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EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF I-VOTING ON ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT IN ESTONIA

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Abstract

This article presents an investigation into the impact of Internet voting (i-voting) on voter turnout in Estonia. The goal is to analyse existing data to determine the extent to which it affects voter turnout. The research carefully examines trends in voter turnout and the use of i-voting to address the question of how technology affects voter engagement. The study aims to provide insight into the relationship between voting adoption and voter behaviour by examining the data. This will contribute to the ongoing debate on electoral technology and offer valuable directions for future research and policy development in this area.

Key words: *electronic voting, i-voting, elections, voting turnout, Estonia.*

INTRODUCTION

Estonia has positioned itself as a digital powerhouse despite its relatively smaller size. The nation's commitment to technological progress and digital literacy is underscored by the fact that 99 % of public services are available online 24/7. This achievement is attributed to the ProgeTiiger programme launched in 2012 [Soares, 2023]. Estonia's digital success is largely attributed to the X-Road platform, which provides secure access to e-government services and promotes transparency, trust, and public engagement [Rausch, 2023]. The introduction of electronic identification cards in 2002 has further simplified accessibility, enabling citizens and residents,

including those from other countries, to easily navigate a wide range of online services [Tshakna, 2013]. Estonia's ability to leverage innovation despite its compact stature is exemplified by this digital evolution.

The X-Road software for e-democracy initiatives includes internet voting (i-voting) as one of its tools. I-voting systems enable voters to cast their votes from various locations, including public computers, voting kiosks in polling stations, or any Internet-connected device available to them. The votes are transmitted over the Internet to a central tally server. This method has been discussed in various studies [Council of Europe, 2010; Wolf et al., 2011; Musia-Karg, 2019]. First introduced in 2005, i-voting has become a cornerstone of Estonia's democratic environment. The widespread adoption of i-voting across various electoral contexts positions Estonia as a trailblazer in pioneering its use as an alternative voting channel. The experience gained from Estonia can be a valuable resource for entities worldwide seeking to modernise democracy through technology [Ehin et al., 2022].

While several countries are experimenting with online voting, no country has embraced it as widely as Estonia. The accessibility and convenience provided by i-voting have led many Estonians to prefer the online format to traditional in-person voting. This trend is supported by upcoming statistics. According to Kapsa [2021], this shift demonstrates how 21st-century technologies can effectively reshape and improve processes that were conceived in the 20th century.

Therefore, this article examines the impact of electronic voting on electoral participation and democratic processes in Estonia. The development of e-democracy tools within the X-Road software has had a significant impact on accessibility and turnout. Estonia's experience provides meaningful insights for entities worldwide seeking inventive approaches to democratic systems. This article explores the intricate relationship between modern technology and established democratic practices.

1. I-VOTING IN ESTONIA

Looking back, the former Minister of Justice, Mert Rask, made the first proposal for e-voting in 2001, in line with ongoing reforms of the electoral process in the Ministry. Estonia, already a trailblazer in digitalising public administration and operating Internet banking, welcomed the concept. Then-Prime Minister Mart Laar viewed e-voting as a means to enhance electoral participation. The practical implementation of i-voting was facilitated by the presence of electronic identification cards (e-ID) and electronic signatures [Madise, Drechsler, 2004]. In 2002, legal

frameworks for new electoral procedures were created, followed by a security analysis in 2003. The National Electoral Commission outsourced the development of i-voting to the local software company Cybernetica, based on conceptual material from a specialised group [Ehin et al., 2022]. I-voting was first introduced in the 2005 municipal elections, with a turnout of 1.8 %. Subsequently, it was used in the 2007 parliamentary elections, where the turnout increased to 5.4 %. The highest turnout was recorded in the 2009 European Parliament elections, where it peaked at 14.7 % [Kitsing, 2014].

I-voting was originally introduced as an alternative to traditional in-person voting. It offers convenience during the early voting period, from the tenth to the fourth day before the official election day. To use i-voting, voters must install the application, which is available on the official election website and accessible from anywhere with an internet connection. Before entering the interface, voter verification via electronic ID or mobile ID is mandatory. After entering a virtual environment displaying the candidates for their constituency, voters can complete the voting process with a simple click.

The individual votes are then sent online to a central server under the administration of the National Electoral Commission. The voter's eligibility is verified, ensuring the secrecy of the vote. The Electoral Commission counts all anonymous online ballots and generates certificates at each step to confirm the audit. This process is carefully documented and monitored to ensure transparency and accountability [e-Estonia, 2021].

The National Election Commission has the option to evaluate i-voting results up to four days before regular elections, allowing them to address potential system errors. Voters are able to cast multiple ballots within a specified time, but only the last choice will be considered valid. To enhance security and ensure the integrity of i-voting, polling stations provide the ability to request information about recording electronic votes [OSCE, 2023]. In exceptional circumstances, the National Electoral Commission may annul i-voting results, allowing affected voters to cast ballots directly at polling stations without nullifying the entire election [Górny, 2021].

2. METHODOLOGY

Taking into account local, national (parliamentary) and European dimensions, the article presents quantitative research and data on voter turnout from 2005 to 2023. The main goal of the research is to assess and analyze the impact of the implementation of electronic voting on voter turnout in several election cycles in Estonia. The research focuses on examining the impact of electronic voting on voter

engagement and participation in subsequent electoral processes. The aim is to identify patterns, trends, or shifts in voter behaviour over time due to the integration of electronic voting, contributing to a better understanding of its long-term effects on voter turnout. Therefore, the research question is formulated as follows:

Q: How has the implementation of e-voting affected electoral participation in voting cycles?

The official website of the Estonian National Electoral Committee and the State Electoral Office (valimised.ee/en) is a crucial repository of all election-related data necessary for this research. To ensure accurate data interpretation, we rely heavily on this comprehensive resource as a cornerstone of our investigation. Furthermore, we also consider the insights presented in Tsahkna's [2013] publication, 'E-voting'. Our article draws on 'Lessons from Estonia' and Ehin et al.'s [2022] 'Internet voting in Estonia 2005-2019: Evidence from 11 elections' as secondary sources. The authors explore the nuanced intersections of i-voting and electoral participation.

We provide not only a numerical analysis but also a wider story, offering background information and definitions regarding the complexity of i-voting in Estonia. Our data synthesis is based on academic sources, independent reports, and relevant newspaper articles. For the richness of our narrative, these diverse sources become essential, bridging the gap between academic discourse and the lived reality of the local context – a vital element in understanding the multifaceted development of a country.

The research utilises the following logical methods:

- **Data Analysis:** Used primarily in interpreting information from The Estonian National Electoral Committee and the State Electoral Office website, including quantitative analysis of election data and trends.
- **Analysis of Secondary Sources:** Used in researching the publications of Tsahkna [2013] and Ehin et al. [2022], which enrich the study by incorporating insights from existing research.
- **Descriptive approach:** Applied to provide contextual information about i-voting in Estonia, including definitions, potential pitfalls, and general insights into the country's political and digital landscape.
- **Integrating different sources:** Used throughout the article to synthesise information from academic literature, official reports and newspaper articles to promote a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

- Narrative construction: Used to connect statistical findings into a coherent narrative, making research accessible and engaging to a wider audience.

In summary, our study employs a range of logical methods, including quantitative analysis, examination of secondary sources, a descriptive approach, and source integration, to comprehensively explore the impact of electronic voting on electoral participation in Estonia. By seamlessly connecting statistical insights through narrative construction, we present a concise and engaging story that captures the evolving dynamics of e-voting within the country's democratic processes.

3. RESULTS

The topic of electoral participation and the potential for increasing it through electronic voting is frequently discussed. Tshakna's [2013] research on the impact of technology on voter participation in elections between 2005 and 2011 found that introducing i-voting increased participation, as evidenced by graphic and numerical data. The study focused on all types of elections during that period, from municipal to parliamentary to European Parliament elections. However, a study by Ehin et al. [2022] found that although the number of voters who regularly go to the polls has stabilised, an increasing number of citizens from the active electorate prefer to vote online. This finding suggests that modern technologies may not necessarily lead to a rapid increase in voter turnout or mobilisation of non-voters. Our research from January 2023 supports the trend of increasing online voter participation. While the average participation rate in parliamentary elections is around 60 %, over half of voters (51 %) in the 2023 parliamentary elections voted online for the first time in history. While the average participation rate in parliamentary elections is around 60 %, over half of voters (51 %) in the 2023 parliamentary elections voted online for the first time in history. The accompanying graphic illustrates this trend using data from various types of elections.

Table 1

Overview of Electoral Participation in Various Types of Elections

Type of election	Turnout (%)	Share of online votes (%)
1	2	3
Parliamentary elections 2023	63,5	51.1
Local elections 2021	54,7	46.9
European Parliament elections 2019	37,6	46.7

The End of the Table 1

1	2	3
Parliamentary elections 2019	63,7	43.8
Local elections 2017	53,3	31.7
Parliamentary elections 2015	64,2	30.5
European Parliament elections 2014	36,5	31.3
Local elections 2013	58,0	21.2
Parliamentary elections 2011	63,5	24.3
Local elections 2009	60,6	15.8
European Parliament elections 2009	43,9	14.7
Parliamentary elections 2007	61,9	5.5
Local elections 2005	47,4	1.9

Source: Author, based on Valimised, [2023].

Several trends can be identified based on the data presented in the table above:

- **Differences in voter turnout:** Voter turnout varies depending on the type of election and year. The 2015 parliamentary elections had a relatively high turnout of 64.2 %, while the 2019 European Parliament elections had a lower turnout of 37.6 %.
- **Increased acceptance of Internet Voting:** The rise in online voting suggests that Estonian voters are increasingly accepting and adopting i-voting. This trend indicates a shift towards using digital platforms for electoral participation, potentially influenced by factors such as convenience, accessibility, and trust in the system.
- **Stabilisation of voter turnout:** Additionally, despite fluctuations in voter turnout across elections and years, there appears to be a stabilization of the percentage turnout over time. The consistent turnout patterns observed may be

influenced by various sociopolitical factors and the integration of online voting as a common element in electoral procedures.

In summary, our data analysis suggests that electoral participation has stabilised at specific levels, which vary based on the type of election. Additionally, there has been a noticeable increase in the adoption of i-voting among voters. The data shows that i-voting has transitioned from an experimental phase to a standard practice in Estonian electoral procedures. It is widely accepted in local election parlance and is now recognized as a standard feature rather than an innovative experiment, both domestically and internationally. The Estonian government's long-term commitment to digitisation and the perceived efficiency and financial benefits of adopting new technologies have established i-voting as a legitimate and integral part of the electoral process in Estonia. This recognition is due to the objective evaluation of the benefits of i-voting.

CONCLUSION

This article examines a distinctive trend in contemporary political science by exploring a country that pioneered i-voting nearly two decades ago. The available data reveal a growing preference among an active electorate for i-voting, rather than a significant mobilisation of the electorate, contrary to expectations. The Estonian experience challenges the popular hypothesis that technological integration in the electoral process universally leads to increased voter turnout. Instead, it highlights the importance of understanding voter preferences in the context of the chosen electoral channel. The intricacies of e-voting, especially i-voting, continue to pose interdisciplinary challenges even after years, making it a subject of ongoing debate and exploration.

The digitalisation of electoral processes is currently underway in several countries worldwide. Research of this nature is valuable as it examines current practices, allowing us to determine advantages, disadvantages, and risks, as well as the necessity of preventive measures in the form of risk management or educating the electorate regarding the functionality of individual systems and devices. The integration of e-voting presents both opportunities and challenges in modern electoral processes. The benefits of increased efficiency, faster vote counting, and improved accessibility for people with disabilities, as highlighted by Górný [2021], Batt [2019], and Wolf et al. [2011], underline the potential of electronic voting to revolutionise traditional voting methods. Additionally, the reduction in administrative burden and potential cost savings in the long term further

strengthen its appeal [Batt, 2019]. However, the adoption of electronic voting raises significant concerns, particularly regarding security risks, privacy violations, and the potential for electoral manipulation. These concerns have been highlighted by Górný [2021], Birch et al. [2014], and Wolf et al. [2011]. In addition, technical challenges such as ensuring the anonymity and reliability of the electoral system and resolving legislative and social obstacles require careful planning and ongoing evaluation [Anne, 2007; Toots, 2016]. Successful implementation requires a multifaceted approach, including political support, organizational integration, compliance with democratic principles and strict technical standards [Goldsmith, Ruthlauff, 2013].

As electronic voting continues to evolve, interdisciplinary research and collaboration are essential to master its complexity and ensure the integrity and inclusiveness of electoral processes in the digital age.

Debates about the above-mentioned benefits or doubts are part of almost every election cycle, even in the Estonian context. Institutions and authorities responsible for the conduct of elections must, therefore, promptly respond to criticism either from politicians or sceptics from professional circles or the public. After the last parliamentary elections [March 2023], the most prominent voice at the local level was the politician Martin Helme, the leader of the opposition Conservative People's Party (ERKE), who rejected Estonia's electronic voting as unfounded after the recent election expressing dissatisfaction after his party failed to secure a leading position, finishing behind The Estonian Reform Party and ending up in the opposition. Helme argues that a well-organised campaign and pre-election calculations led by the Conservatives should have culminated in victory during the 2023 election. He also questions the Electoral Commission's approach and criticises the extension of time it takes for results to be published, especially for online voting. In response, ERKE initially contested the election results, eventually leading to legal proceedings [ERR, 2023]. Subsequent reports indicate that the Estonian Supreme Court has dismissed complaints related to i-voting. However, the court proposed including new constitutional provisions regulating this matter [ERR, 2023].

Concerns are not limited to political figures, but also to IT experts. For example, Thomas Scott, a well-known British web developer and internet content creator, criticised Estonia's e-voting in a video (uploaded in 2019) that has been viewed more than 4.5 million times on his YouTube channel. He highlighted independent reports showing weaknesses in the system and an outdated architecture vulnerable to cyber threats from abroad, whether at the level of individual voting machines or

the central server that counts the votes. In particular, Scott dismissed the idea that blockchain technology would solve these problems, highlighting its role solely as a data storage system, the complexity of which is difficult to explain to the general public [Scott, 2019].

During a visit to the e-Estonia centre in November 2023, we sought further insight and raised common critical comments with local experts. Erika Piirmets, the local digitalisation advisor, acknowledged that similar concerns and complaints arise in almost every election in the country. However, she said that despite these challenges, the system was working effectively and had earned the trust of a significant proportion of citizens – underlined by the supporting data presented earlier. This dual perspective highlights the ongoing discourse on e-voting, where scepticism and trust are intertwined in assessing its functionality and security.

In the future, it will be interesting to observe the progress of the issue we are investigating in the most advanced Baltic state. Every decision, every innovation and every flaw in the system represents a new opportunity for improvement and research. In the best-case scenario, Estonia has the potential to become the first country where citizens prefer to vote from the comfort of their homes and physical voting becomes less common. In the worst case, e-voting may only work until a significant breakthrough undermines citizens' confidence in this voting channel.

In conclusion, the field of e-voting, especially its online manifestation, offers a rich terrain for future research and exploration. Several aspects deserve in-depth examination to improve our understanding of the multiple implications and dynamics associated with this evolving electoral channel. Potential avenues for future research include a comprehensive analysis of socio-demographic factors influencing e-voting preferences, a thorough examination of existing cybersecurity measures and their effectiveness, an examination of public perceptions and attitudes towards e-voting over time, and an assessment of the impact of evolving technologies on the development of e-voting systems. In addition, comparative studies in countries with different experiences of e-voting can provide valuable information on best practices and challenges. As technology continues to evolve, ongoing research efforts will play a key role in shaping the future of e-voting and its role in democratic processes.

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SLOVAKIA'S NATIONAL IDENTITY AND ITS POWER: HISTORICAL NARRATIVES, MYTHS AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

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Abstract

This article explores the relationship between national identity, the creation of myths and historical narratives, and their impact on politics in Slovakia. By analysing the intersection of historical perceptions and political dynamics. The research aims to show the influence of national identity on political choices and decision-making processes. The article provides an overview of how the relationship between history, myths, and understanding national identity influences the dynamics of today's politics in Slovakia.

Key words: *Slovakia, National Identity, Myths, Politics.*

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are creatures who can actively create different ideas and at the same time search for meaning in life and in their history. Myths play an important role in this search for meaning. The function of myths is to explain the natural or cultural habits of the group in which they are expressed. On the basis of these myths, symbols are created that define the values that society promotes. Myths and mythology are the foundation of many civilisations and nations. The question that needs to be asked today is whether myths that have become national myths, national folklore or national symbolism still have their place in society.

National myths are important because they act as a simplifying factor in a complicated truth. They condition the understanding of the nation's origins and co-create its identity, answering the questions “Who are we?”, “Who are we not?”, “Who is our friend?”, “Who is our enemy?”, “What political order do we prefer?” It is possible to perceive them as images that represent inspiration for the future, using images of the past, be it the golden age or the age of oppression [Tesař, 2007].

From the point of view of our research, we consider the most important identity, the political identity, which in the European space is understood as national-ethnic and national-political. Each political identity belongs to a collective/social identity.

Collective social identity also includes ethnicity/national-ethnic identity, which is based on common cultural interactions and self-definition in relation to other ethnic groups. It should be noted that ethnicity is perceived more strongly at a lower social level, i.e. in smaller groups, e.g. minorities, immigrants [Tesař, 2007]. Identity at the level of the majority group is most often expressed through national identity.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

In reviewing the literature on which the article is based, it is important to highlight several key authors and works that have provided a theoretical framework for understanding the issue. These authors include Ernest Gellner, whose work focuses on the formation of national identities. Equally important is Erik Hobsbawm, who provides an important historical perspective on the formation of national identities and the development of national movements in a broader historical context, which helps to explain the influence of myths and national identity on political and social effects in society. Equally important is the work of Henri Tajfel and John Turner on the theory of social politics, which provides a comprehensive view of how individuals identify within a group and shape their social groups. And since we are dealing with the space of Slovakia as an inseparable part of literature, we will also consider the work of Johann Gottfried Herder, who is one of the founders of the concept of national romanticism, which had a direct impact on the formation of national identity. Hegel's philosophical work provides a basis for understanding the development of national identity and historical development.

As far as Slovak authors are concerned, we consider the book *Mýty naše Slovenské* (Our Slovak Myths, ENG) by Krekovič, Krekovičová and Mannová (ed.), which provides relevant insights into the formation of national identity in the context of

the history of Slovakia and Slovak culture, to be relevant. The works of Gyarfášová, Miháliková and other scholars dealing with this issue extend these themes and provide important perspectives on the development of Slovak national identity. These sources provide a theoretical and empirical basis for understanding myths and myth-making in national identity and their significance in the Slovak political context.

2. NATIONAL MYTHS

A shared history is an important factor in the formation of national identity and pride. Perceptions of history are often heavily influenced by myths and mythologies. These are events and stories whose essence has been adapted to create the spectrum of opinion of the majority of society. This symbolic narrative aims to capture the mysteries of the world, life, the origin of things and other fundamental questions through the stories and experiences of other people. Myths have been created to help people understand the world around them. This understanding of the world helps us to identify with a particular community [Schöpflin, 1997], mainly because humans are a social species and need a group to live a satisfying life. Tajfel and Turner [1986] captured this need in their work within social identity theory. According to Tajfel and Turner's theory, people feel the need to have a social identity and to be part of a particular group. This results in groups in which individuals feel solidarity with each other.

Identity is a broad concept with many definitions, often used in the behavioural, humanities and social sciences. In addition to personal identity, which is tied to a specific individual and represents a set of specific characteristics and is considered the most basic, there is also collective or group identity [Kusá, 2005]. Group identity in this understanding is perceived as a group of individuals who have certain similarities. Group identity is based on the awareness of each individual belonging to the group to maintain a certain solidarity with its members and to share the same ideals and values. Identity in the sense of identification and self-determination is an important part of groups. However, it is necessary to realise that an individual does not have only one identity, but that they overlap and that social and group identities are also reflected in the personal identity [Novotná, 2010].

National identity has been and continues to be shaped by myths of nation-building. National myths are simplified in order to capture a wide range of people. We can say that practically every historical event or person of significant importance for the

state is subject to mythologisation, and its transmission from generation to generation is supported by mass communication and inclusion in the school teaching process. And despite their fictitious nature, they influence people's behaviour [Krekovič, 2013]. This thesis is also supported by Ernest Gellner, who claims that nations either have a real history or adapt and create one [Gellner, 2006]. Eric Hobsbawm attributes the mythologising of history to modern nationalism, which seeks to reconcile the history of the nation with the idea of national interest [Hobsbawm, 1992]. We can therefore argue that the main function of national myths is to mobilise and ensure the unity of modern, contemporary nations, thus creating a national-political identity and preserving values that prove to be mobilising over time.

Modern nations in Europe are based on political identity and, like political identity, they are divided along two main lines. An ethnic nation-state, typical of the area of states that emerged from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. And a political nation state, typical of Western Europe, such as France.

National myths manifested themselves most prominently in the processes of nationalism in the 19th century. Their main function was to provide an answer to the question of how to reconcile political boundaries with cultural ones. To create a space that would reflect the bipolar division of groups into “us” and “them”, or a space that is “known, good” and a space that can be considered “foreign and bad”, because either we have an idea of the dangers we might face there, expected or not, and we are afraid of it as a group. For each group, myths represent a narrative of justification for its system of morality and values.

National myths base their efforts to create borders on a certain categorisation. It is important to make this distinction because all nation-states have at least one category of myth on which they have based their efforts to gain recognition. National myths can be categorised according to their interpretation or the reason for their creation. In his article *Function of Myths and Taxonomy of Myths* [1997], George Schöpflin divides myths into eight groups.

- Myths about the territory,
- Myths about salvation and suffering,
- Myths about unfair treatment,
- Myths about chosenness and civilizing mission,
- Myths about military valour,
- Myths about rebirth,
- Myths of antiquity,
- Myths about kinship and shared ancestry.

Within the framework of this division, we can observe that even in Slovakia, in the 19th century, during the period of nation-building, efforts at national revival and efforts at independence were manifested through the idea of national identity, where myths were used, which we can place in the appropriate category in specific cases. In the 19th century, myths associated with efforts to create a nation are justified. They highlight shining moments, build positive traits to identify with, condemn moments of oppression and warn against their repetition. The question remains: is there a need for myths in the 21st century? If so, how do they affect a nation's society? Can these myths be abused?

3. THE ROLE OF MYTHS IN THE FORMATION OF SLOVAKIA'S NATIONAL IDENTITY

Research into Slovak myths does not have a very long and extensive tradition in Slovakia. In terms of success and scope, the book *Mýty naše slovenské* (Our Slovak Myths, ENG) [ed. Krekovič, Mannová, Krekovičová, 2013] was the book dealing with Slovak myths from modern history to current events. Currently, when reviewing the literature dealing with the issue of myths in Slovakia, we can come into contact with the study of myths mainly through research in the field of art, art creation and its presentation. In the field of art, the term national myth can be used for research on the history of Slovak modernism after the creation of Czechoslovakia [Gregor, 20-23] or research on works related to specific national myths, for example about Jánošík [Koltaiová, 2013]. Research on Slovak myths is also carried out by linguists, who perceive language not only as an individual and social phenomenon, but also as a language that influences individual and group identity [ed. Ondrejovič, 1997].

It is necessary to point out that the study of myths through the lens of social/political sciences cannot be avoided, even if it is perhaps less extensive in terms of publication content than in other scientific fields. This is mainly due to the fact that the social/political sciences tend to use quantitative methods, which cannot fully explain the reasons for changes in society. Unfortunately, public opinion polls, election analyses and statistics on life satisfaction in the country cannot fully reflect the myths and symbols in politics.

However, the creation of myths, and especially their connection with politics, shows us that it is possible to unite on a general level “for all and for the people”, but often in the interest of someone else. As a useful publication that examines political discourse through myths, symbolism, culture, language or memory, we include the

publication entitled *The Place of Symbolism in the Political Culture of Slovakia* by Silvia Miháliková [2018], in which she describes in three chapters the symbolism of the state from the historical development of the state, the symbolism of money and the symbolism of states. Oľga Gyarfášová has a different perspective on myths and their impact on the national agenda, in her research she examines the causes and links to the political regime and institutions through the lens of the historical memory of Slovak society and the impact of the national agenda [Gyarfášová – 1997, 2011, 2015].

The choice and form of political myths and mythology, symbols and rituals used indicate the direction of the political ideology and political regime established in the country. In order to understand the general perspective, it is also necessary to understand historical consciousness and collective memory as theoretical concepts, because the behaviour of political leaders influences the perceptions and attitudes of the public. According to Miháliková [2018], symbolic behaviour is a basic form of interaction between political representatives and the public and strengthens the authority of rulers. Symbols are used in political communication to evoke emotions, support a political programme and identify with a political line. Tendencies to use the issue of "national identity" and to transform it into nationalism in public discourse can bring a strong negative emotional charge into everyday life. An example of this is the current Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic, Martina Šimkovičová, a representative of the Slovak National Party (Slovenská Národná Strana, SNS), who is known for her hateful statements towards refugees and the LGBT+ community and for her efforts to forcefully manage the Ministry of Culture without public hearings [Šelestiaková, 2024]. Or the current deputy speaker of parliament, Andrej Danko, leader of the Slovak National Party, whose main motivation for running in the presidential elections is “not to let Slniečkars rule here”, or a visit to the grave of the former Czechoslovak president from the era of socialism, Gustáv Husák, together with the current prime minister, Robert Fico, SMER-SD [Mikeš, 2024].

