

# MODELS OF CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

## MODELOS DE DESENVOLVIMENTO DA SOCIEDADE CIVIL NOS PAÍSES EM DESENVOLVIMENTO

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**Abstract:** In developing countries, civil society (hereinafter CS) development models are mostly based on traditional European democratic values. Adopting the values of democracy and the EU free market affects the development of CS. The article aims to identify and evaluate empirically the features of civil society (CS) models in developing countries. The research methodology is based on a statistical analysis of the dynamics of CS in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe: Poland, Romania, and Ukraine. The analysis uses key indicators of CS development, in particular the Human Development Index, the Civil Society Participation Index, and the Civil Liberties Index based on the data of The V-Dem Institute (2023). The results demonstrate the existence of common and distinctive democratic characteristics of the civil society development models of Ukraine, Poland, and Romania. The countries are similar in terms of the state of opposition movements against the government, moderate level of citizen participation in politics and public problem solving, the environment for citizen participation in CSOs, and at the same time, a large number of different organizations and social institutions.

**Keywords:** Models of civil society (CS). Democratic models of CS. Citizen participation in politics. Opposition movements of CS.

**Resumo:** Nos países em desenvolvimento, os modelos de desenvolvimento da sociedade civil (doravante SC) baseiam-se principalmente nos valores democráticos tradicionais europeus. A adoção dos valores da democracia e do livre mercado da UE afeta o desenvolvimento da SC. O artigo visa identificar e avaliar empiricamente as características dos modelos de sociedade civil (SC) nos países em desenvolvimento. A metodologia de pesquisa é

baseada em uma análise estatística da dinâmica da SC nos países da Europa Central e Oriental: Polônia, Romênia e Ucrânia. A análise utiliza indicadores-chave do desenvolvimento da SC, em particular o Índice de Desenvolvimento Humano, o Índice de Participação da Sociedade Civil e o Índice de Liberdades Cívicas com base nos dados do Instituto V-Dem (2023). Os resultados

demonstram a existência de características democráticas comuns e distintivas dos modelos de desenvolvimento da sociedade civil da Ucrânia, da Polônia e da Romênia. Os países são semelhantes em termos do estado dos movimentos de oposição contra o governo, do nível moderado de participação cidadã na política e na solução de problemas públicos, do ambiente para a participação cidadã nas OSC e, ao mesmo tempo, de um grande número de diferentes organizações e instituições sociais.

**Palavras-chave:** Modelos de sociedade civil (OSC). Modelos democráticos de SC. Participação cidadã na política. Movimentos de oposição da SC.

## 1. Introduction

Civil society is an intermediate link between the private and public (state) sectors. Citizens unite in groups and form social ties and networks to protect and defend their collective and individual interests. In the scientific literature, such groups and networks are called civil society organizations and civil society institutions (CSOs, CSIs) (Chambers & Kopstein, 2001; Jensen, 2006). CSOs may include various stakeholders: trade unions, associations, religious organizations, charitable foundations, civic associations, and organizations providing assistance, advocacy, etc. CSIs also engage in political activities and organize social movements, professional associations, and other non-governmental organizations. In developing countries, the models of CSO development in most cases are based on traditional European democratic values. This is especially true for countries that are on the path of European integration, political, economic, and social approximation, and liberalization. The borrowing of EU democratic and free market values affects the development of the CS. The article aims to empirically assess and identify the peculiarities of civil society models in developing countries.

## 2. Literature review

Theories and models of civil society emerge and develop as a result of Marxist, liberal, and social democratic political theory (Pries, 2019; Van Rooy, 2020; Sellers, Lidström & Bae, 2020; Pierobon, 2022; Bolleyer & Correa, 2022). Rosenblum (1994; 2016; 2018) identified the main three models of CS development according to the functions of citizens' activities: democratic, mediating, and electoral CS. The democratic CS is characterized by political participation and opposition of citizens to the government

through the implementation of the counterweight function. The key tasks of CSOs are to create a sense of political empowerment among citizens, their ability to solve and influence political decisions and problems and participate in public discussions and policy implementation. The main tasks of mediating CSOs are to foster virtues in citizens: socialization, education, joint problem solving, formation of social ties, principles of openness, humanity, and responsibility as key features of pluralistic democracy. Electoral CS aims to increase the economic efficiency and well-being of citizens and to form a participatory democracy. Early studies of the CS provide characteristics of democratic models in Western Europe, in particular, the level of independence and autonomy. Eastern European countries are characterized by an "educated CS" with cultural peculiarities and gradual development of a full-fledged nation, which originated in the educational and cultural spheres.

