

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIETAL SECURITY.

A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AND ROMANIA IN THE CURRENT GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT*

Elena Grad-Rusu–Marius Nicolae Grad¹

Introduction

The end of the Cold War prompted international security scholars to rethink the paradigm of security more broadly, independently from the state as the key player and the military sector as the core component. Besides this, societies and other political and social entities became more complex and sophisticated. New mechanisms of cohesion were developed over time and even though the core values remained the same, complex socio-political systems emerged (Flaherty, 2018). Nowadays, the variety and complexity of threats are challenging not only the short-term safety and security of the citizens and states but also the existence and functionality of societies and communities.

Since the emergence of modern communication technology, intrastate actors have been able to easily interact, develop, and promote their interests and objectives. But, at the same time, the permeability for manipulation, disinformation, and ignorance has increased. In this context, civil society has played an important role in holding governments accountable for their actions and informing the public. Moreover, it has been a critical contributor to preserving democratic developments and to promoting the rule of law. All these are prerequisites of strong societal security.

Additionally, societal security is a core component of healthy societies and it cannot be achieved without strong civic support, hence the close connection with civil society. The existing literature extensively covers both topics (civil society and societal security), but the nexus between them has not been thoroughly examined. This research delves into the intricate relationship between civil society and



societal security, examining the dynamics within the Republic of Moldova and Romania against the backdrop of the contemporary geopolitical landscape. The study is driven by the need to understand *how civil society functions as a critical factor in shaping and safeguarding societal security*, particularly in countries exposed to unconventional threats.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. The first section reviews the literature on civil societies and societal security and the connection between them. It is followed by a brief discussion regarding the data and method used in the analysis, while the third section provides an overview of the social and political contexts in Romania and the Republic of Moldova since 2014. The last section includes a comparative discussion/analysis on public engagement, identity resilience, societal resilience, community cohesion, and addressing threats. The conclusions discuss the main findings of our research and set further research directions.

Civil society and societal security. Is there a connection?

The definition of civil society has been articulated differently in various socio-political and historical contexts (Shepherd 2015), which makes it far from heterogeneous both in terms of focus and approach (Wright 2023). From a general perspective, the term operates across a range of areas such as human rights, environment protection, labor standards, or gender justice. In many cases, civil society is perceived as an important vehicle for ‘capacity building’ by states, supporting the governments in the implementation of national strategies (Haastrup, Hagen 2020). In practice, civil society consists of groups and organizations, both formal and informal, which act independently of the state and market to promote diverse interests in society (Jaysawal 2013).

Conceptualizing civil society as a separate sphere that is autonomous from the state articulates the meaning of representing the interests of individuals (Fish 1991). Consequently, civil society is meant to strengthen democracy, while ensuring the protection of citizens’ rights. Through its agents and actions, civil society ensures that democracy is respected, whilst at the same time acting as ‘a counterweight to the state’ (Foley, Edwards 1996), by fostering citizen participation and civic education. Since human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and human rights are at the basis of the functioning of the European Union (Mureşan 2023) as well as of any democratic state, civil society becomes a proper agent in guarding these principles, particularly in countries exposed to unconventional threats.

Even though the agents, the actions, or the causes might be different, the existence of an active civil society drives the building of democratic structures. Therefore, taking into consideration the approaches presented above to the meaning of civil society, we define the term in this article as *the space where networks of voluntary associations create a proper environment for action between the individual*



and the state and we focus the study on identifying cohesion and not disruption in social life.

According to Fairclough, as mentioned in one of his studies, civil society is one of the most important linkages in strengthening the community (Fairclough 2000), which makes it difficult to separate the concepts of civil society and community cohesion. Social relationships and attachments to places or to social groups have a huge contribution to defining community cohesion.

Studies about civil society explain cohesion by correlating volunteerism and engagement with feelings of cultivating personal development or by having a sense of community (Flanagan–Van Horn 2001). Some delve deeper into the subject and include self-esteem, leadership, and social responsibility (Brennan–Barnett–Baugh 2007). The social support dimension of community empowerment is allied with social capital. It refers to cultivating intra-network solidarity (Forenza 2017), while civil society is seen as the holder of the moral authority for action and operational knowledge in the community.

