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**SOCIAL CAPITAL IN BALTIC SEA REGION IN THE LIGHT OF THE  
CONCEPT BY PIERRE BOURDIEU**

**Abstract**

Although the concept of social capital is not new to the social sciences, it was Putnam and his *Making Democracy Work* who made the concept attractive to modern economic, social and political theories. Social capital is considered an important factor with regard to social relationships, a working democracy, and economic development. In this sense, social capital relates to several basic dimensions of social life, which influence on an economic development. The aim of the article is to analyse is to analyse how the non-economic factors affected the economic development of the Baltic Sea Region, being from the early 90s of the twentieth century on the margin of the European and international policy.

**Key Words**

Social Capital, Pierre Bourdieu, Baltic Sea Region

**Introduction**

Taking into account the state of research on the theory of dependency and critique of modernization theory<sup>2</sup>, it is worth considering the non-economic aspects that can affect the well-being of the country. There is no single factor that can be indicated as facilitating or limiting the economic development of the countries<sup>3</sup>. Do traditionally used in models the economic variables fully explain the development? In this paper the author has focused on one of many factors. Namely, the author has used the idea

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<sup>2</sup> G. A. Frank, *The Development of Underdevelopment*, "Monthly Review" No 18(4), 1966, p. 17; J. S. Valenzuela, A. Valenzuela, *Modernization and Dependency. Alternative Perspectives in the Study of Latin American Underdevelopment*, "Comperative Politics" No 10(4), 1978, p. 535-557.

<sup>3</sup> S. Knack, P. Keefer, *Does Social Capital Have an Economic Payoff? A Cross-Country Investigation*, "The Quarterly Journal of Economics", No 112(4), 1997, p. 1251-1288; L. Guiso, P. Sapienza, L. Zingales, *The Role of Social Capital in Financial Development*, "The American Economic Review", No 94(3), 2004, p. 526-556.

of social capital by Pierre Bourdieu, who distinguishes three main types of capital: (each of them has its own subspecies): economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. To these three capitals the symbolic capital must be added, which is a form that each of them takes when it is perceived by means of the perception that grants a specific logic to it, or if you prefer, does not recognize the arbitrariness of the possession and accumulation<sup>4</sup>. The purpose of this article is to show how the non-economic factors affected the economic development of the Baltic Sea Region, being from the early 90s of the twentieth century on the margin of the European and international policy. It should be noted that during the Cold War rivalry, it was divided with the “iron curtain” into two blocks: East and West, with its consequences in the uneven economic development.

The Baltic Sea Region is a non-homogeneous region. When examining the economic situation of the region, the BSR countries are traditionally divided into two groups<sup>5</sup>:

- the high-income countries Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Germany, Iceland which are the so-called old market economy countries, or developed economies of the region;
- the middle- or low-income countries Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Russia. The latter are classified as post-socialist or transitional economies.

Taking into account the assumptions of the concept of social and cultural capital, indicated by P. Bourdieu<sup>6</sup>, in this paper the author has used selected research tools, allowing for comparing the countries of the Baltic Sea Region in terms of: the level of democracy, innovation, gender equality, social inequality and environmental policy. Selected in this manner research tools will help to assess the impact they have on economic growth in the countries included in the research between 2000 and 2015.

### **The concept of social capital in the research of economic development of the countries**

Drawing the attention of sociologists to the social capital contributed to its definition and assignment as an object of research to the representatives of this discipline<sup>7</sup>. Sociological approach allowed for examining the principles and rules regarding the functioning of individuals or society, while much less attention was paid to the influence of social capital on the economy of countries<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> P. Bourdieu, *The forms of capital*, [in:] J. Richardson (ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Greenwood Press, New York 1986, p. 241-258.

<sup>5</sup> T. Paas, E. Tafenau, *Introduction*, [in:] T. Paas, E. Tafenau (ed.), *Modeling the Economies of the Baltic Sea Region*, Tartu University Press, Tartu 2004, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> P. Bourdieu, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> P. Bourdieu, op. cit., p. 105-109; J. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1990, p. 105-109; R. D. Putman, *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*, “Journal of Democracy”, No 6(1), 1995, p. 65-78; F. Fukuyama, *Trust: The social virtues and the creation of prosperity*, Free Press, New York 1995.

<sup>8</sup> G. S. Becker, *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education* (2nd ed.), National Bureau of Economic Research, Columbia University Press, New York 1975; G. S. Becker, R. F. Tamura, K. M. Murphy, *Human Capital. Fertility and Economic Growth*, “The Journal of Political Economy”, No 98(5), 1990, p. 12-37; K. Kostro, *Kapitał społeczny w teorii*

In the subject literature, however, there is no consensus on the definition of social capital, which causes great difficulty in using its definition to explore the essence of the phenomenon.