New studies point out a new modern concept of "civil society" that is characterized by significant differences from previous concepts of "society". The concept of "civil society" is mobilized and united to achieve many goals, which makes it impossible to distinguish a separate model or CSO category (Wood, 2017).

Frolic (2015) argues that there is a wide range of interpretations of the concept and models of civil society in terms of parallel policies, citizenship, political development, and governance. The models of CS range from the Greek concept of citizenship to the restructuring of state-society relations associated with the capitalist era. The author also highlights CSOs that act to oppose communist regimes, notably in the last decade. Therefore, CSOs and their activities are based mainly on Western ideology and values. This explains the emergence of civil society under the auspices of the state in the form of state-run CS. Traditional Western models of civil society are characterized by increasing local autonomy, development of the urban capitalist class, occasional outbreaks of spontaneous group activity, the spread of Western values, segmentation, and increasing protection of individual interests (Frolic, 2015).

Guasti (2016) examines the potential of civil society to contribute to the democratic legitimization of the EU. The main goal of European governance is to develop institutions for stakeholder participation in decision-making through civil political dialogue. The EU is characterized by a strong and active level of support for CSOs, which are actively involved in the development of certain legal provisions. Active citizenship and active political participation of the population ensure the formation of a link between the

public sphere and civil society. In the EU as a whole, civil society is an active player in EU policy and reformation. However, at the same time, it has generally limited access to and influence on policy (Guasti, 2016).

Frantzeskaki et al. (2016) examine new forms of civil society organization based on a thorough review of examples of civil society initiatives. The study of various European CS projects and initiatives shows the introduction of new social relations and practices. CSOs are becoming an integral part of the transformation of a socially oriented state, thus protecting and serving social needs, and promoting social welfare (Frantzeskaki et al., 2016).

Bolleyer & Correa (2022) discuss how voluntary membership-based organizations form a component of civil society, such as parties, interest groups, or service-oriented organizations. CSOs keep their members active and cultivate different forms of activism. The authors identified two forms of "member engagement": "member involvement" through employment and "member influence" in the form of participation of members in decision-making within the organization.

Thus, the literature considers traditional and innovative models of CSO development based on the analysis of the experience of European countries as a key region of the formation of values on which CSOs' activities are based. Meanwhile, the literature lacks studies of CSO development models in developing countries between 2010 and 2021.

### 3. Methods and materials

To study the models of civil society development in developing countries, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were selected: Poland, Romania, and Ukraine, based on their similarity in development in terms of the following indicators: population data, GNI per capita, Human Development Index, Civil society participation index, Civil liberties index (Table 1).

Table 1. Indicators for the selection of developing countries for the analysis of GS development models

Country	Population	GNI per capita	Human Development Index	Civil Society Participation Index	Civil Liberties Index
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Poland: Parliamentary republic	37,7 M	16,850 USD	0,876	0,58	0,81
Romania: Semi- presidential republic	19,1 M	14,160 USD	0,821	0,76	0,88
Ukraine: Semi- presidential republic	43,8 M	4,120 USD	0,773	0,75	0,75

Source: World Data (2023), The V-Dem Institute (2023).

To evaluate the development models of the CSOs, the indicators of The V-Dem Institute were chosen, namely:

1. The Civil Society Participation Index assesses the regularity of consultations between politicians and CSOs, the level of citizen engagement in CSOs, the prohibition of women's participation in CSOs, and the level of decentralization in nominating candidates for legislative bodies within a party. The Civil Society Participation Index provides an assessment of the level of influence of civil society, its autonomy, and independence from the state, where citizens actively and freely defend their civil and political interests.