Moreover, civil society and social cohesion are closely interconnected concepts, with each playing a significant role in fostering the other. The connection is complex and multifaceted. While some argue that civil society can promote social cohesion better than government policies (Taylor–Gooby 2012), others highlight potential limitations of this approach, as group processes in civil society may lead to exclusion rather than inclusion (Taylor–Gooby 2012). Social policies can foster social cohesion by contributing to a citizenship regime with equal rights (White 2003). However, recent policy shifts have emphasized a "bottom-up" approach, focusing on civil society's role in promoting social cohesion (White 2003). This shift has implications for vulnerable groups, such as migrants, whose representation in the public sphere may be affected by civil society organizations (Semino, 2014). Some researchers propose that civil society should be considered a top stakeholder in society, with social cohesion serving as a normative foundation for stakeholder theory (Lépineux 2005).

While both social cohesion and community cohesion deal with the integration and unity of people, social cohesion is a broader concept that applies to society as a whole, while community cohesion is more specific to local communities. Community cohesion can be seen as a building block for social cohesion, where strong, cohesive communities contribute to a cohesive society at large (Cantle 2008; Schiefe–van der Noll 2017). Thus, community cohesion has a stronger impact on building resilience and social cohesion might be strengthened.

Security-related concerns have become important subjects for both state and non-state actors like international organizations, NGOs, and other civil society bodies (Tschirgi 2003). It is already historically proven that without security there can be no democracy, and without democracy, there can be little hope for sustainable peace. Over the last years, civil society actors have become more involved in the nexus of peacebuilding and development through the promotion of popular participation in community decision-making and conflict resolution (Colletta 2006),



since success in conflict resolution, or quite to the contrary, maintaining and fomenting a conflictual situation, is often the doing of government (Corpădean 2023).

Traditionally, scholars researching security have focused on topics such as peacekeeping, disarmament, arms control, the process of restructuring security institutions (including police, military, and intelligence services), civilian-military relations, or security budgets as a part of overall public expenditure. Recently, this approach has been strongly challenged by some schools of thought such as the Copenhagen School, the Welsh School, and the human security approach. Nowadays, the definition of security has been extended to include the “soft and human characteristics”, which encompass a range of threats going beyond the conventional military examples. These new menaces have a more transnational influence and are represented by environmental hazards, pandemic diseases, financial crises, terrorism, loss of regional identity, or public safety (Chen et al. 2004).

These new approaches have triggered a rethinking among scholars regarding the nexus between civil society, security, identity, and community cohesion. In this context, the term societal security gains more interest in being developed and protected, which engenders new initiatives, but also a lot of new partnerships and synergies between civil society and the traditional actors, which help to promote inclusive democratic participation, a functioning rule of law and public security.

Therefore, societal security cannot exist in a vacuum. Since civil society functions as a critical factor in shaping and safeguarding societal security, it requires the involvement of people with mutual trust, norms, and ethics to safeguard a durable bond among them. Societal security and social cohesion are interconnected concepts crucial for a society's resilience and development. Social cohesion involves solidarity between groups and individuals, fostering trust and inclusion (Khylyk & Khylyk, 2021). It is a key component of social security, which encompasses maintaining vital societal functions and protecting the population's basic needs and values (Knudsen, 2019). The concept of societal security, as developed by the Copenhagen school, can be strengthened by applying social identity theory, which provides a sharper definition of identity and explains individuals' psychological need for societal security (Theiler, 2003). Factors such as globalization, crises, and socio-economic challenges significantly impact social security and cohesion (Kyrlyuk et al., 2023). Assessing social security and cohesion through indicators like the Social Progress Index can help identify areas for improvement (Kyrlyuk et al., 2023). Building social and cultural cohesion is essential for national security and resilience, particularly in conflict-affected countries like Ukraine (Khylyk & Khylyk, 2021).

In this article, we focus on the correlations between civil society and societal security. The dynamic interaction between these two terms is an essential part of conserving the identity of communities and promoting social cohesion.

