



AN APPROXIMATION TO THE J-CURVE

CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZATION

Teacher: Antonio Quesada

Student: Cristina Valentina Heghes



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Introduction

Nation states today are part of a delicate, interconnected global system, so one country's failure can create worldwide instability.

This paper aims to provide answers of the J-curve model proposed by Ian Bremmen, and to explain how nations develop in a world of constant change.

What made me decide to choose this topic, was one of the sessions of the Challenges of Globalization. In that class I heard about this model for the first time. After this session, in my mind, I had a lot of questions such as: How does the curve work? Which are the disadvantages? and if I can relate this model with my own country. In this paper I would try to answer to some of these questions.

The work is structured in three sections. In the first part, concepts used for the analysis are provided, and the theoretical framework of application is introduced at the starting point of this work.

In the second part I carry out the case study that contains the analysis of Poland, Niger and Romania.

In the last section, the overall result of the study is projected, and finally, the work concludes with the bibliography

Review of literature

The political scientist, Ian Bremmer, used the J- curve graph to understand the political and economic behaviours of different countries better. He considers that, the world of foreign policy group's nations as stable or unstable.

Stability is defined as the country's resilience and ability to withstand political or economic shocks from either internal or external sources. These stable nations can be open or closed, democratic or authoritarian.

According to Ian Bremmer, *“a weak economy is more susceptible to deeper, faster shocks because it lacks the ability to rebuild infrastructure or restore external trade”*. But he considers that, political instability is incompatible with terrorism and nuclear weapons.

In the graph 1, the J curve depicts how a country is rated on openness and stability. This analytical system, allow us to explain how each country flows along the J curve according to its unique history, culture and politics. A part of these factors, economics also affect the J curve.

Graph 1: The J Curve model



Source: (Bremmer, 2006)

The right side of the J curve is characterized by open political and economic systems. The left side shows hierarchical governments that control their citizens' access to information and ideas.

States can travel both forward (right) and backwards (left) along this J-curve, and so stability and openness are never secure. A nation that survives a crisis must move to one side or the other of the J curve to maintain power. (Bremmer, 2006).

According to Bremmer, a government's motivation differs dramatically depending on where they fall on the J curve.

Case study

In this section, I want to analyse different countries from the economic, financial or political point of view. The data obtained give me the possibility to provide an approximation of the country in the J-curve map.

In this analysis I have used indicators such as: the GDP¹ and the KOF Index of Globalization² (covering the three areas of globalization: economic globalization, social globalization and political globalization).

For this study I was thinking deeply in the name of the country or region. Firstly, I wanted to analyse the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China), but after reading the work of Ian Bremmer I changed my decision because he studied some of them. Then I thought that it would be interesting to study some countries which are developed versus developing countries. And finally, I decided to see the situation in my own country, Romania, throughout the years.

Developed vs Developing countries

I couldn't find a clear definition of developed or developing countries. But according to UNFPA, development can be measured by economic or human factors. Developing countries are, in general, countries that have not achieved a significant degree of industrialization relative to their populations, and have, in

¹ Gross domestic product (GDP) is the monetary value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific time period. (Will Kenton, 2018)