2. The Civil Liberties Index measures the level of respect for civil (liberal) freedoms, including assessments of the absence of physical violence committed by public authorities, and the absence of restrictions on private and political freedom by the government.

The following key indicators - characteristics of the state of the public sector - were used to highlight the peculiarities of the models of development of the public sector in the selected countries:

1. CSO anti-system movements characterize the existence of peaceful or armed anti-system opposition movements among CSOs against the political system to fundamentally change the state system. Score: 0 - 4, where 0 - practically absent, 1 - minor activity without threat to the regime, 2 - moderate level of threat to the regime, 3 - high level of activity with high threat, 4 - very high level of activity with a real threat to the regime.

2. CSO consultation characterizes the regularity of government consultations with CSOs on policy areas. Score: 0 - 2, where 0 - high isolation of the government, engagement of CSOs in rare cases, rare cases of consultation, 1 - CSOs' voices are considered to some

extent, 2 - important CSOs are recognized as stakeholders and have a voice in important policy areas.

3. CSO entry and exit characterizes the degree of government control over the entry and exit of CSOs from public life. Score: 0 - 4, where 0 - monopolistic control, characterized by politicians funding CSOs that support politicians, parties, organize demonstrations or rallies, participate in strikes, and fund forums to address public issues; 1 - significant control, characterized by licensing CSOs, setting political criteria for banning CSOs, limited CSO participation in politics, and active repression if the criteria are not met; 2 - moderate control, which is characterized by the fact that regardless of the fullness of the ban on CSOs, some of them play an active political role, the government does not repress CSOs due to political weakness; 3 - minimal control, in which there are constitutional provisions for banning CSOs engaged in anti-democratic activities, and the ban is implemented through the rule of law; 4 - unlimited control, in which the government does not impede the activities of CSOs, provided that the activities do not prevent the removal of the government by force.

4. The CSO participatory environment characterizes the level of funding and ways of participation of citizens in CSOs. Score: 0 - 3, where 0 means that most CSOs are funded by the state, a large number of people can participate in CSOs, but participation may be involuntary; 1 means that citizens are not actively involved in existing voluntary CSOs; 2 means that citizens participate in a large number of CSOs with minimal participation; 3 means that people participate in a large number of CSOs from time to time.

5. CSO repression characterizes government repression of CSOs. The score is 0 - 4, where 0 - severe repression and active persecution of actual CSO members, deterrence, liquidation of CSOs; 1 - significant repression, active persecution, arrest, imprisonment of leaders, opposition members, disruption of mass events and violent sanctions against activists (beatings, destruction of valuable property, threats to families); 2 - moderate repression, material sanctions, minor legal prosecutions (detention, short-term imprisonment), refusal of CSOs to act or express opinions. 3 - mild repression: material sanctions (fines, dismissal, denial of social services) to deter opposition CSOs from taking actions or expressing opinions (burdensome registration procedures to slow down the formation of new CSOs and participation in them), a government organization of movements or NGOs to drive out independent CSOs. 4 - no repression, free organization

of CSOs, strikes, associations, the voice of opinion, criticism of the government without government sanctions or harassment.

6. CSO women's participation characterizes the prohibition of women's participation in CSOs. The score is 0 - 4, where 0 means almost always, 1 means often, 2 means approximately equally, 3 means rarely, and 4 means seldom.