Therefore, we suggest that by following some elementary measures, civil society can succeed in promoting societal security, especially in countries exposed to



unconventional threats. First of all, informing and communicating with the community will bring social and community cohesion and broader knowledge of societal identity. Knowledge can inspire associational activities among people and make them more aware of potential opportunities, but also of threats, which leads us to the second measure – conflict awareness.

This approach focuses on knowing and understanding threats, as long as society recognizes the existence of certain issues that might endanger identity, community development, and societal security by any means. In this scenario, civil society concentrates on promoting social inclusion, equality, and social justice (Boylan, Dalrymple 2009) and takes action to help people speak freely, secure their rights, represent their interests, and obtain the services they need. It emphasizes the sensitization of citizens to the local culture.

The promotion of social cohesion and solidarity could be expressed as a third measure taken by an active civil society to maintain societal security. Social cohesion establishes human rights, social justice, and economic growth, factors that ultimately strengthen democracy and protect the identity of each community. When the primary interests of the people are fulfilled by the state, societal security becomes an attractive topic among citizens and deepens the meaning of pro-people democracy.

Therefore, civil society through strong civic support plays a very important role in promoting democracy. An insight into a healthy society stems especially from the promotion of community identity, which brings stability, transparency, cohesiveness, and empowerment, thus facilitating a process of societal security. In this regard, identity resilience is another fundamental factor. Primarily, it was defined in terms of personal identity resilience (Breakwell, 2020), as most of the existing knowledge is based on theories from the realm of psychology. In this analysis, we discuss identity resilience in terms of community identity (Joseph, 1993; Spain, 1993) or collective identity (Licata, 2015; Davis, Love et. al., 2019, Tajfel, 1978). Therefore, collective identity resilience (based on the social identity theory) might be defined as the capacity to preserve or adapt in the face of adversity, trauma, threats, or other internal or external factors.

Based on the theory presented above, we hypothesize the following:

- H1: A diverse and active civil society determines stable societal security.
- H2: A higher diversity of civil society entities will determine a stronger public engagement.
- H3: Strong and consistent support for CSOs from the government will enhance societal security when facing external threats.

Research design and case selection

To test the abovementioned hypotheses and to provide a comprehensive answer to our research question, *how does civil society function as a critical factor in shaping and safeguarding societal security?* We first have to operationalize the main concepts. As such, for civil society, we have used the theoretical framework provided by Lyons (2009) and the datasets of Civicus Global Alliance (Civicus 2023), FHI360 (Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index), Our World in Data (Civil society participation index) and The Economist Group (The Democracy Index). For identity resilience, we rely on the following indicators: religion (Dobratz, 2002), ethnicity (Milan, 2022), nationality (Eisenstadt, 1998), and social movement mobilization (Polletta, Jasper, 2001). Societal resilience is approached by looking at socioeconomic indicators, religiosity (Goroshit 2013), community cohesion, securitization, and threat perception.

The two cases, Romania and the Republic of Moldova have been selected based on several reasons. In terms of similarities: both countries were under communist regimes until the fall of the Soviet Union, they have a similar cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious background, and share comparable proximity to Russia and the current war in Ukraine. In terms of differences: they were exposed to different amounts of Russian influence, the political environment has evolved differently and the civil society has developed under contrasting democratic progress. Moreover, Romania is a member of the European Union (2007) and NATO (2004). Thus, we can assess Romania and the Republic of Moldova as being two similar cases (considering the initial phase of development as the end of the communist regimes), but with different outcomes. Since our approach is based on a qualitative analysis, the main method used is process tracing (descriptive inference (Kumar, 2020)) and the data have been collected from publicly available datasets related to the indicators mentioned in the first part of this section. The timeframe under analysis is the period between 2014 and 2023 and has been selected based on the geopolitical context (the Russian annexation of Crimea) and the fact that between 2014 and 2016 both countries had elections that reshaped the internal political environment.

