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Electoral developments of the recent years reveal a clear trend of right-wing populist political movements gaining ever stronger support in the number of Western countries usually referred to as consolidated democracies. Unexpected victory of Donald Trump at both the Republican Party primaries and the national election 2016 in the USA is an especially striking example considering the provoking nature of his campaign widely ac-
cused of being populist and appealing to right-wing nationalist (racist) sentiments. Even more surprising was the level of support he gained among those categories of the electorate, who were expected to be his strongest opponents.

The article employs social context analysis as a tool for better understanding of the success Trump's campaign has achieved in traditionally liberal states such as the Rust Belt in the north of the US or latino-dominated Florida. Tracing the evolution of the liberal-conservative split of the US society from the second half of the XXth century till present one can observe that traditional for the Democratic Party campaigning focus on race, gender and social justice issues coupled with the stress on foreign policy failed to appeal to the party's base electorate. On the other hand, addressing the issues, which have, for a while now, been politically incorrect for open political debate, has helped the Trump's team to really con-
solide conservative supporters making him unexpectedly successful among his rivals from the Republican Party.

The case of the 2016 United States presidential election reveals that both liberal and conservative political elites have lost track of what really concerned the society thus allowing populist campaign to become successful where it was the least expected. Based on the electoral analysis of the United States of America, the paper argues that the crises of political elites losing their connection to their base electorate thus disrupting effi-
ciency of democratic representation constitutes the underlying reason for the worldwide rise of populist political parties and movements.

Keywords: electoral geography, right wing populism, western democracies, US presidential election.

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VULNERABILITY OF CENTRAL ASIAN STATES TO RISK OF TERRITORIAL AND POLITICAL CONFLICTS APPEARANCE

The collapse of the socialist bloc and multiethnic federations has become one of the most important events defining the modern World political map. This process accompanied by the emergence of a number of new borders and international and domestic conflicts. After 25 years of gaining independence still preserved a risk that territorial claims and mutual misunderstandings that may escalate to violent conflicts, mainly because of the increasing authoritarian tendencies in post-Soviet states. From this perspective, many of new states characterized as conflict-prone. The article proposes perspective pattern of estimation of the state's vulnerability degree to the conflict. The paper reviews a number of scientific approaches to explanation the content of “vulnerability” in the modern geographical narrative. The peculiarities of the development of the concept of “vulnerability” in political geography are considered. It is justified the assumption that the state, the region can have different sensitivity to the risks that provoke territorial and political conflicts. Research pattern allows assess the degree of vulnerability in five main parameters: positional, historical, structural, dynamic and functional. The purpose of the paper is to show the effectiveness of using the multi-parametric vulnerability approach on the example of Central Asia. The region constituting by five post-Soviet countries and is capable to investigation because of it relatively cultural and political homogeneity. The methodology for the analysis of territorial conflicts at the macro-regional level is proposed. The level of vulnerability of various countries in the region to the manifestation of territorial conflicts assessed on the ground of 23 indicators. 5-score scale method is the way to formalize the correspondence between the nature of the indicator's and the level of risk that occurs with this precondition value. Results demonstrate the different degrees of vulnerability Central Asian states to international and domestic conflicts.

Keywords: territorial conflicts, vulnerability, preconditions to conflict, Central Asia.

Formulation of the problem. The collapse of the socialist bloc and three socialist federations, such as the USSR, the SFRY and Czechoslovakia, has become one of the most important events defining the modern world political map. This process was accompanied by the emergence of a number of territorial conflicts. Various historical, cultural (ethnic and religious), political, economic and environmental factors had led to their emergence.