According to James Coleman<sup>9</sup>, social capital is the capability of people's cooperation within groups and organizations, undertaken in order to realize common interests. Coleman defines social capital by reference to the features of society organizations, such as trust, norms, links, which, in his opinion, could increase the efficiency of social activities by taking coordinated tasks. Besides, he understands social capital as institutions that are perceived by an individual as own resources, increasing their benefits from cooperation and exchange. In his view, the ability to join in groups, for the realization of the objective, is particularly important not only for the economy, but also for other socially important aspects of human activity<sup>10</sup>.

The concept of social capital was popularized by American researchers Robert D. Putman and Francis Fukuyama. F. Fukuyama defined social capital as an attribute of only stable communities, where there is a permanent and stable political and legal system. According to him, social capital is a set of informal values and ethical standards common to the members of a specific group and enabling them to effectively interact<sup>11</sup>, which allows them to operate more efficiently. He refers to the values, such as truthfulness, fulfilment of obligations and reciprocity in relations with others. The main benefit from the existence of high social capital is the reduction of transaction costs, that is, among others, costs associated with the conclusion of contracts, judicial proceedings and other formal activities. This refers to the economic sphere of life. In other areas, the high level of social capital, according to Fukuyama, is combined with functioning a healthy civil state and the formation of groups and associations that are the supplement between the state and family. The lack of social capital causes the social dysfunctions (corruption, terrorism, etc.) and can lead to a lack or reduction of economic development<sup>12</sup>.

R. D. Putman in the work *Democracy in action* defines social capital, "Social capital is these features of social organizations, such as networks (systems) of individuals or households, and norms and values associated with them that create external effects for the whole community". They can increase the efficiency of the society, making the coordination of the action easier<sup>13</sup>. Putnam was interested primarily in large communities, because he has thought that although relations at the level of larger structures are weaker, they have a greater impact on economic growth than the strong relationships established in small communities. Putnam considered trust and shared values, which the members of the community have, as an important

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*ekonomicznej*, „Gospodarka Narodowa”, No 7-8, 2005, p. 1-28; C. I. Jones, *Was an Industrial Revolution Inevitable? Economic Growth Over the Very Long Run*, Conference on Technology, Human Capital and Economic Growth, University of Jerusalem, Hebrew 1999, [online:] [www.mscc.huji.ac.il](http://www.mscc.huji.ac.il) (20.11.2016).

<sup>9</sup> J. Coleman, *The Vision of Foundationa of Social Theory*, "Analyse & Kritik", No 14, 1992, p. 119.

<sup>10</sup> J. Coleman, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> F. Fukuyama, *The Social Capital. The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, Brasenose College, Oxford 1997, p. 38.

<sup>12</sup> F. Fukuyama, *Social Capital and Civil Society*, "Working Paper" No 74, 1999, [online:] <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/1999/reforms/fukuyama.htm#top> (10.11.2016).

<sup>13</sup> R. D. Putman, op. cit., p. 258.

feature of social capital. But this is not sufficient for the formation of social capital<sup>14</sup>. The grassroots manifestations of self-organization of people and civic engagement prove the social capital abundance. So when individuals with similar civic virtues meet and establish relationships, an additional common quality is created that benefits to all members of the community. It should be noted that Putman pointed to very important, yet neglected by theorists, aspects of the foundations of economic development<sup>15</sup>. It concerns the role of the social community with its traditions and cultural norms, the capability for collective action conditioned by these norms, the capability for spontaneous coordination. All these aspects were largely ignored in the early theories of social modernization and economic development.

For macro-structural approach it is worth mentioning the approach by Douglass C. North and Mancur Olson, for whom it is characteristic to include the following: social and political environment, formalized institutional links and structures, stressing the importance of the political system, legal norms, the judicial system, and civil and political rights<sup>16</sup>.

On the other hand, P. Bourdieu<sup>17</sup> emphasizes that social capital is primarily the social skills that allow for collaborating with others, social capital is a set of actual and potential resources which are linked with the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships based on mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, with the membership in the group – which provides each of its members with support in the form of capital held, by a collective, credibility that gives them the access to a credit in the broadest sense of this word. The ability to cooperate or trust in others become one of the most important features of the development in the situation where development is less and less dependent on the efforts of individual people, but is the result of teamwork. On the other hand, the research on game theory confirms that cooperation is often the best option for players. Philip D. Straffin<sup>18</sup> stresses that many social situations have a structure analogous to the Prisoner's Dilemma<sup>19</sup>.

In this context, the state takes on the significant importance, as the subject of international relations, which is created by a social group, characterized by a unique culture. As Christiaan. Grootaert<sup>20</sup> indicates, in theories of growth the social capital is the “missing link” that explains why some economies are more efficient than it would be indicated by the traditional resources of physical capital (material) possessed by them.

