
The assessment of sustainability in political environment of balanced social field: possibilities of electoral method

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Abstract: The conceptualisation of sustainability is one of the main tasks in multidisciplinary research. The methodology of the assessment of sustainability for political environment is presented in this paper. The structure of the methodology includes several steps to achieve the theoretical fullness. Political environment is conceivable as one of the main environments in the theory of balanced social field. According to the sense of balanced social field, there are distinguished nine antinomies in the political environment. Each antinomy is revealed by categories of political sustainability. The sustainability of political environment mostly is measured in electoral data. The electoral method is preferable because of its simplicity and universality for evaluation of political sustainability. Suggested theory is illustrated by the example of geopolitical sustainability patterns in Lithuania.

Keywords: sustainability; balanced social field; political environment; electoral method; Lithuania.

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1 Introduction

The conception of sustainable development has become eminently relevant in the development of different science trends. The sustainability is conventionally understood as the ratio of social, economical, political and ecological interests, which is beneficial to permanent and positive development of a society. However, a broad meaning of sustainability calls in a necessity of a deeper look into separate environment components. Even the conventional conception of sustainability acknowledges that ecological and socioeconomic environments develop according to different consistent patterns. Separate economic, political, legal, etc. environments in turn exist and vary according to their specific genetic characteristics in a common social environment. Respectively, a precise and reasoned assessment of the overall sustainability is impossible without establishing sustainability's values in individual environments.

A political environment distinguishes for the necessity of knowledge of sustainability's values. An effective management of public affairs and a progressive net of government relations are usually described by qualitative characteristics. If a qualitative assessment was based on quantitative indexes, the larger precision in measuring the level of sustainability in the political environment would occur. The search of the quantitative indexes has become one of the most important goals in the establishing of values of political environment's sustainability. Explicit researches need the quantitative indexes which reveal the intercountries differences and the differences inside the country. The country's regions are usually distinguished by individual qualities of sustainability; therefore, the process of sustainability's realisation is territorially discriminating. Political geographers (Agnew, 1997; Johnston et al., 2001; Koulov, 1995; Kovacs and Dingsdale, 1998; Lee and Brunn, 1996; Lubecki, 2004; Pattie and Johnston, 1998) widely use electoral data which give great possibilities to reveal countries' political territorial structure. However, it is avoided in such topic works to give different sustainability's values for the political territorial units distinguished on the base of electoral method. This avoidance can be explained by two basic reasons. Firstly, it is not fashionable to evaluate political (territorial) differences positively or negatively nowadays, because such evaluation would contradict to the spirit of postmodernism. Secondly, the allotment of various sustainability values for different political quantitative indexes is a difficult problem requiring a broad attitude, innovative method and a strict deduction. The lack of the research of sustainability's categories unfolds when the big political crises have already begun and which have rarely been foreseen. Nonetheless, the prediction and control of political processes are necessary and the reasoned naming of the level of various political phenomena sustainability would serve for this best. Thus, considering the dynamics of political sustainability, it is possible to administrate positively even difficult problems.

The interpretation of political environment is possible only when a place of politics in the general social whole is assessed. The very identification of the political environment and the understanding of its proceeding should not contradict the logic of the social order. The conception of a social field distinguishes for the highest structural perfection and the perfection of social phenomena. The two quite different social field theories of Lewin (1951) and Bourdieu (1985, 1990) gained the most acknowledgements in the social sciences. It is regular that the social field theory is transformed in various researches in order to highlight the most relevant topic. Accordingly, the terminology framing the social field and its social conception is receding from the classical form.

The social field theory, which presupposes geographical relevance, is used in this paper (Kavaliauskas, 2001). The latter conception comprises two different types of the social field: a balanced social field and a gravitational social field. The conceptualisation of the balanced social field is becoming topical for the perception of the political environment and for the naming of sustainability's values.

