopada 2016].

<sup>6</sup> D. Travin, V. Gelman, „Zagogulinyi“ rossijskoj modernizatsii: smena pokoleniy i traektorii reform, „Neprikosnovennyiy zapas“ 2013, vol 4, nr 90, źródło: <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2013/4/2g.html> [odczyt: 1 listopada 2016].

<sup>7</sup> H. Wiesenthal, *The Dilemma of Simultaneity Revisited – Or Why General Skepticism about Large-Scale Reform Did Not Apply to the Postcommunist Transformations*, Prepared for the International Conference „Thirty Years of the Third Wave of Democratization: Paradigms, Lessons, and Perspectives“, Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB), December 10-11, 2004.

Central-Eastern Europe, including the countries of the Visegrad group, faced the need to replace their one-party regimes (or regimes with a hegemon-party) with competitive democracies, and planned systems in economy with the market mechanisms, and empire regimes with national states<sup>8</sup>. A. Pshevorski<sup>9</sup> and J. Elster<sup>10</sup>, as well as C. Offe shared these views and argued that a constructed in this way logic model of the "dilemma of simultaneity" meant that if Western European countries at first underwent a long way of national and state building processes, and then laid the foundations of capitalism and only after that moved to democracy (by doing so they did not always succeed in modernizing and quite often experienced century or decade "throwbacks"), then post-communist European countries had to solve these tasks simultaneously, as they faced a "triple transit", carrying out complicated and painful reforms in all directions and at the same time. Correspondingly, it was believed that the need for simultaneous achieving results in economic and political reforms made successful "integral reforms" senseless<sup>11</sup>.

The temptation to extend all changes in time, to build up a succession (at first market, then democracy or vice versa) or completely reject the reforms was too strong. That is why, as C. Offe supposed, that the "dilemma of simultaneity" meant that despite all obvious obstacles and challenges, only simultaneous implementation of democracy and market reforms could bring to the post-communist countries, namely Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic, quite a rapid success, while the attempts to solve all these tasks "step by step" posed a threat of escalating political, economic and social crises<sup>12</sup>. J. Elster shared the same position and in late 80-s – early 90-s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the systems of Central-Eastern European countries just started their formation (renovation) in his work "The Necessity and Impossibility of Simultaneous Economic and Political Reforms"<sup>13</sup> hypothesized that in Central-Eastern European countries, namely in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic it appeared to be possible to combine such transit categories as "necessity", "impossibility" and "simultaneity". The point is that transformation of communist regimes in the region over the period of the "third wave" of democratization was considerably different from the "shifts" of political regimes during the "first" and "second" waves of democratization. The main distinction was that two or even three transformational processes took place simultaneously in the region: political transformation (from authoritarianism to democracy), economic transformation

<sup>8</sup> C. Offe, *Das Dilemma der Gleichzeitigkeit. Demokratisierung und Marktwirtschaft in Osteuropa*, „Merkur“ 1991, vol 4, s. 279-292.; C. Offe, *Dilemma odnovenemosti: demokratizatsiya i rynochnaya ekonomika v Vostochnoy Evrope*, [w:] Shtyikov P., Shvanits S., Gelman V. (eds.), *Povoroty istorii: Postsotsialisticheskie transformatsii glazami nemetskih issledovateley*, Wyd. Letniy sad 2003, vol 2, s. 6-22.

<sup>9</sup> A. Pshevorskiy, *Demokratiya i rynok: Politicheskie i ekonomicheskie reformy v Vostochnoy Evrope i Latinskoy Amerike*, Wyd. ROSSPEN 1999.

<sup>10</sup> J. Elster, *The Necessity and Impossibility of Simultaneous Economic and Political Reform*, [w:] Pólszajski P. (ed.), *Philosophy of social choice*, Wyd. IFiS Publishers 1990, s. 309-316.

<sup>11</sup> W. Merkel, *Plausible Theory, Unexpected Result: The Rapid Democratic Consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe*, „Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft“ 2011, vol 2, s. 11-29.