The evolution of the socio-political context. Romania and the Republic of Moldova since 2014

Romania

The Romanian political landscape, for the selected timeframe, was dynamic and complex, characterized by change, reforms, and crises. The recovery after the economic recession of 2008/2009 brought into the public sphere waves of dissatisfaction, related to economic measures and political developments. For example, a health system reform in 2012 led to one of the first massive protests in Romania



after the events of '89–91. Later, during the same year, a constitutional crisis (a conflict between the president and the prime minister) generated civil disobedience and conflicts between political parties. Worsening working conditions, mass layoffs, and poor payrolls prompted thousands of employees to take to the streets in the early days of 2013. Later on, 2014 and 2015 were marked by strong political tensions and protests: Black Thursday (Constin, 2014), the War of the Palaces (Ludaster, 2014), and the presidential election scandal. The Colectiv Club tragedy (2015) was followed by another wave of protests all across the country, which resulted in the resignation of the prime minister and, in a way, ended the 2012–2015 unrest period.

The elections of 2016 saw a predictable return of the Social Democratic Party as the major force in Parliament. However, the legislative reform (a concealed attempt to modify the Penal Code and the Penal Procedure Code on the night of 31 January) sparked massive protests that continued until 2019. The movement was considered to be the largest after the fall of communism. In 2021, the political landscape was marked by another political crisis that resulted in the breaking of the government coalition and a three-month entanglement. Harsh economic conditions, the declining quality of life, and failed reform attempts generated more socio-political unrest: the teachers' strike (mid-2023) and the farmers' and transport operators' protest (December 2023–January 2024).

The political atmosphere in Romania between 2014 and 2023 exhibited dynamism and was marred by crises. Politicians' inability to adequately represent citizens' interests triggered responses from civil society, leading to pressure that reshaped the political landscape. The escalation of political rivalries was further fuelled by the emergence of new parties or alliances, heightening the competitive dynamics. Simultaneously, external factors like the COVID–19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine posed challenges, thereby provoking dissatisfaction among the citizens.

The social context in Romania after 2014 was characterized by both continuity and change. Political dynamics contributed to shifts in societal attitudes and interactions. The period witnessed heightened civic engagement and reactions from the public in response to perceived failures in political representation (see the waves of protests). The emergence of new political parties (USR, AUR) and alliances intensified the competitive landscape, influencing the overall social environment. These challenges, at times, led to public dissatisfaction as citizens grappled with the impact of both domestic and international events on their daily lives.

Moreover, the social landscape in Romania reflected ongoing disparities between affluent urban centers and rural provinces, highlighting structural imbalances. Issues such as demographic challenges, including a low birth rate and the forthcoming retirement of the baby boomer generation, persisted. The social context was also influenced by weaknesses in education and public healthcare systems, particularly exposed during the COVID–19 crisis. In terms of public administration and governance, Romania faced hurdles in consistent strategy implementation and



digitalization efforts, with instances of clientelist spending and corruption affecting state-owned enterprises and public procurement processes.

The Republic of Moldova

The Republic of Moldova's political situation is unique to a post-communist country that seeks to unite with the West but is also heavily influenced by Russia. In the 2009 elections, a fundamental turning point occurred as Western-oriented parties successfully removed the communist government from power. The leaders of the Republic of Moldova have been changing sides and various factions are now pushing for greater ties with the European Union or Russia. These geopolitical conflicts have impacted policy choices, international relations, and the general direction of the nation. The country's political landscape is frequently characterized by a delicate balance of competing interests, with internal divisions playing disproportionate roles in its development.

Corruption and economic problems have also affected internal politics. Efforts have been made to tackle corruption by improving transparency and accountability. Economic reforms and managing the impact of external economic factors have been significant topics whose focus has been set by political leaders. The complexity of Moldovan politics has been heightened by social issues like poverty and emigration, as leaders struggle to find sustainable solutions for the betterment of citizens. Additionally, external factors have a significant influence on the Republic of Moldova's internal political dynamics, in addition to domestic ones. Due to its strategic location and historical ties with both the European Union and Russia, the country's internal politics are quite complex.