2 The sense of balanced social field

The social field as a polyedged social phenomenon may be presented both by integral phenomenon of spatial socium's expression and by various images of its specialised cognition's trends (Kavaliauskas, 1992, 2001). The following general conception of the social field is proposed: 'social field means an imaginary spatial expression of the activity of internal genetic and gravitation forces of human society, its territorial structure or interactions which are possible to recognise by methods of social physics, social psychology and socioeconomic statistics'. This definition codes the participation of the two forces, which are different by nature, of the socium's development in the social field's conception, ipso facto its two different 'faces' and the models of spatial expression. It expresses the efforts to integrate both halves of the social field cognition, which have been separated so far, to a solid complex, being formed on the base of general methodology. It is purposeful to refer the following statements to the *axiomatisation* of the social field's, as a fundamental phenomenon, paradigm:

- 1 *Ontological*: the social field is a fundamental expression of the entity of social environment conceptualised by intellectual abstraction.
- 2 *Dialectical*: the inner genetic dialectic of social field expresses the space of coexistence and equilibrium of antinomic tendencies of social development parameters.
- 3 *Gravitational*: the spatial interactions of social field are formed by gravity pull of its structural elements.
- 4 *Typological*: the social field is a typical phenomenon for all genetic or functional forms of social activities.
- 5 *Pragmatic*: the cognition of social field is necessary for the determination of dynamics, structural and functional rules of the human society's development.

The *typological structuration* of the social field's paradigm which comprises all or at least the most important known forms of this phenomenon's conception is very important as well. On the grounds of the experience (Kavaliauskas, 2001) the distribution of the balanced social field comprising the following forms of expression is recommended.

Balanced social field: the space of common dialectic coexistence and balance of the opposite social proceeding's trends, comprising the following environments of social antinomies' (dichotomies') expression:

- 1 demographic environment, where the features of demographic environment are established on the reproductive and structural indexes of citizens' status
- 2 cultural environment, where the features of cultural environment are established on the indexes of ethnic, cultural, religious and valuable socium's activity or orientation

- 3 economic environment, where the features of the economic environment are established on the indexes of economical development standard and the country's economy nature
- 4 political environment, where the features of political environment are established on the indexes of the state's government organisations, the trends of politics and political attitudes
- 5 legal environment, where the features of legal environment are established on the indexes of constitutional attitudes' implementation and the efficiency of legislation work.

The third moment of the theory of social field's cognition is the *analytical determination of paradigm* or the ascertainment of the system of indexes which are approbated in the paradigm. Essentially, the experience and analogies of social field's researches allow to establish the system of the main indexes explaining its nature and characteristics.

The following standard indexes, which are able to express social field's quantitative characteristics, are recommended for the *research of the balanced social field*:

- 1 *Intensity*: reflects a general level of antinomic contradiction's expression, which is determined by the method of international, national and regional comparison.
- 2 *Sustainability¹ (tension)*: reflects the harmony (disharmony) of the antinomic contradiction, which is determined on the base of relative deflection of antinomic parameters from the average or optimal significances.
- 3 *Pressure*: reflects the density of disharmony, which is determined according to the number of present disharmonic antinomies in the area.
- 4 *Coherence*: reflects the intercorrelation among antinomic contradictions, which is determined by the correlational analysis when the relative intensity of interrelation among social field parameters, which are under consideration, is calculated.
- 5 *Speed of deformation (spatial distortion)*: reflects the rapidity of misbalance transformation, which is determined according to the peculiarities of the antinomic parameters' change trends.

The fourth moment of the social field's cognition theory consists of its 'paradigm's pragmatism or the establishment of perspective application's trends'. With reference to the axiom of the social field's necessity to the explanation of the society development's regularities and on the basis of strategic and territorial planning needs and their practice, the trends of pragmatics of the balanced social field's cognition can be formed, which express the purposeful employment of this field's researches for the following theoretical and practical problems to solve:

- 1 finding out the rules of territorial expression of the human activities
- 2 estimating the intensity of socioeconomical interactions
- 3 determination of the possible human conflict areas
- 4 shaping the regional policy.

The above-mentioned attitudes of the social field paradigm's axiomatisation, typological structuration, analytical determination and pragmatism form an integral deductive model of this phenomenon's cognition's conception. In addition, the mentioned attitudes

express a 'systematic geographised solving of the social field's problem'. Certainly, the versions of the social field's paradigm formed on the other attitudes have also a right to exist whereas the given version may be corrected and made more precise in future as the experience of the research objects' cognition will grow.