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Some of them were the heritage of the pre-socialist period; others arose when sovereign states were members of the socialist federations, while the third group appeared only in the post-socialist period. Since the beginning of some conflicts in the post-socialist space, the whole human generation has passed – 25-27 years. The generation brought up in the territorial reality of the post-socialist era of the newly formed independent states starts its adult life; therefore, critical understanding of the historical background should obviously not be expected from the new generation. It is urgent to make the geographic research of the current state of territorial conflicts, which should reflect spatial characteristics of the spread of conflicts as well as to reveal the vulnerability of numerous post-socialist states to violent conflicts. The Central Asian region constituting by five post-Soviet countries and is capable to investigation of vulnerability because of it relatively cultural and political homogeneity.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** There is quite a vast experience of geographersin researching vulnerabilities of people, territories, settlements who are exposed to negative effects of natural hazards and threats, or vulnerabilities caused by political conflicts or other economic and social factors. As O. Kononenko et al. [3], and R. Slyvka [30] notes, "vulnerability" is a concept which is characterized by many interpretations in the scientific literature. In UN's “Glossary of Environment Statistics”, vulnerability defined as the degree to which a community, structure, service or geographical area may be damaged or destroyed, based on their natural properties or locations under the influence of specific hazardous risks [17, p. 76]. In addition, vulnerability can defined as the result of physical, social and economic factors and the environment, which increases the community's susceptibility to dangers [25, 34]. S. Steriacchin notes that vulnerability reflects the ability of a item or a set of items (organised into the system) exposed to danger to withstand the damage [32]. The concept of "vulnerability" is characterised in detail by the authors of United Nations' “Human Development Report 2014". It states that in places where social and legal institutions, authorities, political space or social and cultural norms and traditions fail to serve the members of the society equally, and where they create structural barriers for some people and groups preventing them from implementing their rights and choices, they generate structural vulnerability. The report indicates major threats that affect the growth of vulnerability: 1) economic shocks, health shocks; 2) natural disasters, climate change and industrial hazards; 3) conflicts, civil unrest. Three main prerequisites for vulnerability growth are defined: 1) limited capabilities; 2) location, position in society, sensitive periods in the life cycle; 3) low social cohesion, irresponsible institutions, poor governance [18, p. 19]. Nowadays, vulnerability considered the property of regional systems [32]. Vulnerability is the interaction between threats (in the territorial conflicts – political and military threats) and systemic vulnerability that produces certain results. It is clear that vulnerability is a dynamic characteristic [9]. The resilience of the territory is an opposite category to vulnerability. Most authors consider the concept of vulnerability and resilience as complementary: the greater the vulnerability of the system, the less its resilience and vice versa [3, p. 243].

In political geography, a long tradition of vulnerable regions and their separate parts can be traced. At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, scientific discourse on the issue of vulnerability of some regions and countries to the conflict emerged. It involved the concept of "Eurasian Balkans" [7], crash zones [24], buffer zones [27], in-between-ness [29], overlapping territorialities [5], or failed/fragile states [21].

We suggest considering the conflict zone a vulnerable territorial and political system. Its opposite in terms of quality is a geographically stable political system. In political geography, it is appropriate to use the term "conflict region vulnerability". It can be defined as the degree to which the region is vulnerable to political threats based on its geographical location, physical and geographical conditions, socio-geographical structures, political status and functional capacity.

Assuming that the goal of acknowledged rational politics is to achieve a sustainable level of territorial and political system (minimal vulnerability to conflict), it seems logical that another possible extreme manifestation of vulnerable territorial and political system (maximal vulnerability to conflict) is possible as well. The transitional state is a so-called transit territorial and political system. The latter may have three dynamic qualities: 1) structural (aimed at achieving stability of territorial and political systems); 2) destructive (aimed at reducing the stability of territorial and political systems); 3) fluctuating (random deviation from the previous development of territorial and political system).

The aim of territorial and political organization of the society is to achieve resilience to threats and risks that a war, destruction, radical lifestyle changes may bring. At this stage, a territorial and political system may be exposed to fluctuations, i.e. a deviation from the constructive or destructive development as a result of shock effects. The latter include climate changes, ecological crises and spread of epidemics, the deterioration of market opportunities and resource cycles in the world economy and mass migration. According to G. Pocheptsov [4], social sciences turned to the phenomenon of nonlinearity, because they cannot adequately describe, and even more predict the destruction of the system, that is, its crisis or collapse. There is a general tendency both in management and in different academic disciplines to go out today not only for the description, but also for the forecast. The study of the crisis should always give the way out of it. Zinoviev, for example, sees such factors of the crisis: 1) the mechanism of a potential crisis; 2) conditions in which the possibility of a crisis turns into reality; a push to the crisis [2].

The destructive direction of the territorial and political system is carried out by the subjects of the struggle for territory and its resources. Their goal is to take advantage of preconditions that can be well described according to five parameters: 1) positional vulnerability; 2) structural vulnerability; 3) dynamic vulnerability; 4) functional vulnerability. If they do not manifest clearly enough, the subject may deliberately act in the direction of individual components of vulnerability. This destructive effect can be amplified or attenuated by shock effects, such as falling prices for energy resources and a decrease in the capacity of "petrol filling countries" in terms of aggressive rhetoric and actions [30, p. 191].