In July 2021, President Maia Sandu's reform-oriented Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS) won the snap parliamentary elections. PAS' victory marked the first time in 20 years that a party had received an absolute majority of votes in a parliamentary election. The formation of a single-party government ended years of rule by unstable coalitions that often included allegedly corrupt political forces (OSCE 2021). President Sandu herself was directly elected in November 2020, defeating incumbent Igor Dodon, 58% to 42%, in a second-round vote (Reuters, 2020). At the time, Dodon was the de facto head of the Russian-leaning, socially conservative Party of Socialists, the former ruling party. The presidency holds symbolic importance but has relatively limited formal powers under the country's parliamentary system. In the July 2021 snap parliamentary elections, PAS won 53% of the vote and 63 of 101 seats. A Socialist-led bloc won 27% of the vote and 32 seats. The third party to enter parliament, the populist, Russia-leaning Șor Party (banned in 2023), was led by political and business figure Ilan Șor, who fled the country in 2019 while appealing a seven-year sentence for his role in a \$1 billion bank fraud scandal dating back to 2014. However, all these pro-Western political developments were met with protests in 2022–2023, due to worsening economic



conditions. The movement was instrumented by the pro-Russian Party and after the organization was outlawed, the demonstrations and marches decreased in intensity.

Overall, the political scene of the Republic of Moldova can be assessed as being marked by the competition between West and East, while the Russian influence is challenging the pro-European movement. Besides, from a social perspective, persisting political instability has hindered any substantial improvement in the economic and social conditions of the people in recent years. In rural regions, a significant portion of the population, particularly the elderly, women, and children, continues to grapple with poverty, living well below the poverty line. Consequently, the Republic of Moldova remains one of the most economically disadvantaged countries in Europe.

Recent data from the United Nations underscores that the gap between the affluent and the impoverished in Moldova is steadily expanding, giving rise to even more pronounced social disparities, particularly in education, healthcare, and income levels.

Civil society and societal security

Considering the recent social and political developments in Romania and the Republic of Moldova, it is worth mentioning that both cases are facing external threats that pose strong challenges. The Russian propaganda (Todd et al. 2018; Boksa 2019), misinformation and distrust that are penetrating the communities, migration flows, war, and transnational organized crime are merely some of the aspects that must be managed in a dynamic and unpredictable context. In addition, the internal social and political context, in both states, does not provide a solid base to properly manage the permanent flow of external threats.

As shown above, civil society and societal security are linked and, to some degree, interdependent. Since the current geopolitical environment is unpredictable, it is worth questioning how civil society functions as a critical factor in shaping and safeguarding societal security. As such, the first factor that is analyzed is the *evolution of civil society in terms of structural indicators and activity*.

Civil societies in Romania and the Republic of Moldova have evolved in close connection to the willingness to develop a strong democratic environment. For example, in Romania, there has been a noticeable increase in activism over the last decade, with the creation of many new CSOs (civil society organizations). The sector has moved from civic engagement based on personal or common interests (e.g. trade unions, interest groups) to broader issue-driven activism and civil society work on matters such as corruption and the environment. Studies show that “trigger events” have gathered large groups of people, leading to protests (the frequency and intensity thereof have increased since 2010) and the creation of new CSOs focused on specific problems (World Bank 2020; Volintiru–Buzasu 2020).



Moreover, the emergence of social movements (Heemeryck 2018) and community philanthropic organizations, such as foundations, indicates another vital step in consolidating Romania's civil society. The COVID-19 pandemic and the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine have caused significant mobilization among civil society organizations in Romania, demonstrating their societal value and increased capacity (Cibian 2022).

In the Republic of Moldova, civil society is facing several challenges in terms of structure and activity, although there are multiple initiatives that support civic engagement. Datasets show that the number of CSOs is relatively high (Gîscă 2023), but, in most cases, their activity is reduced or inexistent (Balutel 2019). Besides this, improper legislation and internal corruption slow the initiatives and hinder the efficiency of such entities. For example, an organization that had financial benefits provided by the state, lost the facilities in 2021 because the committee responsible for the financial allocations has not been active since 2020.