Collective memory is one of the concepts that have taken root in the social sciences, which deal with the study of identity and related concepts such as ethnicity, the nation state, patriotism and others. It is important to see collective memory as one of the key aspects in the creation of groups that form bonds based on a sense of solidarity and thus mobilise in times of danger. However, it should be remembered that collective memory is not a static concept, but an object of deliberate influence that acts as an activation point for the beginning of group action [Kusá, 2009].

Collective memory is created through mutual communication between individuals and their memories [Tesař, 2007]. Historical awareness is an essential part of national identity. Its success is based on language, culture and the representation of the opposites “us” and “them” [Gyárfášová, 2015]. National identity, collective memory and historical consciousness are concepts that are considered within the framework of nation-building. Anthony D. Smith [1989] sees a nation as a historical and cultural community with a unified territory and common laws. Other authors [Strauss, 2010] also include language, writing, religion, territory, consciousness and unconsciousness among the integrating factors of the nation.

Interpreting the current state of Slovak society, its past and future means combining rational and irrational elements and analysing their interpretation and impact on society. In the search for the beginnings of Slovakia, as in the case of other nations, we encounter an attempt to prove the greatest possible antiquity of the nation. How long have the Slovaks been here and who are they? We are Slovaks, but what does that mean? Is it possible to find “pure Slovaks” in the geographical area of Central Europe? We should forget about this possibility, because from the historical point of view of the geographical movements of various tribes, Hungarians, Germans, Turks, Tatars, Czechs, etc., through the area, we have to assume that there was a certain assimilation or at least the leaving of descendants [Krekovič, 2005]. We can conclude that Slovakia and the Slovaks have been here from a historical point of view since the establishment of the Principality of Nitra, whose inhabitants stood in contrast to the non-Slavic Hungarians. The medieval nation survived the fall of the Principality of Nitra and the Slovak nation was gradually formed from it on the territory of present-day Slovakia [Steinhübel, 2005, in Krekovič].

Modern nations as we know them today began to form in the 19th century under the influence of nationalism. In the Central European context, we consider Johann Gottfried Herder to be the most prominent author who influenced the perception of the nation, who understood the nation as: “*A nation is a community of people united by the same language, inhabiting a certain territory, having common customs and traditions, the same national consciousness formed by the historical process*” [Herder, 2006]. According to this definition, language, territory, customs, traditions and national consciousness are among the characteristics that every nation must have. For Herder, language is the most important part of the identification of a particular nation. The struggle for linguistic uniqueness and individuality was typical for Slovakia as a country situated in the geographical area of Central Europe. The language was an integrating factor of the nation and also a distinctive

sign against the Hungarian pressure on the territory, even though in the revolutionary years of 1848-1849 the idea of the territory of Slovakia was defined on the ethnic principle [Lipták, 2005 – in Krekovič].

There were two main schools of thought in Slovakia regarding language as a state-building concept. The Bernolák line, led by Anton Bernolák, the Catholic line, and the Štúr's line, led by Ľudovít Štúr, the Evangelical line. For the purposes of this article, we will focus on the Štúr's line, which contributed most to the creation of a Slovak national consciousness and to the codification of the literary Slovak language that is still used today. The Štúr's line was mainly influenced by the dialectical idealism of George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel [Lapošová, 2013]. Hegel's philosophy is manifested in the “spirit of the nation”, which is expressed in a civil society created on the basis of the free choice of individuals. Herder's philosophy, on the other hand, manifested itself mainly in the field of language, which emerged as part of the formation of a nation. They were thus created simultaneously.

Nation ←————→ National language

According to Herder's definition, another qualitative characteristic of a nation should be customs and traditions, which in the area of Central Europe, especially in the former territory of Austria-Hungary, are difficult to assign clearly and concretely to nation-states. Customs and traditions also give rise to national consciousness.

National consciousness, the process of identification based on the national-ethnic principle, ethnicity, began in Slovakia within the framework of the national revival movement, which culminated in 1848–1849 and contributed to the anchoring of the built national identity, although it was not successful in terms of political demands Ľ. Štúr [Jurčišinová, 2018].

The territory was not clearly defined until the establishment of the first Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. The subsequent turbulent years of the independent Slovak state (1938–1945) and the second Czecho-Slovak Republic (1945–1993) changed the geographical positions of Slovakia's borders.

The modern history of Slovakia is mainly focused on the period of the communist regime (1948–1989). During this period there were active efforts to convince the population that there was a possibility of a classless, equal society, despite the fact that there were violations of the human and political rights of individuals. Forty years of one-party rule are still felt in society today, 30 years after the collapse of the bipolar division of the world. Despite the realisation that not everything was

ideal under the conditions of the totalitarian regime, we feel and witness the effort to defend it. “At least something was built under the Communists”, “We couldn't go to the West, but we could go to Cuba”, “The world was simpler”, “Everyone had a place to live and a job”, these are just a few of the phrases that are often used as an argument for that period.

In 2018, a survey was conducted on the current perception of socialism in the cultural, collective memory of Slovaks. The publication *Socialism: Reality instead of myths* [ed. Gonda, Zajac, 2020] examines the public opinion of Slovaks about the period of socialism in the chapter *Myths through the lens of current surveys* [Kuhn, Potočát, Zajac, Gonda, 2020]. The results of a nationwide quantitative survey confirm that more people in Slovakia are convinced that people lived better under socialism. These are mainly conditions of security in the field of work, housing and a more peaceful life. It should be noted, however, that opinions on this question are significantly influenced by the age of the respondent. In the 18–24 age group, 18 % of respondents hold this opinion, while in the over-65 age group, 73 % of respondents think that life was better under socialism.

After the fall of communism (1989), the question of what is typical of the Slovak nation and who are the Slovaks began to reappear in Slovakia. Research carried out after November 1989 revealed the weaknesses in the collective memory of Slovaks, who were unable to identify positive historical figures at the time. The survey was repeated in 1996 and 2000, when Alexander Dubček, Milan Rastislav Štefánik and Ľudovít Štúr took the place of figures of whom Slovaks are proud. However, it is interesting to observe the change in the perception of the Slovak state and the personality of Jozef Tiso, who as a member of the Catholic Church was perceived with greater leniency, and the representative of the communist regime Gustáv Husák, who began to show collective forgetfulness [Gyarfášová, 2015]. It is equally interesting to observe how politicians in the present day are reusing myths, not for the sake of unification, but for the sake of populist electioneering.

4. SNS – CASE OF ABUSING NATIONAL MYTHS IN POLITICS

From a political point of view, the post-November period can be seen as a period of possibility for the formation of several political parties. For the purposes of this article and its scope, we can consider the SNS and SMER-SD as the most important.

The Slovak National Party (SNS) has established itself in the Slovak party system as a representative of pro-national values based on the historical legacy of the previous, historic Slovak National Party. In the attitudes of the SNS after the

establishment of the independent republic, nationalism directed against ethnic minorities, in particular Hungarians and Roma, can be observed. This is evidenced by statements made by the former president of the SNS, Ján Slota:

The following statements reflect the mood of the post-November period, when political parties were trying to define themselves on the political spectrum against the emerging minority parties, but also against the parties in Hungary, which in this period began to reopen the issue of border areas.

“My pôjdeme do tankoch a pôjdeme a zrovnáme Budapešť... My budeme bojovať za svoje územia, za metre štvorcové, za každý meter štvorcový budeme bojovať... Chceme bojovať! Nedáme ani centimeter štvorcový tým hajzlom maďarským... 8. marca 1999, Rádio Twist”

“We will go in tanks and go and level Budapest... We will fight for our territories, for square meters, for every square meter we will fight... We want to fight! We will not give even a square centimeter to those Hungarian bastards... March 8, 1999, source: Rádio Twist”

Equally important in this statement is the repetition of the word “we”, which seeks to evoke a sense of cohesion and a common struggle against a common enemy.

“My sme Slováci tu, my od rodu Kristového. Nebude tešik [in hun,: tessek]. (Ján Slota takto vykrikoval v bratislavskom Harley Pube) 20. mája 2006, TV Joj”

“We are Slovaks here, we are from the Christ family. There will be no tesik [in hun,: tessek]. (Ján Slota shouted like this in Bratislava's Harley Pub) May 20, 2006, TV Joj”

“Musíme držať spolu. Nejakí Maďari tu nebudú poskakovať v strednej Európe a nebudú tu vytvárať také napätie, ktoré môže prejsť do niečoho veľmi nedobrého, čo nikto asi v strednej Európe nechce. (...) A s prepáčením Nemci doslova a do písmena možno robili menšie zvrhlosti ako maďarskí fašisti na južnom Slovensku: povedal Slota v rozhovore pre ČTK. 23. septembra 2007”

“We have to stick together. Some Hungarians will not be jumping around here in Central Europe and will not create such tension here, which can turn into something very bad, which probably nobody in Central Europe wants. (...) And with apologies, the Germans, literally and figuratively, may have done less

depravity than the Hungarian fascists in southern Slovakia: Slota said in an interview for ČTK. 23 September 2007”

In these statements we can observe the metaphor of a nation belonging to Christians. There is an attempt to interpret the ancient tradition of Cyril and Methodius against the opposition of the later adoption of Christianity on the territory of Hungary, combined with an effort to avoid a repetition of the oppression of the Austro-Hungarian era.

It was also a statement not only for the Hungarian minority, but also for the Roma minority.

“Cigáni by pozornejšie chodili po uliciach. Na takýchto ľuďoch len malý dvor a dlhý bič! 16. decembra 1999”. Sme.sk, 1999, cit. 2024

“Gypsies would walk the streets more carefully. Only a small yard and a long whip for such people! December 16, 1999” Source: Sme.sk, 1999, cit. 2024

However, the position of the Slovak National Party, even after the gradual decline of its electoral preferences and its subsequent 'rebirth' in 2012 with Andrej Danko as its leader, has not changed the degree to which it emphasises national identity. The key factor is the belief that Slovaks are under constant threat, which borders on the question of national survival. However, the problem is no longer the Hungarian or Roma minority, but also the area of liberal democracy, the LGBT+ community and the attitude to the war in Ukraine. The inspiration for the future direction is the creation of the 'Slovak Fidesz', which they see as a model for the management of society or the glorification of totalitarian regimes.

“Liberálna demokracia likviduje Slovensko, 12. decembra 2023”. In: Majerčíková, 2023, cit. 2024

“Liberal democracy is destroying Slovakia, 12 December 2023”. In: Majerčíková, 2023, cit. 2024

Other members of the party are also close to the national identity position.

Podpredsedníčka strany: Dagmar Kramplová

“CIELOM LIBERÁLNEHO EXTRÉMIZMU JE VYTVORIŤ DEZORIENTOVANÚ, DUŠEVNE I TELESNE ROZVRÁTENÚ BYTOSŤ! 24.júla 2023”. In: Kramplová, 2023, cit. 2024

Vice-president of the party: Dagmar Kramplová

“THE GOAL OF LIBERAL EXTREMISM IS TO CREATE A DISORIENTED, MENTALLY AND BODYLY PERVERTED BEING! July 24, 2023”. In: Kramplová, 2023, cit. 2024

Ministerka kultúry: Martina Šimkovičová

“Hovorím to skôr, ako sa zdvihne vlna nenávisťi a hrubosti v niektorých médiách a na sociálnych sieťach. Takže na produkcii Pride-ov, školeniach mládeže a aktivistov v LGBTI témach po školách a baroch bude ministerstvo kultúry, tak ako v iných oblastiach, šetriť”, “Už viackrát som sa vyjadrila, že odmietam progresívnu normalizáciu a moja zásadná predstava o ďalšej činnosti rezortu je návrat k normálnosti. Ctím si rôzne názory, ale nech je každému dovolené, a teda aj mne, vyslovovať svoj postoj”, 13. januára 2024, Ta3, 2024, cit. 2024

Minister of Culture: Martina Šimkovičová

“I say this before a wave of hatred and rudeness rises in some media and social networks. So the Ministry of Culture, as in other areas, will save on the production of Pride, training of youth and activists in LGBTI topics after schools and bars”, “I have already stated several times that I reject progressive normalization, and my fundamental idea of the department's further activity is a return to normality. I respect different opinions, but let everyone be allowed, including me, to express their position”, January 13, 2024, Source: Ta3, 2024, cited 2024

“Rešpekt voči iným kultúram neznamena ich zmiešavanie s tou slovenskou. Ak máme byť uznaní ako národ s vlastnou kultúrou, postavme do popredia našich dejateľov, naše tradície, naše dejiny”, 6. november 2023. Teraz, 2023, cit. 2024.

“Respect for other cultures does not mean mixing them with the Slovak one. If we are to be recognized as a nation with our own culture, let's put our actors, our traditions, our history in the foreground”, November 6, 2023, Source: Teraz, 2023, cit. 2024.

In all these statements, there is an attempt to limit manifestations of otherness or “accidental mixing” of cultures. However, it is necessary to point out, as we mentioned in the previous chapter, that it is impossible to expect a pure culture that has not been shaped by other influences, especially in the area of Central Europe.

The other party we have chosen as an example of the use of the narrative of national identity is the Smer-SD in conjunction with the SNS. Smer-SD (Social Democracy) has long been one of the strongest political parties. In 1999, the party acted as a 'third way' party and only later profiled itself as a left-wing party. A significant turning point in the narrative of the party's political representatives occurred in 2016 and was reinforced by the Covid-19 crisis and subsequently by the war in Ukraine. The narrative of the question of national identity can currently be seen in the support of the leader of the Smer-SD party, Robert Fico, within the Ministry of Culture, which is headed by Šimkovičová (SNS).

“Prosím, venujte pozornosť veľkomoravskej i cyrilometodskej tradícii, meruôsmym [1848–1849 – transcription of the numeral from the archaism] rokom, významným slovenským dejateľom. Nezabúdajte na také výrazné udalosti a dátumy, ako bol napríklad” 17. júl a Deň prijatia deklarácie o zvrchovanosti SR. 6. novembra 2023. Teraz, 2023, cit. 2024.

“Please, pay attention to the Great Moravian and Cyrillo-Method traditions, to the 1848–1849 years, to important Slovak contributors. Do not forget such significant events and dates, such as July 17 and the Day of Acceptance of the Declaration on the Sovereignty of the Slovak Republic”. November 6, 2023, Source: Teraz, 2023, cit. 2024.

As in the previous cases, we can identify elements in this statement that represent certain cultural features that should be important to the people of the nation. These include the Cyril and Methodius tradition, which is associated with Christian sentiments. The revolutionary years of 1848–1849, as an important milestone for Slovakia, mainly due to the codification of the literary language and thus the definition of its specificity.

CONCLUSION

It is important to point out that, despite the fact that the SNS and SMER-SD are at opposite ends of the official political party divide, they are united by the idea of Slavic cooperation and the return of a socialist establishment headed by a strong leader. This narrative is also confirmed by SMER-SD representative Ľuboš Blaha, who in 2019 was chosen as the most toxic member of parliament in the context of anti-system monitoring on Slovak Facebook, the Infosecurity.sk portal [Breiner, 2019], and also by the party leader, who actively communicates with the leader of the Fidesz party about common positions oriented towards Russia.

The rhetoric of the current political representatives is appealing and works mainly because a unified language and a universal set of national and state symbols are used, which arouse strong emotions with the need to act immediately, to act in favour of the state, which we consider threatened by an external enemy. Populist promises, simple solutions to complicated problems, strengthening of cultural traditions and Slovak heritage are an important driving force for moving the boundaries of these two parties. The past is directly related to the perception of the present, and it is necessary to know it in order to avoid misusing it. In the 21st century we cannot afford to romanticise and change history at will. Our goal should be a history education that is not influenced by ideology or efforts to promote a political agenda and political manipulation. Instead, it should aim to promote openness, inclusion and tolerance. These values are important in building a modern society that can meet the challenges of a global world. The use of myths, as they are used today, polarises society and marginalises certain groups, with the result that democratic processes are weakened.

Monitoring the use of the concept of national identity and myths should be important for academic research mainly because it can predict attempts to manipulate society and, in the most extreme case, prevent changes in the political regime by serving as a control and educational body against the abuse of power.

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VIRTUAL LAND RESOURCES IN TÜRKİYE'S CROP TRADE

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Abstract

Virtual land refers to implicit land resources displaced between countries in the trade of agricultural products. Virtual land flows can be measured using trade volume and country and year-specific yield data of products. This study aims to measure and reveal the long-term changes in virtual land flows in Türkiye's crop trade from 1986 to 2020. The results show that Türkiye's net virtual land imports in crop trade had increased from approximately -670 thousand hectares in 1986 to 7 million hectares in 2020. Turkey's annual average net virtual land import is 1.8 million hectares.

Key words: *Virtual Land Trade, Crop Trade, Türkiye, Embodied Land, Arable Land Flows.*

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INTRODUCTION

In international trade, there are implicit flows of production factors involved in the production processes of tradable goods as well as final goods flows. In addition to final goods flows between countries or regions, international trade also results in the exchange of resources such as water and land involved in the production processes of these goods. Since these resources are not tangible in tradable goods but are embedded in production processes, these resource transfers are called virtual resource trade (Zhang et al., 2016). In addition to the ever-increasing and diversifying commodity flows associated with international trade activities, the globalization process has also led to significant increases in the volume of virtual resource flows. Both national and global trade policies focus primarily on tangible commodity flows, which leads to neglect of embedded resource flows in tradable goods. In this context, it is possible to state that current trade policies are far from regulating the virtual resource flows in international trade. However, virtual resource flows have significant economic, socio-economic, and environmental impacts in the context of both exporting and importing countries (Würtenberger et al., 2006; Qiang et al., 2013; Kastner and Nonhebel, 2010). For all these reasons, there is a need to redesign existing trade policies by taking into account virtual resource flows both on a national and global scale. Quantitative measurement of these virtual resource flows is a preliminary stage for the relevant efforts.

Virtual resource flows are discussed in the literature mainly through trade in agricultural products and in the context of water (Allan, 1993,1999; Ioris, 2004; Xiong vd., 2020) and land (Kastner vd., 2011; Meyfroidt vd., 2013; Qiang vd., 2020; Wang vd., 2021) resources. The main reason for this situation is that agricultural production is closely tied to water and land resources. On the other hand, these resources have become increasingly scarcer on a global scale due to economic, demographic, and environmental factors (Qiang et al., 2013; Würtenberger et al., 2006; Chen and Han, 2015).

There is a fairly heterogeneous structure in the spatial and temporal distribution of water and arable land resources on a global scale. For this reason, especially for countries where water and land resources are scarce and the population is dense, international trade in agricultural products is very important in meeting local food demand and ensuring sustainable food security. In this context, trade in agricultural products functions as a bridge connecting countries or regions with resource supply deficit and surplus (Qiang et al., 2013; Chen and Han, 2015) and partially balances the heterogeneity in resource distribution. This balance is mainly

achieved through embedded resource flows in agricultural trade (Zhang et al., 2016).

Virtual resource flows were first mentioned in the literature by Borgstrom (1965) in the context of land resources. The author expressed the embedded land resources in the trade of agricultural products with the concept of “ghost acreage”. However, the interest in virtual resource flows in the literature is mainly based on Allan's (1993) studies on water resources. For this reason, it is possible to state that the theoretical foundations of the virtual land concept have developed predominantly within the framework of the virtual water concept. The concept of virtual water is defined by Allan (1993) as water resources embedded in agricultural products and transferred between countries as a result of trade activities. Based on this definition, Würtenberger et al. (2006) defined the concept of virtual land as productive land resources embedded in exported and imported agricultural products.

The term virtual water first emerged as a global solution alternative to the water problem in the MENA region (Middle East and North African Countries), which suffers from severe water scarcity and where food demand is mainly met through imports (Yang and Zehnder, 2007). Both virtual water and virtual land approaches are essentially based on the view that it is possible to protect and save these resources on a global scale if flows in international agricultural trade occur according to positive yield differences between countries. Positive yield differences between countries are closely related to the agricultural production techniques and methods applied by these countries (Yang et al., 2006). The virtual resource trade approach also enables countries to reduce the pressure on scarce local resources and benefit from extraterritorial resources. For this reason, the virtual resource approach is also described by Allan (1993) as a potential solution alternative for political conflicts that may arise due to resource scarcity, especially in regions where this problem is severe.

There are many studies in the literature on measuring virtual water and land flows in local, national, and regional trade of agricultural products (Wichelns, 2001; Kumar et al., 2005; Yang et al., 2006; Fader et al., 2011; Dalin et al., 2012; Chen and Chen, 2013; Cao and Yuan, 2022; Fan et al., 2022). Although the term virtual land was introduced to the literature earlier than the concept of virtual water, it is seen that studies on the virtual water trade occupy a larger place in the literature. This situation is mainly because the water problem is more visible than the land problem. At the same time, the effects of the drought problem have become more felt day by day due to global warming and climate change. This situation has led

researchers to focus their attention mainly on virtual water trade. On the other hand, as mentioned before, the theoretical foundations of the virtual land approach have developed mainly within the framework of the concept of virtual water. For this reason, techniques and methods for calculating embedded land flows in agricultural products have been developed mainly based on water resources. For all these reasons, there is a particular need for contributions from different disciplines toward the development of both the theoretical dimension and the calculation techniques and methods of virtual land trade (Yang ve Zehnder, 2007).

In this study, the virtual land area hidden in Türkiye's crop trade was quantified from 1986 to 2020. To quantify the virtual land export and import in primary crops we use the trade volumes and country and year-specific yield data of these products. We use the conversion factors for processed crop products to convert them into primary crop equivalents (Qiang vd., 2013). In this study, virtual land export and import amounts were calculated for 339 different crop products (178 primary crops and 161 crop products). Conversion factors of crop products were quantified using the caloric equivalent approach (Gerbens-Leenes et al., 2002; Kastner and Nonhebel, 2010; Qiang et al., 2013; Qiang et al., 2020). In this approach, the conversion factors are calculated by comparing the caloric contents of the processed product to the caloric contents of the primary product in the same amount. The caloric contents of crops were provided from the FAO's (2001) International Food Balance Sheets.

Best of our knowledge, there isn't any specific study in the literature on virtual land trade conducted in the context of Türkiye. In the limited number of studies (Fader vd., 2011; Qiang vd., 2013, 2020) conducted on a global scale, it is seen that Türkiye is included only in terms of total virtual land flows based on certain product groups or in short time intervals. For this reason, this paper aims to fill the gap observed in the literature. At the same time, it aims to reveal in detail the current situation regarding Türkiye's virtual land trade in the context of primary and processed crop products and the changes observed in the net virtual land flows over the years. On the other hand, quantitative calculation of virtual land flows constitutes the first stage of studies on both sustainable land management and the protection of arable land resources. However, it is possible to obtain more detailed and comprehensive results if virtual resource flows are considered based on specific product groups and the calculations are carried out in the context of both water and land resources.

1. Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

Due to economic, demographic, and environmental factors, arable lands are scarce resource that is decreasing day by day on a global scale (Qiang et al., 2020). According to World Bank (2023) data; Türkiye's per capita arable land area, which was approximately 0.81 hectares in 1961, decreased to 0.23 hectares by 2021. On a global scale, the arable land area per capita, which was 0.36 hectares in 1961, decreased to 0.18 hectares in 2021. This data shows that there has been a serious decrease in arable land area per capita both in Türkiye and in the world. Although the arable land area per capita in Türkiye is slightly above the global average, it is quite likely that soon, existing agricultural land resources will be insufficient to meet the food demand of the rapidly increasing population and ensure sustainable food security.

The fact that agricultural production is closely tied to arable land resources makes trade in agricultural products a necessity, especially for countries and regions where arable land resources are scarce. International trade in agricultural products plays a very important role in reducing the effects of existing resource scarcity in these countries (Qiang et al., 2013). On the other hand with global agricultural trade, local arable lands not only meet local consumption demands but also cross-border consumption demands. Countries where arable land resources are limited and food demand is high have to choose to meet the balance between low supply and high demand in arable land resources by renting or purchasing land from abroad or by importing more agricultural products (Wang et al., 2021). In this context, trade in agricultural products makes it possible for countries with scarce arable land resources to benefit from land resources outside their national borders (Würtenberger et al., 2006). Meeting consumption demand through imports shifts domestic land demand towards foreign land resources. This situation opens the door to cross-border environmental and ecological impacts (Meyfroidt et al., 2013). As a result of consumption and trade activities, the use of local land resources exceeds national borders, and this situation reveals the need to reorganize land use and management decisions from an international perspective.