<sup>12</sup> C. Offe, *Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transition in East Central Europe*, „Social research“ 2004, vol 71, nr 3, s. 501-528.

<sup>13</sup> J. Elster, *The Necessity and Impossibility of Simultaneous Economic and Political Reform*, [w:] Pólszajski P. (ed.), *Philosophy of social choice*, Wyd. IFiS Publishers 1990, s. 309-316.

(from a planned-controlled economy to the market one) and system transformation (formation of national states). Besides, in this case transformation was understood as a historical process of changes, which is a unity of several components – transformation of the political system of the society, transformation of a “political person” (human being, elite, collective body and organization), transformation of political culture of the society and a person (ideas, norms, level of political relations). In its turn, political transformation must be interpreted on the basis of sovereignty, political participation, supremacy of law, stability of democratic institutions, political and social integration, while economic transformation was distinguished on the basis of the level of social and economic development, structure of market and competitive processes, currency and price stability, respect to private property, level of a general welfare, stability and effectiveness of the economic system etc. However, the most important is the fact that changes in Central-Eastern Europe by their essence correspond to the changes which earlier had taken place in Western Europe. But in the western world these processes occurred evolutionally and gradually, but not simultaneously and accelerationally.

Taking this into consideration, the scientists saw the change of the system namely in the transformational connection between the processes of structural restricting of economy, politics and society and called it the “dilemma of simultaneity”. Their prediction was the following: in Western Europe transition to the capitalistic market economy and parliamentary democracy was slow and gradual. However, in Central-Eastern Europe the results of changes in one sphere were blocked by changes in other spheres. The point is that those who suffered from economic reforms will naturally use their political power to exert pressure on the society during the elections to put off from the authority those political groups and elites which had implemented such reforms. In other words, in this construction there is an opposition of those who “lose” and those who “win” from the alternation of the system<sup>14</sup>. On the basis of this, C. Offe pessimistically evaluated the prospects of the “triple transformation”, speaking about the temptations of “sequence” of reforms, either national state building to harm democracy or economic modernization to harm political reforms. Instead of this, his prediction provoked discussion among political scientists and economists, as there had not been such an opposition before and no one had reverted to the old system or blocked any reforms. Moreover, C. Offe’s concerns as to the Visegrad group and other Central-Eastern European countries turned out to be exaggerated: despite numerous crises and conflicts they managed to solve the tasks of economic, social as well as political modernization. But it became possible due to both domestic and foreign political factors, in particular the desire to become a part of the “Great Europe” and to distance from Russia, which after 1945 imposed communist regimes on them, made

<sup>14</sup> C. Offe, *Das Dilemma der Gleichzeitigkeit. Demokratisierung und Marktwirtschaft in Osteuropa*, „Merkur“ 1991, vol 4, s. 281.; H. Wiesenthal, *The Dilemma of Simultaneity Revisited – Or Why General Skepticism about Large-Scale Reform Did Not Apply to the Postcommunist Transformations*, Prepared for the International Conference „Thirty Years of the Third Wave of Democratization: Paradigms, Lessons, and Perspectives“, Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB), December 10-11, 2004.; Z. Bauman, *A Revolution in the Theory of Revolutions?*, „International Political Science Review“ 1994, vol 5, nr 1, s. 15-24.; S. Malle, *From Market to Capitalism: The Building of Institutional Ethics*, „Journal of Public Policy“ 1994, vol 14, nr 1, s. 1-16.

their governments and peoples follow the earlier extrinsic "rules of the game". Willingly or involuntarily for the sake of modernization the countries even refused from a part of their sovereignty. In general, one can state that the "dilemma of simultaneity" on the example of the Visegrad countries, was more or less successfully overcome in 90-s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic built up democratic political regimes and market economy, in 1999 joined the NATO (Slovakia did it in 2004) and in 2004 they joined the European Union<sup>15</sup>.