From another perspective, the evolution of specific indicators related to the well-being of civil society and its connection to societal security (see Table 1 below) shows strong developments in both Romania and the Republic of Moldova. For example, in Romania, since 2014, a decrease in terms of the quality of democracy has been recorded, while the sustainability of CSOs was lower in 2023 compared with previous years. The demographics have remained mostly unchanged, but the number of citizens who officially assumed the Orthodox religion has decreased, showing either a reluctance to declare it or a form of disengagement with religion. This disconnection with the religious factor might prove a weakened identity cohesion. The civil society participation index has recorded lower values lately, showing signs of fatigue and indifference in terms of civic engagement. Although civil mobilization was unforeseen in the case of refugees from Ukraine, it did not evolve into a long-term commitment. Recent protests (farmers and transport operators) prove that general public support is hard to obtain and if the trigger events are not intense and impactful, the general population tends to be uninterested and uninvolved (H2 is partially confirmed, considering the lack of long-term involvement of citizens). All these trends might be associated with the score of the Social Capital Index that was lower in 2023 compared to 2018, thus defining an eroded level of social cohesion and consensus. Safety perception was also lower than in previous years, which might be explained by the persistence of the war in Ukraine. Even though the social and political conditions have not devolved profoundly, the decrease in public engagement, community cohesion, and societal resilience should be correlated with the general public's perception, which is under the strong influence of media outlets, trendsetters, and manipulative campaigns, conducted as supported by foreign entities (for eg. Russia).

By contrast, the Republic of Moldova has recorded more favorable results in the last decade. The political environment has remained relatively stable, with improved social conditions for civic initiatives. Although the number of CSOs is high and their activity is reduced, entities in the public sphere present a strong capital for further



positive developments, despite challenges imposed by national legislation or low political support. Civil society participation was higher in 2023 compared to 2014, which shows stronger public engagement and community cohesion. Identity resilience is lower than in Romania because of ethnic diversity and different cultural and political influences (for example, Russian influence). Societal resilience is facilitated by favorable safety perception and improved sustainability for civil society initiatives. Despite this, political fragmentation should be considered an effective tool in mobilizing different social initiatives (for example, the latest protests that were mobilized by political leaders). However, the politicization of civil initiatives or even their mobilization based on political views is decreasing the credibility and representativeness of such initiatives.

Table 1. Some indicators related to the well-being of the society since 2014 (the data presented are associated with the year mentioned in parentheses)

Indicator in 2021/2022 / 2023 & evolution since 2014	Democracy index since 2015	Civic space conditions CIVICUS since 2017	Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index (lower score means more sustainability)	Civil Society Participation Index (Our World in Data) 1 – most active	% of the population of the same religion (Orthodox)	Religiosity – (Pew Research Center) % highly religious	Major ethnicity (National Census)	Civil society participation index (V-Dem) 1 - high	Safety Perception Index (Lloyd's Register Foundation) 0,5 – not safe	Social Capital Index (Social cohesion & consensus) By SolAbility 100 - maximum
Romania	56/100 (*23) ↓	73/100 (*23) →	3,6/7 (*21) ↓	0,67/1(*22) ↓	73,86% (*21) ↓	55% (*18) →	Romanian 89,3% (*21)	0,67 / 1 (*22) ↓	0,156/0,5 (*23) ↓	51,9/100 (*23) ↓
Republic of Moldova	36/100 (*23) →	75/100 (*23) ↑	3,7/7 (*21) ↑	0,82/1(*22) ↑	96,8% (*14) →	47% (*18) →	Moldavians 75,1% (*14)	0,82 / 1 (*22) ↑	0,239/0,5 (*23) ↑	57/100(*23) ↑

Conclusions

Although the current geopolitical context implies intense and dynamic challenges for Romania and the Republic of Moldova, the civil society–societal security nexus has deeper roots. Considering the factors connecting the two elements, social security is achieved through a long-term process, based on systematic transformations. As such, short-term factors might challenge the quality of societal security but are unlikely to profoundly and radically transform the state of affairs. However, if there are internal vulnerabilities within societies, current short- and medium-term threats might exploit them and increase their efficiency in threatening societal security. A strong common identity and social cohesion should help communities better deal with external threats. Public engagement and community cohesion might be boosted by intense trigger events. Both countries present favorable conditions for developing strong societal security, but it resides with internal drivers and forces to maintain this trend (H3 is confirmed through the role played by the public policies in supporting CSOs and social/community cohesion). Nowadays, Romania and the Republic of Moldova have built a fragile, but stable foundation for improving the stability and involvement of civil society in societal

security. Yet, a diverse and active civil society might not determine a stable societal security (H1 is rejected), if the general environment does not provide the needed incentives for long-term involvement and resilience.