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<sup>14</sup> R. D. Putman, *Democracy in America at century's end*, [in:] A. Hadenius (ed.), *Democracy's Victory and Crisis*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997, p. 31.

<sup>15</sup> T. Zarycki, *Kapitał społeczny a trzy polskie drogi do nowoczesności*, „Kultura i Społeczeństwo”, No 2, 2004, p. 45-65.

<sup>16</sup> M. Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation and Social Rigidities*. Yale University Press, New Haven 1982; D. North, *Institutions. Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, Cambridge University Press, New York 1990.

<sup>17</sup> P. Bourdieu, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> P. D. Straffin, *Game Theory and Strategy*, The Mathematical Association of America, Washington 1993, p. 74.

<sup>19</sup> J. Nash, *Non-cooperative games*, “Annals of Mathematics”, No 54(2), 1951, p. 286-295.

<sup>20</sup> C. Grootaert, *Social capital: the missing link?*, “Social Capital Initiative Working Paper” No 3, 1998, p. 1.

## Model of social capital measurement in the Baltic Sea Region

Rebecca Adler-Nilsen has pointed out that the concept of P. Bourdieu complements previously used in international relations theoretical approach of the researchers, such as Althusser, Foucault or Derrida<sup>21</sup>. A similar position is presented by Deepa Narayan<sup>22</sup> and Katarzyna Sierocińska<sup>23</sup>, who believe that using the concept of social capital by P. Bourdieu, it is possible to draw attention to the non-material aspects (factors) determining the economic development of countries.

In the empirical literature, one can find a number of more or less direct indicators of social capital<sup>24</sup>. The overview of the most commonly used indicators of social capital, coming both from the general social surveys<sup>25</sup>, as well as the research designed to give the measurement of social capital<sup>26</sup> can be found in many different studies<sup>27</sup>.

Due to the variety of definitions, tools, and the levels at which one can measure social capital, it should be noted that receiving the one true measure of social capital is not only impossible, but also undesirable<sup>28</sup>. For the purposes of this study, a model has been developed based on the assumption that the understanding of social capital draws attention to the perspective of collective action, explaining behaviours that elicit the cooperation undertaken in order to achieve mutual benefits unattainable through traditional research methods. P. Bourdieu defined it as: the sum of the actual and potential resources<sup>29</sup>. Because of the fact that it is a resource, certain social groups may have more or less of it, and thus they can be more or less privileged.

Bourdieu's approach can therefore be defined as the sum of intangible assets of society:

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<sup>21</sup> R. Adler-Nilsen, *Introduction. Bourdieu and International Relations theory*, [in:] R. Adler-Nilsen (ed.), *Bourdieu in international relations. Rethinking key concepts in IR*, Routledge, London and New York 2013, p. 20.

<sup>22</sup> D. Narayan, *Bonds and Bridges: Social Capital and Economic Development*, [in:] J. Isham, T. Kelly, S. Ramaswamy (eds.), *Well-being in Development Countries*, Cheltenham 2002, p. 58-81.

<sup>23</sup> K. Sierocińska, *Kapitał społeczny. Definiowanie, pomiar i typy*, „Studia Ekonomiczne” No 1, 2011, p. 69-86.

<sup>24</sup> Z. Czajkowski, *Kapitał ludzki – pojęcie i miary*, Instytut Gospodarki Światowej, Warszawa 2012, [online:] [http://kolegia.sgh.waw.pl/pl/KGS/struktura/IGS-KGS/publikacje/Documents/Z.Czajkowski\\_312.pdf](http://kolegia.sgh.waw.pl/pl/KGS/struktura/IGS-KGS/publikacje/Documents/Z.Czajkowski_312.pdf) (10.11.2016).

<sup>25</sup> eg. World Values Survey.

<sup>26</sup> eg. Social Capital Integrated Questionnaire and The Social Capital Assessment Tool - of the World Bank, or Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey - The Saguaro Seminar.

<sup>27</sup> D. Narayan, M. F. Cassidy, *A dimensional approach to measuring social capital*, “Current Sociology” No 49, 2001, p. 59-102; W. Stone, *Measuring social Capital. Towards a theoretically informed measurement framework for researching social capital in family and community life*, “Research Paper” No 24, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2001, [online:] <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/RP24.pdf>, (10.10.2016); M. Theiss, *Operacjonalizacja kapitału społecznego w badaniach empirycznych*, [in:] H. Januszek (ed.), *Kapitał społeczny we wspólnotach*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej w Poznaniu, Poznań 2005, p. 59-69; K. Sierocińska, op. cit.

<sup>28</sup> K. J. Arrow, *Observation on Social Capital*, [in:] P. Dasgupta, I. Seragilden (ed.), *Social Capital: A Multifaceted Perspective*, World Bank, Washington 2000.

<sup>29</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Les rites d'institution*, “Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales” No 43, 1982, p. 58-63.