Correspondingly, it is known that reforms of the post-communist Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia and later on Slovakia and the Czech Republic have been following the "dilemma of simultaneity" since 1989. A special task was standing in front of the countries – simultaneously implement political, economic, social and cultural transformation and modernization (reformation), which made some politicians and scientists to present the "Theorem of impossibility", concerning the chances for success of such a multiple transit. However, as the experience showed, the "dilemma of simultaneity" for the countries of the region was in fact resolved and a special role in the process was played by the official EU proposal, made in early 90-s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to involve Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic to the European Union. Consequently, all other efforts of these countries (to a lesser extent made by Slovakia, especially before 1999) aimed at achieving the goal – joining the EU led to the effective outcomes in the process of reformation. As a result, one can hypothesize, that the prospect of the EU membership for other countries may become an instrument of their accelerated and simultaneously multidirectional reformation. However, the very essence of the gradual "overcoming" of the "dilemma of simultaneity" in the countries of the Visegrad group and which is the subject of our current research is theoretically and methodologically and conceptually significant.

After the fall of the "Iron Curtain" not only ordinary reviewers, but also experienced political analysts were skeptically primed for the democratic prospects in Central-Eastern Europe, including the Visegrad countries. Some notable democratization experts stated that the process of establishing the supremacy of law, development of a liberal society, as well as political pluralism must be slow and painstaking. It was explained by the fact that the former satellites of the USSR were in the situation of the "dilemma of simultaneity", as they faced not just one task of democratization, what itself was a serious challenge, but also the problem of liberalizing their previously planned economics, reconstructing civil society, which had been almost fully destroyed after the decades of authoritarian/totalitarian regime, building up independent national states on the grounds of the former "colonialism" of the USSR. And all these tasks were to be done simultaneously, due to what a great number of theoreticians and practitioners elaborated the "theorem of impossibility", speaking about the chances for

<sup>15</sup> D. Travin, V. Gelman, „Zagugulinyi“ rossiyskoy modernizatsii: smena pokoleniy i traektorii reform, „Neprikosnovennyiy zapas“ 2013, vol 4, nr 90, źródło: <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2013/4/2g.html> [odczyt: 1 listopada 2016].

a quick and full transformation to democracy in the post-communist countries of the Visegrad group. Besides, in other countries of the world, which before early 90-s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had already been consolidated democracies, such processes (in the form of transition from an imperial authoritarian country to the democratic national state, formation of competitive market economy, consolidated legal state, united civil society, balanced constitutional system, structured multi-party system and finally pluralistic political regime) occurred not simultaneously, but gradually and expanded over the centuries. In their turn, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic were to pass all these transits, namely economic, social, cultural and political rapidly and synchronically. Each of them had to be successful to pay the way to success of all other reforms. Correspondingly and with certain grounds in early 1990-s it was believed that it was almost impossible to implement such a great number of tasks rapidly.

Attention is paid to the fact that the tasks, which were set before the post-communist countries-reformers, were in fact deviant in comparison with the problems of other democratic transits. And by the mid of the first decade in the 21<sup>st</sup> century most central and eastern European countries, including those of the Visegrad groups, surprisingly smoothly and successfully turned into consolidated democracies. Herewith, the countries required about 15 years to create more or less competitive market economies, stable liberal democracies, integrated national communities, significant civil structures and functional administrative mechanisms. Moreover, the development of some countries from the Visegrad group, in particular Poland, after the fall of the “Iron Curtain” became a great example of a special admiration for the transformational success. And now all countries are valuable members of the EU. Besides, as a result of the financial crisis, which started in the EU at the end of 2008, namely countries of the Visegrad group, and not “elder members” of the EU were on the winning side. In general, it means that the “dilemma of simultaneity” became less serious for the Visegrad countries after the end of the “cold war”, than theoreticians and practitioners believe.