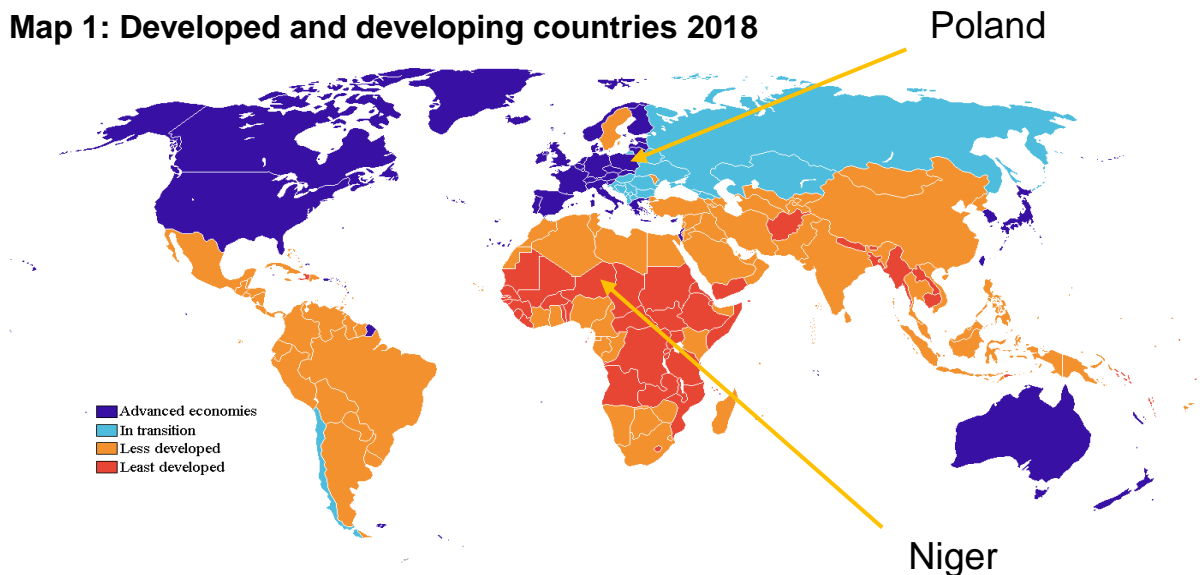
² The KOF Index of Globalisation is an index of the degree of globalisation of countries. (Wolfgang Lehmacher, 2017)

most cases, a medium to low standard of living. There is an association between low income and high population growth.(UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund, 2014).

The development of a country is measured with statistical indexes such as income per capita (per person), gross domestic product per capita, life expectancy, the rate of literacy, freedom index and others (Millennium Development Goals, 2018).

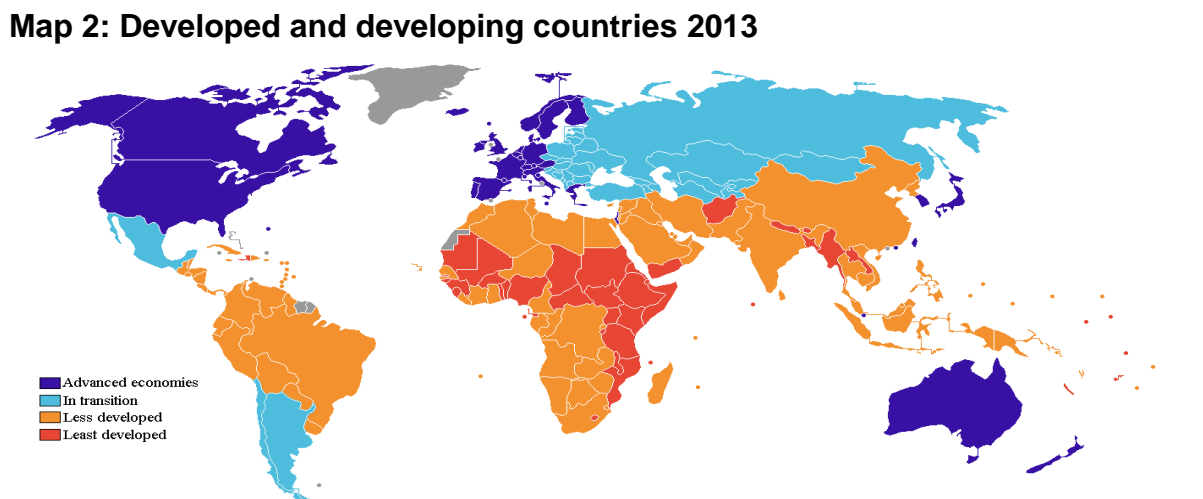
Firstly, I tried to analyse the evolution of different countries throughout the years. In the maps below, we can distinguish different situations between 2013 and 2018. Some of them are in a better position, but others are in a bad position.