Therefore, through civic society efforts aimed at maintaining and promoting bonds of reciprocity and social connection, the common citizen may be able to build proper societal resilience, which leads to harmony among the masses, a crucial factor for public engagement in the process of ensuring societal security.

Further studies should thoroughly address the connection between societal security and civil society, in terms of identity resilience under external manipulation and propaganda and in connection with internal demographic changes.

Bibliography

- Balutel, Adrian. (2019): "Civil Society Landscape in Moldova." *Politik aktuell*, 2.
- Bokša, Michal. (2019): "Russian Information Warfare in Central and Eastern Europe: Strategies, Impact, Countermeasures.", *Policy Paper, The German Marshall Fund of the United States*.
- Boylan J.–Dalrymple J. (2009): "*Understanding Advocacy for Children and Young People*." Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Breakwell, G. M. (2020): "In the age of societal uncertainty, the era of threat." In: D. Jodelet–J. Vala–E. DrozdaSenkowska (Eds.): "*Societies under threat. A pluri-disciplinary approach*." Springer-Nature. pp. 55–74.
- Brennan, M. A.–Barnett R. V.–Baugh E. (2007): "Youth involvement in community development: Implications and possibilities for extension." *Journal of Extension*, 45., pp. 203–213.
- Cantle, T. (2008): *Community Cohesion. A New Framework for Race and Diversity*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chen, L.–Fukuda-Parr S.–Seidensticker E. (2004): "*Human Insecurity in a Globalising World*." Boston: Harvard University Press.
- Cibian, Stefan–Fejes, Zoltan Levente (2022): "*Intervenția societății civile din România în adresarea crizei umanitare din Ucraina*." Editura Institutului de Cercetare Făgăraș.
- Civicus (2023): "*Civicus Monitor country scores and ratings – Methodology Paper*."
- Colletta, N. J. (2006): "Citizen Security – the Role of NGOs and Broader Civil Society in Ceasefire Monitoring: Lessons from Mindanao." *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 2., (3.), pp. 21–34.
- Corpădean, Adrian (2023): "Some considerations on the usefulness of the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance III for fostering conflict resolution in the Western Balkans.", *Civil Szemle*, Special Issue IV., pp. 39–51.
- Davis, Jenny–Love Tony–Fares Phoenicia (2019): "Collective social identity." *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 82., (3.), pp. 254–273.
- Dobratz, B. A. (2001): "The Role of Religion in the Collective Identity of the White Racialist Movement." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 40., pp. 287–302.
- Eisenstadt, Shmuel N. (1998): "Modernity and the Construction of Collective Identities." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 39., (1.), pp. 140–143.
- Fairclough, N. (2000): "*New Labour, New Language?*." London–New York: Routledge.