Geographic preconditions of geopolitical behaviour of Uzbekistan are highlighted by D. Spechler, M. Spechler [31]. N. Megoran [22, 23] paid much attention to the geography of territorial conflicts among Central Asian countries. The report provided by Rand Arroyo Centre [11] is an example of intelligence analytics that concerns the Central Asian regions. This report identifies and evaluates the key conflict-producing faultlines in Central Asia. The faultlines include the role of state political and economic weakness; the impact of crime and the drug trade; the effects of ethnic tensions and foreign interests and influence; and the impact of competition for natural resources. Internal political and geopolitical factors of conflict potential in Central Asia are
investigated by E. Efegil [10]. Perception of foreign policy relations through the prism of the stability of political regimes in Central Asia is described by A. Razma [28]. Factors of political instability, particularly in Kyrgyzstan, are analyzed by Kiliç [20]; A. Ismailbekova [19] investigated their consequences for vulnerable national minorities on the example of Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan.

The purpose of the paper is to show the effectiveness of using vulnerability to conflicts pattern on an example of Central Asia.

Main material. Central Asia is a historical and geographical region that encompasses five post-Soviet states: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The main characteristic of the region is its land-lock position. In the 19th century, states that had been formed in the region lost their independence and subsequently became an integral part of the Russian Empire. In the pre-Soviet period, none of the mentioned above states were like they are today. Borders of these republics are the result of intra-state administrative boundary establishment. After the proclamation of independence in 1992, all these states, except Turkmenistan, entered the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States). Turkmenistan's declaration of "permanent neutrality" was formally recognized by the United Nations in 1995 [14]. Under Russian initiation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan joined an economic bloc – the Eurasian Economic Community, and a military-political bloc – the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Uzbekistan became the member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization another Eurasian political, economic, and security organization, which clearly shows the leadership of the Russian Federation and China. According to the data of "Conflict Barometer" (2017) [8], there are several interstate territorial conflicts in the region (Table 1).

Besides, there were internationalized internal conflict related to the participation of Russia and Uzbekistan in the resolution of the internal conflict on the territory of Tajikistan in the late 90's. The problem of the region is a high probability of inspiration with political separatism: 1. Northern regions of Kazakhstan, where there is a large number of Russian-speaking population. 2. Kara-Kalpak autonomy in Uzbekistan. 3. Mountainous Badakhshan autonomy in Tajikistan. Such superpowers as Russia, China, and the USA, as well as regional states such as Iran, Turkey, compete for influence in Central Asia. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan do not hide their ambitions as regional leaders. Competitions for international influence, resource allocation, control of transborder trade and migration flows can disrupt the balance between states.

Quantitative approach allows assess the preconditions for conflicts in each of the countries of the region. In total 23 indicators have been proposed to quantify positional, historical, structural, dynamic and functional vulnerabilities. They reflect the varied characteristics of the studied countries. The five-point scale method allows reconciling the various indicators to assess the level of vulnerability of the country to conflict. The maximum score of "5" means greater degree of vulnerability of the country to conflict according to the given indicator, while the minimum "1" is the smallest one. 5-score scale method is the way to formalize the correspondence between the nature of the indicator's and the level of risk that occurs with this precondition value. The final summing of points allows determine the general level of vulnerability of the country (Table 2). The disadvantage of this approach is ignoring the nature of the impact of each vulnerability indicator on the overall level of risk, as the contribution of each factor to the probability of occurrence of a risk event, as a rule, is not equivalent.

Positional Vulnerability Indicators:
1. (P1) Compactness of the territory of the state estimated by the formula:

\[ K = \frac{4\pi S}{L^2} \]

where \( K \) – compactness’ coefficient; \( S \) – state area; \( L \) – length of borders.

Results: 1 point to Kazakhstan (33908232); 2 points to Turkmenistan (5901944); 3 points to Uzbekistan (5343024); 4 points to Kyrgyzstan (2409008); 5 points to Tajikistan (1814920).

2. (P2) Landlocked position of the state estimated in 4 points, double-landlocked position in 5 points. Results: 4 points to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan; 5 points to Uzbekistan.

3. (P3) Number of neighboring states (including neighboring states across a Caspian Sea). Results: 1 point to Kazakhstan (5 + 2); 2 points to Turkmenistan (4 + 3); 3 points to Uzbekistan (5); 4 points to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (4).