#### **4. Results**

Ukraine is characterized by the following characteristics of the CS development model: slow upward dynamics, and evolution in some key components of the CS. According to Figure 1, it is evident that Ukraine has a small number of opposition movements against the government, or moderate activity of citizens with a low level of threat to the regime (score 1.31 in 2010, 1.52 in 2021). The Ukrainian CS is characterized by an increase in the level of consultation by citizen-participants in the political sphere, and the voices of participants are taken into account to some extent in the political sphere (score 0.52 in 2010, 1.15 in 2021). There were no changes in the degree of government control over the entry and exit of CSOs between 2010 and 2021 (score of 2.59 in 2010 and 2.59 in 2021). Ukraine has moderate control over the work of CSOs, the government does not repress citizens due to political weakness, and some institutions play an active role in political life. Ukraine also has partially effective constitutional provisions regulating anti-democratic CSO movements. The environment for CSO participation is characterized by the evolution and growth of citizens' engagement in CSOs, although still, the majority of the population shows minimal participation in CSOs despite the significant number of institutions (score 1.65 in 2010, 2.35 in 2021). Ukraine is characterized by a reduction in the level of restrictions on CSOs' activities (score 3.06 in 2010, 3.44 in 2021), but material sanctions (fines, dismissal, denial of social services) are still in place to deter opposition CSOs from acting or expressing their opinions.

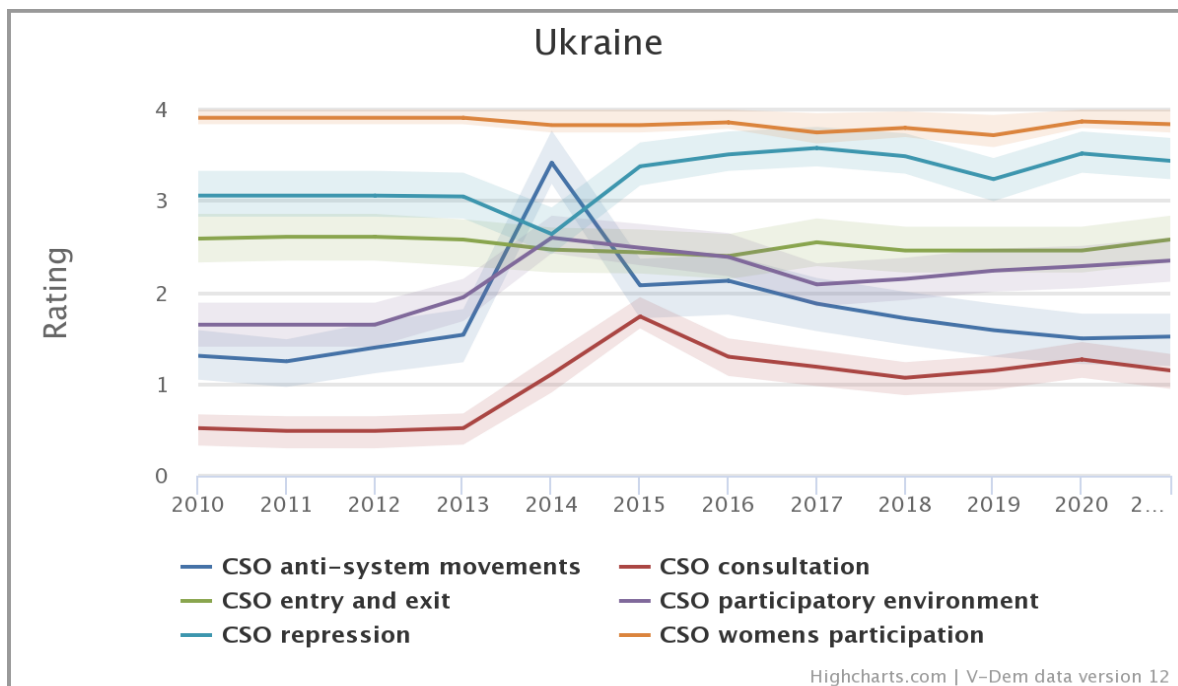


Figure 1. Dynamics of Civil Society Development Indicators in Ukraine, 2010-2021

Source: The V-Dem Institute (2023).