**$K_s = W_1 + W_2 + W_3 + (\dots) + W_i$**   
**where:  $K_s$  - social capital**  
 **$W_i$  - non-material indicators**

The proposed indicators, in addition to the substantial compliance of their definition with the research area, were chosen for availability and uniformity of data for countries, reliable and repeatable measurements. The most frequently mentioned sources of data are the bases of international statistics. An important aspect of the selection of indicators was its methodological stability and possibilities of making comparisons of the values from the past with present and future observations. Such indicators were proposed that could, to the extent possible, well reflect the changes in the area, which they were to describe, and at the same time, were resistant to the influence of external factors and interfering conditions. However, it should be noted that these indicators are not exhaustive and comprehensive.

### **Social Capital in the Baltic Sea Region**

On the basis of the analysis of the subject literature, the society was combined with the political, social, cultural, and economic aspects on the principle of opposites, which will allow for the determination of the deficiency or the advantage of social capital in the examined country (group of countries). In the adopted measurement model, the social capital is characterized by components: the indicator of democracy, innovation index, the indicator of gender equality, the Gini index, Foot print network. **(1) Distance of authority (small - large)**, showing the distance to the authority allows for studying the level of democratization of society. It is the range of expectations and acceptance of the unequal distribution of authority expressed by the less powerful (subordinates) members of the institution or organization. This feature was emphasized by both Putman, Fukuyama, and North and Olson in the study of social capital.

In quantitative research, there are many theoretical and methodological tools, with which one can measure democracy<sup>30</sup>. For the purposes of this study, index of democracy was selected, prepared for the British weekly "The Economist" by its research unit – The Economist Intelligence Unit, which as a reference point adopted the analyses conducted by Freedom House, extending it by two variables: the functioning of authority and participation of citizens. The structure of the index and its multidimensionality allow us to analyze the differences in the levels of democracy between countries. The chart below shows the change in the index of democracy in the Baltic Sea Region countries in the years 2006 and 2015<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> M. Saward, *Democratic Theory and Indices of Democratizations*, [in:] D. Beetham (ed.), *Defining and Measuring Democracy*, SAGE Modern Politics Series Volume, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi 1994, p. 6-23; W. Szewczak, *Jak zmierzyć demokrację? Skale pomiaru demokracji politycznej stosowane w politologii porównawczej*, „Przegląd Politologiczny” No 4, 2010, p. 97-108.

<sup>31</sup> In 2015 the eighth report of the Economist Intelligence Unit was published.

On the basis of the values of democracy index, the Baltic Sea Region countries can be qualified for up to three of the four categories of political systems<sup>32</sup>. Although the democracy index has been calculated only since 2006, however, in such a short period one can see the changes, which are the evidence of ongoing democratic processes in the examined countries.

First, in the Baltic Sea Region we have to do with full democracies. This group includes the Nordic countries and Germany, which achieve the highest standards of democracy, not only in the region, but also worldwide. The above mentioned countries are world leaders in the areas, such as:

- the electoral process and pluralism; which is a prerequisite for free, fair and competitive elections;
- civil liberties, namely the protection of fundamental human rights, such as freedom of speech, of opinion and the press, freedom of religion, freedom of association and the right to a fair trial;
- functioning of government – the assessment of efficacy and transparency of authority, its freedom from external pressures and corruption, a system of mutual control by the authorities, etc.;
- political culture – activity of citizenship, occurring within a specific and based on respect for democratic rules;
- political participation - active participation of citizens in public debate, in choosing representatives, in the activities of the party.

**Table 1. The index of democracy in the Baltic Sea Region countries in the years 2006 and 2015**

Country	Democracy Index 2015	Democracy Index 2006	Democracy Index by regime type
Sweden	9,45	9,88	Full democracy
Norway	9,93	9,55	Full democracy
Island	9,58	9,71	Full democracy
Denmark	9,11	9,52	Full democracy
Finland	9,03	9,25	Full democracy
Germany	8,64	8,82	Full democracy
Poland	7,09	7,30	Flawed democracy
Lithuanian	7,54	7,43	Flawed democracy
Latvia	7,37	7,37	Flawed democracy
Estonia	7,85	7,74	Flawed democracy
Russia	3,31	5,02	Authoritarian regime

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit, *Democracy Index 2015. Democracy in the age of anxiety*, <http://www.yabiladi.com/img/content/EIU-Democracy-Index-2015.pdf>, (20.11.2016)

On the other hand, the so-called flawed democracies function here, which until the early 90s of the twentieth century recognized democratic standards as the basis for the functioning of countries: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia. Their path to full democracy would be considered to be unfinished – in the process of construction.