3 A system of indicators for sustainability of political environment

While assessing a political environment as one of the five most important spheres where a balanced social field expresses, the field's ground standard index – intensity is needed for understanding it first. The intensity of the balanced social field is expressed by dichotomies (antinomies) which show the essential generalised deep contradictions in a certain net of interactions. Here nine main antinomies of the political environment are suggested:

- 1 traditional–non-traditional geopolitical orientation
- 2 support of authorities–hostility to authorities
- 3 unitarity–federalism
- 4 left–right
- 5 observance of political ideology–political populism
- 6 municipality–central authorities
- 7 democracy–autocracy (partocracy)
- 8 harmony of political institutions–antipode of political institutions
- 9 stability of politics–anarchy of politics.

The distinguished complex of antinomies expresses these sections of the political interactions' expression: the system of the state's territorial government (3, 6), organisation of political authorities (8–9) and a political valuable orientation (1–2, 4–5, 7). The three sections of political interactions are not supposed to be assessed as subparts of the political environment. This is more a principle of a classification of the main antinomies manifesting in the political environment.

Such a principle of distinguishing antinomies of the political environment is an attempt to embrace fundamental political phenomena and does not pretend to a complete perfection. The definition of an importance degree of dichotomic axes, the hypothetical reclassification of those axes may be carried out after more detailed researches of the political environment are accomplished. It should be highlighted that some antinomies, expressing a political environment's intensity, may be little urgent or perceived in particular in some countries due to their specific political history. Nevertheless, the suggested antinomies suit most countries with long-lasting or still being established democracy.

Sustainability, the second standard indicator of the balanced social field after the intensity, marks the interrelation between antinomy's poles. The dimension of misbalance of antinomy's poles interrelations is shown by the means of sustainability's values, that is, the intensity of deviation from the antinomy poles' interrelation which

secures a successful society's development. It is worth to distinguish at least four sustainability's categories for the research of medium peculiarity:

- 1 sustainability
- 2 low unsustainability
- 3 medium unsustainability
- 4 big unsustainability.

The sustainability categories, reflecting the intensity of antinomic contradiction's disharmony can be successfully identified mostly on the basis of quantitative characteristics. Unfortunately, the phenomena of political environment can be rarely expressed by quantitative characteristics or sometimes it is even impossible to do this. While evaluating the individuality of each political antinomy, the measuring of sustainability (the establishment of borders between the categories, etc.) becomes even more problematic. In spite of the problems of establishment of political environment's sustainability, which arise objectively, the considered entirety of phenomena is certainly topical and has a broad perspective of theoretical and practical application.

4 Assessment of political sustainability with applying the electoral method

The electoral data are supposed to be one of the most integral quantitative expressions of political environment's phenomena. The basic electoral indicators are:

- 1 political attitudes (sympathy)
- 2 voter turnout
- 3 the ratio between political attitudes and the turnout.

It is possible to distinguish at least preliminarily the categories of sustainability in most antinomies of the political environment while applying the electoral method. Certainly, each country's electoral system distinguishes itself for different features, an individual link with socio-political questions. However, a general frame of political environment's sustainability, formed on the base of electoral method, helps to assess the differences among states too. Some peculiarities of the electoral system induce to search for close electoral data, which express the categories of sustainability in the political environment. It is likely that such peculiarities will allow specifying of the preliminarily formed statements. It is necessary to clearly formulate the principles of distinguishing sustainability's categories in each dichotomic axis of the political environment in the initial phase of the suggested theory.

Traditional–non-traditional geopolitical orientation: the most purposeful way of measuring geopolitical sustainability's expression is to introduce the antinomic axis of traditional–non-traditional geopolitical orientation. The geopolitical unsustainability is the most topical in the countries or their parts which are in the intersection of geopolitical mega derivatives. A country usually chooses or, due to its nature becomes naturally a part of a grand geopolitical mega derivative (e.g. Western space). However, not all the state's residents support the chosen geopolitical line and only a bigger part of citizens' vote for the correspondent geopolitical orientation's parties or their representatives.

The substitution of the geopolitical orientations is most often initiated by individual separatistic regions, which seek for or have already reached the model of a federal state. Local party or parties, settled in a certain region and clearly expressing the opposition towards the state's traditional geopolitical orientation, are the accelerants of geopolitical unsustainability. The unsustainability does not manifest when up to 5% of citizens vote for the parties with unconventional geopolitical orientation and a big unsustainability emerges when the mentioned parties receive more than 15% of votes. Respectively, the border of a little and medium unsustainability locates when approximately one-tenth of voters vote for the mentioned parties.