Ukraine has burdensome registration procedures and bureaucracy in place for the creation of CSOs to slow down their formation and participation. In many cases, the government organizes movements or NGOs to supplant independent CSOs. At the same time, there is a tendency for citizens to organize CSOs more freely, intensify protests, unite, and growing criticism of the government, especially in the context of the war in 2022. Among the peculiarities of the CS is also low activity of women in CSOs (score 3.91 in 2010, 3.84 in 2021). Representatives of civil society organizations and communities in Ukraine note an increase in the level of social ties and the expansion of the network of organizations in the context of the war. In particular, this is happening for more effective provision of humanitarian aid, and exchange of experience and knowledge to avoid the risks of fraud. For example, the NGO "Station Kharkiv" cooperates and coordinates with many other local organizations, and establishes links with 27 newly formed self-organized volunteer groups. The NGO also implements participatory participation projects to train citizens to defend and protect their rights in communities, and to increase public participation in local government decisions. In the context of the war in 2022, such projects are of low relevance due to the need for humanitarian aid and many challenges related to the survival and food supply of the population. Among the projects of the NGO is the development of an NGO cluster to help organizations strengthen each other, ensure



synergy of efforts, and share experience and knowledge in the implementation of CSO functions. The KyivPride NGO also provides humanitarian assistance in the context of war, namely by strengthening and expanding cooperation with initiative groups to help victims. In the context of war, the CSO "DEJURE Foundation" is also moving to activities related to volunteer initiatives and the provision of humanitarian aid. Meanwhile, the main focus of the work in the CSO is to actively promote and defend judicial reform to reduce corruption in Ukraine. In this regard, the CSO joined the activities of the International Center for Ukrainian Victory, founded by the Anti-Corruption Action Center and former Ukrainian MPs in Warsaw. The CSO is actively involved in international advocacy for Ukraine's interests, encouraging people to participate in politics and influence the work of politicians. In the context of the war, its tasks include countering Russian propaganda and highlighting the truth about the war in Ukraine. To this end, the organization cooperates with other communities and organizations, establishes networks to organize actions, and petitions, and uses other democratic tools to achieve this.

Poland is characterized by a downward, slow dynamics of CS development by most indicators, especially since 2015 (Figure 2). According to Figure 2, we can observe a slow increase in the level of opposition movements against the government, or moderate activity of citizens with a low level of threat to the regime (score 0.6 in 2010, 1.59 in 2021). The Polish CS is characterized by a reduction in the level of consultation by citizen-participants in the political sphere, isolation of the government from citizens, and rarely considering the voice of CS participants in the political sphere (score 1.92 in 2010, 0.56 in 2021). Throughout 2010-2021, there have been negative changes in the degree of government control over the entry and exit of CSOs (score 3.32 in 2010 and 2.59 in 2021). In Poland, an increase in the level of control over the work of CSOs was detected. According to CSOs' assessments, there is moderate control, which is characterized by a certain prohibition of CSO activities. At the same time, citizens play an active role in the political life of the country. Poland also has partially effective constitutional provisions regulating anti-democratic CSO movements. The environment for CSO participation is characterized by no changes in the activity of Polish citizens in CSOs, although the majority of the population still shows minimal participation in CSOs, despite the significant number of institutions (score 2.15 in 2010, 2.15 in 2021).