The effects of trade in agricultural products on the protection and savings of water and land resources have been extensively discussed in the literature. Empirical findings show that international trade flows contribute significant savings to global water and land resources if these flows occur from countries with higher productivity levels to lower ones (Fader et al., 2011; Dalin et al., 2012). China's trade in agricultural products from 1986 to 2009 contributed to global land savings

an annual average of 3.27 million hectares (Qiang et al., 2013). On the other hand the annual average land saving in international grain products trade is approximately 50 million hectares, which corresponds to a land area roughly the size of Spain (Zhang et al., 2016). In addition, the volume of arable land area included in international trade has also expanded significantly in parallel with the increase in trade in agricultural products and has reached one-third of the total arable land area on a global scale (Chen and Han, 2015). However, some studies in the literature (Fader vd., 2011; Kumar vd., 2005; Ioris, 2004) state that the mentioned increase in international trade of agricultural products may also lead to an increase in the dependency levels of importing countries on other countries and foreign resources. For this reason, the mentioned countries unintentionally remain outside the virtual land market. Yang and Zehnder (2007) oppose this view and state that the basis of virtual land trade is the arable land scarcity problem of importing countries and argue that agricultural trade is a necessity rather than an alternative for the mentioned countries.

The virtual land trade approach is mainly based on differences in land use efficiency between countries (Yang et al., 2006). The absence of a global market for water and land resources causes the prices of these resources to be determined well below their real value. It is also possible to say that the agricultural, economic and trade policies followed by countries are very effective in this regard. This situation makes it difficult to determine the actual efficiency levels of countries in resource use (Burke et al., 2009). Another important limitation of the virtual land approach is that productivity levels in agricultural production are directly related to input use (Yang and Zehnder, 2007). If the land requirement level is the only parameter taken into account, empirical findings show that the most suitable alternative to meet food demand is intensive agricultural practices targeting high productivity levels (Kastner and Nonhebel, 2010). However, there are many undesirable environmental and ecological impacts caused by intensive agricultural production systems, especially eutrophication, pesticide pollution, and biodiversity loss (Matson et al., 1997). Another important criticism of the virtual land approach is that it focuses mainly on product yields and trade amounts when measuring the virtual land export and import amount of agricultural products. An implicit assumption is made that other variables affecting the trade in agricultural products, other these variables remained constant throughout the research period. This assumption leads to neglect of other variables related to demand, while variables related to product supply have an important place in measurements. In reality, increases in trade

volume and productivity levels of agricultural products may lead to an increase in the demand for food products, especially those with high demand elasticity. This situation may lead to an increase in the absolute demand for arable land resources, contrary to the expectations underlying the virtual land approach (Ewers et al., 2009; Rudel et al., 2009).

Criticisms of the virtual land approach generally focus on the theoretical foundations of the concept. This is mainly because the theoretical foundations of the concept are not yet sufficiently developed (Yang and Zehnder, 2007). Cao and Yuan (2022) point out that the virtual land trade approach is not a comprehensive solution alternative for all problems related to the scarcity of arable land resources. However, the authors particularly state that this approach plays a very important role in both ensuring efficiency in resource distribution and reducing the pressure on scarce local resources.

The fact that indirect land flows related to consumption and trade flows have become equal or even more important than local direct land use brings to the agenda the need to re-evaluate land use policies from a virtual perspective (Chen and Han., 2015). In this context, monitoring embedded land flows in agricultural trade is very important in terms of including sustainability issues in global trade policies. It also allows undesirable environmental and socio-economic impacts associated with international trade flows to be taken into account in designing national and international trade policies (Würtenberger et al., 2006).

2. Method

There are serious differences between crops and livestock products in terms of both production methods and techniques and land use types and requirements. Conversion factor calculations also show significant differences in the context of crop and livestock products. For these reasons, calculations of the virtual land export and import amount were made only for crop and crop products. This study considers 339 different crop products, 178 primary crops, and 161 crop products. The number of products in export and import are 148 and 191, respectively.

The virtual land export and import amount in the trade of agricultural products is calculated using the trade and yield data of the primary crops. The product caloric equivalent approach (Gerbens-Leenes et al., 2002; Kastner and Nonhebel, 2010; Qiang et al., 2013; Qiang et al., 2020) was used to calculate the conversion factors showing the primary crop equivalent of crop products. In this approach, the conversion factor of crop products is calculated by dividing the caloric content of

the processed product by the caloric content of the same amount of primary crop. Caloric contents of crops and crop products taken from the FAO's (2001) Food Balance Tables Sheets.

Crop products that are re-exported after value-added processes (such as processed coffee and cocoa products) are not included in the scope of the study. It is very difficult to determine the country of origin for the mentioned crop products. However, some countries import primary crops from other countries and then re-export them to different countries. This situation leads to deviations in the redistribution of local land resources and calculation results. Since these products constitute a very small part of the total trade volume, their impact on the calculation results is quite low (Qiang et al., 2020).

2.1 Calculation of Virtual Land in Crop Trade

Virtual land area in crop trade is calculated based on the trade volume and yield data of the primary crops. Yield is calculated by dividing the production amount of primary crops by the harvested area in a certain year. Virtual land export and import in Türkiye's crop trade can be calculated as follows: (Qiang et al., 2013):

$$VLI = C_p \sum_{h=1}^n \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{I_{h,i,j}}{Y_{h,i,j}} \quad (1)$$

where VLI denotes the virtual land import amount per hectare area, and C_p denotes the conversion factor. $I_{h,i,j}$ shows Türkiye's import amount (kg) of product i from country h in year j , and $Y_{h,i,j}$ shows the yield value (kg/ha) of product i in country h in year j .

$$VLE = C_p \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{E_{i,j}}{Y_{i,j}} \quad (2)$$

where VLE refers to the virtual land export amount per hectare area. $E_{i,j}$ shows the export amount (kg) of Türkiye's product i in year j , and $Y_{i,j}$ shows the yield value of product i in Türkiye in year j (kg/ha).

The net balance of virtual land incorporated in Türkiye's crop trade can be calculated as follows:

$$NVLT = VLE - VLI \quad (3)$$

A positive value of NVLT indicates that Türkiye has a net virtual land export (ha), while a negative value indicates a net virtual land import (ha).

2.2 Calculation of Conversion Factor

The conversion factor allows processed products to be expressed in terms of the primary product, or in other words, it shows how much primary product is needed to obtain a certain amount of processed product. Although there are different methods and approaches in the literature about the calculation of the conversion factor, in this study, a caloric equivalent approach based on the caloric contents of primary crops and crop products was adopted. This approach avoids the problem of double counting. Conversion factor for crop products can be calculated as follows (Qiang vd., 2013; Kastner ve Nonhebel, 2010; Kastner vd., 2011):

$$C_p = \frac{kcal\ a}{kcal\ p} \quad (4)$$

where C_p refers to the conversion factor of the crop product p , $kcal\ a$ refers to the caloric content of the primary crop, and $kcal\ p$ refers to the caloric content of the crop product p .

3. Results

Total virtual land exports were 33,203,382 hectares, and total virtual land imports were 86,918,271 hectares in Türkiye's crop trade from 1986 to 2020. The annual average virtual land export was 948,668 hectares, and the annual average virtual land import was 2,483,379 hectares. As can be seen from Figure 1, it is noteworthy that Türkiye mainly imports net virtual land in crop trade and the amount of net virtual land import has increased significantly, especially since 2001.

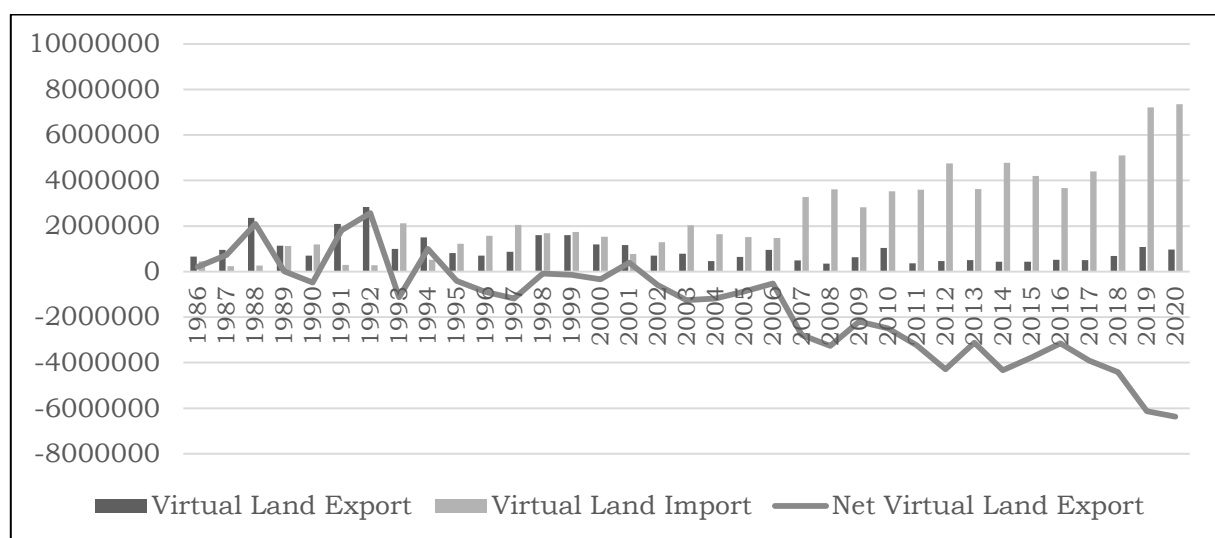


Fig. 1. Virtual Land Trade of Türkiye's Primary Crop Trade (1986–2020)

Source: Authors' own calculations based on the FAOSTAT database.

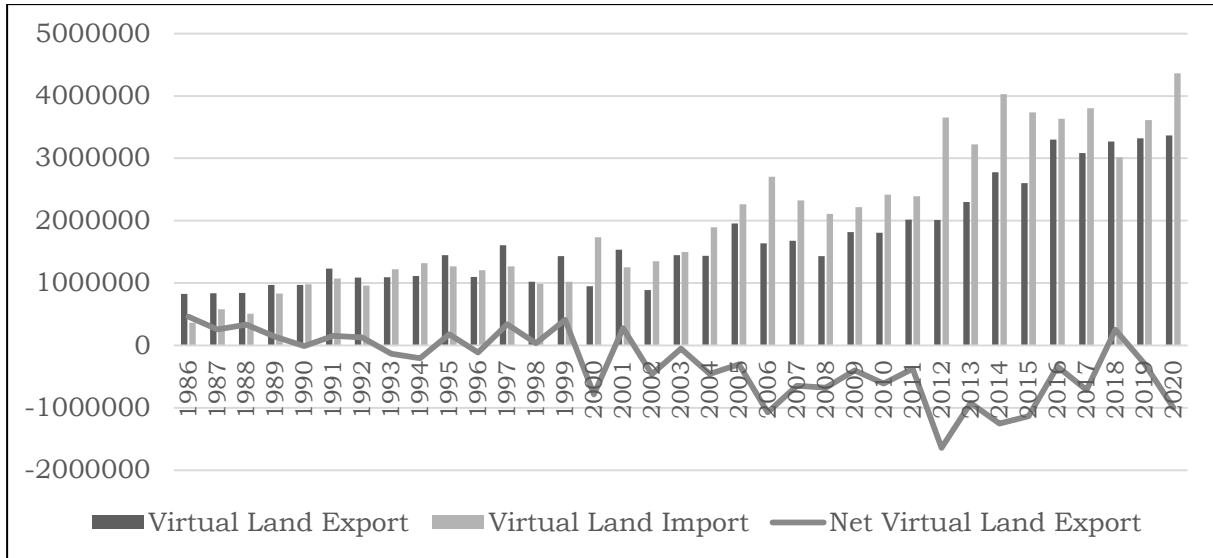


Fig. 2. Virtual Land Trade of Türkiye's Processed Crop Trade (1986–2020)

Source: Authors' own calculations based on the FAOSTAT database.

Türkiye's net virtual land export in crop products trade between 1986 and 1999 turned into net virtual land import in 2000. From 1986 to 2020, Türkiye's total virtual land exports in crop products trade were 60,218,526 hectares, and total virtual land imports were 70,825,088 hectares. Net virtual land import is 10,606,563 hectares. The annual average exported and imported virtual land area is 1,720,529 and 2,023,574 hectares, respectively.

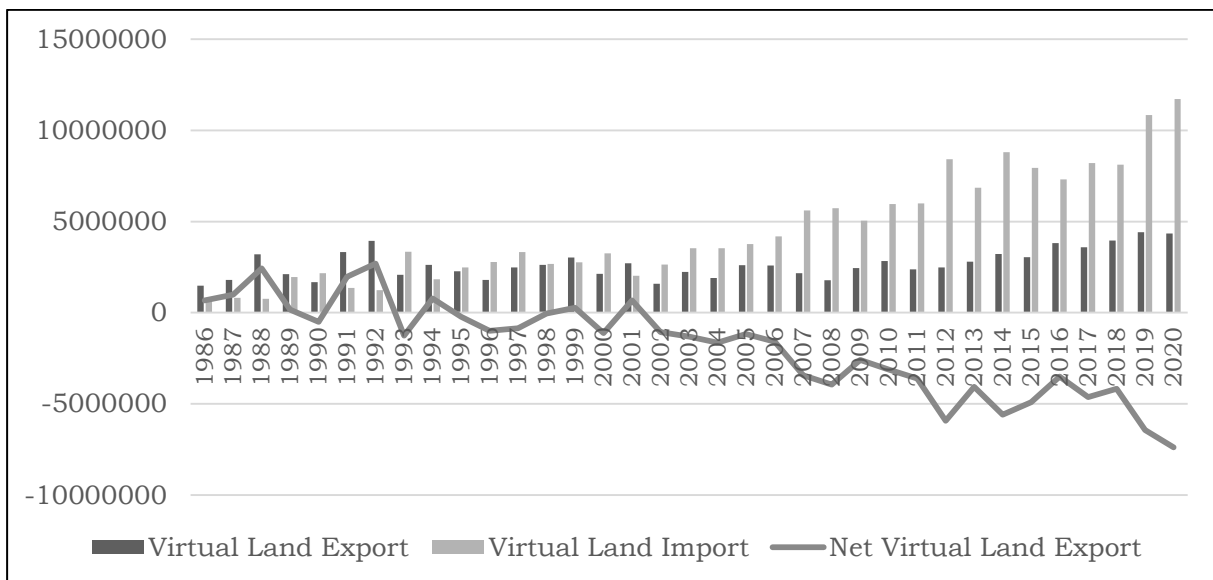


Fig. 3. Total Virtual Land Trade of Türkiye's Crop Trade (1986–2020)

Source: Authors' own calculations based on the FAOSTAT database.

Total virtual land export and import amounts in Türkiye's crop trade are approximately 93 million hectares and 158 million hectares, respectively from 1986 to 2020. According to Figure 3, the difference between Türkiye's virtual land exports and imports in crop products trade started to increase in the 2000s, and this difference gradually increased until 2020. In the years except 1986–1989, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1999, and 2001, Türkiye imported net virtual land in the trade of crop products.

4. Conclusion

Total virtual land export and import amounts in Türkiye's crop trade are approximately 93 million hectares and 158 million hectares, respectively from 1986 to 2020. During the examined period, Türkiye's total net virtual land import is 64,321,451 hectares, and the annual average is 1,837,756 hectares. This finding shows that to meet the current demand for crop products, Türkiye needs an annual arable land area of 1,8 million hectares in addition to national land resources. As mentioned before, products that are re-exported after some value-added processes, such as processed coffee and cocoa products, and livestock and livestock products are not included in the virtual land calculations. For this reason, Türkiye's annual extraterritorial land requirement is expected to be well above the mentioned area. On the other hand, according to World Bank (2023) data, Türkiye's loss rate in arable land per capita was 71.6 % in the period 1961–2021. This ratio is very important as it reveals the seriousness of the current situation. In addition to the downward trend observed over the years in Türkiye's per capita arable land equipment, some economic, environmental, and ecological developments may cause the current situation to become even more critical. In addition to environmental factors such as climate change (Dalin et al., 2012) and drought caused by the global warming process, excessive fertilizer use, inefficient irrigation techniques, and intensive agricultural production practices can lead to serious deterioration in soil structure and quality (Kastner and Nonhebel, 2010). It is quite likely that all these developments will negatively affect land use efficiency in agricultural production processes and further increase Türkiye's current demand for external land resources.

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REVIEW OF POLISH-ICELANDIC POLITICAL RELATIONS IN 1945–1989 – A POLISH PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The article discusses the political relations between Poland and the Republic of Iceland from 1945 to 1989. Prior to the Second World War, the two countries had limited contact, mainly through trade. Political relations only began to develop in the post-war period. Although at that time, both countries found themselves in antagonistic political and military blocs, as well as in different economic systems, Polish-Icelandic relations were generally constructive, pragmatic, and positive in nature. From the Polish perspective, the opposition of a significant part of Icelandic society towards the location of an American military base in Keflavik and Iceland's membership in NATO, as well as the Cod Wars waged mainly against the United Kingdom, were the main influences. Additionally, the block of socialist states carried out a policy of 'constructive dialogue and cooperation' in relation to the entire Nordic area, and there was an interest in developing trade contacts.

Key words: *relations with Nordic countries, Iceland, political relations of 1945–1989, policy of constructive dialogue, foreign policy of Poland.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In November 1918, Poland regained its independence. Only twelve days later, on December 1, 1918, Iceland was also proclaimed an independent state. However, it

remained in a personal union with the Kingdom of Denmark. During the interwar period, both countries had very limited political relations. The ratification of the Trade and Navigation Treaty between Poland and Iceland [Traktat Handlowy i Nawigacyjny pomiędzy Polską a Islandią] in 1924 and the conclusion of the Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Tonnage Certificates for Icelandic ships in Poland and Gdańsk, as well as for Polish and Gdańsk ships in Iceland [Porozumienie w sprawie wzajemnego uznawania okrętowych świadectw pomiarowych okrętów morskich, w Polsce i w Gdańsku islandzkich], expressed the diplomatic relations between the two countries. Between 1930 and 1939, Poland held an honorary consulate in Reykjavik, Iceland. Additionally, Michał Sokolnicki, the Polish Envoy in Copenhagen, visited Reykjavik during this time.

After the end of the Second World War, there was a significant increase in political interest in Iceland in Poland. This was reflected in the intensification of mutual contacts. However, this issue has not been thoroughly examined or described in detail in relevant literature, except for the article penned by Mirosław Romański, titled "Kontakty polsko-islandzkie po 1945 r.". The article titled 'Polish-Icelandic Contacts after 1945' aims to fill a void in the existing literature. It presents a descriptive hypothesis that despite being in antagonistic political and military blocks with different ideological and economic systems, Poland and Iceland had constructive, pragmatic, and positive mutual relations between the end of World War II and the 1980s. The article is structured into an introduction, main section, and conclusion. The main section analyses the content and scope of mutual political contacts between Poland and Iceland, and is divided into three subsections: development (in the 1940s and 1950s), stabilization (in the 1960s and 1970s), and limitation (in the 1980s) of political relations.

The approach used was political analysis within the model of historical political science, which includes the analysis of processes, phenomena, and relations. The research analysed the development of political life in Poland and Iceland, focusing on changes to their systems, institutions, and political relations. The explanation provided is causative and characteristic of historical study. Therefore, this article mainly employs the historical method.

Due to the limited research on the interactions between Poland and Iceland from 1945 to 1989, the article heavily relies on source materials. The analysis primarily examined archival materials related to the relationship between Poland and Iceland. These materials were collected from the Archives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Institute of National Remembrance and the Icelandic National Archives (Thjóðskjalasafn Íslands).

2. RELATIONS IN 1945–1989

2.1 Development of political relations (in the 40s and 50s)

Poland promptly recognized Iceland's full independence, which was proclaimed on June 17, 1944. On July 13, 1945, the Republic of Iceland was one of the first countries to recognize the Provisional Government of National Unity and propose establishing diplomatic relations with Poland [*Diplomatic notes dated 14 July, 1945 sent to the diplomatic representatives of France, Great Britain and the USSR; Telegram w sprawie uznania Tymczasowego Rządu Jedności Narodowej*]. The exchange of diplomatic missions took place in 1946 due to technical reasons [Frątczak 1974: 78]. In September 1945, Petur Benediktsson, the Minister Plenipotentiary of Iceland in Moscow, arrived in Warsaw with the Icelandic parliamentarian Einar Olgeirsson to discuss the case and explore the potential for establishing trade relations [*Pétur Benediktsson sendiherra í Póllandi 1946–1951*]. The Icelandic minister was also interested in determining whether Iceland should have created a distinct position in Warsaw or if it could be represented by its envoy in Moscow [*Notatka Naczelnika Wydziału Skandynawskiego z 1 X 1945 r.*: 1]. In the following year, the Icelandic minister plenipotentiary in Moscow received information from the Polish ambassador that "the Polish Government agreed to exchange diplomatic missions between Iceland and Poland, with Iceland being represented by its diplomatic representative in Moscow, and the Polish Government by its envoy in Norway" [*Depesza do Posła Islandii w Moskwie*].

As per the arrangements made in Warsaw, Mieczysław Rogalski, the Polish Envoy in Norway, travelled from Oslo to Reykjavik. The purpose of his visit was to submit letters of credence, establish personal relations, and discuss the proposed trade treaty between Poland and Iceland. The visit was initially scheduled for June [Rogalski 1946a], but was postponed to August 1946. In his report on the visit, Rogalski referred to the post-war political situation of Iceland, saying: "What one may discern in Iceland is the great supremacy of America and the abundance of American goods of all kinds and needs. America has taken all air bases and wants to retain them permanently. The position of the Icelandic government, financially dependent on America, is however to make the air bases equally accessible to all the major coalition powers. This policy is also supported by the Soviet Union, which [...] enjoys here high favour" [Rogalski 1946b].

In September 1948, Józef Giebułtowicz replaced Mieczysław Rogalski as the Polish Envoy in Iceland. Although his stay on the island was brief (September 10–18, 1948), he left with a positive impression. In his summary report of the visit, Giebułtowicz even included a personal reflection: "Throughout my diplomatic

service, Iceland has been the only place where, representing the New Poland, I felt treated equally with representatives of, for example, Great Britain or the United States. And since even for a diplomat it is difficult to get rid of the sensitivity caused by ambition as to these matters, often strikingly different in other countries (even those having closer contacts with Poland), it created a welcoming atmosphere for me and gave me for the first time in my service satisfaction with the result of my mission” [Giebułtowicz 1948a: 8]. Furthermore, in his summary report of the visit, Giebułtowicz, like Rogalski before him, provided an assessment of Iceland's post-war geopolitical position and the attitude of its people. The diplomat stated: “At the moment, Icelanders are acutely aware of the extent to which, in the existing geographic and political system, they are exposed to danger resulting from American imperialist aspirations. But the acceptance, which they do not even wish to express, but which is visible, should not be mistaken for a positive emotional attitude towards the United States. It ought to be noted that the American propaganda is so strong that this state of affairs may change over less than a generation” [Giebułtowicz 1948a: 8].

As previously mentioned, a Polish honorary consulate was established in Iceland during 1930–1939 [Pałyga 1970: 189]. Its activity was approved and recognized during Envoy Rogalski's stay on the island in 1946. In the first years after the war, the honorary consulate operated on the basis of pre-war letters of credence, which the new Polish authorities considered void. However, the Icelandic Government was not concerned with completing this formality. Only Józef Giebułtowicz, the next Polish envoy accredited to the presidency of Iceland, took an interest in this matter. In May 1948, he requested a new letter of credence from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Giebułtowicz also gave a positive assessment of the consulate, noting: “The existence of the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Reykjavik is purposeful and even indispensable, due to the Polish ships calling in there as well as owing to the growing Polish-Icelandic trade relations. As it can be seen from the correspondence between the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Oslo and the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Poland in Reykjavik, the Consulate even makes certain steps in the propaganda field, distributes materials received from the Legation of the Republic of Poland in Oslo and arranges all the commissioned activities” [Giebułtowicz 1948b: 1–2]. At that time, the Honorary Consul was an entrepreneur named Hjalti Jonsson, while his nephew, Finnbogi Kjartansson, served as the Deputy Consul. Kjartansson had studied trade in Poland before the war and graduated from Warsaw in 1935 [Ristow 1972: 10].

Another Polish envoy accredited to the presidency of Iceland was Stanisław Antczak, who came to Reykjavik in early July 1954 to submit relevant powers. In general, like Giebułtowicz before him, Antczak had positive impressions from his trip to Iceland. “My impressions as to the stay and meeting Icelanders – he wrote in the summary report on the visit – are favourable, as for the kindness and even a cordial reception, it indicates that Icelanders treat us with great respect and that commercial and political relations with Poland are taken seriously” [Antczak 1954: 5].