The second way of measuring the unsustainability of traditional and non-traditional geopolitical orientation's antinomy is to consider not only the votes for the forces resistant to traditional geopolitical orientation but the votes for neutral (where the traditional geopolitical trend is not emphasised) parties and their representatives too. However, in such a case it is very difficult to identify the correspondent sustainability's categories according to the results of elections. The third and a quite illustrative way of measuring the antinomy of the contradicting geopolitical mega spaces is the analysis of referendums' results. The referendums dealing with the integration to the chosen geopolitical orientation's derivatives are especially important. The categories of political sustainability are established in respect to the part of citizens voting against the traditional geopolitical orientation. The quantitative categories of geopolitical sustainability in this case are measured with the same quantitative expression as the part of votes favourable to the parties with unconventional geopolitical orientation.

Support of authorities–hostility to authorities: this antinomy is an especially generalised opposite with strong indicative characteristics. This antinomy reflects the political sustainability especially distinctly. The misbalance of the antinomic axis of the support–hostility to authorities (government) is marked by two main indicators – the support of the (ex)government and the turnout in the elections.

The index of the ex-government support usually is associated with the theory of elitist society (Dunleavy and O'Leary, 1987). The citizens who are dissatisfied with the activity of the political elite, governing the main strategic trend of a state's development, usually support the political forces and individuals contradicting to the settled political elite. A big political unsustainability expresses when the elite's opposition receives the qualified majority of votes (66%) during elections, the medium unsustainability – when it receives a simple majority of votes and a little unsustainability occurs when the mentioned opposition is supported by less than a half of voters. A political sustainability manifests when the forces of the political elite are supported by a qualified majority of voters.

A passive participation in the elections shows citizens' disappointment in the governmental institutions and the impotence against the government's organisation. The low turnout signifies not only the disappointment in government but is a certain form of citizens' protest too. The political sustainability still remains, if more than a half of potential voters participate in the elections of the most important political institutions. When the turnout decreases by few percentage step starting with a 50% limit, the categories of corresponding political unsustainability are extinguished.

Unitarity–federalism: this antinomy is the most suitable for the unitary state model. The intensity of citizens' turn for federal structure of a state is expressed by political unsustainability. The federal state model is the most attractive for those groups of citizens, which have individual ethnic, linguistic, historical, socioeconomic, religious

features, that is, the main socio-cultural factors, which form a political identity (Carty and Eagles, 1998; Crowley, 2001; Knutsen, 2004). Regional parties usually form themselves in the state areas, which turn for federalism. If the regional parties start establishing themselves not only for the expression of certain group's separatistic goals, but also on the ideological basis too (e.g. the lefts and the rights of the same region), it can be affirmed that people do not trust the central government of a unitary state and national parties as well. Thus a big political unsustainability emerges. Considering the voting results, there are preliminarily distinguished sustainability's categories according to the amount of votes received by regional parties. Thus, a hypothesis, that a big unsustainability in the unitary state is expressed by the majority of qualified voters (more than 66%) in a certain area, which vote for regional parties, is possible. A low support of regional parties (less than one-third of voters voting for them) would signify a political sustainability. The low and medium unsustainability's categories would be separated by a 50% support limit. A low unsustainability manifests itself when regional parties receive from one-third to the one half of votes, and a medium unsustainability is when the regional parties are supported by the unqualified majority of voters.

The unsustainability in the axis of unitarism–federalism antinomy can also manifest, even if the regional parties are not forming themselves. In such a case, it is rather difficult to define the intensity of unsustainability.

Left–right: the main antinomic axis of political ideology in democratic states consists of the left and the right. Various models identifying the left and the right (e.g. Bobbio, 1999; Zechmeister, 2006) mark left and right fields with different sections. It is accepted that the main and the most important difference between the two political ideologies is the attitude towards the significance of an individual and a society. The rights prefer the individuals to society, the lefts vice versa.