- Fish, S. (1991): "The emergence of independent associations and the transformation of Russian political society." *The Journal of Communist Studies*, 7., pp. 299–334.
- Flaherty, E. (2019): "Complexity Theory: Societies as Complex Systems." In: *Complexity and Resilience in the Social and Ecological Sciences*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 29–76.
- Flanagan, C.–Van Horn, B. (2001): Youth civic engagement. *Membership and mattering*.
- Foley, M.W. and Edwards B. (1996): "The paradox of civil society." *Journal of Democracy*, 7., pp. 38–52.
- Forenza, B. (2017): "Sustained Community Theater Participation as Civil Society Involvement." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 46., (3.), pp. 549–566.
- Gîscă, Florin (2023): "O busolă pentru un mediu favorabil și împuternicirea OSC-urilor – Raport de Țară.", Asociația Promo-Lex.
- Goroshit, S. K.–Eshel Y. (2013): "Demographic variables as antecedents of Israeli community and societal resilience." *Community Psychol.*, 41., pp. 631–43.
- Haastrup, T.–Hagen J. J. (2020): "Global racial hierarchies and the limits of localization via national action plans." In: Basu, S.–Kirby P.–Shepherd L. (Eds): *New Directions in Women, Peace and Security*. Bristol: Bristol University Press. pp. 133–152.
- Heemeryck, Antoine (2018): "Social Movement and Civil Society in Post-communist Romania: Local Evolution, Global Comparison." *Anthropological Researches and Studies*, 8.
- Jaysawal, N. (2013): "Civil Society, Democratic Space, and Social Work." *SAGE Open*, 3., (4.).
- Joseph, Sarah (1993): "Identity, Culture and Community", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28., (17.), pp. 807–809.
- Kumar, V. (2020): "Trends in big data analytics." *Journal of Parallel and Distributing Comparing*, 74., (7.), pp. 256–258.
- Kyryliuk, V.–Koliadych, O.–Shevchuk, O. (2023): Social security and cohesion: modern approaches regarding their interaction. *Economic Analysis*, 33., (1.), pp. 59–65.
- Licata, L. (2015): "Social Psychology of Collective Memory." *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, pp. 194–199.
- Ludatser, Ana-Maria (2014): "Războiul penal dintre Palate". Ziarul Național.
- Lyons, Mark (2009): "Measuring and Comparing Civil Societies, Cosmopolitan Civil Societies." *An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 1., (1.), pp. 71–84.
- Milan, Chiara (2022): "Navigating Ethnicity: Collective Identities and Movement Framing in Deeply Divided Societies." *Nationalities Papers*, 50., (6.), pp. 1057–1070.
- Mureșan, Paula (2023): "Russia-Ukraine War: Celebrities' Involvement in Conflict Resolution." *Civil Szemle*, Special Issue IV., pp. 151–168.
- Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (2021): "Moldova's early parliamentary elections were competitive and well run despite the inadequate handling of election disputes and campaign finance issues, international observers say."
- Polletta, Francesca–James M. Jasper (2001): "Collective Identity and Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27., pp. 283–305.
- Reuters (2020): "Moldova's Dodon says concedes defeat in presidential runoff if courts find no violations." <https://www.reuters.com/article/moldova-election-idINS8N2EG080/>.
- Schiefer, D.–Van der Noll, J. (2017): The Essentials of Social Cohesion. *A Literature Review. Social Indicators Research*, 132., (2.), pp. 579–603.
- Shepherd, L. J. (2015): "Constructing civil society: Gender, power and legitimacy in United Nations peacebuilding discourse." *European Journal of International Relations*, 21., (4.), pp. 887–910.



- Spain, Daphne (1993): "Been-heres versus come-heres: Negotiating conflicting community identities." *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 59., (2.), pp. 156–172.
- Tajfel, H. (1978): "The achievement of inter-group differentiation." In: Tajfel, H. (Ed.): *Differentiation between social groups.* London: Academic Press. pp. 77–100.
- Tschirgi, N. (2003): "Peacebuilding as the Link between Security and Development: Is the Window of Opportunity Closing?" *International Peace Academy Studies in Security and Development*, New York.
- Volintiru, C.–Buzaşu C. (2020): "Shaping civic attitudes: Protests and politics in Romania". *Romanian Journal*, pp. 118–146.
- World Bank (2020): *"Rapid Assessment of Romanian CSO in the Context of COVID–19."* <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/374111602685815317/pdf/Rapid-Assessment-of-Romanian-CSO-in-the-Context-of-COVID–19.pdf>.
- Wright, K. A. (2023): "Challenging civil society perceptions of NATO: Engaging the Women." *Peace and Security agenda. Cooperation and Conflict*, 58., (1.), pp. 61–80.

Note

¹ This study was supported by the European Union within the Erasmus+ programme, project 101085517-DREMS ERASMUS-JMO-2022-HEI-TCH-RSCH. The article reflects exclusively the opinions and points of view of the authors, the Commission not being responsible for any form of use of the information. The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.