While Stanisław Antczak was in Iceland, the Icelandic Foreign Minister, Kristjan Gudmundsson, raised the possibility of establishing a permanent Polish representation in Reykjavik. During a reception he hosted, Gudmundsson argued that such an office would greatly facilitate trade, cultural, and consular contacts between the two countries. The Icelandic business delegation staying in Warsaw in March 1956 (Witkowski 1956) also reported similar postulates. They highlighted serious problems in their contacts with the Polish side, which made it difficult to expand Polish-Icelandic relations. To meet the expectations of the Icelandic side, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided in April 1956 to open a consulate in Reykjavik with a consul's rank [*Notatka w sprawie otwarcia Konsulatów w Luxemburgu i Reykjaviku oraz Agencji Konsularnej w Heerlen, 19 IV 1956*]. Therefore, on June 5, the Legation of the Polish People's Republic in Oslo sent a diplomatic note to the Embassy of the Republic of Iceland in Oslo regarding the establishment of a consular post in Reykjavik [Antczak 1956a: 1]. In the same month, Envoy Antczak reported from Oslo that the Icelandic Government had agreed to the establishment of a consular post of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik with an official note dated 20 June. [*Wyciąg korespondencyjny Nr 11655 z Oslo, dn. 25 VI 1956 r.; Nota islandzkiego MSZ z dnia 20 czerwca 1956 r. potwierdzająca zgodę na utworzenie Konsulatu PRL w Reykjaviku*]. Consequently, on August 1, 1956, the Consulate of the Polish People's Republic was established in Reykjavik with territorial competence for Iceland by the decision of Minister Marian Naskowski. [*Akt ustanowienia Konsulatu Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w Reykjaviku, 10 VII 1956 r.*]. One month later, Mieczysław Gumkowski was nominated as Consul of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik. In December of 1956, the Polish Envoy in Oslo, Mieczysław Antczak, informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about a letter received on December 11th from the Consul of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik. The letter contained information that on November 29th, 1956, the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent letters of credence to Gumowski along with the exequatur [Antczak 1956b].

In the first half of 1957, the Polish side made efforts to raise the consulate to the rank of legation. As a result, on 15 October, the Consulate of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik was abolished, and its responsibilities were transferred to the Legation of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik, which had been established on August 15, 1957. [*Akt zniesienia Konsulatu Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w Reykjaviku, Warszawa 5 X 1957; Akt ustanowienia Poselstwa Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w Reykjaviku*]. The Consul, Mieczysław Gumkowski, was appointed as the First Secretary of the Legation. In the absence of the envoy, who stayed in Oslo on a daily basis, he headed the post as *chargé d'affaires* [*Parafraza dep. Szyfr. z dnia 31.07.1957 r. do Morskiego – Oslo*]. In 1962, the governments of the Polish People's Republic and the Republic of Iceland decided to elevate their representative offices in Warsaw and Reykjavik to the rank of embassies, resulting in another transformation of the Polish representation on the island. The Polish side presented this initiative in a letter dated November 10, 1962, addressed to the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Kazimierz Dorosz, the sitting Envoy, was appointed as the Polish Ambassador to Iceland. However, the organizational structure did not last long. On May 30, 1963, the Polish authorities decided to liquidate the Embassy of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik as a separate institution. Instead, they established a representative office that functioned based on the structures of the commercial counsellor's office [*Plan perspektywiczny prowadzenia pracy wywiadowczej na kierunku: fińskim, norweskim i islandzkim z dnia 27.10.1965 r., 22*]. Bolesław Piasecki was appointed its head and presided as *chargé d'affaires a.i.* (while maintaining the position and responsibilities of the *commercial attaché*) [*Szyfrogram Winiewicza do Kazimierza Dorosza z dnia 6 marca 1963 r.*]. In subsequent years, the Polish representative office in Reykjavik underwent further reorganizations, including the restoration of embassy status.

The establishment of Polish posts in Reykjavik in the second half of the 1950s, first the consulate and later the legation, was primarily motivated by political factors related to the internal political situation in Iceland. The 1956 election brought significant changes to the Icelandic political scene. As a result, the centre-right coalition of the Independence Party and the Progressive Party, which had been directing Icelandic policy for a decade and integrating the country into a network of international connections with the United States and other Western countries, was removed from power. The new government, which is known as the first 'government of the broad left', was formed by the Progressive Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the People's Alliance. Regarding international policy, the new ruling group,

primarily composed of the People's Alliance gathering Icelandic socialists and communists, made revocation of the Defence Agreement with the US and withdrawal of American troops from the Keflavik base a key assumption [Raczyński 2011: 184–185]. The political realignment of Iceland caught the attention of and was welcomed by the USSR and other socialist countries, including Poland. As a result, they began seeking to intensify mutual contacts with Iceland and support the political changes taking place there. Consequently, Poland decided to open its consulate on the island, followed by a diplomatic representation in the form of the Legation of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik. The following text is a direct quote from a secret correspondence between Przemysław Ogrodziński, Director General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Albert Morski, Envoy of the Polish People's Republic in Oslo, dated April 20, 1957: “The decision to foster our relations with Iceland was made in the spring of 1956 after the Icelandic government had declared revision of the agreement with the US concerning the bases. The decision, thus, resulted from political assumptions and aimed to enable permanent observation of Iceland's political evolution and to establish direct contact with the Icelandic political circles favourable to the idea of peaceful coexistence. At the same time, the governing bodies recommended developing cultural relations with Iceland. Trade relations had been already established. As a result of this decision, we resolved to establish a consulate in Iceland, which we intended to transform into a legation within a year. To set up a legation at once seemed to us to be too harsh in this period” [Ogrodziński 1957: 1]. Relatedly, Morski, on the occasion of a visit to Reykjavik connected with the submission of credentials, received the task of obtaining the Icelandic Government's consent to transform the Polish consulate into a legation and to implement this transformation. At the same time, Morski was obliged to travel to Iceland several times a year in order to “strengthen contacts with Icelandic political circles” [Ogrodziński 1957: 1].

The letter instructed the Polish envoy in Oslo to provide conclusions on the development of relations with Iceland after visiting the country. From May 25 to June 7, 1957, Morski stayed in Reykjavik. In his report, the Polish diplomat highlighted the reluctance of a portion of Icelandic society towards American domination over the island. He noted: “What expresses the Icelandic society's attitude towards Americans is last year's overthrow of the conservative government which had led to the installation of the US military bases in Iceland during peacetime, and the support of the sitting government, composed of «progressivists» / peasant party / social democrats and communists, which came to power under

the slogans of removing American bases from Iceland. In the further part of the report he added his assessment of the situation: «If it had not been for the Hungarian incidents, this matter would have been undoubtedly brought to an end already last year. The situation created due to the Hungarian incidents and the Suez Crisis forced the Icelandic government to make temporary concessions to the US. In consequence, the decision on the future of the American bases on the Icelandic territory was suspended until the summer of 1957. However, the number of American troops in Iceland has been considerably reduced, Americans make their presence in Reykjavik very seldom, and the financial inflows from the lease of the bases, which in the previous years amounted to almost 300 million Icelandic kronas, were reduced in 1957 to 1/3» [Morski 1957: 1].

Assessing the attitude of Icelanders to Poland, Morski generally regarded it as friendly and kind (especially towards some fraction of the political elite).

As part of the process of strengthening contacts with Icelandic political circles, measures were taken to establish direct contacts between the leaders of the Icelandic Socialist Party and the leaders of the Polish United Workers' Party. In May 1957, talks were held between Mieczysław Gumkowski, the Consul of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik, and Einar Olgeirsson, the leader of the Socialist Party and chairman of the lower chamber of Althing. Gumkowski stated that the Icelandic socialists considered it important to establish communication with the Polish United Workers' Party [Gumkowski 1957a: 1–3].

Following instructions from the head office, the Polish diplomatic representation in Reykjavik aimed to maintain close contact with the centre-left government of Iceland, as well as leading politicians, particularly those on the left. The legation sought to use these contacts primarily for two purposes: firstly, to obtain political information, and secondly, to generate interest in the main directions of Polish foreign and domestic policy. The Polish chargé d'affaires a.i. observed that the implementation of the latter goal faced significant challenges. For example, there was little interest among Icelandic politicians in the Rapacki Plan, which was being promoted by Polish diplomacy at that time. A similar situation arose with the proposal for an exchange of visits between Polish and Icelandic parliamentarians. However, at the turn of 1958, Mieczysław Gumkowski could report to the head office: “Since the Consulate of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik was transformed into the Legation (August 15, 1957), the interest in the institution and the range of its contacts have increased significantly. The establishment of the Committee of Polish Friends [Komitet Przyjaciół Polski] in Reykjavik, the first steps

on the path of the exchange of journalists, interest in the Polish literature, publications and cinema, and finally the growing trade in goods are a promise to well-developing Polish-Icelandic relations” [Gumkowski 1957b: 16]. However, in late 1958, the prospects for their evolution changed significantly due to the reassessment of Iceland's internal policy. Just before Christmas, the People's Alliance left the government coalition due to the lack of an agreement on economic affairs, resulting in the dissolution of the so-called government of the broad left. Following its collapse, the country was briefly governed by a social democratic minority government led by Prime Minister Emil Jonsson. In 1959, after electoral district reforms and new elections, the Independence Party, Social Democratic Party, and Progressive Party formed a centre-right 'reorganization government' that remained in power for the next three terms (1959–1971). The cabinet's name was associated with the economic reform programme initiated in 1960. The programme included krona devaluation, liberalisation of foreign trade, and a reduction in state protectionism and interventionism. Iceland expressed the new policy by signing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1964 and joining EFTA in 1970 [Raczyński 2011: 185]. In international politics, the new centre-right government proposed an alliance with the US, membership in NATO, and the continuation of the American base in Keflavik. Therefore, Halina Kowalska, Gumkowski's successor as *chargé d'affaires* a.i. in Reykjavik, reported on the legation's activities in the second half of 1959, stating: “The foreign policy of the social democratic government [...] is characterized by the persistent pursuit of closer ties with the West, eager emphasis on belonging to the Atlantic community, and above all, close cooperation with Americans. In these conditions there is no question of centrifugal tendencies in relation to NATO. Likewise, the matter of the implementation of the 1956 parliament resolution on the liquidation of the American airbase [...] completely lessened” [Kowalska 1959: 2]. Referring to the relations between Iceland and the Soviet Union, Kowalska emphasized: “Iceland's governing circles have deep and unconcealed – to put it mildly – aversion to the Soviet Union. It is driven by hostility toward communist ideology and fear of infiltration” [Kowalska 1959: 5]. At the same time, the new political conditions did not significantly deteriorate official Polish-Icelandic relations. According to the Polish diplomatic representative, this was because Iceland still viewed Poland in “a certain October halo” at the end of the 1950s, considering it to be “politically oriented westward”. This generated a friendly attitude towards Poland [Kowalska 1959: 7, 17].

At the end of the 1950s, international matters played an important role in Polish-Icelandic bilateral relations. Iceland sought to obtain the widest possible international support for its decision to extend the belt of territorial waters, which led to a sharp dispute with Great Britain. In October 1959, Haraldur Gudmundsson, Iceland's Envoy accredited in Poland, met with Minister Adam Rapacki in Warsaw to seek Poland's support for Iceland's position on the naval law ahead of the 1960 Geneva Conference. In response, Minister Rapacki emphasised that the Polish perspective on this matter was based on the fundamental principle of recognising the sovereign rights of states to specify the width of their territorial waters within reasonable limits, in order to protect their vital interests. Therefore, he assured Gudmundsson that, as was the case at the Geneva Conference in 1958, Poland still recognised Iceland's debating points and would continue to support its position [Zabłocki 1959]. In its relations with Iceland, the Polish delegation aimed to gain support for the disarmament concepts proposed by the socialist block and official recognition of the western Polish border by the Icelandic government. The Polish delegation in Reykjavik was also committed to monitoring the FRG's "penetration" in Iceland [Druto 1959; *Penetracja Niemieckiej Republiki Federalnej w Islandii*]. In both cases, Polish diplomacy encountered significant difficulties. The Icelandic political elite, as previously mentioned, showed little interest in the Polish disarmament initiative presented in the Rapacki Plan. Additionally, Icelandic authorities did not understand the importance of officially confirming the Polish border on the Oder and Nysa Łużycka rivers [*Note of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iceland to the Polish Legation in Reykjavik dated August 10, 1960*]. In the subsequent years, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs endeavored to closely observe and monitor the following issues: Iceland's international political position (which was increasingly leaning towards the US), the growing influence of the US on the island, the balance of power in domestic policy, and the prevailing sentiments in Icelandic society (particularly anti-NATO or anti-American demonstrations). At the same time, the Polish state supported Iceland's position at international forums, even when it conflicted with the interests of Western powers. Therefore, as noted by Bernard Piotrowski, in the post-war period "Polish delegates at the UN supported all Icelandic efforts to strengthen the country's political sovereignty" [Piotrowski 1972: 37].

2.2 Stabilization of political relations (in the 60s and 70s)

In the 1960s, Poland placed significant importance on developing relations with the Republic of Iceland. This was due to political reasons, mainly related to NATO

issues and concerns about FRG “propaganda penetration” in Iceland. Additionally, there were economic reasons, particularly the potential for Polish shipyards to secure contracts for constructing cutters and trawlers for Icelandic ship owners, as well as an interest in maritime and fishery matters [*Pilna notatka 19/D.III/1969 z 9 stycznia 1969 r.*: 3]. As the centre-right coalition still held power in Iceland, trade began to play an increasingly important role in bilateral relations, particularly in the late 1960s. This was partly due to Icelandic foreign policy, which, guided by national interest, sometimes manoeuvred between the West and the East. Ambassador Ogrodziński emphasized this in his October 1969 report on his trip to the island: “Iceland does want the presence of socialist countries at home, a limited one, but undoubtedly posing a certain counterbalance to its links with the West” [Ogrodziński 1969: 12].

In the late 1960s, political communication between the two nations was primarily conducted through diplomatic missions and consular posts. However, this changed with the introduction of official visits by senior politicians. In 1968, Icelandic ministers visited Poland for the first time in the history of their mutual relations. The first visit, which took place from 1–12 July, was made by Gylfi Th, the Icelandic Minister of Culture and Commerce. In January 1969, Gislason and later, from 18–22 August, Minister of Fisheries Eggert Thorsteinsson visited Poland. According to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both visits were successful in familiarising foreign guests with Polish production and export capabilities, particularly in shipbuilding [*Pilna notatka 19/D.III/1969 z 9 stycznia 1969 r.*: 3]. In September 1969, Ryszard Karski, the Polish Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, paid a return visit to Iceland. He headed the delegation that negotiated and signed a trade agreement for the period of 1970–1974.

Regarding political contacts, it is noteworthy that the Progressive Party showed a willingness to establish relations with the Polish Peasants' Party in the late 1960s. According to *chargé de affaires* a.i. Mieczysław Kroker, the Progressive Party chose to intensify cooperation with people's democracy countries in all possible areas. At that time, they were already maintaining regular contacts with people's parties in the GDR and Bulgaria [Kroker 1969: 5].

The beginning of the next decade did not bring any fundamental changes in bilateral relations. At the beginning of the 1970s, the Polish side in contacts with Iceland was primarily aiming at: 1. Development of trade, and in particular boosting Polish exports to the island in order to offset the negative balance; 2. Maintaining and, where possible, developing contacts at the intergovernmental level initiated by

visits of Icelandic ministers in 1968 (primarily to promote Polish exports and to conduct political talks on European security); 3. Continuing and developing cultural, scientific and technical cooperation – to the extent defined by real possibilities [*Notatka dotycząca stosunków polsko-islandzkich z 10 kwietnia 1970 r.*: 1].

At that time, Polish official state bodies were interested in Iceland's position on the proposal to convene a conference on security and cooperation in Europe, as Iceland was among the NATO members who were relatively positive about it [*Tezy do rozmów z Sekretarzem Generalnym islandzkiego MSZ Petur Thorsteinssonem*: 1]. The Icelandic government was primarily interested in maritime issues, in addition to economic concerns. This was because of their unilateral decisions in 1972 and 1975 to expand the exclusive economic zone in the waters surrounding the island. They also sought international support and recognition for these activities.

During his stay in Warsaw on May 19–23, 1970, Secretary General of the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Petur Thorsteinsson, conducted discussions on the issues mentioned above. The Icelandic initiative led to Thorsteinsson's meetings and talks with Adam Willmann, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ryszard Karski, Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, and Czesław Wiśniewski, Deputy Minister of Culture and Art. At the end of the visit, the Icelandic secretary was received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stefan Jędrychowski. The purpose of the visit was for the Polish side to present its position on matters related to European security, the German problem, and the process of normalization of Polish-German relations. The talks also included a review of the state and prospects of bilateral relations, particularly in the commercial and cultural dimensions. Regarding the issue of European security, the Icelandic diplomat repeatedly emphasised that Iceland supported the idea of convening a conference on this matter. Iceland aimed to normalise relations in Europe and maintain good relations with all countries, which was one of the main principles of Icelandic foreign policy at the time. Regarding the German issue, the Republic of Iceland placed great importance on talks between the Polish People's Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. Thorsteinsson emphasized that his country did not support the exclusion of the possibility of German unification. The discussions held in Warsaw also covered maritime and fishery issues. Thorsteinsson expressed his hope to gain Poland's acceptance for the plans to expand Iceland's exclusive economic zone. It was agreed that contacts regarding these matters would take place through the permanent representations of both countries at the UN. If necessary, direct contacts through diplomatic channels would also be utilized. Concerning economic issues, both parties reiterated their

mutual desire to develop existing trade relations. The Icelandic diplomat invited Minister Jędrychowski and Deputy Minister Willmann to visit Iceland. The diplomat also reminded the Polish side of their obligation to host a return visit from the Minister of Culture. Deputy Minister Willmann summarized the talks as follows: "Taking into account the peripheral location of Iceland in Europe, preoccupation with its own problems, intensification of the American influences – we got basically a positive impression on the overall position of Icelandic policy and its willingness to develop contacts and relations with socialist countries in general and with Poland in particular" [*Pilna notatka z 27 maja 1970 r.*: 1–6].

In March 1971, the IV Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to Thorsteinsson's invitations by undertaking activities to organize a return visit by Deputy Minister Willmann. The proposed dates for the visit were in May or June. Eventually [*Wizyta Min. Willmanna w Islandii*], however, it was made only in 1972 by Deputy Foreign Minister, Józef Czyrek.

The development of bilateral relations between Poland and Iceland in the 1970s was influenced by the reshuffle on the Icelandic political scene. Unlike the 1960s, the 1970s were marked by high political instability in Iceland, with subsequent elections bringing changes to government coalitions. Following the 1971 elections, the Independence Party lost power, and the Progressive Party, along with opposition groups, formed the second government of the 'broad left'. In 1974, the Independence Party regained power and cooperated with the Progressive Party. In 1978, an alliance composed of the Progressive Party, the People's Alliance, and the Social Democratic Party took power, forming the so-called third government of the 'broad left'. However, they remained in power for just over a year. The return of the Icelandic left to government brought back the slogans of Iceland's exit from NATO and the withdrawal of American troops from the island into the mainstream of Icelandic political life. The political climate created by this situation was conducive to improving relations between Iceland and countries of the socialist bloc. According to a 1971 report by the Polish *chargé de affaires* a.i. in Reykjavik, Czesław Godek: "The programme of the current Icelandic government is a national programme. None of the coalition parties wants to see American troops in Iceland, and the press organ of the People's Alliance and also of the Progressive Party often oppose the anti-Soviet campaign conducted in the opposition press. The atmosphere is different than at the times of the former government. Willingness to cooperate with socialist countries has also intensified" [Godek 1971: 15]. In August 1971, Ambassador in Norway and Iceland, Przemysław Ogrodziński reported from Oslo:

“The new Icelandic government can be considered the most radical / leftist government in capitalist Europe” and further: “The situation justifies increasing our contacts with the Government of Iceland. Poland is in a good position because we have not interfered with the internal affairs of the Icelandic left” [Ogrodziński 1971]. However, it soon became apparent that the Icelandic left, which had evolved into the position of 'Eurocommunism' (as termed by Polish official state bodies), was not enthusiastic about establishing closer cooperation with socialist countries, as its representatives had been in the 1950s. For instance, in 1975, the People's Alliance declined the invitation from the Polish side to participate in the VII Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party [Szymanowski 1975a, 1975b]. Officially, the authorities justified their decision by invoking the principle of non-participation in congresses of other countries' parties, which had been formulated a few years earlier, although there were exceptions to this principle. Two years later, in the context of the political activity of the embassy in Reykjavik, chargé de affaires Antoni Szymanowski reported the following: “[...] the main leftist force, «People's Alliance», is now displaying unfavourable tendencies, hindering contacts and cooperation, to say nothing of a more generous basis: these are clear sympathies to «Eurocommunism» and explicit accents against the USSR and SC [socialist countries]. The party's organ - on the scale of the Icelandic press – should be placed today after the most anti-communist and anti-Soviet conservative newspaper” [Szymanowski 1977a: 5].

In the first half of the 1970s, an important event in bilateral relations occurred when Icelandic Foreign Minister Einar Agustsson visited Poland from May 20–24, 1973. This was the first high-level visit in the history of Polish-Icelandic relations. The invitation was extended by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Józef Czyrek during his stay on the island in 1972. The Polish side gave Agustsson's visit the same protocol and press coverage as other Nordic foreign ministers, emphasizing the importance of relations with Iceland. During the visit, the Icelandic minister met with Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz and Minister of Water Transport Jerzy Szopa. Although a meeting with Chairman of the Polish Council of State Henryk Jabłoński was planned, it did not take place. Agustsson had to cut short his stay in Poland and urgently return to Iceland due to the worsening of Icelandic-British relations during the second 'Cod War'.

According to Polish diplomacy, the Icelandic side attempted to demonstrate their willingness to expand relations with socialist countries by promptly accepting the proposed visit by Deputy Minister Czyrek. It is important to note that, at that time,

Poland and Iceland shared similar stances on many key international issues. This was because the foreign policy of the new Icelandic centre-left government met the expectations and interests of the socialist countries in many areas. The Icelandic authorities have declared their interest in European events and expressed their willingness to pursue a policy of détente and cooperate with all nations. They have also announced their intention to seek a revision of the agreement with the US and gradually withdraw American soldiers from the base in Keflavik, with completion expected by 1975. They have also announced their intention to seek a revision of the agreement with the US and gradually withdraw American soldiers from the base in Keflavik, with completion expected by 1975. Poland shares the assessment of the importance of bilateral agreements ratified by the USSR with the Polish People's Republic and the German Federal Republic, as well as the four-party agreement on Berlin, for a positive development of the situation in Europe. The speaker recognizes the GDR and announces the establishment of diplomatic relations with this country in the near future. The speaker also supports the admission of both German states to the UN. The speaker advocated the swift convening of the European Conference on Security and Cooperation and announced active participation in it. They declared support for the ongoing arms reduction talks in Vienna and fully agreed with the idea of convening the World Conference on Disarmament. The signing of the Paris Peace Accords regarding Vietnam was welcomed, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was recognized. The establishment of diplomatic relations with this country was also announced. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was recognized, and the policy of UN support for national liberation movements in Africa was backed. Finally, the speaker advocated for a broad development of economic cooperation in Europe.

During the review of bilateral relations, both parties rated them positively and emphasized the need for further development. The discussion mainly focused on economic issues, particularly the export of Polish vessels and an agreement between Iceland and the EEC. In a previous issue, Agustsson evaluated the trawlers purchased from Poland as the best out of all obtained so far. He also announced that Iceland would continue to place orders for Polish ships while striving to diversify its imports from Poland, particularly in the area of consumer goods. Regarding the latter topic, the Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the Icelandic agreement with the EEC would not adversely affect the development of Polish-Icelandic economic relations.

According to Minister Olszowski, Agustsson's visit to Poland was purposeful and conducted in a friendly atmosphere. The conversation was characterised by...

“constructiveness and mutual striving to achieve consensus”. The Polish side managed to accomplish all the assumed main goals. The only concessions concerned fishing issues. As emphasized by Olszowski, in this area the Polish side took into account “the specific situation of Iceland in connection with [...] exacerbation of its conflict with Great Britain”. Generally, nonetheless, Olszowski stressed that the visit of the Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs was useful and fruitful. It made an important “contribution to the programme of comprehensive activation of relations between the Polish People's Republic and the countries of the Nordic region” [*Pilna notatka z wizyty Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych Islandii Einara Augustssona w Polsce w dniach 20–24 maja 1973 r.*: 7].

In 1973, Ludvik Josepsson, the Icelandic Minister of Trade and Fisheries, paid an official visit to Poland, following in the footsteps of Agustsson. The agenda of his visit included talks with Polish ministers in Warsaw, as well as a stay in Gdańsk and Gdynia, where he familiarized himself with the functioning of the Polish shipbuilding industry. According to the report of chargé d'affaires a.i. Czesław Godek, Josepsson gave a very positive assessment of the trip to Poland and the talks held there.

In the following years, the main issue in bilateral relations was the regulation of possible access for the Polish fishing fleet to Icelandic fisheries. Polish diplomacy raised this matter several times, but the Icelandic side consistently prolonged discussions and avoided making any declarations. Finally, on September 9, 1977, the two countries signed the Agreement on Scientific and Technical Cooperation in Fishery [Umowa o współpracy naukowo – technicznej w dziedzinie rybołówstwa]. However, the Polish fleet was not granted any fishing rights in the Icelandic fishing zone. The agreement did not include a stipulation that both parties considered it desirable to extend in the future for “economic cooperation” [*Bieżące sprawy Islandii, 15 VIII - 15 X 1977*: 2]. In September 1977, in order to sign the agreement in question, the Polish Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Maritime Economy, Edwin Wiśniewski, arrived in Reykjavik to be received by Iceland's Prime Minister, Geir Hallgrímsson [Polsko-islandzka umowa w dziedzinie rybołówstwa: 2].