The ratio of the poles of the left–right antinomy's axis is firstly expressed by the ratio of quantity of the parties with traditional political ideologies and their interrelation. The two biggest parties most often receive the most votes in the traditional democratic countries: the social democrats (socialists, labourists, etc.) which represent the political left and the conservatives (Christian democrats, etc.) and the liberals which represent the political right. The essential condition of successful society's development, extinguished on the basis of the left–right antinomy, is the large parties' representation of both basic ideologies. If the left or the right is weakly represented (there is no large party of corresponding political wing), a big political unsustainability of the left–right antinomy may be found. But most frequently, both the left and the right are represented in democratic states. The number of votes (of the number of the whole votes) received by the party or group of parties with a certain ideology in the elections may be registered in a coefficient. The value bigger than 40% denotes a political sustainability, while the value receding each 10% step expresses the rest three categories of the political unsustainability.

Observance of political ideology–political populism: now it is often felt even in the countries with old democracy that traditional ideological parties do not answer the arising challenges well. Consequently, new ideologies for the traditional parties are being created. The most famous example of this case is 'The Third Way' theory created by a philosopher Giddens (2000) for the British Labour party. Nevertheless, the observance of the political ideology (even though it is being modified) is one of the main factors of rational politics.

A very important thing in the axis of observance of the political ideology–political populism’s antinomy is the number of populist parties and movements. The political sustainability exists on the condition that there are no populist parties in a country. However, even the quantity of the functioning populist parties does not signify in itself the hovering political unsustainability. Marginal parties are the part of a healthy political organism which even may be sought for – they arise new ideas, search for original ways to express themselves. Thus, they induce the traditional ideological parties to improve. While assessing the electoral data, the number of the votes received by the populist (not traditional) parties in the elections becomes the indicator of sustainability. If the populist parties gain only few percent of all the votes, a political sustainability still exists. Starting with the 5% limit and the part of votes for the populist parties rising by the same percentage step, different categories of political unsustainability manifest.

Municipality–central government: most researchers of the political phenomena (Cusack, 1999; King et al., 2004) admit that the main initiative power in democratic society manifests ‘from below’, that is, from the citizens who raise their basic political problems for the municipality as it is supposed to be the government ‘closest to common people’. The high turnout in municipality’s elections shows a good status of a civil society. The municipality is provided with lots of rights both in unitary and federal democratic states. It is natural that the turnout in municipality’s elections is not markedly lower than in the elections of a central government in the countries with successful democracy.

The political sustainability in the axis of municipality–central government antinomy manifests when there are less or slightly more citizens participating in the elections of the central government rather than in the elections of municipality. A little unsustainability occurs if the ratio between the turnouts in municipality’s and central government’s elections fluctuates from 85% to 95%, a medium sustainability occurs when a lower line drops by 10% more and a big sustainability is clear when the ratio of the turnouts drops below the mark of three-fourths. In the latter situation, when even one-fourth of citizens are not interested in the municipality’s matters but take care of the composition of the central government, a serious municipality crisis may be discovered.

In addition, it is true that a low turnout in municipality elections may signify not only unsuccessful activity of municipality’s representatives but the central government’s purposive policy too. The development of municipality stagnates for this reason and the part of taxes, directly received by municipality, reveals it. This indicator may be one of the most important in the municipality–central government axis (Güth et al., 2005), which corrects and supplements the sustainability’s categories established by the electoral method.

Democracy–autocracy (partocracy): the intensity of autocracy and partocracy contradicting to democracy signifies the degree of the democracy expression’s sustainability. The existence of the parties which express their antidemocratic attitudes openly does not suppose the manifestation of political unsustainability. The support of the antidemocratic parties in the elections, one of the most important forms for the society to resolve and express opinion in a democratic society, is a more important indicator. The political sustainability manifests if the antidemocratic forces receive up to 5% of the votes. If a part of votes for the antidemocratic parties increases by a few percentage steps, the corresponding categories of political unsustainability show up.

The showing up tendency to authoritarianism in democracy manifests when a great attention is paid to the institution run by one person (e.g. the President House).

In addition, the reach to empower the one-man-governed institution as much as possible and a more active turnout in such institution's elections than in the elections of other institutions (which have officially delegated bigger decision powers) signify the authoritarian symbolism too. In such a case, when there is a bigger turnout in the elections of the nominally less important institutions, associated with one person rather than in the elections of the institutions having a greater delegated influence, a political unsustainability starts to emerge. It is little when the turnout's deviation is up to 5% in the corresponding elections, and the unsustainability is big when the deviation exceeds the limit of one-tenth.