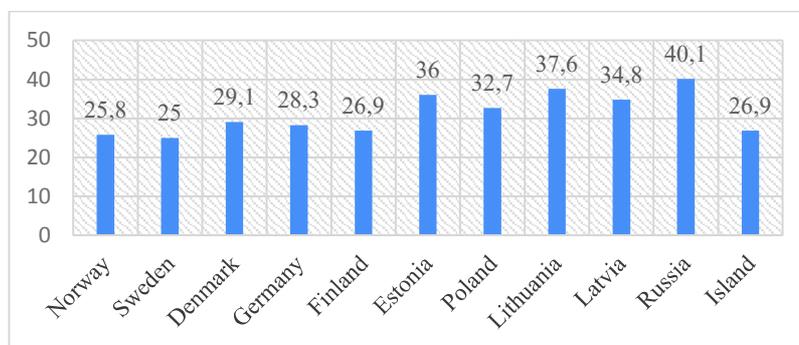
<sup>32</sup> On the basis of the index the countries are divided into four groups: full democracy (8-10 points), flawed democracy 9 (6-7,9); hybrid regime (4-5,9), the authoritarian regime under 4.

However, from this perspective, the adverse change is surprising for Poland, in which (except for Russia) the index is not only the lowest, but it also has a downward trend. The processes of democratization of society were established most in Estonia. In turn, in Lithuania the change is small, and in the case of Latvia there is the absence of change.

Russia belongs to the fourth category - the authoritarian regime. In this case, our attention is paid on the decrease of democracy index in Russia, which has shown the priorities of Russia in foreign policy, particularly evident after Wladimir Putin came to power.

**2. Individualism - collectivism** refers to the Prisoner's Dilemma by J. Nash<sup>33</sup>, that is, the benefits resulting from the cooperation in comparison with the possible higher profit by entities at the expense of the whole society. The importance of cooperation in building social capital was emphasized, among others, by: Fukuyama<sup>34</sup>, Bourdieu<sup>35</sup>, Coleman<sup>36</sup> or Putman<sup>37</sup>.

The result of collective actions in the country is the elimination of income inequality, which can be measured using the Gini index. One of the institutions, which deals with measuring economic inequality is "The Economist", which publishes a report on the basis of the so-called Gini coefficient, calculated in relation to disposable income and consumption. Data for the report are derived from household budget surveys. Such studies are being carried out at present in almost all countries. Gini index is a tool that can measure the distribution of income within a given country. Its value ranges from 0 to 1, where 1 is the maximum disparity, and 0 is the perfect equality. The graph below presents data concerning the level of the Baltic Sea Region in 2015.



**Figure 1. Gini Index in the Baltic Sea States in 2015**

source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2015*, Washington 2015, [online:] <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators>, (10.11.2016).

<sup>33</sup> J. Nash, op. cit.

<sup>34</sup> F. Fukuyama, *The Social Capital...*

<sup>35</sup> P. Bourdieu, *The forms of capital...*

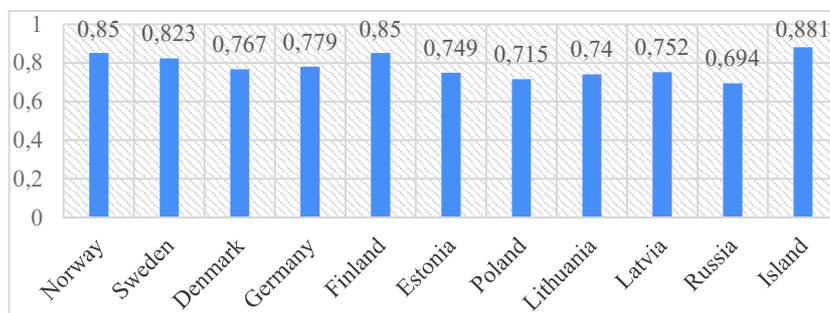
<sup>36</sup> J. Coleman, op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> R. D. Putman, *Bowling Alone...*, R. D. Putman, *Democracy in America...*

As the graph shows, collectivism is adequate for Nordic societies and Germany. In these countries, people from birth belong to strong, cohesive groups. These groups lifelong provide them with care and protection, for which their members reciprocate their unquestioned loyalty. This approach is typical of the Nordic countries, especially Sweden, which is an example of a well-functioning welfare state. The Nordic countries have the lowest level of the Gini index measuring inequality at the level oscillating around 25%. According to prof. Henryk Domański of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology Polish Academy of Sciences, it is there that people show mutual trust most. The reasons for such a low value of the index of inequality can result from the following: citizen-friendly welfare state, or low income inequality.

On the other hand, individualism is adequate for societies in which the ties between individuals are loose and everyone has in mind primarily themselves and their close family. This factor may be reflected in the low social capital at the level of states. New democracies like Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia achieve in this category far worse results, oscillating in the range of 30-40%.