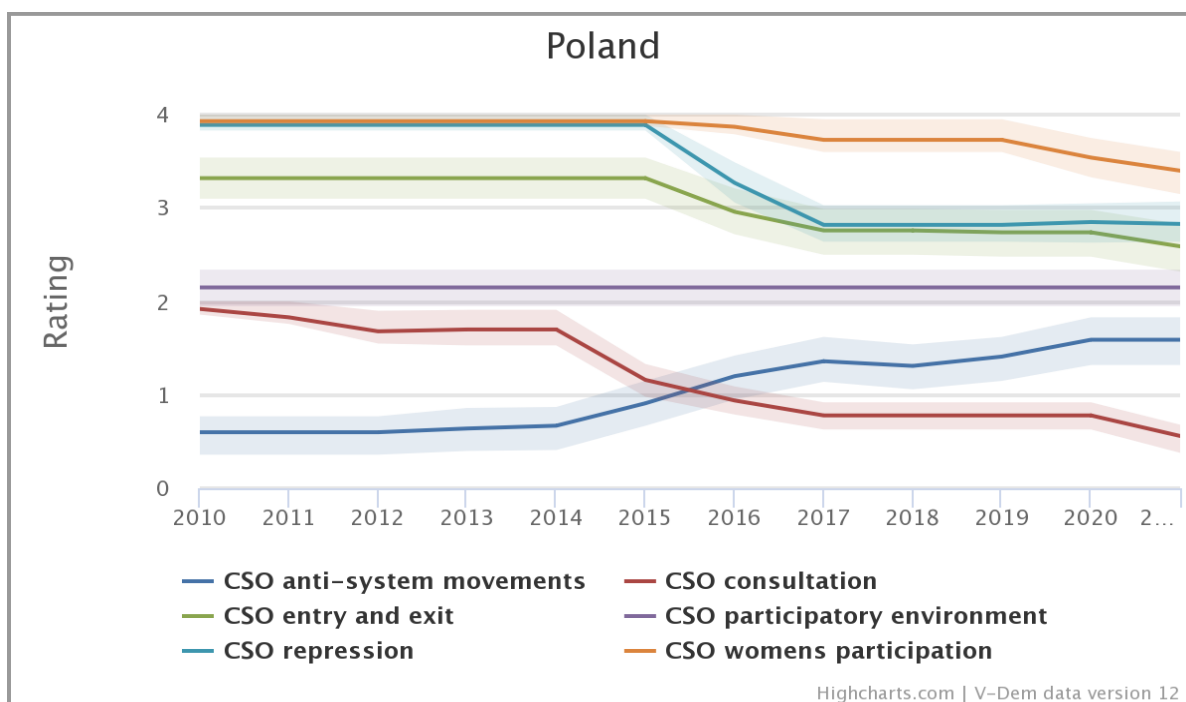


Figure 2. The dynamics of the indicators of CS development in Poland, 2010 - 2021

Source: The V-Dem Institute (2023).

Poland is characterized by an increasing level of restrictions on CSOs' activities (score 3.89 in 2010, 2.83 in 2021), in particular, material sanctions (fines, dismissal, denial of social services) are in place to deter opposition CSOs from acting or expressing their opinions. In Poland, similarly to Ukraine, there are burdensome registration procedures and bureaucracy in place to slow down the formation and participation of CSOs. In many cases, the government organizes movements or NGOs to displace independent CSOs. At the same time, there is a tendency for citizens to organize CSOs more freely, intensify protests, unite, and growing criticism of the government. Among the peculiarities of the CS is also low activity of women in CSOs (score 3.93 in 2010, 3.4 in 2021).

Romania is characterized by the following characteristics of the CS development model: slow upward dynamics, and evolution in key CS components. According to Figure 3, it is evident that Romania has a small number of opposition movements against the government (score 0.99 in 2010, 1.63 in 2021). Moreover, there were no significant changes in the provision of consultations by citizen participants in the political sphere, although the voices of participants are considered in the political sphere (score 1.35 in 2010, 1.25 in 2021).