Harmony of political institutions–antipode of political institutions: each country has its individual hierarchy of political institutions, so it is difficult to give a generalised picture of a certain political institutions' harmony. According to the settled traditions and the government's structure, provided by the Constitution, an individual hierarchy of political institutions' power and links functions in each country. A unitary state is chosen to be a theoretical example, where the hierarchy (regarding 'closeness' to citizens) consists of the municipality, the parliament, the president, having few powers and supernational government going in turn. Considering the experience of democratic Western countries, a small part of citizens participate in the elections of super national institutions (e.g. the European Parliament) because they are considered to be far from people and of little significance (Flickinger and Studlar, 2007; Geys, 2006). It is regular that in respect of 'closeness' to people the elections of municipality (a), the parliament (b), the president (c) and super national institutions (d) have different significance. In case of political sustainability, a turnout in different institutions' elections would follow the sequence: $a > b > c > d$. A total incongruity of citizens' preferences in the elections with political institutions' influence on a hierarchy would signify a big unsustainability. The big unsustainability would manifest in a reverse sequence of all or most important components: $d > c > b > a$ or $c > b > a > d$. If the ideal activity sequence of citizens participating in different elections comprised only a half or more components, a little unsustainability would manifest with a deviation of 15% from the ideal sequence, and the medium unsustainability – of more than 15%. If the latter divergence reached the higher limit than 25%, a big political unsustainability would occur even though the other components of the sequence aligned in ideal order.

Stability of politics–anarchy of politics: the intensity of influence's change of the two political 'players' – political institutions and political parties – is topical in this antinomic axis. It was already remarked while elaborating the antinomic axis of political institutions and their harmony that the turnout in the elections of various institutions should gradually reduce when the established influence of political institutions weakens and the institutions 'recede' from common people. In such a case, when there is an ideal sequence of turnouts in the elections of different institutions, a political unsustainability does not manifest, unless the ideal sequence of the turnouts is broken. When the ideal sequence is or has already been broken, the showing up disproportion (reverse to the support of the ideal sequence) between the turnouts in two different institutions' elections expresses different political sustainability's categories by 3% points' step. A big political unsustainability is obvious when a significance of approximately 10% or more of points is reached.

The existence of the basis constantly supporting political parties is very meaningful for the stability of politics and the predictive political behaviour. Political scientists try to search for the reasons keeping the steady parties' electorate (Mishler and Rose, 2001).

However, it is complicated to establish precisely the lowest line of parties' support, which, in addition, sustains the influence of political parties and the guarantee of political stability. The longevity experience of democratic Western countries show that at least one half of citizens constantly support one political party. Thus, the support of one party at separate levels of elections level's drop by more than a half denotes the other categories of unsustainability. Therefore, the political unsustainability does not manifest, if the support of parties does not change up to one-fifth in certain elections.

5 Territorial differences of geopolitical sustainability in Lithuania

The formulated theory of the assessment of political environment's sustainability requires concrete examples. The suggested interpretation of political sustainability's categories applying the electoral method is viable only then, when the empirical data confirm the political attitudes. The practical application of the said theory in this research is illustrated by the example of one antinomy distinguished in the political environment. The antinomy of traditional geopolitical orientation–non-traditional geopolitical orientation extinguishes for its fundamentality. Therefore, the territorial differences of geopolitical sustainability's categories in this antinomy are very significant. The territorial sustainability's differences are especially relevant in the intersection of geopolitical mega derivatives. The geopolitical sustainability is further analysed in Lithuania, the country situated in the Western civilisation's periphery.