It was presupposed by the fact that the Visegrad countries “managed” to become “genuine” and at one moment “unavoidable” consolidated democracies<sup>16</sup>. As W. Merkel notices<sup>17</sup>, the countries of the region correspond to four levels of democracy consolidation in a positive (maximalist) vision<sup>18</sup>. And this means that they have undergone all graduated in time stages of consolidated democracy, as a result of which democracy as a phenomenon and institution became “comprehensive” both by elites and masses. Among them are: a) constitutional/institutional consolidation of the whole political system at the level of its main institutional

<sup>16</sup> P. Schmitter, C. Schneider, *Liberalization, Transition and Consolidation: Measuring the Components of Democratization*, „Problems of Regime Change” 2004, vol 11, nr 5, s. 59-90.

<sup>17</sup> W. Merkel, *Plausible Theory, Unexpected Result: The Rapid Democratic Consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe*, „Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft” 2011, vol 2, s. 11-29.

<sup>18</sup> J. Linz, A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Wyd. The Johns Hopkins University Press 1996.; W. Merkel, *Die Konsolidierung postautoritärer und posttotalitärer Demokratien: Ein Beitrag zur theorieorientierten Transformationsforschung*, [w:] Süßmuth H. (ed.), *Transformationsprozesse in den Staaten Ostmitteleuropas*, Wyd. Nomos 1998, s. 39-61.

characteristics (head of the state, government and legislative branch, judicial branch, party and electoral system), which form a macro-level or a level of structure; b) representative consolidation of democratic regime by means of appeals towards territorial and functional representation of interests at the level of parties and groups of interests, which form meso-level of collective actors; c) behavioral consolidation of a democratic regime on the basis of informal "participation" of such actors, as army, police, landowners and business representatives, radical groups and movements, which make up a meso-level of collective (informal) actors; d) consolidation of civil culture, as a result of which civil culture is formed as a basic social and cultural substructure of democracy<sup>19</sup>. Passing four levels of consolidation outflow in generation of such attributes as democratic legitimacy (legitimacy of democracy) and democratic stability (stability of democracy). In other words, the Visegrad countries have achieved such a state of democracy consolidation and political transformation, when their political regimes reached a certain "point of no return", after which civil and political regime of the countries was characterized by minimal chances for returning to autocracy.

In parallel (simultaneously) with consolidation of democracy (comprehension of the state of consolidation by a democratic regime) in the countries of the Visegrad groups occurred social-economic and system-structural modernization and reformation of various sectors of economy<sup>20</sup>. In particular, sector of the national economy was mainly reformed, and for that was used a concept of the "shock therapy", which included at least five substantial measures and procedures: a) liberalization of prices and trade process; b) severe contraction of state subsidies; c) achievement of convertible currency by a further devaluation of the currency exchange rate; d) policy of incomes, concerning control over the salary and wages; e) budget reforms. In fact, all these measures were strategically planned and carried out rapidly and simultaneously. The sense of the "shock therapy" was quite simple and systematically clear: it was focused on minimization of general expenditures of the transitional period caused by the fact that expenses for transition were increasing over the process of economic transformation<sup>21</sup>. Rather interesting is that reformation of the sectors of national economies occurred inseparably from consolidation of democracy. It makes us argue that in case of our study the "dilemma of simultaneity" shows the fact that a simple unification of three problems of transition/transformation is far from explanatory in the post-communist development, and rather plays a role of a logical connector of these problems. Such position means that simultaneity, interrelation and inner logic influence the fact that every sphere of transition/transformation can become a reason for obstacles and

<sup>19</sup> G. Almond, S. Verba, *The Civic Culture. Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, Wyd. Princeton University Press 1963.; G. Almond, S. Verba, *The Civic Culture Revisited: An Analytic Study*, Wyd. Little Brown 1980.

<sup>20</sup> W. Merkel, *Restriktionen und Chancen demokratischer Konsolidierung in postkommunistischen Gesellschaften: Ostmitteleuropa im Vergleich*, „Berliner Journal für Soziologie“ 1994, vol 4, s. 463-484.; W. Merkel, *Theorien der Transformation post-autoritärer Gesellschaften*, [w:] von Beyme K., Offe C. (eds.), *Politische Theorien in der Ära der Transformation*, Wyd. Politische Vierteljahresschrift 1996, s. 30-58.