Map 1: Developed and developing countries 2018



Source: Extracted from: (Wikimedia Commons, 2018)

Map 2: Developed and developing countries 2013



Source: Extracted from: (Wikimedia Commons, 2018)

I'm going to study the situation of two countries:

- Niger: because in 2013 was a less developed economy and now is considered least developed
- Poland: that's because in 2013 was considered in transition country and nowadays is advanced economy.

Niger:

Along the last decades in Nigeria, happens a lot of political changes, from dictatorship to democracy and four proclamations of the republic (Falola & Heaton, 2008).

In March 2011 Mahamadou Issoufou became president and ended a year-long military junta, returning democracy in the country after Mamadou Tandja was a decade in power (BBC News, 2018). But the new president didn't change the situation in the country. Also, I would like to add that according to the Bremen nation to survive a crisis must move to one side or the other of the J curve to maintain power.

From 2013 began some clashes between the Nigerian army and some insurgent groups like Boko Haram. Almost 37,000 people who were living in Nigeria had been displaced just in 2014 (UNHCR ACNUR, 2017). Nowadays the country has a difficult situation that's because there is child malnutrition and food shortages.

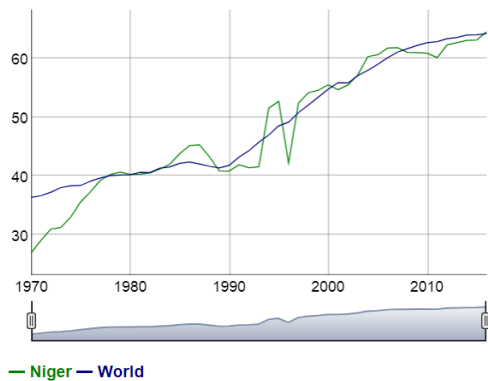
Referring to the previous information, we can conclude that, this could be one of the reasons why Niger changed her situation from 2013 to 2018.

I think that, Nigeria is not a stable country that's because now she didn't recover of the political shocks. Until 2010 the media was controlled, but after that the press freedom in Niger has "improved considerably" (BBC News, 2018). Nowadays the government is still controlling a lot the nation's broadcasting, also the private radio stations have proliferated, and there is a government-run daily.

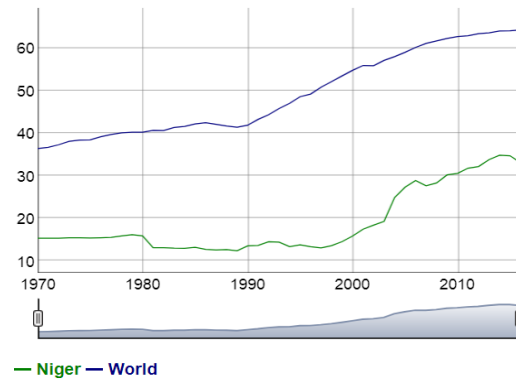
So, refer to the J-curve, we can conclude that Nigeria is in a political instability, but the state is trying to be more open. As we can see the state gave more freedom to the citizens and let them have access to the information.

In this country, I tried to analyse the KOF (political, social and economic globalization) and I could see that since 2011 happened a real change in the country. This indicator is increasing for all the factors and currently achieved the maximum level for the last 40 years.

Graph 2: Political Globalization



Graph 3: Social Globalization



Source: Extracted from: (Gygli, Haelg, Potrafke, & Sturm, 2018)

As we can see in the previous graphs, Nigeria in 2016 has the same political globalization index with the average of the world. Referent to the social globalization index they are far away to the average of the world, but slowly they are increasing their position.

Poland

In this country, there were few political changes. Poland was a communist state between 1945 to 1989. During the revolutions of 1989, the Marxist-Leninist government of Poland was overthrown, and the country adopted a new constitution. The transition from a communist state to a capitalist economic system and a liberal parliamentary democracy was peaceful. This process resulted in the creation of the Third Polish Republic, founded in 1989. So, as a result the country is stable politically (Davies, 1984); (Dudek, 2007).