In September 20–22, 1976, Stefan Olszowski, the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Poland, visited Iceland as part of a strategy to develop political contacts with the Nordic countries and in response to repeated invitations. The visit coincided with the 30th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations and signing the first trade agreement between Poland and Iceland. This was the first visit of a Polish Foreign Minister in the history of mutual relations and the first official visit

of a senior politician from the bloc of socialist countries to Iceland. During his short visit to Reykjavik, Olszowski met with Icelandic Foreign Minister Einar Agustsson and was also received by Iceland's President Kristjan Eldjarn. During the visit, its participants reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on the most important international problems of the time, in particular with regard to the implementation of the CSCE Final Act and preparations for the Belgrade conference scheduled for the following year. As for the international issues, the Polish side wanted above all to point to the wide opportunities created by the "policy of détente and peaceful coexistence for the positive development of bilateral relations between states with different socio-political systems". In the sphere of bilateral relations, the aim of the Polish diplomacy was to discuss ways of solving the problem of possible fishing of the Polish fleet in the waters around Iceland, which had not been remedied at the time, as well as to debate on the prospects of expanding and increasing trade, based on stable long-term agreements [Ciešlar 1976: 2].

Regarding international issues, the Polish side viewed the consultations positively. According to Polish diplomacy, Minister Agustsson's statements during the plenary talks were more extensive than any previous official statements made by the Icelandic government [*Bieżące sprawy Islandii, 15 sierpnia – 30 września 1976*: 5]. In response to the raised issues, Minister Agustsson: The speaker agreed with the Polish side that there is a need to strengthen the process of political and military détente. They emphasized the importance of fully and comprehensively implementing the provisions of the CSCE Final Act and properly preparing for the meeting in Belgrade. The speaker also expressed appreciation for Poland's efforts in this regard. The Icelandic side expressed interest in the Soviet initiative to hold three pan-European congresses on energy, transport, and environmental protection. However, it was noted that participating in such events would pose significant personnel and organizational challenges for Iceland. Poland expressed interest in the progress of SALT II negotiations and Vienna talks on reducing armed forces and armaments in Europe. They also hoped that disarmament efforts in Central Europe would extend to the northern flank of the Nordic region in the future. The speaker expressed support for the proposal to hold the World Disarmament Conference and agreed with the Polish stance on the importance of the UN and the need to reinforce it without amending the UN Charter. They also praised the Polish government's efforts to improve relations with the FRG, acknowledging that it was a significant step towards promoting détente and enhancing relations between countries with differing political systems.

The bilateral talks resulted in a slight decline. The discussions centred mainly on fishery and economic matters, specifically on the potential for trade expansion.

The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs summarised Minister Olszowski's visit to Iceland as useful and held in a friendly and convivial atmosphere. The visit contributed to the deepening of the political dialogue with Iceland, which was a positive complement to Polish relations with other countries in the Nordic region. The report, prepared by Deputy Director of IV Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paweł Cieślak, emphasised these points. "The Polish side clearly felt that this visit – as the first diplomatic visit of a politician from a socialist country at this level – had particular importance for the Icelandic side. The Icelandic interlocutors stressed in all their speeches the importance of Poland, its economic and social achievements and the activity of foreign policy" [Cieślak 1976: 4–8]. Olszowski's visit was significant because it occurred during the reign of Iceland's centre-right government, which was less inclined to establish connections with socialist countries. The Polish Embassy in Reykjavik viewed the visit as a means of confirming that, among all socialist countries, Poland held the most favourable position in Iceland [*Bieżące sprawy Islandii, 15 sierpnia – 30 września 1976*: 5].

In the late 1970s, political relations between Poland and Iceland were described as 'good and free from controversy'. However, due to Iceland's size and distance from Poland, these relations were less developed than with other Nordic countries. Poland's interest in developing these contacts was demonstrated not only by the visits of Minister Agústsson in 1973 and Minister Olszowski in 1976, but also by the establishment of a political department at the Embassy of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik, which included an MFA employee with the rank of Minister-Counsellor [*Islandia, notatka informacyjna, z września 1976*: 14].

At that time, the post in Iceland, which fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Maritime Economy, aimed to improve and strengthen relations with Iceland. This was achieved by maintaining close contact with the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other ministries, leading politicians, political parties, parliamentary groups, social organizations, and mass media. In 1977, Antoni Szymanowski, the Polish *chargé d'affaires* in Reykjavik, expressed his opinion on the state of relations between the two countries in the following way: "Polish-Icelandic relations are good, they can even be described as friendly. Evidently, the degree of their development cannot be compared to the state of relations between the Polish People's Republic and other Nordic countries [...]. Nonetheless, Poland occupies an important position in Iceland's foreign trade as one of the largest importers – thanks to large purchases of fish flour and leather. The political field is

free from controversial issues, if we disregard the fact that the two countries belong to opposing military groups as well as the state of affairs in the fishery industry, which is unfavourable for Poland, but not very likely to change [...]. Thus, one can speak about the general convergence of both countries' foreign policies, which opt for strengthening of détente, limitation of armaments, especially nuclear ones, suppression of the sources of conflicts (Middle East), development of economic and scientific-cultural cooperation, support for the UN" [Szymanowski 1977b: 2–3].

In April 1978, Henrik Bjornsson, Secretary General of the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visited Warsaw to strengthen political ties. During his visit to Poland, the Icelandic diplomat held consultations with Józef Czyrek, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, conducted talks at the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Maritime Economy, and was also received by Emil Wojtaszek, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Following the intentions of the Polish side, the visit was meant to establish a tradition of holding regular meetings and consultations at the level of deputy ministers of foreign affairs, in line with the model of Polish relations with other Nordic countries. Regarding international affairs, it was found that both countries share similar perspectives on various contemporary issues of European or global significance. Bjornsson presented Iceland's official position as being deeply interested in the progress of détente. Iceland did not regard the debates of the CSCE review conference in Belgrade as a failure. The country recognized the crucial importance of SALT II talks for progress in disarmament and further advocated for organizing the World Disarmament Conference. Iceland hoped that the forthcoming Special Session of the UN General Assembly dedicated to this subject would be the prologue for its convening. The country disapproved of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction and did not share the position of states in favour of reviewing the UN Charter. Regarding bilateral relations, the meeting participants were pleased to note improvements in both the political and economic aspects in recent years. While fishery issues received significant attention during the negotiations, the outcome dispelled any doubts about Poland obtaining fishing quotas in the Icelandic zone in the coming years.

In general, the Polish side gave a positive assessment of the visit and the consultations. They even proposed to elevate the rank of the ongoing political dialogue to the prime ministers of both countries [*Wizyta w Polsce H. Bjornssona, 26–30.04.1978, Notatka informacyjna o konsultacjach polsko-islandzkich przeprowadzonych w Warszawie w dniach 26–28 kwietnia br.: 1–7*].

Several months later, in September 1978, the Embassy of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik made a proposition related to the transfer of power in Iceland

to the left-wing government and a similar proposition had been made. They suggested renewing the invitation for the then Prime Minister, Olafur Johannesson, who had been invited to visit Poland during his previous role as Minister of Trade and Justice in the previous cabinet [Szymanowski 1978]. However, the government of Johannesson fell after just over thirteen months in power, so the visit never took place.

The 1970s marked a significant revival in bilateral relations between Poland and Iceland, with unprecedented intensification of political, economic, and cultural contacts. For this reason, at the end of the 1970s, a note regarding the bilateral relations prepared by IV Department contained information that they “should be described as good and characterized by a keen interest for Poland” [*Ambasador Islandii w Polsce z siedzibą w Oslo A. Tryggvason, Notatka informacyjna o Islandii i stosunkach polsko-islandzkich*: 5]. In these circumstances, the political priorities of the Polish Embassy in Reykjavik were to take actions aimed at implementing the CSCE Final Act and strengthening the process of détente. Additionally, the embassy aimed to develop bilateral relations in all areas, in line with the assumptions of the Polish People's Republic's policy towards the Nordic region. The embassy also aimed to shape a positive image of People's Poland [Szymanowski 1979: 2]. In the late 1970s, Polish diplomacy raised the rank of diplomatic relations with Iceland by sending an ambassador to permanently reside in Reykjavik. This demonstrates the importance that Poland placed on maintaining contact with Iceland [*Uwagi Departamentu IV Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych do planu pracy Ambasady PRL w Islandii na rok 1980*: 1]. Previously, the embassy in Iceland was led by a chargé d'affaires, while the accredited ambassador resided permanently in Oslo.

2.3 Limitation of political relations (in the 80s)

Following a period of dynamic development, Polish-Icelandic contacts were significantly limited in the early 1980s. This was primarily due to the acute economic crisis faced by Poland, as well as its complex internal situation and international repercussions. Initially, however, there were no indications of significant changes in Polish policy towards Iceland or in the mutual relations. In 1980, the Polish government aimed to maintain a close relationship with Iceland. The action programme for 1980 outlined the following plan for their diplomatic relations.

- in the political field – creating favourable conditions for the development of mutually beneficial political and economic relations (mainly through maintaining contacts with the government, main political parties and trade unions);

- in the economic field – creating more favourable conditions for boosting Polish exports to the island;
- in the field of culture and information – presentating Poland and its position in the world [*Program działania na 1980 rok w stosunkach z Islandią*: 1–2].

The embassy aimed to expand its “cultural and political” activities beyond the country’s capital by planning three trips to Akureyri, Neskaupsstadur, and Husavik. This is in addition to building good relationships with the political environment of Reykjavik. [*Plan pracy ambasady w Islandii na 1980 r.*: 2]. In 1980, there was an analysis of the idea of sending a delegation of Polish parliamentarians to Iceland.

However, these plans were quickly abandoned due to the challenging economic situation in Poland and the deterioration of Polish-Icelandic relations resulting from the repression of the opposition and the imposition of martial law in Poland. The political elites, mass media, and broad public opinion in Iceland, as well as in many other countries, closely followed the August strikes, establishment of the Independent Self-Governing Labour Union 'Solidarity', and the subsequent events that took place in Poland from 1968 to 1981 [*Utanríkispólitík Póllands 1968–1981*]. In mid-April 1981, the Polish Ambassador in Reykjavik, Henryk Wendrowski, presented the prevailing views on the situation in Poland in Icelandic society as follows: “Even talks in the local circle of diplomats indicate a wholly one-sided way of seeing Polish affairs. Much like at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here. There is a general belief here that the Polish nation, that the workers rebelled against the system. Not only against the current government, but against communism. So, the conclusion is simple: a bad system must be replaced by a better system, that is by a capitalist one. That is why the revolt in Poland should be supported and sympathised with, and that is why «Solidarity» has been classified as a positive force, while the communist, weak government as a retrograde one” [*Islandzkie komentarze do sytuacji w Polsce*: 2]. The Embassy reported that Icelandic trade unions had established contact with 'Solidarity'. Haukur Mar Haraldsson visited Poland to meet with Lech Wałęsa and invite representatives of 'Solidarity' to Iceland. [*Islandzkie komentarze do sytuacji w Polsce*: 3–4].

Due to the worsening political relations between the two countries, there were significant changes in the guidelines of Polish foreign policy towards Iceland. It was reflected in the Programme Guidelines for Relations with Iceland in 1981 [*Programowe kierunki działań w stosunkach z Islandią w 1981 r.*] noting that: “Iceland is not one of the main targets of our political and economic interests, the

scope of Polish-Icelandic relations will not expand". At the same time, among the instruments of influence in the political sphere the document mentioned only: "maintaining contacts between Polish and Icelandic trade unions", "further actions for contacts between the Polish United Workers' Party and the People's Alliance" and "maintaining contacts with the main Icelandic political parties, particularly with the opposition Social Democratic Party" [*Programowych kierunkach działań w stosunkach z Islandią w 1981 r.*: 1–2]. The document did not mention any contacts with the Icelandic government, which had criticized the Polish authorities for violating the provisions of the CSCE Final Act.

This situation coincided with the fact that in 1981, the Polish Embassy in Reykjavik faced a difficult financial situation. In light of the aforementioned issues, the Polish government took action by recalling the Ambassador of the Polish People's Republic in Reykjavik during the summer of 1981 and subordinating the post to the Ambassador of the Polish People's Republic in Oslo [Korczewski 1981]. Subsequently, on May 31, 1982, all Polish delegations in Iceland were closed [Ambasada PRL w Reykjaviku]. The closure of the Polish Embassy in Iceland had a negative impact on both Polish-Icelandic political relations and trade between the two countries. This was highlighted by the Icelandic delegation during the Polish-Icelandic Joint Committee session held in Warsaw on 19–21 September 1984. The delegation strongly advocated for the reactivation of the Polish representation, stating that it would facilitate the development of economic relations. This postulate was fully understood by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Trade [Nestorowicz 1984] and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. [*Pismo do Ministra Handlu Zagranicznego T. Nestorowicza z dnia 8 listopada 1984 r.*].

However, it took three years to relaunch the Polish post. The Ministry of Foreign Trade recommended Stanisław Laskowski for the task of commercial counsellor and chargé d'affaires a.i. to travel to the island. Laskowski arrived in Reykjavik on October 31, 1987, and made an official visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland at the beginning of November. Although the atmosphere was convivial, Icelandic official state bodies did not express much interest in developing economic relations with Poland. As a result, trade relations on the Icelandic side were primarily conducted through individuals and their business entities¹.

During the 1980s, there were limited direct contacts between senior representatives of Poland and Iceland, reflecting a significant limitation in their relations. Only one

¹ Stanisław Laskowski completed his mission in Iceland on July 30, 1991. Then in 1994, he was appointed Honorary Consul of the Republic of Iceland to Poland.

high-level visit occurred during this decade, which took place from December 12th to 15th, 1988, when Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iceland, visited Warsaw. During his stay, he met with several high-ranking officials including the Chairman of the Polish Council of State, Wojciech Jaruzelski, Prime Minister Mieczysław Rakowski, Marshal of the Sejm Roman Malinowski, Foreign Minister Tadeusz Olechowski, and Minister of Economic Cooperation with Foreigners Dominik Jastrzębski. Additionally, at his own request, the Icelandic minister held talks with prominent representatives of the anti-systemic opposition [Laskowski 2000: 234].

3. CONCLUSION

From the mid-1940s to the end of the 1980s, there was a development in Polish-Icelandic political relations. During this period, the interactions between the two countries became more lasting and less incidental. The friendly political atmosphere favoured the strengthening of mutual contacts. Although Iceland and Poland were in opposing political and military blocs, and had different economic systems after the Second World War, Iceland was generally portrayed positively in Poland. This was due to the policy adopted towards all Nordic countries, with whom Poland aimed to establish a framework for constructive dialogue and cooperation. However, Icelandic specificity conditioned it, primarily through the existence of a relatively strong trend opposing American domination in Icelandic society and among some political elites. This was expressed through the desire for Iceland's withdrawal from NATO and the closure of the American base in Keflavik. The positive image of Iceland was partly derived from its involvement in political and economic conflicts, particularly with the UK. The Icelandic authorities sought allies among socialist countries in response to the intensification of these conflicts. It is important to note that the perception of Iceland in Poland and the level of interaction between the two countries was largely influenced by Iceland's internal political situation. Specifically, it depended on whether the government in power was centre-right or centre-left. The official inter-state relations played a significant role in the development of Polish-Icelandic contacts, which were fully established only in the latter half of the 20th century. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1946. Ten years later, Poland established its diplomatic representation in Iceland. Regular inter-state contacts were conducted through consular and diplomatic institutions, and infrequent official visits were made by representatives of both countries.

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CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AS THE IDENTITY OF PHENOMENON

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Abstract

As a foundation of national identity, a cultural landscape can be perceived sensually or spiritually. Associating a country with art, memory, and identity opens up the possibility of a new perception of a particular place as a cultural landscape. The theoretical and methodological basis of the text encompasses Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Pecníková's [2020] typology of the country as a cultural landscape presented as 1) a real landscape; 2) a fantastic landscape; 3) an ideal landscape. The aim, therefore, is to test the applicability of Pecníková's typology to a case country – New Zealand, commonly referred to as a Pacific country.

Key words: *cultural landscape, identity, New Zealand, Pacific.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's globalized world is characterized by a high dynamic of changes bringing new questions connected with the survival of human communities [Kozárová, Ištók 2015] that adapt the landscape according to newly formed conditions and thus shape the identity of the land and nation. Identity is the key to understanding human beings, their thoughts, and opinions, but also to the perception of the life of the communities in which they live.

Cultural landscape as a scientific field of cultural studies interconnects concepts of identity, history, and cultural memory of a land. Besides material expression, an intangible component is included i.e. people's way of thinking, their feelings, acting, and sense of belonging (identity), as well as cultural and historical events that fundamentally influenced its formation [Pecníková 2020; Gbúrová 1996]. It is a concept of ideology defined as a complex of temporal layers of the memories of the chain of generations of people who live there, memories that are expressed in architecture, painting, music, landscape, and so on. By linking land with identity, we open up a new perspective of perceiving a specific place as a cultural landscape. Countries around the world have nicknames (e.g. New Zealand – Land of the Long White Cloud) that seem to be based on cultural stereotypes, but often come from intellectually interesting phenomena that define the nature of the cultural landscape. Globalization has resulted in joining the cultural landscape with a territorial identity. *“The link between landscape and identity is one of the most powerful feelings in human beings. [...] Increasingly attention is being paid to the critical role landscape plays in our sense of place, identity and belonging”*. [Taylor 2015a:12]. The phenomenon of identity as we know it today did not exist in the pre-modernist period, e.g. in an agrarian society, people were bounded by social class, religion, and local ties to the lord of the manor [Pondelíková 2022:33; Gelner 1993; Gieben, Hall 1993]. The changes began with the rise of industrial society; these older ties dissolved, and society needed a different kind of glue to hold it together [Fukuyama 2012]. This glue was typically formed of language and culture, as they created new bonds so that people could communicate with each other and live together in a pluralistic, multicultural, and modern society. Identity is a key to understanding human beings, their thoughts, and views (referred also as individual identity), but also to perceiving the life of the communities in which they live (collective identity, as a base for political and national identity).

National identity is an essential form, followed by transnational, cultural, transcultural, and ethnic or religious identity in the context of studying the cultural

landscape. Within cultural studies, several approaches and perceptions of culture and its dimensions have been developed, such as the theories of Edward T. Hall, Geert Hofstede, and Fons Trompenaars. For the purposes of this study, Hofstede's 6-D model will be applied, which describes in detail the ways, manifestations, and norms of behaviour in individual cultures. The identity of a country (national identity) and its people is generated by the physical, climatic, ecological, and geographical qualities of a given space, which, through their natural or anthropogenic configuration, make individuals aware of the place where they live and give them a sense of belonging [Walls 2022].

The cultural turn (70s – 90s of the 20th century) caused that various scientific disciplines, which have culture integrated into their research have interlinked the acquired knowledge. These are mainly cultural and political studies, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, economics, and geography. The interest was no longer only in objects of culture (artworks, artifacts), but research focused on a deeper study of culture(s) through the interpretation of symbols, meanings, social relations, cultural differences, and landscape.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE OVERVIEW

A cultural landscape is a rather unexplored scientific field of cultural studies. It connects the concept of identity, history, and cultural memory of a land. *“Cultural landscapes are the places where human culture is on display where our human landscape is our unwritten biography, reflecting our tastes, our values, our aspiration, and even our fears in tangible visible form”*. [Taylor 2015a:12]. In addition to material expression, there is an intangible component in the cultural landscape; i.e. people's way of thinking, their feelings, acting, sense of belonging (identity), as well as cultural and historical events that fundamentally influenced its formation [Pecniková 2020:45; Gbúrová 2015:9]. As a personal (individual) identity reflects an individual's membership of different groups within a community, it is closely linked to collective identity, i.e. social group identity. Therefore, Tajfel and Turner claim that it is essential to understand the link between personal and group identity [Tajfel, Turner 1979:34] reflected often by political participation. This can indicate acceptance of national institutions, rules, customs, traditions, and symbols that shape collective identities [Gbúrová 1996:33]. The study of collective identities is a significant area of interest in political science. In Europe, the primary political identities are national and civic identities, while in the South Pacific, national and regional identities are used as forms of identification associated with the Pacific

region [Hau'ofa 1998]. This standpoint is critical for this research from political-science point of view.

The study and research of the cultural landscape are only in its beginnings, however theoretical background has been established by Minca [2013], Norberg-Schulz [2010], Schama [2007], Pecníková [2020; 2022; 2023], Heinrichová [2012], etc. The cultural landscape is an ideological concept that represents what is important to a given society as well as a materialized system, which includes verbal, visual, and physical aspects of human existence, creating space for the multidimensional and dynamic development of the world [Minca 2013]. Moreover, the cultural landscape also captures what the society wants or does not want to keep in the cultural memory, but it is part of it.

Nowadays, the term **landscape** has become ambiguous as it overlaps various structures, images, and diverse elements, which are often contradictory in terms of typology. Furthermore, the cultural landscape is a concept that is best elaborated within the framework of cultural geography. It is based on a postmodern approach, which perceives culture in the broadest sense of the word, which is based on its universality and apparent infinity of meanings. Therefore, cultural geography does not pay much attention to culture as such but perceives the transformation of the environment under the influence of man as a priority [Pecníková 2020:53].

A cultural landscape can be perceived sensually or spiritually. Connecting a land with art, memory, and identity opens the possibility of a new perception of a certain place as a cultural landscape. The landscape can be read as a social document or as an anthropological interpretation of a cultural text with many meanings [Pecníková 2020:47]. We can perceive the cultural landscape through its socio-cultural sphere, language, visual art, architecture, natural phenomena, or lives of personalities who made their mark with their works of art whether music or literature. The cultural landscape can be examined as a linguistic landscape [Saduov 2021], a literary cultural landscape [Bohušová 2021; Javorčíková 2021], a musical cultural landscape [Pondelíková 2021], a touristic cultural landscape [Tökölyová 2021], or an urban cultural landscape [Pecníková 2021; 2023]. A place (referred to within an identity of place) is an essential element of studying the cultural landscape. The place can be defined as a natural landscape, or urban landscape which means a city, a part of a city, any space without borders, or significant cultural sight. Human beings are those who shape the cultural landscape, they give it its vitality and value, thus forming the landscape's identity, i.e. identity of place [Malík 2017]. On the other hand, the place contributes to

creating a national and cultural identity of the landscape's inhabitants. Humans are perceivers of the landscape and receptors of the various stimuli coming from the place where they live [Gbúrová 1996].

The **place** means recognizing how people use different places to fulfil their needs, whether for living, work, or relaxation thus creating a "sense of place", which is "*an important aspect in cultural context by integrating users with the place*" [Mohammad et al. 2013]. Mohammad, Saruwono, and Hairi [2013] explore the place via three dimensions and state that the place acquires its sense through people's experience, response, and perception (psychological dimension), representation of people's beliefs and memories (spiritual dimension), and images in films, books, or articles (visual dimension; intangible heritage) that shape human's perception and expectations from the place. The place is not created just by objects, but the area acquires its spirit through meaningful activities and people's experiences perceived through all senses. The place, natural or urban, is in an ongoing process. "*In general, the earth is the 'scene' on which our everyday life takes place. It can be transformed and controlled to a certain extent, which results in a friendly relationship. From the natural landscape, it becomes a cultural landscape, that is, an environment where one has found his meaningful place within the whole*". [Norberg-Schulz 2010:40].

Nowadays, a distinction is made between natural and urban landscaping. The identity of the natural landscape lies in the coherence of its elements, wisely interwoven by nature. With regard to natural landscapes, there is a tendency to protect, conserve, maintain or restore areas in order to preserve them for future generations. The care of the natural landscape is urgent because it is essential to maintain the balance and harmony between the natural and urban areas. The identity of the urban landscape is more complex, as it is formed not only by a correlation of elements, but mainly by the way in which the impact of human actions overlaps with the original environment. Soukupová [2017] defines the city as a cultural landscape as a complex of temporal layers of the memory of the chain of generations of its inhabitants, the memory embodied in architecture, sculpture, painting, music, landscaping, etc. (tangible heritage). At the same time, however, it represents a complex of images that have existed and continue to exist in ethnic, generational, social, opinion, local and other modifications [Soukupová 2007]. The city is first and foremost a social space; it expresses the connection between society and place, between objects, phenomena and processes that have been connected with it [Pecníková 2023; Taylor 2015b].