The results of referendums are the most purposeful way to establish the sustainability in the axis of traditional–non-traditional geopolitical orientation in Lithuania after its statehood's restitution. The results of the two referendums, held in 1991 due to Lithuania's independence from Soviet Union and in 2003 due to Lithuania's entry to the European Union (the EU), reveal the territorial breaks of Lithuania's geopolitical orientation during the period of 15 years in the most exact way. While comparing the regularities of the territorial expression of both referendums, a stable regional structure manifests itself. Even though the entrance to the EU restricts the self-dependency of Lithuania state, however, saying 'placet' for Lithuania's independency largely signified the gravitation towards the Western geopolitical space. Respectively, according to the results of the 2003 referendum, the step of geopolitical sustainability is slightly higher because a part of citizens could vote against the joining the EU regarding the restriction of state's self-dependency. The steps of the other unsustainability's categories are slightly narrower than they were in 1991 because a part of voters may have agreed with the entrance to the EU regarding only economical interests rather than geopolitical attitudes.

According to the territorial differences between citizens' disapproval with Lithuania's independency in 1991 (Figure 1) and the disapproval with membership in the EU in 2003 (Figure 2) almost all the northern and eastern Lithuania's frontier zone distinguishes for the relatively big disfavour for the chosen state's geopolitical trend. At least 7.5% of citizens voted against Lithuania's independency mere in the frontier zone and its influence's area in 1991. A high political unsustainability (more than 20% voted against the independency) in the Slavic south-eastern area is more or less reasonable due to its special ethnic composition. However, other parts of the northern–north-eastern frontier zone obviously reveals a relatively higher disapproval

with the chosen geopolitical trend. The similar gap between the state's nucleus and the northern–eastern frontier zone has remained until the present days. The citizens of ethnically mixed south-eastern Lithuania also were the most active in disapproving with the Lithuania's membership in the EU in 2003 referendum. A big unsustainability manifested in this area because more than 15% of citizens disagreed with the membership in the EU. The unsustainability increased in the northern and north-eastern frontier zone since 1991 up to 2003. The geopolitical unsustainability is not less than it was in 1991 in the municipalities of the northeastern frontier zone. Even the north-western corner of Lithuania, distinctive for geopolitical sustainability in 1991, in the northern frontier zone is now gravitating towards medium unsustainability. The geopolitical sustainability's category involves the western–south-western part of the country in 1991 and 2003, where the local citizens do not have doubts about the traditional geopolitical orientation.

The distinguished three general geopolitical regions of Lithuania show the geopolitical cleavage very clearly. Western and South-western Lithuania is the most pro-Western and anti-Soviet (Russian) region in Lithuania. South-eastern and North-eastern Lithuania in opposite is the most anti-Western region in the state. The rest of the territory of Lithuania goes into medium pro-Western valuable orientation. This region relatively is called Middle Lithuania. The stable standing of the regions is confirmed by the unchanged core-periphery structure of geopolitical orientation in 1991 and in 2003. The importance of geopolitical cleavage is also seen in the last Parliamentary (2004) and Municipal (2007) elections, because the regional system of some partisan preferences (based on the geopolitical cleavage) was similar to the regional system of geopolitical orientation. A general frame of geopolitical sustainability in Lithuania, formed and explained on the base of electoral method, helps to assess the differences among regions. The possession of geopolitical–electoral indexes reveal the territorial states' differences of sustainability, thereby helping for the identification of the territorially differentiated policy.

Figure 1 The disapproval of Lithuania's independency in the referendum in 1991 (%)