**3. Masculinity - femininity;** Masculinity is a feature of societies in which social roles are related to gender, and are clearly defined. Men are expected to be assertive, tough, to focus on the material success, while women are expected to be modest, tender, and careful about the quality of life. Femininity is characterized by those societies, in which the social roles of both sexes mutually permeate and complement, for which their members reciprocate the loyalty and trust.



**Figure 2. Gender equality in the Baltic Sea States in 2015**

Source: World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report*, Geneva 2015, 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition, <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR2015/cover.pdf>, (20.01.2016).

Equal opportunities for men and women typical of the Nordic countries mean that all people have the right to free development of their personal abilities and making choices without the limitations which can be imposed by strict concept of the role of men and women<sup>38</sup>; that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of men and

<sup>38</sup> OECD, *Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship: Final Report to the MCM 2012*, C/MIN(2012)5, (2012). [online:] <https://www.oecd.org/els/emp/50423364.pdf> (10.11.2016).

women are equally recognized, appreciated and encouraged<sup>39</sup>. The principle of equality of opportunity lies in the fact that the differences resulting from being a man or a woman cannot become the basis for unequal treatment, manifested in the recitation of the right to decide for themselves about the professional and private life.

The indicator of gender equality is important because in less developed countries excessive social inequalities are not conducive to economic development. The highest scores in the Baltic Sea Region and in the world were obtained by Nordics. Analysing the data, the disparities between the group of Western countries and the countries coming from the Eastern Bloc are clearly shown. Russia took the last place among the countries surveyed. Only in the case of Latvia one can see a rising trend which shows that Latvia as the only country of the Eastern Bloc led in those years a policy of equal social disparities. Besides, in the analyzed period, the indicator of gender equality changed in a minor way. Iceland and Finland gained most. The indicator of gender equality has increased the least in Lithuania and Russia<sup>40</sup>.

Analyzing all the Baltic Sea Region countries one can see that apart from Latvia, the countries have no systematic policy of gender equality in the period under review<sup>41</sup>. This is reflected in the fact that once the countries advance in rank obtaining in some years more points, and then they experience a drop. Therefore, it should be noted that among the south-eastern Baltic countries, the largest progress was achieved by Latvia annually improving the indicator of gender equality.

**4. Uncertainty avoidance** (low high) is the level of threat perceived by members of the given culture in the face of new, unknown situations or uncertain events, the willingness to take risks can be measured by the innovation index.

The phenomenon of economic globalization, manifested in the liberalization of trade, capital flow, and technological development affects the increase of the pressure of many economic entities to accelerate development. The above-mentioned processes have influence on the situation in which the countries participate in a kind of “a race” for the competitiveness. Therefore, the optimal criterion of comprehensive assessment of the countries can be the competitiveness understood as a feature, which determines the ability of a given country to create continuously the development trend, the growth of productivity and the effective development of markets in the conditions offered by competitors of new, better and cheaper goods and services. Innovation is therefore considered to be one of the most important factors deciding on the competitive advantage. It is the determinant of the transformation processes of a given country, including economic growth.

Treating innovation as a source of competitiveness is important in the formation of the modern economy. It is a drive wheel, which gives the course of progress and economic development. The main tool characterizing the development of the country

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<sup>39</sup> UNICEF, *Promoting Gender Equality: An Equity-Focused Approach to Programming*, United Nations Children's Fund, New York 2011, [online:] [http://www.unicef.org/gender/files/Overarching\\_Layout\\_Web.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/gender/files/Overarching_Layout_Web.pdf) (11.10.2016).

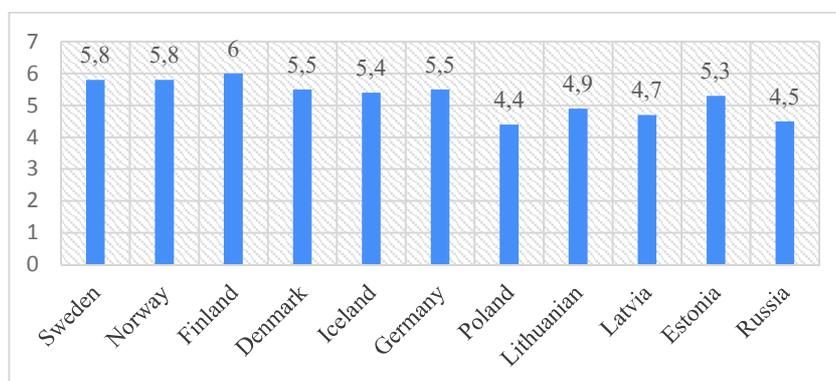
<sup>40</sup> World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report*, 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition, Geneva 2015, [online:] <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR2015/cover.pdf> (11.10.2016).