The natural or urban landscape is a key factor in the creation of cultural identity. Nature, its structure, the genius loci of a place, the cohesive space, the heritage and the architectural objects are the elements that together create the identity of a landscape. It is therefore essential to look for the added value of a place as a key part of understanding its identity and character. To Relph [1987], place is reflected in the concept of identity as the expression of adapting, assimilating, accommodating and socializing. The identity of a cultural landscape is created by personal connotations and memories that are manifested in symbols and signs. They give meaning to codes that help to identify with a particular culture. At the same time, the cultural landscape reflects the dreams, ideas and projects of people who share a common cultural memory, the same sense of belonging at a given time and in a given political situation, when they manifest themselves in this form [Pecníková 2020; Gbúrová 1996:33; Hau'ofa 1998]. The identity of a cultural landscape is also based on oral history, which is not based on written documents from a given period, but on the testimony of people who have real experience. In addition, Norberg-Schulz emphasizes that *“history has a fundamental function in the formation of the art of place, which implies permanence and change, while other artistic expressions derive especially from positions typical of the permanence and change they were conceived. The art of place is the art of totality”* [Norberg-Schulz 2000:221].

Landscape is perceived not only as a material, artistic, or historical place, but also as a social and cultural construct, being the result of various human activities. Visual expressions help to understand the socially created landscape. The concept of landscape is broader and includes not only monuments, places, or squares, but it is an expression of cultural values, social behaviour and individual actions in a given place at a given time. According to Pecníková [2020: 51–53] the cultural landscape can take various forms such as:

a) artistic imagination with a focus on interpreting a particular part of the land.

The scenery has a certain structure, which creates the impression that the scenery evokes. It can resemble a work of art, or a literary work (artistic description).

b) figurative landscape complements e.g. architectural designs and fills the space between buildings, or around them. Not only the building itself is designed but also the space around it. This approach is associated with the creation of an urban landscape (also called a cityscape), which is the opposite of a natural landscape. Cityscape scope is much smaller than in the case of landscape

architecture, which includes management, construction, and planning over a longer period of time and over a wider area.

c) *genius loci* is the spirit of a place, which determines its character. It is the way we see and read the landscape. In the past, people's physical survival depended on a "good" place to live, where they were not threatened by natural disasters, and where they were relatively safe. However, a place with *genius loci* means a unique character or a certain atmosphere that it carries. Therefore, in places with *genius loci*, we also observe the symbolic value that it represents, as well as the relationship of man to the place and its transformation over the ages.

d) landscape as a communication system reflects social relations. It is about the relations between man and the environment, but also about the manifestation of interpersonal relations in the environment. It is not only about the division of the land according to the owners, but also about the fact that the entire history is reflected in the land in visual, meaningful, or symbolic references. Even the entire cultural landscape can be a symbol that carries a specific meaning.

e) carrier of cultural codes means that architecture and transformation of the landscape are considered permanent transmitters and carriers of cultural codes. The form and meaning of an architectural work reflect the inner, spiritual dimension of its creators while reflecting the aesthetic structure of the city.

f) a cultural landscape as a product of culture(s) can be explored through architectural forms, use, function, meaning, and representation, based on aesthetic, political, ethical, historical, economic, social, semiotic, and other criteria.

The cultural landscape is constantly transforming, responding to human needs, preferences, and ideologies that change in space and time. The global organizations such as UNESCO, IUCN, ICOMOS, and the Council of Europe urge to protection, preservation, sustainability, and development of the cultural landscape and enrich cultural, territorial, and national identity, because the destruction of unique cultural landscapes, lack of development policies and adherence to measures lead to irreversible damages [Pecníková 2021:6; Gbúrová 1996; Oikonomopoulou et al. 2023]. Cultural heritage is an inseparable part of the study of the cultural landscape. The ancient civilizations did not separate the landscape from nature but transformed it based on their religion and the gods they worshipped. In the case of New Zealand, which is characterized by a dynamic landscape that is shaped by earthquakes, floods, landslides, and tsunamis, we can observe the deep influence of these events on the relationships between Māori, the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa with their ancestral landscapes [Wilkinson et al. 2021]. Therefore, we

agree with Schama that the landscape can be perceived as a “way of life” as it reflects events, personalities, and their influence, which shaped its identity and character. Such a landscape may, in fact, be “a text” in which generations inscribe their recurring imagination [Schama 2007:11].

A country’s ability to promote some of its distinctiveness depends on the strength of its brand [Anholt 2004], as evidenced by New Zealand’s success (below) in competing with others in the diversity of its natural beauty, standard of living, and cultural characteristics. The official website for the 100 % Pure New Zealand campaign therefore states that the brand is one of the best examples of this: *“The symbol of Brand New Zealand is the fern (see Figure 3 below). It appears in our Tourism New Zealand corporate logo. It’s a registered country of origin mark used by tourism and trade operators to promote New Zealand internationally and within New Zealand”* [Travel Trade New Zealand online].

3. METHODOLOGY

This article examines how the cultural landscape could be employed to understand New Zealand’s national identity. The impetus for investigating this matter stemmed from global trends in the importance of national identity within political and cultural sciences, caused by the growing challenge of global impacts on the Pacific Island. Consequently, the primary objective of this research is to facilitate the creation of a blueprint for analysing national identity (and national cultural landscape) based on Hofstede’s model of cultural dimensions and Pecníková’s typology of the country as a cultural landscape. For this purpose, the study incorporates three variables: Variable 1: place, Variable 2: cultural landscape, and Variable 3: national identity. Our research draws from the concepts of national and Pacific identity. Such factors are reflected in the main goal: *Research for applicability of the cultural landscape model to possibilities to research the national identity of a chosen country* fulfilled through two research incentives:

Research incentive 1 (RI1): to apply Hofstede’s cultural dimensions to New Zealand’s cultural landscape. The aim is to test the applicability of Hofstede’s dimensions to New Zealand as a suitable case study.

Research incentive 2 (RI2): to test Pecníková’s model on the chosen nation branding campaign, ‘100 % Pure New Zealand’, which is one of the highest-ranked campaigns promoting cultural landscapes.

To test the stated RIs, the research questions were set out:

Q1: In the chapter devoted to the theoretical framework, to recognize and identify the key concepts of theorists concerning cultural landscape issues that frame national identity policies and contribute to the process of nation-building.

Q2: The objective of the chapter focused on key findings is to identify the essential aspects of Pecníková's model and examine its applicability in testing Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions.

Q3: Pecníková's model will be applied to a selected case study country, specifically New Zealand, to verify the manifestation of the 'real, fantastic, and ideal' country phenomenon in Aotearoa. This analysis is presented in the chapter dedicated to key findings, with a focus on the '100 % Pure New Zealand' campaign.

Conclusions are drawn about this model's suitability for analysing national identity, considering both material and spiritual heritage. The methodology employs a case study approach to create measurable or observable forms from these constructs, based on an established theoretical foundation. The research presented in this paper is based on the assumption, presented in **Q3**, that the cultural landscape is the primary reflection of national identity.

Therefore, to achieve the stated aim of our research, we focus on the official New Zealand campaign known as '100 % Pure New Zealand' (hereafter referred to as the 'Campaign'). This campaign is a) long-term, allowing for evaluation (launched in 1999–2000); b) a national campaign that determines, among other things, tourism activities to make the country more attractive abroad; and c) one of the world's most successful tourism campaigns [Morgan et al. 2002; Smith 2015; Kaefer 2016]. The text discusses the main pillars of New Zealand's national identity as expressed in official documents. However, some critical voices have emerged in the analyses, as noted by Dorsey et al. [2004] and Morgan et al. [2002]. Additionally, New Zealand's 'pure' brand image is based on the concepts of nature and diversity, which are represented by the three aspects of being clean, green, and unique when compared to other countries [Hayes and Lovelock, 2017]. This campaign could be defined as a framework campaign that encompasses the most critical aspects of the country's uniqueness on a global scale. The video 'The Story of Evolving 100 % Pure NZ' explains the interlink between the aspects involved in national identity building and their connection to the national strategy of tourism, also known as 'eco-tourism' [Bell 2008:346]. It emphasises how Tourism New Zealand has developed the 100 % Pure New Zealand identity to more accurately represent the country. The aim was to utilise the rich history of New Zealand design and visual expression. The updated identity showcases the incorporation of people, culture and landscapes, which are

central to the New Zealand travel experience [Kaefer 2016 n. p.]. According to Kaefer [2016], the success of this campaign should also take into account the prominent appearance of New Zealand's landscapes in the Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit movies. Therefore, in the context of this campaign, we will analyse New Zealand as a fantastic country.

4. KEY FINDINGS

In the presented study the authors apply Pecníková's idea of the cultural landscape and define Aotearoa as a real country, a fantastic country, and an ideal country. Cultural dimensions are an important tool in the study of culture and national identity reflected in nation-branding campaigns. These dimensions provide insight into the cultural context of origin, emphasizing the significance of understanding one's cultural background, therefore the theoretical section delves into the detailed examination of Hofstede's dimensions. Despite the objections to Hofstede's research that many cultural and national aspects are simplified [Pecníková 2013:4], his findings became the starting point for the research of Aotearoa's identity. We completed Hofstede's research with our own findings based on studying the cultural landscape, thus connecting sociological research with cultural one.

For our research, Pecníková's model applicability is tested (**Q2**), referring to the fact that there exists a cultural landscape between the past and the future. It reflects history, visions, interventions of authorities, hopes, and expectations of society. A cultural landscape can be seen as a manifestation of power in time and space as those who had power could influence and interfere with it much more easily than those who did not. Humans have ideas, needs, and preferences on how to "order nature" according to their wishes, and thus the cultural landscape functions as an aesthetic norm. Cultivating the natural landscape has different forms [Pecníková 2020:47]¹:

a) real – a land of fact, space, place, city, and territory;

b) fantastic – a land to which a certain symbolic or spiritual meaning is ascribed, as well as a cultural legacy of myths, legends, and symbols;

¹ The inspiration for the presented case study of New Zealand was driven by Javorčíková's [2021] identity study of selected cities (Stratford, London, Oxford, and Toronto) related to the phenomenon of William Shakespeare. The real landscape of William Shakespeare is Stratford, which is his birthplace and the place of death of the Bard of Avon. His life and work are reminded by many tangible and intangible, authentic cultural artifacts. The fantastic landscape is Shakespeare's London as many tourist artifacts are inauthentic replicas of the original unpreserved monuments, e.g. The Globe Theatre which is a replica of the original. According to Javorčíková's [2021:81] findings, Toronto represents an ideal landscape as Shakespeare's life, work, and reputation as a classic and valuable author are constantly activated here in order to create the image of Toronto as a cultural destination of North America.

c) ideal – a land that meets certain characteristics of the “ideal” of a given time, an attempt to transform the environment according to a given ideal that manifests itself e.g. in architecture, where a certain style prevails, which is considered dominant.

Moreover, it consists of several dimensions [Heinrichová 2012]:

a) time dimension means to understand what processes the cultural landscape has gone through;

b) space dimension means the location and size of the cultural landscape;

c) economic dimension means its economic and business development;

d) technical dimension means that the type of country is determined by its sophisticated technical development, remains, or current works that define the landscape;

e) socio-cultural dimension is the least explored, it covers the cultural richness of the territory, cultural development, cultural events, and the emergence of a specific culture.

Understanding a cultural landscape requires identifying its inhabitants, which can be done by examining the cultural dimensions developed by Hofstede. According to him, dimensions are aspects of culture that can be measured in relation to other cultures [Hofstede et al. 2010:31]. Hofstede is considered a pioneer of comparative intercultural research. A large survey was conducted in the 1960s and 1970s that examined value differences among IBM’s employees. From a sample of 10 000 respondents from more than 50 countries (later, he included another 23 countries in the research), Hofstede was able to identify cultural dimensions. His work has later become a paradigm in the field of cross-cultural studies. His 6-D model describes in detail the ways, manifestations, and norms of behaviour in individual cultures. Based on this model, it is possible to create characteristics of a particular country and its national identity. Among the aforementioned dimensions belong:

1. Individualism versus collectivism are the two extreme poles of the same scale, both describing the extent to which people integrate into groups. In individualistic countries, people are not dependent on others in society. “I” consciousness prevails. They act in accordance with their own desires and goals, which means that they place their own success over the collective one. On the other hand, people from collectivist countries see themselves as part of a community or a group that is important to them. “We” consciousness prevails and therefore group welfare and success are more significant than individual success and well-being.

2. Power distance refers to power inequality in societies. It divides people into superiors and subordinates. The high power distance index reflects that members of a society accept and expect an uneven distribution of power in society. Conversely, a low degree of power distance means equal relationships in society.

3. Masculinity versus femininity expresses the distribution of male and female roles in society. In masculine societies, assertiveness and toughness are preferred in connection to material success, while in feminine societies modesty and interest in quality of life are preferred.

4. Uncertainty avoidance points to how society tolerates uncertainty and how they behave in unknown, surprising, or unstructured situations. Strong uncertainty avoidance cultures try to minimize ambiguity; therefore, they require clear rules and laws. They have a high tendency to emotionality, anxiety, or neuroticism. The opposite type, cultures where the avoidance of uncertainty is weak, have fewer rules. They are more phlegmatic and comfortable with ambiguity and chaos.

5. Long-term orientation versus short-term orientation focuses on how much value society imposes on the future and the past. Long-running societies are future-oriented. They support preparation for the future and perceive traditions as something adaptable. That is why they are characterized by a certain degree of adaptiveness. Short-term-oriented societies are, on the other hand, committed to traditions, values, and dignity. In other words, they are devoted to cultural elements of the past as the past is sacrosanct. They are characterized by respecting traditions and social obligations and are therefore resistant to change.

6. Indulgence versus restraint focuses on the extent to which people control their desire based on where they were raised. Indulgence refers to relatively weak control over one's gratification of basic and natural human desires and enjoyment of life. Restraint is related to strong control of gratification which regulates and restricts it by social norms.

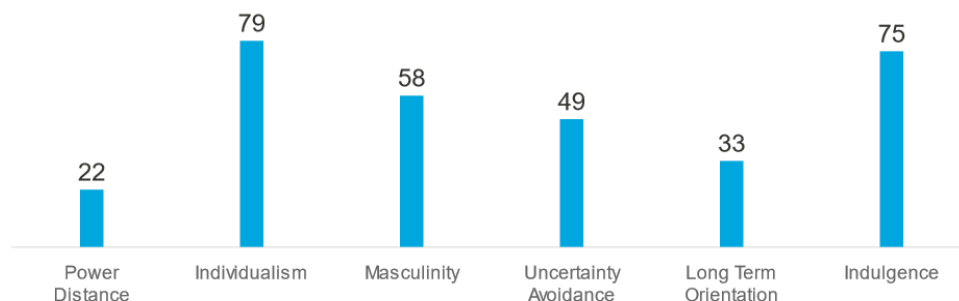
This paper presents a study of the cultural landscape in the context of the typology of Aotearoa as 1) a real country – a really existing land with specific pillars of its nation-branding joined with Polynesia; 2) a fantastic country – a country to which a certain symbolic or spiritual meaning is ascribed, a cultural legacy of myths, legends, symbols of Aotearoa as a part of country's branding campaigning worldwide – made famous through *The Hobbit* or *Lord of the Rings*; 3) an ideal country – a country that meets certain characteristics of the “ideal” at a given time, an attempt to transform the environment according to a given ideal, as proved by

anti-nuclear green position altogether with Taonga and Māori vivid in Polynesia – based national identity.

New Zealand is chosen as a case country due to following reasons. New Zealand (“Aotearoa”) is generally reported as a Pacific country in an official nation – branding and national identity concept (reflected o.i. in the “100% Pure New Zealand” campaign) [Winter-Smith 2023; MFA&T 2021:3, 5; Fraenkel 2012, e.g.]. According to O’Brien et al., *“New Zealand’s identity in the South Pacific tends to differ significantly from its identity on the global stage. Identity is influenced by such things as originality, values, reputation, relationships and transformational change in the international system”* [2018:55]. Furthermore, researching a cultural landscape requires knowledge of its inhabitants’ identity. Hofstede’s intercultural research served as the basis for investigating the national identity of Aotearoa, which details the typical ways, manifestations, and behavioural norms of New Zealand’s cultures. These findings could prove valuable for further research into recent ethnic developments in the country and its region-based policies. Currently, the process of socio-spatial transformation of place identity is reaching its peak. Therefore, concepts such as tradition, individuality, and identity have become fundamental and highly sensitive factors in the social environment. As a result, identity has become a complex concept in both the Pacific and New Zealand, evolving under changes in the ethnic composition of society and regional migration patterns.

To answer **Q2**, we tested the application of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions in the case of New Zealand to verify the theoretical basis of Pecníková’s model. It is important to consider culture as a collective phenomenon since individuals living in a shared social environment identify with it. The distinguishing factor between groups of people is the collective programming of the mind. [Hofstede – Hofstede – Minkov, 2010]. National culture comprises values, norms, customs, traditions, and learned patterns of behaviour. These elements are transmitted from generation to generation and are shared by almost all members of a given society. In today’s globalised world, it is crucial to understand the differences in behaviour and value preferences among people from different cultures. Understanding one’s own culture, as well as the cultures of other nations, is crucial for correctly addressing questions that arise in international relations. Each culture has its own set of cultural standards, which are general ways of perceiving, thinking, and evaluating that most members of a certain group consider typical and behave accordingly. Intercultural differences are an inevitable aspect of life, and accepting them is crucial for effective communication. Intercultural communication requires specific knowledge and

abilities that can be explored through the concept of intercultural intelligence [Dančišinová, Kozárová 2021]. This skill is essential for studying culture, the cultural landscape, and identity.



Graph 1. New Zealand according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Source: *Hofstede-insights online.*

Power distance refers to the extent to which individuals are considered equal in society. In this regard, New Zealand scores very low, as they believe in the fair distribution of power and the minimization of inequalities in their society. People in New Zealand expect consultation, discussion, and frequent sharing of information. Communication is also informal, direct, and participative. In terms of individualism, New Zealand scores high, indicating that its people value fulfilling personal dreams and desires as a path to happiness. Emphasis is also placed on spending money according to personal will, which is confirmed by the dimension of indulgence. Aotearoa scores 75 on this scale, suggesting a culture of indulgence where people are unwilling to deny themselves pleasure for fear of an uncertain future. The people of New Zealand possess a positive attitude and tend towards optimism. The level of uncertainty avoidance in a culture reflects the degree to which its members feel threatened by unknown situations. In the case of New Zealanders, it is difficult to evaluate this characteristic as they did not exhibit any clear preferences. The progress and development of society in Aotearoa is linked to its success-oriented nature, as evidenced by its high score of 58 in the masculinity dimension. A higher score in this dimension indicates that society is more competitive and success-driven. Individuals are often taught these values in schools and apply them in their professional lives. Hofstede's research suggests that New Zealand is a normative culture, where members value fact verification and information analysis. They also hold their traditions, symbols, and values in high regard. To address the primary research objective, which is encapsulated in the Research Incentive, it is necessary

to explore the three key aspects of the cultural landscape of New Zealand: a) as a real country, b) as a fantastic country, and c) as an ideal country (Q3).

4.1 Aotearoa as a real country

An attempt to identify a shared set of values and perspectives is the definition of cultural identity. A distinctive feature of this shared identity is the close connection and affinity with the land, which is expressed by some through a love of sport, particularly rugby. It is important to note that any attempt at a universal, all-encompassing definition must consider geography and history, particularly the Treaty of Waitangi, as these factors play a significant role in shaping New Zealand's identity. New Zealand's culture has been influenced by its geographical isolation and subsequent immigration, resulting in a diverse and multicultural society.



Picture 1. Map of New Zealand with tourist destinations under “100% Pure New Zealand” Campaign

Source: *Watermarkcreative online.*

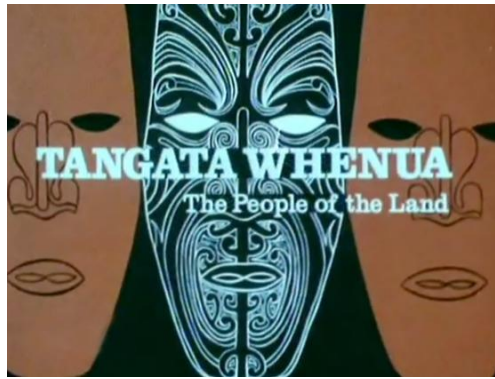
The idea of a common Polynesian homeland with the only indigenous people, the Māori, affirms Te Reo Māori as the original language of New Zealand, giving the language a unique cultural identity and the basis of the nation's identity. Similarly, when visiting New Zealand, tourists may encounter New Zealand English that has been heavily influenced by Te Reo Māori. This is particularly evident in the naming of places, animals, and plants that were previously unknown to English speakers. Additionally, Māori words for clothing, weapons, food, and other items have been adopted into everyday use in non-Māori contexts. Currently, there are approximately 230 words of Māori origin used in New Zealand English. These

include kiwi, pohutukawa (New Zealand Christmas tree), Aotearoa (New Zealand), kia ora (hello; one of the graphical versions of Kia Ora see below – Picture 5) used in everyday language across society), haere mai (welcome), korero (to speak or story), mana (influence, reputation), Pākehā (people of non-Māori origin, especially those of European origin), and tāngata whenua (“people of the land”, the Māori) [Orsman 1997; *English – Māori Dictionary and Index* online]. According to the Māori Language Commission, Māori is the primary language of New Zealand [Haar et al. 2019: 6–9]. Te Reo Māori is recognised as the official language of New Zealand and its indigenous people, alongside English and sign language, by the Māori Language Act 1987. Therefore, for considering “Aotearoa as a real country” primarily two key segments need to be explored and joined within this dimension of cultural landscape: Tangata Whenua and Taonga. This argument is based on the fact that New Zealand identifies as a Pacific nation, with Māori (Tangata Whenua) being one of its pillars. *“Māori and Pacific peoples have shared histories as navigators, explorers, and innovators who traversed te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa in search of new lands ... Their customs, values, beliefs, and languages point to paths that have crossed many times”*. [Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2022:16]. Protecting its Pacific heritage and Polynesian people is one of its primary responsibilities. Tangata Whenua is a term denoting Māori people and Taonga as the very base of their heritage [Te Ara – Encyclopedia of New Zealand 2013]. The Māori language holds significant social power in strengthening the national identity of Māori youth through their connection to place. In Māori tradition, a place can refer to a river, mountain, or a traditional community gathering place. This is exemplified by the universal use of the ‘Kia Ora’ greeting, which is often used in Māori tourism campaigns to express a sense of place identity. Tourists visit New Zealand for its unique nature as well as the Māori culture and customs. The Māori culture is an integral part of New Zealand society and is essential to the country’s Polynesian identity.



Picture 2. The Hongi – a traditional Māori Greeting, at Tamaki Māori Village Rotorua

Source: *Māorilifestyles* online.



Picture 3. Promotion of the “Tangata Whenua: Waikato” of Michael King and Barry Barclay’s landmark 1970s Māori documentary series Tangata Whenua (picture is illustrating The Great Trees and The Carvin)

Source: *New Zealand on Screen online.*



Picture 4. The first picture of a short film Tangata Whenua – People of the Land as “an invitation to look beyond the obvious to the subtle beauty of the truth about our origin, purpose, identity, and sense of belonging”

Source: *Vimeo online.*

Picture 5 illustrates the fundamental role of Māori culture in New Zealand’s identity and society, as evidenced by one of the versions of the national greeting. The tourism campaign focuses on highlighting the importance of Māori culture to the nation’s identity.



Picture 5. One of the versions of traditional Māori greeting

Source: *Māoritourism New Zealand online.*

As analysed in this section, the Māori language is a significant social force in strengthening the national self-recognition of Māori. They represent the most significant element of its regional identity transmitted more broadly across the Pacific Ocean. The Pacific Ocean serves as a unifying factor for the diverse cultures, laws, and traditions that are geographically and environmentally connected, creating an intra-regional identity. New Zealand is united with other Pacific Island Countries (PICs) due to regional proximity, similarity in economic, social, and security issues, as well as cultural proximity in terms of recognizing a common homeland culture and Polynesian culture. Hau'ofa [1998] examined Pacific identity through cultural manifestations such as literature and language. He used the metaphor of the ocean to express transformation and create a sense of regional identity.

The second argument is the understanding of **Taonga**. The Māori dictionary's (online) modern definition refers to Taonga in Māori culture as a valuable thing, whether tangible or intangible, including socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomena, ideas, and techniques. Tangible Taonga refers to socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomena, ideas, and techniques. This includes heirlooms, artifacts, natural resources like geothermal springs, and access to resources such as water rights and land fisheries. Intangible examples may include language, spiritual beliefs, or cultural traditions. Tourists may experience Māoritanga culture today through many New Zealand museums that feature Whare taonga, or 'treasure houses', and through the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, also known as Te Manatū Taonga, or in any daily public services by the national government (Picture 6).



Picture 6. New Zealand passport

Source: NZherald online.

Picture 6 shows one of the examples of how national identity is displayed in everyday government services. The New Zealand passport features the country's

coat of arms on the cover, along with the purpose of the booklet stated in both English and Te Reo Māori translations. A silver fern – so recognised globally as a country’s symbol – is also displayed down the side, making it easily recognizable to New Zealanders (Kiwis).

Another example is Māori tourism. It is founded on the concept of Taonga, which encompasses both tangible and intangible cultural treasures. Tangible Taonga includes artifacts, architecture, land, fishing, and natural resources such as geothermal springs. These material aspects serve as expressions and anchors of the intangible Taonga that are associated with the place. In general, the absence of land means the absence of Taonga, which in turn means the absence of Tangata Whenua and Aotearoa.