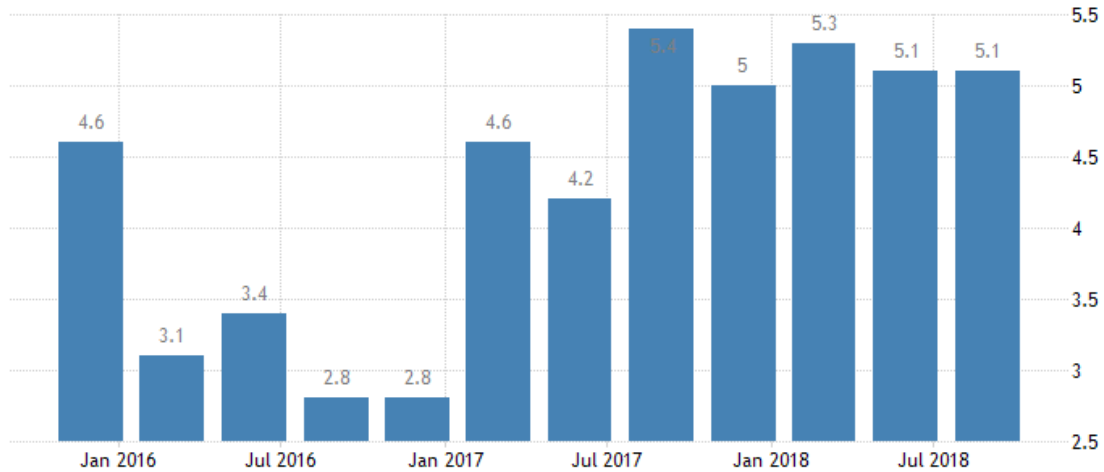
Refer to the Map 2 and 3, there are some reasons why Poland passed from transition to advanced economy.

One of them is that Poland has emerged as a dynamic market in the last 25 years and has become an important player in the European Union. The Polish economy

performed well during the 2014-2017 period, with real GDP growth usually exceeding 3%.

As we can see in the Graph 4, in 2017 Poland's economy grew 4.6%, and in 2018 is still increasing. (Santandertrade.com, 2018b). So, Poland, from the economic point of view present stability.

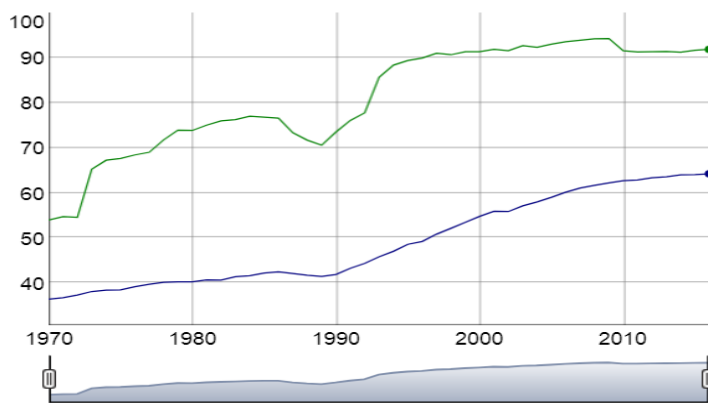
Graph 4: Poland GDP Annual Growth Rate



Source: Extracted from (Trading Economics, 2018)

Refers to the KOF, the value of the globalization index is far away to the average of the world.

Graph 4: KOF Globalization Index



2016: **Poland**: 91.84 **World**: 64.2

Source: Extracted from: (Gygli, Haelg, Potrafke, & Sturm, 2018)

Different data show that the government doesn't control or limit the citizens' access to information. For instance, the television reaches almost all Polish households via local channels or via satellite, also has more than 5.000 newspapers, both regional and local. The direct marketing also is accepted and finally the radio is another communication tool very used in Poland., they have 261 local stations and 6 national (Santandertrade.com, 2018a).

After all this information I can conclude that Poland is a stable nation which is open and democratic.

The evolution of Romania along the J-Curve

In Romania didn't happened lot of political changes throughout the years. There were two periods of communism and the last one was between 1965 to 1989 during the RSR (The Socialist Republic of Romania). In 1989, Romania was the only country in the eastern bloc that passed for democracy through a violent revolution and in which the Communist rulers were executed.(Georgescu, 1992)

The analyse is divided into two parts: before and after the revolution.