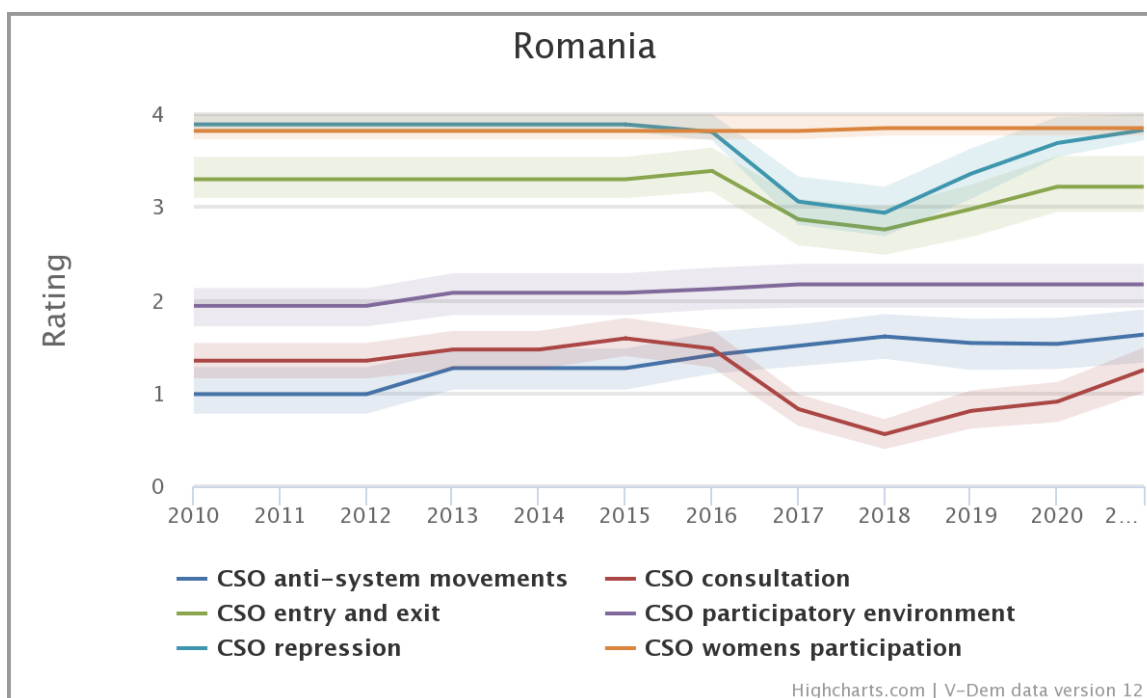


Figure 3. Dynamics of the indicators of civil society development in Romania, 2010 - 2021

Source: The V-Dem Institute (2023).

There were no changes in the degree of government control over the entry and exit of CSOs between 2010 and 2021 (score of 3.3 in 2010 and 3.22 in 2021). In Romania, there is minimal control over CSO activities, and there are constitutional provisions regulating anti-democratic CSO movements. The environment for CSO participation is characterized by minimal citizen participation in CS, despite a significant number of institutions (score 1.94 in 2010, 2.17 in 2021).

Romania is characterized by the absence of repressions against CSOs, citizens can freely organize CSOs, hold strikes, protests, associations, criticize the government, etc. (score 3.89 in 2010, 3.84 in 2021). Among the peculiarities of the CS is also low activity of women in CSOs (score 3.82 in 2010, 3.85 in 2021).

## 5. Discussion

Based on the analysis of civil society development models in Ukraine, Poland, and Romania, we can trace their common and distinctive characteristics. In general, the countries are characterized by a democratic model of CS. While Ukraine shows a slow evolution of CSO development, Poland has a slow downward trend, and Romania has no significant changes. The countries are similar in terms of opposition movements against the

government, moderate levels of citizens' participation in politics, and public problem-solving (Table 2). A distinctive feature of the Polish CS model is a reduction in the level of public consultation in the political sphere, while in Ukraine and Romania, the voices of CS participants are taken into account in some cases. Romania has a lower level of governmental control over CSOs' activities and is characterized by minimal control and constitutional provisions regulating anti-democratic movements. On the other hand, Poland and Ukraine have moderate control, which is characterized by a certain prohibition of CSOs' activities.

The countries are similar in terms of the environment for citizen participation in CSOs and at the same time have a large number of different organizations and social institutions. In Poland, there is an increasing level of restrictions on CSO activities, including possible material sanctions to deter opposition CSOs from acting or expressing their opinions. In Poland, as well as in Ukraine, there are burdensome registration procedures and bureaucracy in the process of creating CSOs, which slow down their formation and participation.