<sup>41</sup> M. Tomala, *Wpływ polityki równości płci na rozwój gospodarczy regionu Morza Bałtyckiego*, „Miscellanea Oeconomicae”, No 2, 2016, p. 1-15.

for gathering and processing information (ICT<sup>42</sup>) is an NRI index, which is defined as:

- an index of networked readiness, ie. readiness to use networking and telecommunication technologies. It is the combination of several dozens of variables<sup>43</sup>. Their selection was carried out at three levels:
- the use and progress of technological and software infrastructure (hardware and software), the number of ICT tools used in the business environment, legal regulations;
- the degree of preparation (readiness) of the three main environments using ICT technologies: households, businesses and government administration;
- the degree of actual use of ICT in the last year by the three above-mentioned groups.

The graph presents the indicator in the Baltic Sea Region in 2015.



**Figure 3. Networked Readiness Index in the Baltic Sea Region**

Source: World Economic Forum, The Global Information Technology Report 2015. ICTs for Inclusive Growth, Geneva 2015 [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GITR2015.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GITR2015.pdf), (20.01.2017).

According to the data, the networked readiness ranking is opened by Finland (1st place). Together with Sweden and Norway (which in turn take the second and third place) they preserved and cemented their position at the forefront of the world (taking into account also the previous years). In addition, all five Nordic countries were among the leaders of networked readiness. Even Iceland, which in a severe way was affected by the global banking crisis in recent years, took the high, 19th position in the ranking, being ahead of countries with well-established business position from Central Europe, such as: Austria (20 position) or France (26th position). It is worth noting that the average for the EU (excluding Sweden, Finland and Denmark) is much

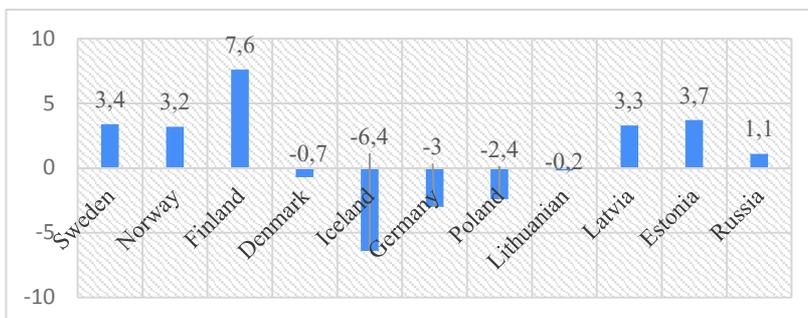
<sup>42</sup> Information and communication technologies (ICT) are all activities related to the production and use of telecommunications and information equipment, and services accompanying them, as well as the collection, processing, sharing of information in electronic form using digital techniques and any electronic communication tools.

<sup>43</sup> We can distinguish hard variables (hard data) that are obtained from the organization of recognized social and scientific status and soft variables (soft data) obtained by conducted expert research.

lower than in the Nordic countries – which suggests that the Nordic countries have adopted totally different steps in the attainment of the goal, which is the creation of the knowledge-based economy. Also Estonia advances to this group of countries with 5,3 score, which give 22 position. Definitely one can see that in this matter they are more competitive, which is reflected in trade and economic achievements at the same time<sup>44</sup>.

The conclusion is that the Nordic countries are now world leaders in the use of ICT. They managed to fully include ICT in their competitiveness strategies to boost innovation. This is the evidence of the great trust, in contrast to Poland, which is the last from Baltic Countries (50 position), Lithuania (31 places), Latvia(33 position) and Russia (41 position), which are more conservative. The best positions

**5. Long-term - short-term orientation;** A long-term orientation means developing the virtues bringing benefit in the future, and a short-term orientation means cultivating the virtues associated with the present and the past. In the era of globalization, one of many virtues is taking care of the Earth, whose resources, as the researchers indicate, are shrinking at an accelerating pace. One measure that can be used to investigate the long-term or short-term orientation is the foot print network indicator analyzing human demand on natural resources of the biosphere. The human consumption of natural resources is compared with the ability of the planet to their regeneration. The ecological footprint is the estimated number of hectares of land and sea needed to compensate for resources used for consumption and waste absorption. The footprint is measured in global hectares (gha) per person. Countries vary in the extent and pace of the use and consumption of the Earth’s resources. The following graph shows the foot print network in the countries of the Baltic Region in 2015. (see Fig. 4)



**Figure 4. Foot print network in the countries of the Baltic Region in 2015**

Source: WWF. (2016). *Living Planet Report 2016. Risk and resilience in a new era*. WWF International, Gland, Switzerland, [http://www.footprintnetwork.org/documents/2016\\_Living\\_Planet\\_Report\\_Lo.pdf](http://www.footprintnetwork.org/documents/2016_Living_Planet_Report_Lo.pdf) (01.11.2016); Iceland - <http://happyplanetindex.org/countries/iceland>

<sup>44</sup> World Economic Forum, *The Global Information Technology Report 2015. ICTs for Inclusive Growth*, Geneva 2015, [online:] [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GITR2015.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GITR2015.pdf) (11.10.2016).