The logo below represents the connection between tangible and intangible Taonga. The fish depicted can be interpreted as a symbol of the richness of nature, which is home to Tangata Whenua. The graphic representation of the fish also resembles the shape of a canoe, expressing the idea of understanding the Taonga – the river – as an expression of the identity of the place. It is not only a place to live but also a source of livelihood and a connection between different parts of the country.



Picture 7. Logo of NZ Māori Tourism Company

Source: *Māoritourism New Zealand online.*

From this research point of view, Māori are seen as key in protecting the cultural (i.e. natural) Polynesian and Pacific heritage as “*Māori culture makes New Zealand unique in a globalized world and is a central part of our sense of place, identifying us as a nation. Whereas the term “national heritage” includes history, taonga, places and symbols of nationality.*” [Ministry for Culture & Heritage 2013:7] Māori culture and the presentation of their customs is, besides the unique nature, one of the reasons why tourists visit New Zealand as the Māori element is extremely lively in

all areas of life in New Zealand society. The country's growing ethnic diversity is thus clearly linked to the process of protecting the heritage of the Pacific and Polynesian peoples. According to Spoonley [2000:4], these Pacific communities develop new cultural forms and identities, they express multiple identities to multiple places.

Finally, it is important to understand that New Zealand's nation-branding is rooted in indigenous people and their role in society, pure nature, and relaxation. Additionally, the strategy of nation branding through developing and promoting tourism is related to the original indigenous peoples. In the case of New Zealand, the primary brand is "100 % Pure NZ" (one hundred percent pure New Zealand; see below). This brand not only promotes tourism linked to cultural heritage but also represents the country's anti-nuclear policy and nuclear-free Pacific stance in international relations. The brand offers "100 % pure relaxation, 100 % pure welcome, 100 % pure adrenalin, and 100 % pure you", all connected back to the core premise of 100 % Pure New Zealand [Tourism New Zealand online]. Picture 8 illustrates an innovative strategy for showcasing the nation's identity, concurrently acknowledging the circumstances of indigenous communities, notably the Māori population, within the context of New Zealand's tourism. It is important to note that the Māori people are not a 'new' minority and are entitled to different conditions and treatment due to their historical significance.



Picture 8. Indigenous culture and traditions as used in nation-branding

Source: *Tourism NZ unveils new campaign with updated 100 % Pure identity via Whybin\TBWA Sydney. In: Campaignbrief online.*

Giannopoulos et al. [2011] reported that in today's globalized world, countries compete for the attention and confidence of potential visitors, investors, and representatives of other countries. A positive branding strategy can be a comparative advantage for a country in international relations. Tourism is one of the most visible and tangible manifestations of good nation-branding. These activities can be categorised as nation-branding activities [Arts and Culture In:

NewZealand online]. In this context, they are identified as one of the most effective instruments of country's diplomacy. This is evidenced by the example of New Zealand – the country presented through its relationship with the environment, as symbolised by the “100 % Pure New Zealand” campaign with examples shown below. The chosen posters below (Picture 9) illustrate the content of this campaigning made by a) Tangata Whenua (shown by a poster from 1999 campaigning), b) natural beauties (posters illustrating a diverse range of natural landscapes including snow-capped mountains, sweeping beaches, ancient volcanic peaks and craters, lush native forests, lakes and fjords and unique geothermal areas), and also c) respect to diversity and d) sports (with a picture mainly of the national rugby team)².



Picture 9. Examples of “100 % Pure New Zealand” campaign³

Sources: *Art and Object online; Travelandtourworld online; Sportslogos online; Allblacks online.*

“New Zealand is one of the most respected and desirable countries in the world and the Pure NZ brand successfully represents many of the positive images, assumptions and expectations people have of the country. The tourism campaign around the Pure

² Revenue streams such as merchandising and sponsorship, including lucrative long-term kit partnerships with Adidas and Altrad, continue to be driven by strong national pride in New Zealand's rugby heritage and globally recognised brand. These brand-focused revenue streams are a greater contributor to the All Blacks' overall value than broadcasting and match revenues. The New Zealand All Blacks have continued to assert their dominance as the world's most valuable rugby team brand. See more at: <https://brandfinance.com/press-releases/new-zealand-all-blacks-are-worlds-most-valuable-rugby-brand-at-us282-million>

³ Logo “New Zealand Black Ferns” is the logo for New Zealand women's national rugby union team and comprises a national symbol of a fern.

*NZ brand has undoubtedly been a success and has helped to make New Zealand one of the most highly sought after tourist destinations and one that is high on people's 'must-visit' lists with proving the preliminary results yet, when stating that "Our 100 % Pure New Zealand campaign (...) is changed and evolved but still aims **to make New Zealand one of the most desirable destinations in the world** for our target market⁴. The markets are different (...) the message is the same: **It's our special combination of activities, landscape, people and culture that makes New Zealand a unique holiday experience**. We call that experience 100 % Pure New Zealand. (...) We continue to market New Zealand internationally as a tourism destination through our 100 % Pure New Zealand campaign. It's at the heart of our advertising, international PR, online marketing, events, and sponsorships". [Travel Trade New Zealand online]. The growing ethnic diversity in New Zealand has influenced its national identity. And globally, "New Zealand's diverse and exciting cultural life is very attractive to overseas investors, performers and audiences (...). Programmes such as Sistema Aotearoa and Te Matatini's kapa haka events demonstrate how cultural experiences can provide social and economic benefits to families and communities". [Ministry for Culture & Heritage 2013:7] In areas such as Māori culture and the country's beauties also via film industry (as seen in movies like Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit, as shown in Picture 10), which comprises the second form of New Zealand's cultural heritage (a fantastic country).*

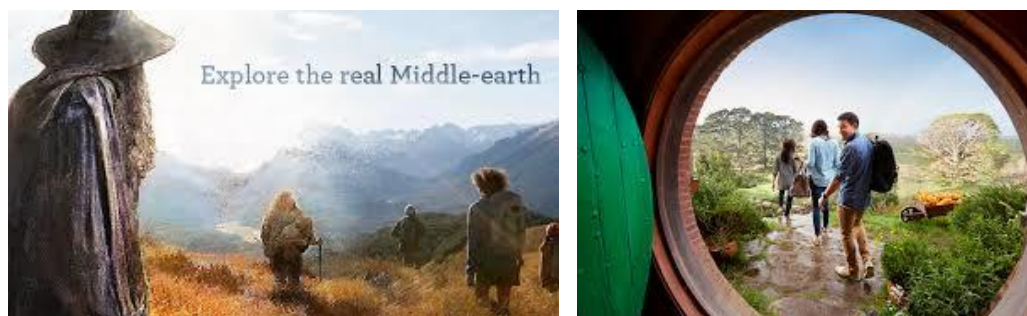
4.2. Aotearoa as a fantastic country – A Middle-Earth

This section analyses New Zealand as a country to which a certain symbolic or spiritual meaning is ascribed, a cultural legacy of myths, legends, and symbols of Aotearoa as a part of the country's branding campaigning worldwide – made famous through The Hobbit or Lord of the Rings and got an unofficial new nickname – The Middle-Earth. This is an effect of on-screen tourism (also as screen or film tourism) as a specific type of touristic activities by tourists who travel to a destination as a result of a film or TV drama series. [Li et al. 2016].

Warwick Frost and Jenifer Frost [2020] claim that Aotearoa's film history began with the new phenomenon of Pavlova Westerns, films set in the 19th century American West but filmed in New Zealand (mainly Good for Nothing and Slow West). These films create a different image and sense of place for rural New Zealand, drawing on heritage sites from New Zealand's 19th century history, particularly those associated with the gold rushes and these films highlight New

⁴ From a local perspective, however, the campaign has become a catalyst for environmental criticism. See e.g.: Dorsey et al. 2004

Zealand's frontier history, creating a new version of the cultural landscape post Lord of the Rings. As well as being home to Middle-earth, on-screen tourism in Aotearoa started its history with films including King Kong, The Piano, The Last Samurai (starring Tom Cruise) and The Chronicles of Narnia have all been filmed in New Zealand.



Picture 10. Famous movie as a tool for nation-branding

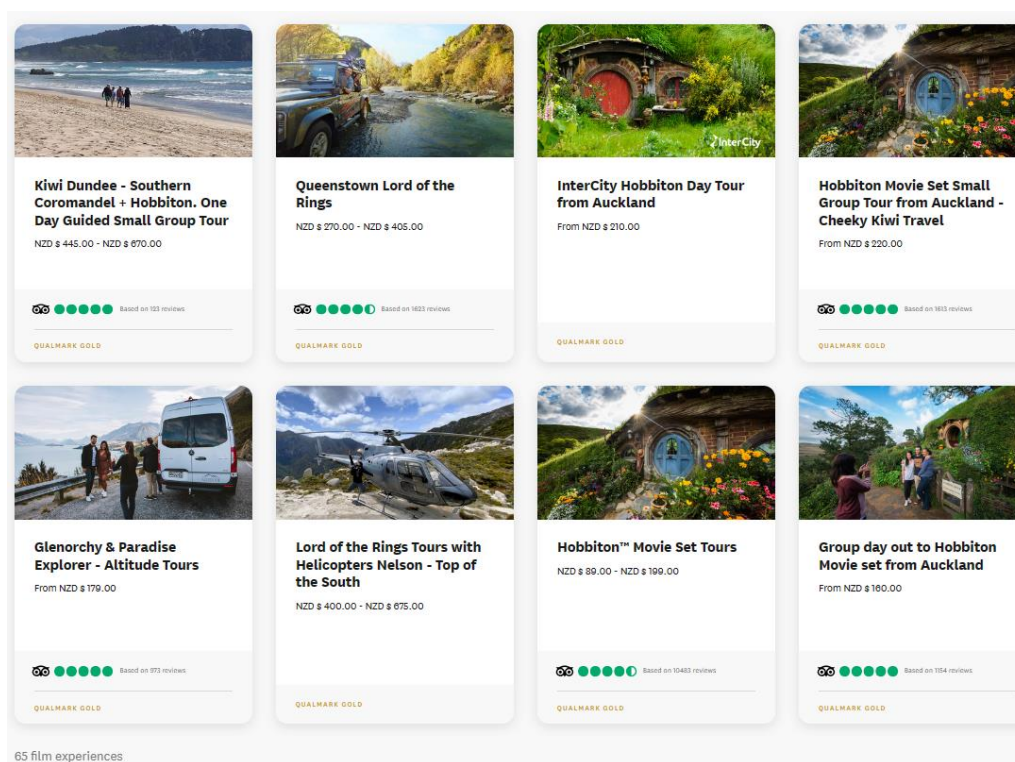
Source: *Home-of-middle-earth. In: NewZealand online.*

As stated by the official website [www.newzealand.com], the official touristic strategy of the country is built not only on beautiful nature, culture, and level of well-being but also on the idea of the most famous moves made in the country. The promotion makes the country attractive by “*New Zealand’s dramatic scenery, consisting of golden plains, towering mountains and enchanting valleys, plays a part in creating the mythical world of Middle-earth™ as seen in The Lord of the Rings™ and The Hobbit Trilogy™. When you visit Middle-earth™ you can explore the many film locations and join tours and activities for the chance to see the film locations for yourself and step inside the imaginative mind of Tolkien.*” [Home of Middle Earth In: *NewZealand online*]. The website offers various attractions, destinations, and activities joined with the movie.

For tourist-focused branding, also Hobbiton was built up and as claimed by the website, “*One filming location to rule them all – Hobbiton™ stands out as an incredibly unique and immersive experience for Tolkien fans. But if you’re interested in the movie-making geniuses that brought Middle-earth™ to life, you must also visit the Wētā Workshop Experience in Wellington, a 90-minute guided tour that takes you behind-the-scenes of the movie magic.*” [Home of Middle Earth In: *NewZealand online*].

Traditionally, tourists have been viewed as passive consumers of media. It is important to note that not only movies, such as *Twilight* and *Italian Volterra*, and music, such as the *Beatles* and *Liverpool*, but also other forms of popular media can significantly impact tourists’ experiences in their destinations. This convergence of tourism and media products is a noteworthy phenomenon. The trend indicates an increase in the number of filmic representations created by

tourists and semi-professional travellers during their visits to locations associated with movies. These representations are often shared on social media platforms and are typically selfie-oriented. This type of content, as seen in the case of New Zealand, has the potential to impact not only tourist behaviour but also national branding. To Williams [2020], media tourism, fan pilgrimages, and food tourism joined in a fan tourism allow fans to form and maintain effective connections with fan objects and to occupy important sites. And one of the effects the Hobbiton village may be considered. The village was built specifically for The Lord of the Rings trilogy and visitors can literally “step into Middle-earth and the lush green pastures of the Shire, experience the thrill of the Hobbit holes, visit the Green Dragon Inn and discover where Frodo and Bilbo’s adventures first began.” [Arts and Culture In: *NewZealand* online].



Picture 11. “Fantastic” offer for the Aotearoa visitors

Source: *Home-of-middle-earth. In: NewZealand online*

This video by TNZ channel invoked the magic of Middle-earth saying “this TNZ television and cinema commercial tells a compelling story of how the cinematic fantasy world of Middle-earth, as revealed in the upcoming fantasy adventure motion picture *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, is in fact the reality of New Zealand. It targets all potential travellers to New Zealand portraying the country’s stunning scenery and unique activities and experiences, coupled with Middle-earth-themed narration” [Tourism New Zealand 2012].



Picture 12. Advertising using a fantasy name of New Zealand (the Middle-Earth)

Source: Advert Gallery online.



Picture 13. Examples of Advertising Times built on Lord of the Rings strategy

Sources: The New York Times online; CBC Radio online; Facebook

Impact of this screen tourism on the sample of two film series, The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit (both filmed in New Zealand) on New Zealand's brand and economy was analysed by Li et al. [2016]. They combine econometric and computable general equilibrium modelling techniques. The results of the research interestingly show that *"The results show that The Lord of the Rings did not significantly impact on the tourism and economy of New Zealand, while the Hobbit Trilogy had a significant positive impact, which may be due to effective marketing strategies and media convergence"* [Li et al. 2016 n.p.].

4.3. Aotearoa as an ideal country

This section discusses New Zealand's appeal as a tourist destination, its high quality of life, and its excellent business environment, based on various rankings

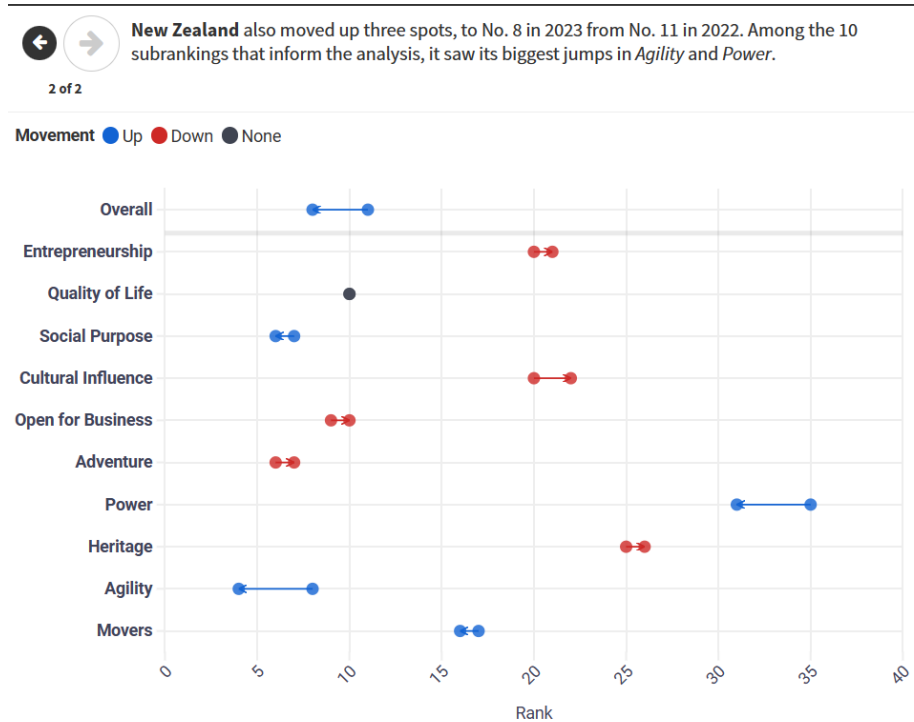
and ratings. These are the ratings that focus on the country as a) a tourist destination, b) a country with a high quality of life, and c) a country with an excellent business environment. The term 'ideal' in this context refers to a country that possesses certain characteristics deemed desirable at a given time. It may involve attempts to transform the environment in accordance with a particular ideal, as evidenced by the anti-nuclear green movement, Polynesia's ethnic diversity, or the level of well-being.

Readers of Britain's Telegraph newspaper voted New Zealand 'world's best country' for 2019, a repeat from 2015 [New Zealand – the best country In: *The Telegraph* online]. The 26 identified reasons relate to the above aspects of New Zealand's acumen – namely, the connection between the real and the fantasy landscape. We can divide the reasons into two categories:

- a) Real landscape – geographical conditions. Here readers appreciated the beaches of Lake Taupo, the city of New Plymouth, home to the famous Mt Taranaki and Goblin Forest, the city of Christchurch, or taking the TranzAlpine train to Greymouth, a beautiful place on the west coast where rainforest meets seascapes and dramatic mountain views. This category also includes a hike along the Milford Track or other walks (within the Great Walks network on both islands). Fauna and flora can also be included in this section, led by New Zealand's original parrot – the kakapo, but also birds such as the hihi, saddleback and takahe.
- b) Real landscape – cultural uniqueness as a combination of indigenous and modern culture. Here travellers appreciated the culture of New Zealand, which they perceived as a living and dynamic part of society, which they could see for example when visiting the Māori Marae or at one of the cultural shows in Rotorua (the city is perceived as the Māori cultural centre). There was also an opportunity to visit the village of Te Puia in the Whakarewarewa Thermal Valley, home to the New Zealand Māori Institute of Arts and Crafts.

Visitors can experience that Māori culture is an essential part of New Zealand society and the country's Polynesian identity. According to a US media survey, Aotearoa was voted the second-best country in the world in 2023. The report by US News & World gathers data from people worldwide for various categories. The attributes of adventure, agility, cultural impact, entrepreneurship, heritage, movers, open for business, power, quality of life, and social purpose were grouped into 10 sub-categories to rank the top countries. Aotearoa (New Zealand) was ranked eighth overall. The UK was rated the best country in the world, with New Zealand

coming in second, according to US tourists who voted [*NewsHub* online 2023]. The country also scores highly in categories such as safety, food culture, emphasis on healthcare and quality of life, great work-life balance, diversity, hospitality, and a straightforward visa process [*Gorga* 2023].



Graph 2. New Zealand in 2022 Best Countries Ranking

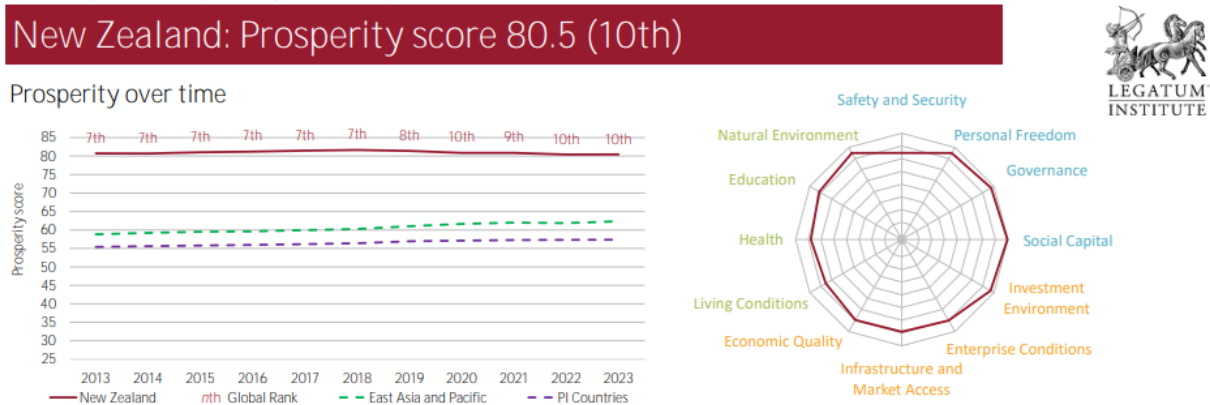
Source: *US News online.*

In 2023, the country has been positioned in the top ten of The Prosperity Index [*Ministry of Business, innovation and Employment* 2023]. Since 2009, New Zealand has demonstrated consistent economic strength and financial prosperity. The Prosperity Index, which covers 96 % of the world’s population and 99 % of global GDP, is the only global index that uses measures based on wealth and well-being, providing a more comprehensive picture of global prosperity than any other tool of its kind. New Zealand also ranks in the top five for social capital when the results are broken down. The report indicates that the country performs well in terms of governance, investment environment, and natural environment.

Another index that could be used to assess New Zealand as an “ideal” country is the Legatum Prosperity Index. It is a tool that provides a unique insight into how prosperity is shaped and developed around the world.

It shows that however, New Zealand is ranked 10th (out of more than 160 countries) in the overall Prosperity Index in 2023, it has dropped 3 places since 2011. New

Zealand is strongest in Social Capital and Governance, but data show it is weakest in Safety & Security. The biggest improvement from a decade ago has been reported in social capital.



Graph 3. New Zealand and development of its prosperity index from 2013-2023

Source: Prosperity online.

This may show New Zealand’s a sustainable reputation of green and clean natural environment and the 100 % pure campaign has been successful in promoting this image and brand to the world and it resulted into country’s image of “a country more committed to protecting the environment than other developed nations” [Rudzitis, Bird 2011]. The cultural uniqueness of the country and natural wealth makes a real connection of material and intangible aspects of Taonga, thus acquiring the character and function of the social construct also in accordance with the theory of social identity as it integrates:

- (1) characteristics of the environment – the country best known to Tangata Whenua;
- (2) human uses of the environment – a significant moment of nature protection, New Zealand as a green anti-nuclear country;
- (3) constructed meanings – strong location to the micro-region, use of Māori city names; and
- (4) attachment and satisfaction – as the spiritual dimension of expressing the identity of a place.

The campaign of changing a motto of “100 % Pure New Zealand” to “100 % Pure Middle Earth” (see section of Aotearoa as fantastic country campaign above) was more visualised also with diplomatic services for visitors as they can choose to have a “Welcome to Middle-earth” stamp added to their passport (Picture 14) that makes feeling and experience of fantasy a real.



Picture 14. The Custom Service at the Wellington International Airport gives stamps to the passports

Source: *New Zealand Herald online*

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The landscape is the manifestation of a long and intimate relationship between human beings and nature. It is like an inscription on which, man has written his story, more or less deep and accurate [Mansouri 2005:71]. Nowadays, exploring and examining cultural landscape is based on understanding land as a living, changing, transforming thus dynamic creature affected by human deeds and lifestyle, which affect civilization, culture, and human life, through its formation and memories that have been recorded over time. As Cosgrove argues, all landscapes are symbolic, because they are symbols of collective cultural concepts [Cosgrove 1989]. Symbols have been produced by humans in the environment and they have different forms; a landscape with dominant cultural symbols – a cultural landscape and a landscape of a city within which there are symbols of human lifestyle – urban or city cultural landscape. There exist a great variety of landscapes that are representative of the different regions of the world, which UNESCO pays attention to under the World Heritage Cultural Landscapes program. The role of UNESCO is to protect, preserve, revitalize, and keep the authenticity and integrity of a landscape.

Hofstede's intercultural research became the starting point for the investigation of Aotearoa national identity (**RI1**), which describes in detail the ways, manifestations, and norms of behaviour typical for New Zealand's cultures. Our findings could be valuable in the further research of recent ethnic developments in the country and her region-based and region-oriented policies. The main findings lie in declaring the validity of applying Pecníková's idea of the cultural landscape (**RI2**). This defines Aotearoa as 1) a real country – a really existing land with specific pillars of its nation-branding joined with Polynesia; 2) a fantastic country – a country to which a certain symbolic or spiritual meaning is ascribed, a cultural legacy of myths, legends, symbols of Aotearoa as a part of country's branding campaigning

worldwide – made famous through *The Hobbit* or *Lord of the Rings*; 3) an ideal country – a country that meets certain characteristics of the “ideal” at a given time, an attempt to transform the environment according to a given ideal, as proved by anti-nuclear green position altogether with Taonga and Māori vivid in Polynesia – based national identity. In the case of New Zealand, the key brand is “100 % Pure NZ”, which not only synthesises a tourism linked to cultural heritage, but is also carried into international relations as a brand focused on anti-nuclear policy and a nuclear-free Pacific, identifying the country as offering 100 % pure: relaxation, welcome, adrenaline and 100 % pure personalised advantages and relax.