<sup>21</sup> J. Sachs, *Crossing the Valley of Tears in East European Reform*, „Challenge“ 1991, vol 34, nr 5, s. 26-34.; J. Sachs, *My Plan for Poland*, „International Economy“ 1989, vol 3, s. 24-29.; S. Fischer, A. Gelb, *The Process of Socialist Economic Transformation*, „Journal of Economic Perspectives“ 1991, vol 5, nr 4, s. 91-105.; J. Brada, *The Transformation from Communism to Capitalism: How far? How Fast?*, „Post-Soviet Affairs“ 1993, vol 9, nr 1, s. 87-110.

even “mutual obstructive effects”<sup>22</sup> within the environment of “modernization processes that are in pursuit of each other”. In that regard it is obvious that, for instance, consolidation of democracy in theory must be complicated due to the structural complexity of democratic transition and transformation in various spheres of the national economy. And vice versa, each component in overcoming the “dilemma of simultaneity” can strengthen another one in case of their successfulness. In the context of the Visegrad countries it was disclosed in a fact that an accelerated consolidation of democracy took place, as a result of which these countries as to the quality of governance and institutional stability do not significantly differ from the countries of Western Europe.

From this perspective quite notable is a position of W. Merkel, who explains the accelerated consolidation of democracy and progress of social-economic modernization in the Visegrad countries on the basis of such factors of overcoming “the dilemma of simultaneity” as: modernity, governance, foreign actors<sup>23</sup>. These are categorical elements, singled out within the theories of modernization<sup>24</sup>, systematic approach<sup>25</sup> and structuralism<sup>26</sup> to explain democracy. Taking this into consideration, rather interesting and actual seems to be the analysis of the key reasons for logic and systematic construction and catalyzing of the Visegrad countries’ movement towards democracy and a modernized society. In particular, it is presupposed by the fact that among all factors, which in late 90-s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century changed the context of transformations within the Visegrad countries, the foreign one appeared to be one of the most important. We are referring to the EU leaders’ brave proposal made to Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic to become a member of the EU. The point is that Brussels’ public promise to grant those countries the status of candidates and finally full membership in the EU in case of preforming the so-called the Copenhagen criteria helped young democracies change their political discourses, reshape party competitiveness and defuse social conflicts. The EU gave clear and rather convincing conditions, actualization of which opened the path for the European Union entry negotiations conducted with the Visegrad countries (and other Central-Eastern European countries). Moreover, Brussels gave distinct recommendations as to the way and terms for the countries to be transformed into liberal democracies with the supremacy of law and create competitive market economy, to become the members of the European integration space. It means, that the “dilemma of simultaneity” was combined with

<sup>22</sup> C. Offe, *Das Dilemma der Gleichzeitigkeit. Demokratisierung und Marktwirtschaft in Osteuropa*, „Merkur“ 1991, vol 4, s. 283.

<sup>23</sup> M. Moore, *Democracy and Development in Cross-national Perspective: A New Look at the Statistics*, „Democratization“ 1985, vol 2, nr 2, s. 1-19.; J. Linz, A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Wyd. The Johns Hopkins University Press 1996, s. 28.; A. Ágh, *Ten Years of Political and Social Reforms in Central Europe*, „Central European Political Science Review“ 2001, vol 3, s. 24-43.

<sup>24</sup> T. Vanhanen, *The Level of Democratization Related to Socioeconomic Variables in 147 States, 1980-1985*, „Scandinavian Political Studies“ 1989, vol 12, nr 2, s. 95-127.; S. M. Lipset, *Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy*, „American Political Science Review“ 1959, vol 53, nr 1, s. 69-105.

<sup>25</sup> D. Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*, Wyd. John Wiley & Sons 1965.; T. Parsons, *The Social System*, Wyd. Free Press 1951.

<sup>26</sup> B. Moore, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, Wyd. Cambridge University Press 1966.; D. Rueschmeyer, E. H. Stephens, J. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, Wyd. University of Chicago Press 1992.

a clear signal for the countries of the Visegrad group: they could become the EU members, if they were able to adapt their legislation, jurisprudence, public politics and market economy so much to be able to function adequately within the European Union.