Based on the conducted analysis, the category of “lenders” (ie. countries which consume less than reproduce) includes the Nordic countries and Germany. The countries which quickly exhaust the Earth’s resources and renew them at the slowest pace are those countries which are located on the south-eastern Baltic. Their results are much worse. Although the Poles and Latvians still exploit almost twice more than the amount of natural resources of the country, since 1990 they have managed to reduce the ecological deficit and improve their situation in relation to the developed economies.

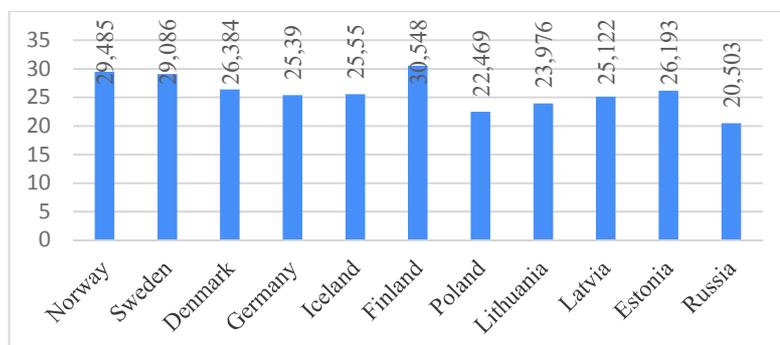
## Conclusions

Summarizing the above considerations, it can be concluded that in the individual elements the Nordic countries and Germany hold an advantage over the semi-peripheral countries. Based on the collected data, the individual tested components can be added up, assuming a comparable scale (0-7) – see Table, where 0 means no social capital and the value 7 means the maximum value of social capital, taking into account the five variables tested (see Table).

**Table 2. Value of social capital in the Baltic Sea Region**

Country (x=max/7)	Democracy Index	Gini Index (7-x)	Gender Index	Innovation Index	Foot print network
Norway	6.951	5.194	5.95	6.77	4.62
Sweden	6.615	5.25	5.761	6.77	4.69
Denmark	6.377	4.963	5.369	6.42	3.255
Germany	6.048	5.019	5.453	6.42	2.45
Iceland	6.706	5.117	6.167	6.3	1.26
Finland	6.321	5.117	5.950	7	6.16
Poland	4.963	4.711	5.005	5.13	2.66
Lithuania	5.278	4.368	5.180	5.72	3.43
Latvia	5.159	4.564	5.264	5.48	4.655
Estonia	5.495	4.480	5.243	6.18	4.795
Russia	2.317	4.193	4.858	5.25	3.885

Based on the results in the table, one can compare the occurrence of social capital in total, taking into account the variables tested in the countries of the Baltic Sea Region.



**Figure 5. The sum of social capital in the Baltic Sea Region**

Despite the limitations mentioned above, the selected research tools allow for a comparison of some selected non-material qualities that influence the economic development of the Baltic Sea Region. Thus, this tool enables us to show the strengths and weaknesses resulting from the possession or lack of social capital. The data concerning the distinguished components confirm the division of the Baltic Sea Region into the semi-peripheries and the core. The occurrence of physical capital together with social capital is a characteristic feature of the core countries (the Nordic countries and Germany). It is therefore essential in the process of building a state welfare to draw attention in the equal extent to the material and non-material features in shaping the economic strategy of countries and creating favourable conditions for cooperation at the macro level.

Therefore, social capital can serve as one of the determinants of economic policy of a country. In the literature, there is the lack of evidence showing the process of investing in social capital, while it can draw attention of governments, corporations and international organizations to selected aspects of the development, which focus not only on income, but also on issues related to democracy, the legal system, trust, and others.

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### **Streszczenie**

Chociaż pojęcie kapitału społecznego nie jest nowością w naukach społecznych, to właśnie Putnam i jego praca na rzecz demokracji uczyniło tę koncepcję atrakcyjną dla współczesnych teorii ekonomicznych, społecznych i politycznych. Kapitał społeczny jest uważany za istotny czynnik w odniesieniu do stosunków społecznych, działającej demokracji i rozwoju gospodarczego. W tym sensie kapitał społeczny odnosi się do kilku podstawowych wymiarów życia społecznego, które wpływają na rozwój gospodarczy. Celem artykułu jest analiza, w jaki sposób poza ekonomiczne czynniki wpłynęły na rozwój gospodarczy regionu Morza Bałtyckiego, który na początku lat 90. XX wieku był na marginesie europejskiej i międzynarodowej polityki.

### **Kapitał społeczny w regionie Morza Bałtyckiego w świetle koncepcji P. Bourdieu**

#### **Słowa kluczowe**

Kapitał społeczny, Pierre Bourdieu, Region Morza Bałtyckiego

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