Table 2. Assessment of the CS development indicators in Poland, Romania, and Ukraine, 2021

	Poland	Romania	Ukraine
CSO anti-system movements	1,59	1,63	1,52
CSO consultation	0,56	1,25	1,15
CSO entry and exit	2,59	3,22	2,58
CSO participatory environment	2,15	2,17	2,35
CSO repression	2,83	3,83	3,44
CSO women's participation	3,4	3,85	3,84

In all countries, no active participation of women in CSOs is evident. The decline in CSO activity in Poland and the identified downward trend in its development can be explained in general by the thesis of a weak civil society in post-communist states (Jacobsson & Korolczuk 2017). Since 2015, Poland has been undergoing political changes, there is a tendency towards illiberal governance (Grzebalska & Pető, 2018), initiatives related to various social groups and their protection (e.g., the problem of refugees, which is also typical for European countries in general (Hollifield, 2020), and many protests and

demonstrations have taken place both for and against the government. This generally indicates a high level of CSO activity in Poland (Narkowicz, 2018). However, in academic discussions, these trends in the country are understood as a growing political split in the society of Poland, especially since 2015, which leads to mass mobilization in the political sphere (Korolczuk, 2017). Chimiak (2021) found that the free movement of CS actors in Poland in the aid sector facilitated the development and exchange of know-how and increased their influence on policy-making. Similar trends were identified by the author of this article in Ukraine during the war. At the same time, there are several contradictions in the work of CSOs in Poland. Chimiak (2021) argues that recently there has been a division between internationalized civil society elites in Poland: between "democratic" and "developing", between religious and secular, between conservative and progressive - this indicates the constant formation of CS elites and the heterogeneity of CS in the country.

In Ukraine, a democratic model of civil society is actively developing in the context of war. This is evidenced by the functions and activities of CSOs: from providing humanitarian aid, and food aid, to advocacy and representation of Ukraine's interests in the international environment, countering Russian propaganda, expanding the network of social ties, and cooperation, and promoting judicial reform. The study by Králiková (2022) also reveals the borrowing of EU norms into the Ukrainian model of civil society. According to the author of this study, such borrowing can be ensured, among other things, by intensifying the work of CSOs and advocating for Ukraine's international interests.

Rosenblum (2018) argues for the rapid growth of small "support groups" that are often overlooked and dismissed as politically irrelevant. Thus, the author shows that the moral support that people find in places like prayer groups and self-help groups helps to develop social trust. The example of CSOs' activities in Ukraine during the war also allows us to draw a similar conclusion. First, this is evidenced by the activities of the "Station Kharkiv" NGO and the "KyivPride" NGO, which cooperate and establish links with newly formed self-organized volunteer groups and strengthen and expand cooperation with initiative groups to help victims. Second, this is evidenced by the growing level of trust in charitable organizations in Ukraine. In 2021-2022, there is a tendency for the number of registrations of charitable organizations to increase. In April 2022, support for the army, the state, and vulnerable groups intensified (Vkursi, 2022). According to the Institute of Sociology NAS of Ukraine, in 2019, 38% of respondents trusted charitable foundations and NGOs. In 2021, trust in NGOs and social institutions increased to 47% (respondents'

answers include "rather trust" and "fully trust") (Razumkov Centre, 2021). In 2022, trust in charitable and humanitarian organizations reached 78% (Razumkov Centre, 2022).

## 6. Conclusion

The study shows that there are common and distinctive democratic characteristics of the civil society development models of Ukraine, Poland, and Romania. The countries are similar in terms of the state of opposition movements against the government, moderate level of citizen participation in politics and public problem solving, the environment for citizen participation in CSOs, and, at the same time, a large number of different organizations and social institutions. In Ukraine, there is a slow evolution of CSO development, while in Poland there is a slow downward trend, and in Romania, there are no significant changes. A distinctive feature of the Polish CS model is a reduction of the level of public consultations in the political sphere, while in Ukraine and Romania, the voices of CS participants are considered in some cases. In Romania, there is a minimal level of government control over CSO activities, while in Poland and Ukraine, moderate control was found, characterized by a certain prohibition of CSO activities. In Poland and Ukraine, restrictions on CSO activities were identified, including possible material sanctions to deter opposition CSOs from acting or expressing their opinions. In Poland, as well as in Ukraine, there are burdensome registration procedures and bureaucracy in the process of creating CSOs, which slow down their formation and participation. In all countries, there is no active participation of women in CSOs.

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