As A. Umland<sup>27</sup> states, on the back of such a serious proposal made by the European council, the aim of joining the EU became a powerful unifying principle and a generally recognized standard for the post-communist elites in the Visegrad countries. A real chance to realize their old dream of "returning to Europe" helped the peoples of the Visegrad countries to overcome that typical "transformation agony" of social and political confrontations, which still takes place in many other post-Soviet countries. The prospect of joining the EU, as well as the status of the candidate and negotiations over entering the Union became crucial catalysts for the democratic transit in the countries under study. In early 90-s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century skeptically-oriented theoreticians even did not guess of them; however a chance of joining the EU became a considerable counterbalance, which to a great extent neutralized the "dilemma of simultaneity" and refuted the "theorem of impossibility". And even despite this the scholars still argue over the extent and even nature of influence exerted on the Visegrad countries' development and their prospects of membership and joining the EU. Moreover, it is still unknown, whether various effects of the convergence process with the EU always were positive for the countries-candidates within the Visegrad group. Thus, it is noted that such close and even exceptional cooperation at the governmental level between the EU and the candidates for joining the EU to some degree restricted reforms of relations between the state and society, i.e. in fact interfered in the development of the third sector in the post-communist countries. Nevertheless, the fact is represented by comprehension that a well-timed and distinct proposal of joining the EU became a safe deal for all participants of the integration process. On the one hand, it gave the Visegrad countries a distinct idea of their way to the desirable "return to Europe". On the other hand, Brussels' openness helped to satisfy west European interests in security, achieved by means of stabilizing former countries of the Warsaw Pact. Historically rapid transformation and integration of the Visegrad countries was one of the most notable episodes in the EU's enlargement. It played an essential role in overcoming the "dilemma of simultaneity" and neutralizing the "theorem of impossibility". On the other side, we can theoretically conclude that the EU unwillingness to accelerate Euro-integration processes as to other European countries may quite often become a reason for non-overcoming the "dilemma of simultaneity" and their interpreting as the "victims of the dilemma of simultaneity".

Taking all the aforesaid into consideration we argue that overcoming of the "dilemma of simultaneity" on the example of the countries of the Visegrad group became possible on the basis of consolidation of various internal and external factors and stimuli of political, economic and systematic transformation, democratization, liberalization and modernization. The point

<sup>27</sup> A. Umland, *Pochemu Evropeyskomu Soyuzu sleduet predostavit stranam Vostochnogo partnerstva perspektivu chlenstva v ES*, „Geopolitika“, źródło: [http://www.geopolitika.lt/index.php/ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/file\\_download.php?artc=5685](http://www.geopolitika.lt/index.php/ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/file_download.php?artc=5685) [odczyt: 1 listopada 2016].

is, that a practical development of a modernization process in the region went wrong and not in accordance with the plan of stabilization of social-economic and political order by means of employing mainly internal factors or incomprehensibility of the influence of the external factors of development, but under the plan of forming modern political and social-economic systems on the basis of combining internal (democratization and modernization processes) and external factors (the desire to become a part of the “Great Europe” and distance themselves from Russia).

On the other hand, it is clear that speculations over dilemmatic obstacles between the politically guided introduction of capitalism and construction of democratic institutions on the basis of the hypothesis of the “dilemma of simultaneity” has not undergone a complete/final empirical expert evaluation, as a result of which the hypothesis itself from the theoretical and methodological perspective is viewed as “exhausted”<sup>28</sup>. The point is that the explanatory force of the hypothesis of the “dilemma of simultaneity” is usually supported by indirect arguments, which belong to the problem of governance and democracy. Consequently, to be proved the hypothesis must be “transformed” to the empty space and be verified on the basis of further various studies of transformational processes.

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<sup>28</sup> W. Merkel, *Plausible Theory, Unexpected Result: The Rapid Democratic Consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe*, „Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft“ 2011, vol 2, s. 11-29.

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