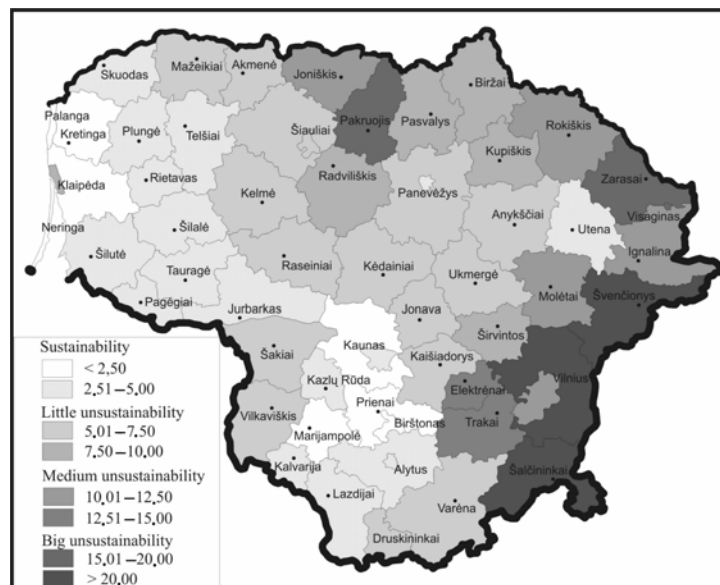
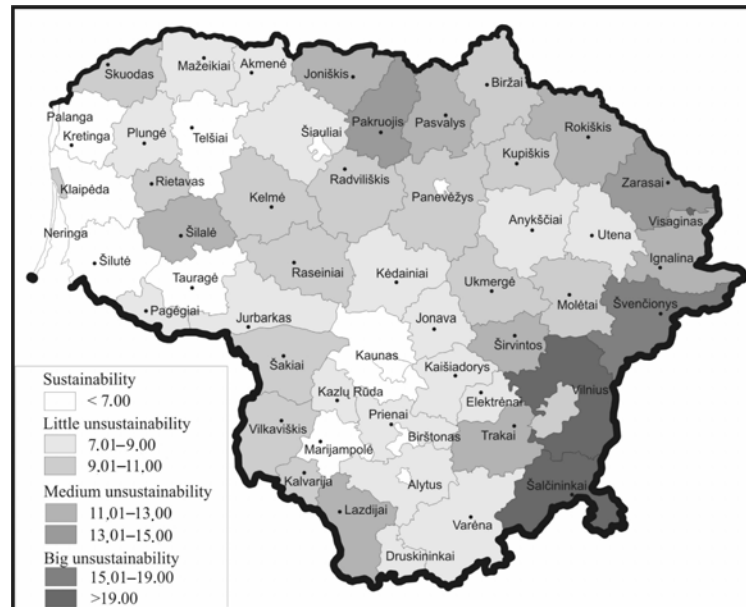


Figure 2 The disapproval of Lithuania's membership in the EU in the referendum in 2003 (%)

6 Conclusions

The suggested theory of the political environment sustainability's establishment reveals a lot of possibilities for the further detailed theoretical and practical researches. The main stated attitudes presuppose several already existing and future strategic tasks.

- 1 The specification of the establishment of the political environment sustainability's categories is necessary according to the electoral and other complementary data. Various socio-political quantitative indexes should confirm, specify or deny the political sustainability's categories distinguished on the basis of electoral method. It is likely that a detailed materialisation of the said theory will allow to think over and to suggest the universality of the political environment's main antinomies. Then a motivated classification of the political environment would be possible, that is, a grouping of antinomies regarding the relevance of political sustainability.
- 2 The methodical principles of the sustainability's assessment applied for the political environment should be also used for picking out the values of the other environments' sustainability. The political environment is only one of the several environments expressing a balanced social field. Analogically, an identification of the antinomies revealing their net's genetic characteristics in other socium's environments is needed. The categories of sustainability in separate dichotomies should be firstly established on the ground of the quantitative indexes. The specification of various sustainability's categories in the balanced social field's environment will allow assessing the connection and dynamics of common social processes in a more complex way. It is likely that it is possible to assess the degree of sustainability of not only the social but the other environments too with reference to similar methodical principles.

- 3 A rational political government requires a further research of political and other environments according to the other standard indexes of the balanced social field. The identification of a certain environment's antinomies and the establishment of sustainability's categories are only the first step in the understanding of the whole balanced social field and the provided possibilities. The fulfilment of the other standard indexes such as pressure, coherence and the speed of deformation will provide with the possibilities of a systematic assessment of the going processes. The full understanding of the relevant phenomena will allow avoiding mistakes while choosing the most optimal politics of a sustainable development. The possession of all standard indexes will reveal the internal territorial interstate and states' differences of sustainability, thereby serving for the realisation of the so needed territorially differentiated and rational politics.
- 4 The territorial differences of geopolitical sustainability's categories in this antinomy are very significant. The concrete example of geopolitical sustainability in Lithuania gives important remarks for the research of political sustainability. First of all, the identification of geopolitical regions reveals a different level of (geo)political sustainability in separate regions. Secondly, the stable or non-stable standing of the regions confirm the positive or negative dynamic tendencies of political sustainability. The distinguished processes let to identify a general core of the problem and a different policy for every region.

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Note

¹The term of *sustainability* in this paper differs from the traditional meaning.