Before revolution

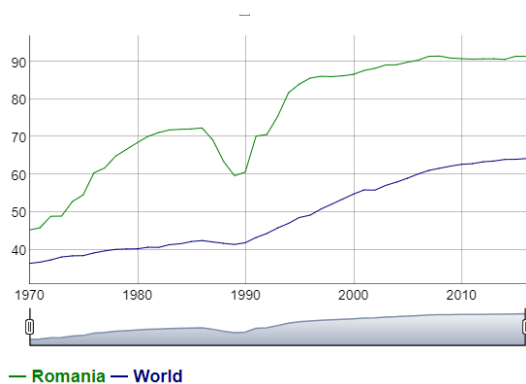
From the point of political view, Romania was a stable and closed country that's because of communism. The dictator "Nicolae Ceausescu" used the power to control the society and in many cases, he managed to reduce the internal conflicts successfully.

But on the other hand, the government controls their citizens' access to information. That's because in Romania was just a single television station, which since 1985 has been reduced to two hours and it contained, in large part, shows by the dictators. Control over the company was strict, censorship was extended, and the Securitate recruited new informants and increased the number of telephone stations observed. The telephone network was one of the worst in Europe, and there were an insufficient number of telephone stations. In Romania

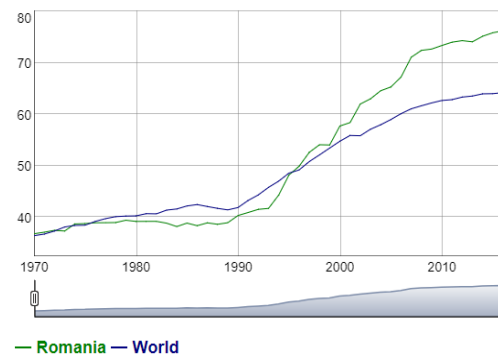
there were approximately 700,000 telephone stations in a population of 23 million in 1989. (Stamatescu, 2009).

All these data can be checked in the graphs below (Graph 5 and 6). Referring to the political and social globalization index, we can see the changes between the communism and democratic period. Also, it's producing a high gap during the revolution and finally the index is increasing during the democracy achieving highest levels.

Graph 5: Political Globalization



Graph 6: Social Globalization



Source: Extracted from (Gygli, Haelg, Potrafke, & Sturm, 2018)

Referring to the J-Curve model, in this period, Romania was situated on the left side of the graph (see graph 1) until the revolution. The government controls totally the access to the information.

After revolution

As Bremen said, “States can travel both forward (*right*) and backwards (*left*) along this J-curve”. In Romania case, as I mentioned previously, she was situated on the left side, but after the revolution her movement along the J-curve was forward. For a long period of time the country suffers political instability, but from the social point of the citizens had more access to information and could share their ideas.

As we can see in the previous graphs (5 and 6), the political and social index increases a lot.

We can conclude that the Romania is trying to be stable, as a democratic country, and to move towards openness. It means that is moving to the right side of the J-curve.

Conclusion

The work verifies the validity of the J-curve, not only in developed countries but also in developing countries. This analytical system, it's useful and allow us to explain how each country flows along the J curve according to its unique history, culture and politics respectively.

The project provides answers of the J-curve model and determines the level of implementation in different countries or periods of time.

The analysis of the three countries has led to the obtaining of the results that are presented in more detail below.

Niger, is a country which is situated more in the left side of the J-curve model, but Poland is totally the opposite, is a stable country and open. In addition, Romania currently is an open country from the social point of view, but politically should work a bit more to achieve the stability. She is moving along the J-curve.

The analysis was basically focused on the political and social aspects, but in the future, it would be interesting to expand the work and study the countries from the economic and financial point of view.

Refer to the political globalization index, I observed that near 90's had happened a big change in a lot of countries worldwide. I identify this fact in countries such as: Greece, Venezuela, Argentina, Germany and Bulgaria. It would be interesting to analyse the J-curve in all these countries and to see if there is a relation between them.

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