4. (P4) The length of the border (including maritime borders). Results: 1 point to Tajikistan (4,130 km); 2 points to Turkmenistan (4,158 km); 3 points to Kyrgyzstan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of conflict</th>
<th>Conflict parties</th>
<th>Conflict items</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Change in 2016</th>
<th>Intensity in 2016</th>
<th>Average intensity 2002-2016</th>
<th>Highest intensity (year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia – Kazakhstan et al. (Caspian Sea)</td>
<td>Azerbaijan vs. Iran vs. Kazakhstan vs. Russia vs. Turkmenistan</td>
<td>territory, international power, resources</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>no changes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,3*</td>
<td>3 (2013)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan – Tajikistan (border communities / Fergana Valley)</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan vs. Uzbekistan vs. Tajikistan</td>
<td>territory, international power</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>no changes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 **</td>
<td>3 (2014-2016) **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan – Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>Uzbekistan vs. Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>international power, water resources</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>grows gradually</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,3 (2010-2016)</td>
<td>2 (2012, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan)</td>
<td>drug traffickers, Pamir people vs. government autonomy, subnational predominance</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>no changes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,4 (2012-2016)</td>
<td>4 (2012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Estimated by "Conflict Barometer" reviews only from 2003 until 2016
** Estimated by "Conflict Barometer" reviews only from 2014 until 2016
The article examines the concept of vulnerability to study the degree of resistance of the country to conflicts has significant prospects in political geography, which are related to the implementation of preventive measures to increase the stability of states to national security threats. The proposed model for

Table 2. Total vulnerability of post-Soviet states in Central Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Positional vulnerability</th>
<th>Historical vulnerability</th>
<th>Structural vulnerability</th>
<th>Dynamic vulnerability</th>
<th>Functional vulnerability</th>
<th>Total vulnerability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.620000</td>
<td>0.679000</td>
<td>0.589800</td>
<td>0.589800</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>0.328000</td>
<td>0.492000</td>
<td>0.513000</td>
<td>0.598900</td>
<td>0.598900</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>0.328000</td>
<td>0.492000</td>
<td>0.513000</td>
<td>0.598900</td>
<td>0.598900</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>0.328000</td>
<td>0.492000</td>
<td>0.513000</td>
<td>0.598900</td>
<td>0.598900</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>0.328000</td>
<td>0.492000</td>
<td>0.513000</td>
<td>0.598900</td>
<td>0.598900</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions. The article examines the concept of vulnerability to study the degree of resistance of the country to the manifestation of violent conflicts. The proposed method for calculating the vulnerability of the country to conflicts has significant prospects in political geography, which are related to the implementation of preventive measures to increase the stability of states to national security threats. The proposed model for
evaluating different parameters of vulnerability allowed determining five levels of resistance to conflicts in a relatively homogeneous region. The least vulnerable countries are Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, the vulnerability of other countries increases with approximately the same gradient: Uzbekistan (64), Kyrgyzstan (75), and Tajikistan (85). The presence of a country’s propensity to conflict does not mean it fatal occurrence in the future. However, in the context of strengthening authoritarianism, in some of them, further aggravation of interethnic relations, demographic and environmental problems can contribute to armed confrontation in order to demonstrate the resilience of political regimes. An experience of Ukraine and Georgia demonstrates that Russia is able to use the strategy of hybrid warfare in the region of Central Asia [28]. The consequence is that G. Pocheptsov described as a new state of the post-Soviet space “no war-no peace” [4]. The only acceptable way of developing the region is active intransigent dialog and cooperation in finding mutually beneficial cooperation models that would contribute to sustainable and healthy development in the future.

Further research should draw attention to identifying the weight of individual indicators of vulnerability of the state and a more complete reflection of historical and functional indicators. The application of proposed methodology has significant prospects for disaggregated research of first rank administrative regions of states. In accordance with the general tendency of modern political geography to shift the attention from the scale of the state to the level of regions constituting it.

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3. Kresl O. The state of the post-Soviet space “no war-no peace” [4]. The only acceptable way of developing the region is active intransigent dialog and cooperation in finding mutually beneficial cooperation models that would contribute to sustainable and healthy development in the future.

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Проаналізовано наукові підходи до розуміння "вразливості" у сучасному науковому дискурсі. Розглянуто особливості розвитку концепції "вразливості" у політичній географії. Обґрунтовано припущення, що держава регіон може мати різку чутливість до ризиків, які провокують територіальні конфлікти. Запропоновано оцінювати вразливість за п'ятьма головними параметрами: позиційним, історичним, структурним, динамічним та функціональним. На прикладі постсоціалістичних країн Середньої Азії показано присутність вразливості до міждержавних територіально-політичних конфліктів. Розкрито характер впливу вразливості на формування конфліктів, запропоновано методику аналізу територіально-політичних конфліктів на регіональному рівні. Оцінено рівень вразливості різних країн Середньої Азії до прояву територіально-політичних конфліктів.

Ключові слова: територіальні конфлікти, вразливість, передумови конфлікту, ризик, Середня Азія.

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