The research was based on the theoretical foundation of the perception of identity of the authors from this geographical environment. We assumed that identity consists of a set of signs that characterise the state, resulting from its history, ethnic or cultural aspects. It represents the acceptance and representation of the nation’s common origins and manifestations. This theoretical starting point was also applied to the argument about the shift in the perception of identity from national to regional. This line of argument was based on the research and analysis of New Zealand’s motivations in the process of building its identity based on the original Māori population, Te Reo Māori, beautiful landscape, and quality of life. At present, the concept of national identity is being transformed into a trans-regional concept, defined not only by geography (e.g., “we are united by the Pacific”), but also by cultural factors such as cultural diversity, languages, traditions, and decision-making models. This, the Pacific is perceived in New Zealand as a unifying and defining aspect that expresses territorial, cultural, and economic ties. This understanding transforms the original cultural identity into a geographical modification, making the Pacific Ocean a cultural link that represents the identity of the region in its multidimensional diversity. This research could be inspirational for small state’s national identity research.

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UKRAINIAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI: IN TERMS OF COOPERATION, CONTRADICTIONS AND CHALLENGES 2019–2023

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Abstract

A strong civil society is a manifestation of developed democracy, freedom and law. A developed civil society is one of the identifiers of European democracies, an example of a modern state governed by the rule of law, to the level of which many countries of the world strive to grow.

In this context, the article examines the role of Ukrainian civil society in the fight against internal and external challenges during the presidency of Volodymyr Zelenskyy. On the one hand, this text studies the role of civil society in the struggle for the implementation of reforms in various spheres of the state apparatus, judicial and law enforcement branches of government. On the other hand, it is analyzed how civil society becomes one of the “shadow” geopolitical players that have an influence on the adoption of key decisions in the Russo-Ukrainian war. The article also examines possible dangers/risks/challenges faced by Ukrainian civil society during and after the Russo-Ukrainian war.

Key words: *Ukraine, civil society, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, reforms, Russo-Ukrainian war.*

INTRODUCTION

In the current era of geopolitical change, individuals can become part of civil society by creating public organizations, joining volunteer groups, and effectively using traditional mass media and social networks. Civil society, although not politically ambitious, becomes a significant political player. The European Commission defines Civil Society as “non-governmental groups such as trade unions, employers' associations and other social groups—allow citizens to take an active part in setting the political agenda. For an aspiring EU member country, a vibrant civil society contributes to fulfilling the conditions for EU membership” [European Commission, Civil Society 2023]. The influence of civil society on political processes in Ukraine was first observed during the Orange Revolution of 2004. Following the falsification of the presidential elections by Viktor Yanukovich's team, Ukrainian society organized itself and defended the right to fair elections and a European perspective. Ten years later, Ukrainians united once again to protest against the threat to their national interests and the large-scale corruption in the country's middle. The Revolution of Dignity demonstrated that despite previous failures to integrate into NATO and the EU, Ukrainian society possesses the strength and determination to continue the fight for a European future. The American philosopher Francis Fukuyama shares a comparable view, stating that “I was amazed that civil society in Ukraine did not give up after the failure of the Orange Revolution. You have preserved and strengthened your ability to self-organize and exert pressure on the authorities. People in the country have not lost their desire for a better government” [Nayyem 2014]. According to Fukuyama, self-organization and pressure on authorities will transform civil society into a political player that Ukrainian and Western politicians will have to take into account in the future.

In the post-revolutionary period, Ukraine faced the challenge of both the war in the east of the country and the need to implement reforms to move towards the EU, as declared by the Revolution of Dignity. The issue of the war in the east was addressed through the Minsk agreements, which brought an end to the active phase of the conflict and resulted in a frozen conflict. The internal reform of the country was aligned with the political will of the former President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, and the efforts of civil society. The creation of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office, National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, National Agency on Corruption Prevention, decentralization reform, medical reform, and reform of the public procurement system (ProZorro) were implemented due to the pressure exerted by civil society on Poroshenko's team. Andrii Andrushkin from

the Center for Joint Actions, a public organization, highlights that important changes in the country were made possible due to societal pressure [Zabolotny, Pivtorak 2021]. Even in the case of creating and reforming anti-corruption bodies, it is evident that politicians who came to power on the Maidan slogans lack the political will to carry out reforms and only do so under strong public pressure.

In 2019, V. Zelenskyy came to power after receiving 73 % of the votes. However, his connections with the oligarch I. Kolomoyskyi and ambiguous statements regarding Ukraine's movement into the EU and NATO, as well as his blind belief in the possibility of reaching an agreement with Russia, have caused some anxiety in society. After his election as president, V. Zelenskyy promptly attempted to arrange a meeting in the Norman format with President V. Putin to discuss the potential resolution of the conflict in Donbas.

On December 9, 2019, Ukrainian President V. Zelenskyy, Russian President V. Putin, Chancellor of Germany A. Merkel, and French President E. Macron held a meeting, which was not successful. It is worth noting that a few months prior to the Norman meeting, protests under the name 'No Surrender' took place in the capital and other cities, following reports in the Ukrainian media about its preparation. The protests aimed to prevent the implementation of the Steinmeier Formula and to caution V. Zelenskyy against making any concessions to Putin. According to Polish historian Jerzy Targalski, the mass protests in Ukraine could deter President Zelenskyi from making further concessions to Russia [Targalski 2019]. These protests can be interpreted as a signal to President Zelenskyy that Ukrainian society will not accept any national or territorial concessions from Russia. The meeting's results suggest that the authorities realized they cannot impose their rules on society and must consider public opinion.

Over the next two years, civil society will continue to play a crucial role in preventing authorities from suppressing freedom of speech, halting reforms, or taking actions that could result in a power grab. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has presented a new challenge for civil society. Currently, civil society is working alongside the authorities in the international arena to secure military aid and impose sanctions against Russia. However, Ukrainian civil society is increasingly becoming a geopolitical player, influencing negotiations between Russia and Ukraine. It is also advocating for a concept of 'just peace' for Ukraine, which includes the liberation of all Ukrainian territories, punishment of those responsible, and reparations paid by Russia to Ukraine.

ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF IDEAS (CONCEPTS) OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE HISTORICAL PARADIGM

The concept of civil society was first introduced in the philosophical works of Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greece. Plato believed that the community of citizens, specifically philosophers, was essential for his ideal state. According to Plato, the ability of each citizen to perform their own duties competes with wisdom, prudence, and courage in achieving a perfect state [Plato 2006]. In his discussion of the state, community, and citizen, Aristotle focuses on the influence of citizens on the state. He observes that the state evolves in response to the demands of communities, and that each citizen bears equal responsibility for the success of the state.

In *Politics*, Aristotle observes that everyone participates in the management of the state, including artisans, farmers, and soldiers [Aristotle 2013]. The ideas of Plato and Aristotle regarding the state, citizens, and society have evolved and influenced philosophical and political thought in the medieval and modern eras. During this period, notable political philosophers such as Marsilius of Padua, Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas More, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke offered their perspectives on the problems of civil society. Marsilius of Padua believed that the community of people should be considered the legislator and have the primary right to choose their ruler. The concept of Marsilius of Padua, *legislator humana*, is a transitional one from the Middle Ages to the modern era in the context of the coexistence of the state and the citizen.

N. Machiavelli's works focus heavily on the role of the ruler in the state, diminishing the importance of the citizen and their role in state-making. In contrast, T. More's 'Utopia' opposes private property and exploitation of citizens by the state, promoting social production with a monarch at the head of the state in his 'utopian state'. T. Hobbes introduces the concept of the 'natural state of people' when considering the state and society. According to Hobbes, individuals are inherently self-interested and will go to great lengths to impede others from achieving their objectives. These obstructions are often concealed, but they have negative consequences for both the individual and the state. To ensure the proper functioning of both the state and its citizens, Hobbes suggests that a social contract be established between individuals regarding the organization of society. The agreement was intended to be implemented through the public authority and the head of state.

Hobbes' concept reveals certain aspects of modern democracies, where power and civil society coexist. It is important to note that Hobbes himself supported absolute

monarchy, but did not object to democracy. The conventions regarding the functioning of the state and the citizen, as proposed by another English philosopher, J. Locke, can be seen as a transition from the modern era to the Enlightenment. Locke supported equality between citizens, freedom, and private property. He believed that the state should act as an arbiter in civil disputes. If the government fails to fulfil its duties, citizens have the right to change it. Locke's views clearly demonstrate the evolution of ideas about a liberal state and democracy with a developed civil society, which can be traced from Hobbes' concepts. This evolution can be traced to the modern understanding of a liberal state and democracy with a developed civil society. These views strongly influenced the founding fathers of the United States, the constitution they created, and the declaration of independence of the United States.

The concept of liberalism, which emphasises individual freedom and societal progress, saw its greatest development during the Enlightenment period. Key figures such as Charles-Louis de Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Adam Smith, Alexis de Tocqueville, and John Stuart Mill contributed to this development. Montesquieu, for instance, developed the doctrine of the social contract between the state and society. According to the social contract, power in any state should belong to the people. The people delegate this power to the ruler. If the ruler usurps this power, the people can rebel against them.

Rousseau, like Montesquieu, developed the theory of the social contract. He believed that in order for the state and its citizens to function properly and transition from natural laws to civilization, it is necessary to establish laws and state institutions that both the state and citizens will adhere to. Similarly, Adam Smith noted that nations with strong political and economic systems are those where citizens have freedom in their civil rights and freedoms. In his work 'Democracy in America', Alexis de Tocqueville substantiates how personal freedom of the citizen and private property can coexist successfully with the state., He argues that the success of a liberal democracy with a strong civil society depends on the equality of opportunities for each individual and non-interference of the state in the economy.

When reviewing the ideas of civil society in the 19th century, it is impossible to overlook the contributions of Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. In his work 'Critique of Practical Reason', Kant discusses the relationship between the citizen and the state, emphasising the importance of individual freedom, equality, and independence, as well as the autonomy of the human mind as the fundamental

principles upon which civil society is built. Regarding civil society, Hegel highlights several fundamental aspects. He emphasises the economic independence of citizens as a crucial factor for the proper functioning of society. Additionally, he partially adopts Hobbes' ideas about human nature, considering people's inclination towards violence and injustice to be natural. The rule of law and civil society can prevent illegality, violence, and injustice.

The development of ideas related to the problems of civil society in the 20th century was hindered by two world wars. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, transformative geopolitical processes in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe led to a change in this situation. During this time, Pope John Paul II fought for civil rights.

Today, the ideas and theories surrounding civil society are represented by the works of various philosophers and political scientists, including Zbigniew Brzeziński, Francis Fukuyama, Timothy D. Snyder, and Niall Ferguson. In particular, Fukuyama argues that modern democracy is based on an effective modern state, which, unlike feudal models, does not rely on the family and close friends of the ruler. The modern state should encourage professionals who are dedicated to serving citizens as citizens, rather than treating them as individual customers exchanging services. This transition is challenging, as stated by Fukuyama (2018). It is also worth noting that today, concepts from the theory and practice of civil society appear depending on geopolitical metamorphoses and the role of certain civil movements in them.

COOPERATION AND CONFRONTATION BETWEEN UKRAINIAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND PRESIDENT ZELENSKY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORMS IN UKRAINE

In 2019, Volodymyr Zelensky's rise to power elicited mixed reactions from Ukrainian society. While the majority of voters deemed him fit for the presidency, some criticized him harshly, labeling him as either incompetent or a Kremlin agent. However, the election of Zelensky as Ukraine's president after the Maidan was not a clear-cut success or failure. Instead, it served as a test of the maturity of civil society. In European democracies, the policies of democratically elected presidents are based on the demands and requests of their societies. This interaction between government and civil society is what builds strong democracies. Prior to his presidential candidacy, Zelensky did not exhibit strong patriotism. He spoke Russian and believed in the possibility of achieving peace with Russia and Putin through negotiations.

During that period, civil society's objective was to compel Zelenskyy to meet the demands of the people, which had been voiced since the Maidan protests. These demands included combating corruption, continuing the reform of anti-corruption and judicial institutions, and safeguarding Ukraine's national interests in foreign policy. At the start of Zelensky's presidency, Ukrainian writer Oleksandr Sydorenko (Fozzie) observed that... "Ukraine will make Zelenskyy a nationalist <...> Referring to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Sydorenko cites the case of Leonid Kuchma. Kuchma, who was previously known as the 'red director', became a moderate Ukrainian nationalist after finding himself on Bankova and understanding the state's problems. It is possible that Zelenskyy may experience a similar transformation" [Sydorenko 2019]. On one hand, Zelenskyy took criticism seriously after being elected president. As a comedian and actor, he was accustomed to receiving only applause and ovations, not sharp criticism. On the other hand, he made every effort to meet society's needs and demands, often imitating real solutions to certain problems.

It is important to note that prior to the Revolution of Dignity, Ukrainian society was divided in its views on Ukraine's foreign policy course. It is unclear which side Zelenskyy would have chosen. The fact that before the elections, he was considered a protégé of the fifth president of Ukraine, Poroshenko, in terms of his rhetoric and political ideas. After the elections, he began to repeat Poroshenko's slogans. This shows that the idea of the Maidan and the power of civil society passed the test of maturity and won in the battle with the idea of 'Russian peace'.

However, the public was concerned at that time about Zelenskyy receiving unlimited power similar to that of Yanukovich, as it could lead to a gradual departure from the democratization and reform of the country. Zelenskyy responded to these criticisms as follows: "an authoritarian regime is impossible in Ukraine, because there is a strong civil society that will not allow this" [Zelenskyy 2021]. On one hand, these statements could be interpreted as an attempt to appeal to both Western audiences and Ukrainian civil society. On the other hand, he believes that any government following the Revolution of Dignity must heed the demands of society, or risk losing power. However, despite President Zelensky's praise for civil society, both he and civil society face the challenge of combating corruption and establishing independent anti-corruption structures.

The issue was that, despite civil society pressure, the fight against corruption was more of a show than a systematic effort. The anti-corruption bodies in Ukraine, even before Zelensky's term, were structured in a way that allowed each government to influence the seemingly independent Security Service of Ukraine,

Prosecutor General's Office, and judicial system. Regarding system reforms, there was pressure from both Western partners such as the European Commission and the European Council, as well as civil society. The latter consists of independent public organizations that are trusted and financed by EU and US funds.

In this context, the Prime Minister of Ukraine Denys Shmyhal noted that “during 2020–2021, the Government systematically involved public organizations in the development of documents that are a "roadmap for the development of the state", for example, in the development of the National Economic Strategy for the period until 2030 involved more than 20 think tanks and 30 business associations” [Shmyhal 2021]. Another example of the involvement of civil society in legislative processes can be the following comment of the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Ruslan Stefanchuk, where he noted that “together with representatives of civil society, we developed a number of legislative initiatives in the field of direct democracy, such as laws on all-Ukrainian and local referendums. A number of legislative acts on judicial reform were also developed. Among them is the adopted draft law No. 3711-d on the restoration of the work of the Higher Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine” [Stefanchuk 2021]. However, it is important to note that the involvement was not systematic and did not concern the formation of anti-corruption bodies. For instance, the specialized anti-corruption prosecutor's office, which was created on September 22, 2015, faced transparency issues immediately after its establishment.

The formation of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecution was a condition set by the EU for visa liberalisation between Ukraine and the EU. This institution was created as part of the reforms to Ukraine's anti-corruption system, which is a necessary step for Ukraine's integration into Europe. At the outset of this important body's operation, there were transparency issues with the election of its head, which jeopardised Ukraine's visa-free regime. European partners highlighted this, emphasising the unacceptability of the situation. When the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine passed laws regarding the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau, changes were made that resulted in the body losing its *de facto* independence and becoming closely linked with the 'old prosecutor's office' and the Prosecutor General personally [Sydorenko, Sushko 2015]. Regarding the appointment of the members of the selection commission for the election of the head of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office, Jan Tombiński, the head of the representation of the European Union in Ukraine, commented that “The effective functioning of the newly established National Anti-Corruption Bureau depends on how quickly the anti-corruption prosecutors will start their work”. The

expert community and civil society representatives have expressed concerns about the appointments made to the Selection Committee by the Prosecutor General [Tombinski 2015]. The then Ukrainian authorities were forced to make concessions and elect the head of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office according to the mechanism proposed by the EU, under strong pressure from the EU and civil society.

After five years, when the term of the anti-corruption prosecutor ended, problems arose again during the election of the new prosecutor under Zelenskyi's presidency. Currently, the announcement of the results of the competitive commission for the election of the head of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office is being blocked. For two years, the office worked with an acting prosecutor, and the winner of the competition was unable to start their duties. Representatives from the Ukrainian public organization, the Anti-Corruption Center, commented on another unsuccessful attempt to appoint the head of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office, noting that... “the commission for electing the head of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office held a meeting, but for the second time could not formally approve the winner of the competition Oleksandr Klymenko. The Bank-controlled part of the commission again refused to vote for a formal decision” [Anti-Corruption Center 2021]. The appointment of the head of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office was delayed by two years, only occurring after Ukraine received candidate status for joining the EU. This was a requirement for further negotiation with the EU. This example illustrates that when the government is confronted with the possibility of losing influence over a significant state institution, it often faces fierce resistance that even a strong civil society cannot overcome.

It should be noted that although civil society (public organizations) were involved in the development and writing of laws on anti-corruption and judicial reform, as declared by the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, Ruslan Stefanchuk, there were issues with the implementation of these laws. Roman Smalyuk, an expert from the Center for Political and Legal Reforms, highlighted that there was no significant progress in the implementation of recommendations by public experts in the field of judicial reform between 2020-2021. A total of 17 recommendations were provided by experts, none of which were fully implemented by the authorities. 13 were partially implemented, and 4 were not implemented at all [Smalyuk 2021]. When analysing the government's consideration of recommendations from experts specialising in anti-corruption reform, a result of cooperation between the government and civil society was observed.

Andrii Borovyk, Executive Director of Transparency International Ukraine, notes that “in the area of anti-corruption reform, out of 14 recommendations of experts, the authorities have fully implemented only one – passed the law on the Bureau of Economic Security. However, there are already questions about the political independence of the members of the commission, which should elect the head of this bureau” [Borovyk 2021]. These examples demonstrate that the government, through effective use of the media, prioritises form over substance in implementing reforms. The issue at hand is not solely related to President Zelenskyy or the current government, but rather stems from a deeper problem within the system. This problem has been deeply ingrained in various state structures for decades, allowing it to absorb any power. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that without the influence of civil society, the results of the reforms would be completely absent. Considering the current domestic regulatory and legal framework and scientific research on the interaction between state authorities and civil society institutions in implementing anti-corruption policies, three main directions can be identified where it is most fully implemented: The first form of interaction between civil society institutions and state authorities is demonstrated through the involvement of civil society representatives in the work of specialized anti-corruption bodies. These bodies include advisory, coordination, and expert permanent and temporary councils, as well as commissions and working groups. The second direction of interaction involves civil society institutions using individual tools or mechanisms to combat corruption in conjunction with state authorities. The third direction of interaction between state authorities and civil society institutions pertains to the formation and development of the institution of public control over the implementation of the state's anti-corruption policy [Antonova, Mishchenko, Bandura, Abdullayev, Dolhyi 2022].

Examining the power model that has emerged in certain Eastern European countries, particularly Ukraine, Fukuyama refers to it as the 'Berlusconi Formula'. This formula combines media control with economic power. Berlusconi used his influence in the media to secure his election to power and subsequently employed his political power to safeguard his economic interests <...> this model, he said, “could destroy Western democracy, was later used by oligarchs in many countries, but primarily in Eastern Europe” [Schur 2021]. The aforementioned formula was implemented by Ukrainian oligarchs in an attempt to retain their assets, which were obtained illegally during the 1990s. The system reportedly persisted until the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia on February 24, 2022.

Today, Ukrainians, civil society, and the government cannot afford to delay reforms or eliminate those enemies who are in the rear. Civil society should learn one simple lesson: there should be zero tolerance for those who oppose Ukraine's progress, reforms, and initiatives that contribute to the democratic development of Ukraine.

Since the start of the full-scale Russian military aggression against Ukraine, there has been an increase in cross-sectoral cooperation between authorities, local self-government, civil society, and, in some cases, representatives of Ukrainian businesses in various areas. In many cities, public associations, charitable organizations, business entities, and local authorities establish humanitarian hubs to gather various resources. Thanks to the joint efforts of state authorities, public and volunteer organizations, several information and reference resources have been created. These resources provide information and guidance on the evacuation process and receiving emergency humanitarian aid. In Ukraine, the official platform 'Spivdiya' was launched to unite volunteer and state initiatives for humanitarian aid during the war¹. To address the issues faced by internally displaced persons, public organizations establish networks of coordinators to communicate with local authorities. Namely, the regional coordinators of the NGO "CrimeaSOS"².

The Ukrainian Volunteer Service, in partnership with SoftServe, has developed the 'Palyanytsia.Info' platform for quickly searching for humanitarian and volunteer aid in all regions of Ukraine. The platform provides information about organizations that offer aid to vulnerable populations, including internally displaced persons, the elderly, children, and people with disabilities. This aid includes assistance with evacuation, housing, food, and medicine, both within individual cities and villages, as well as throughout the regions and the entire country of Ukraine. The platform currently lists over 800 organizations that offer various forms of assistance. The platform team is continuously working to supplement and update this resource³.

The cooperation between civil society and the army should be highlighted. The state must establish legal protection for citizens and create a favorable legal environment for the activities of public institutions established by them [Semyorkina 2011]. The interaction between civil society and the Armed Forces of Ukraine should be

¹ SpivDiya is a charitable foundation that unites the efforts of volunteers, businesses, international funds and the state to help those in need. [online]. Available at: <https://spivdiia.org.ua/>

² Krymsos a public initiative created on February 27, 2014 for prompt and objective coverage of the events taking place in Crimea in connection with its illegal occupation by the Russian Federation. [online]. Available at: <https://krymsos.com/>

³ Palyanytsya.Info is an open database of organizations that provide humanitarian and volunteer assistance to the population throughout Ukraine. [online]. Available at: <https://palyanytsya.info/>

perceived positively as a sign of a developed public sector. However, it may also indicate an insufficient level of provision by the state for the effective functioning of the armed forces in terms of material, technical, psychological, and cultural-educational directions. The close interaction between the armed forces and the public, which has developed since 2014 and continues to this day, is only feasible under conditions of war when the very existence of the state is threatened. However, the true fighting capacity of the armed forces cannot be guaranteed by the volunteer movement alone; it must be provided by the state.

The growth of trust in civil society representatives is significant. According to Komnatnyi, Buha, Fedorova, Horovyi, and Bortniak (2011: 350), the level of trust in public organizations increased from 34.5 % to 40 % between 2015 and 2020. In December 2022, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) conducted an all-Ukrainian poll of public opinion called 'Omnibus'. The study results show that trust among volunteers increased from 68 % in 2021 to 84 %, and the balance improved from +57 % to +81 % [Hrushetskyi 2023].

UKRAINIAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE UKRAINIAN AUTHORITIES IN TERMS OF EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

On 24th February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The Ukrainian people's task became to fight for their freedom and their lives. While the Ukrainian armed forces resisted on the front lines, the Ukrainian president fought on the information front. Ukrainian activists had to organize a strong public movement abroad to support their cause. According to Ukrainian researcher Kateryna Zarembo, the Russian invasion added a new dimension to Ukrainian civil society – “dimension of internationalization”. [Zarembo 2023: 55]. The internationalization is a result of the mass and forced migration of Ukrainians, primarily to Europe. According to UN data from April 2023, 8.1 million Ukrainian refugees have been registered in Europe [Operational Data Portal UNHCR's, Ukraine Refugee Situation 2023]. Given the ongoing hostilities in Ukraine, it is probable that this number will continue to rise.

An internationalized Ukrainian civil society, led by activists of various profiles, had to assist the official Ukrainian authorities in the fight for Western weapons and sanctions against Russia. Additionally, they had to persuade citizens of Western countries of the necessity of these weapons and sanctions. In many Western countries, there is still a narrative that Russia is invincible. It is suggested that giving Russia a conditional Crimea could lead to peace in Ukraine. However,

Ukrainian intellectuals, human rights defenders, and activists who are part of the Ukrainian public movement in the West should also inform Western societies that Ukrainians deserve to be part of the EU and NATO. This is because they are willing to sacrifice their lives for Western values.

When Zelenskyy attempts to persuade Europeans and Americans of the necessity of certain weapons and sanctions, representatives of civil society immediately join these calls, creating significant media attention. This was particularly important in the early days of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is worth noting the impassioned speech of Ukrainian activist and executive director of the anti-corruption center, Daria Kaleniuk, during a meeting with former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

In particular, D. Kaleniuk addressed Johnson with the following words: “You talk about the stoicism of the Ukrainian people, but Ukrainian women and children are afraid because of the bombs and rockets flying from the sky. The Ukrainian people are desperately asking the West to protect our sky. We are asking for a no-fly zone, which you say will trigger World War III. But what is the alternative? Watch?” [Kaleniuk 2022]. This speech by a public activist was a plea for help from Ukrainians to a Western leader. It is important to share stories like this in the media, as it is an extension of oneself and expands possibilities (McLuhan, 1964). The actions of civil society leaders on the Western front in Europe had a huge impact on the Western world in a matter of minutes. The media activity of Ukrainian activists was significant not only in the context of the supply of weapons to Ukraine and the introduction of sanctions against Russia but also in conveying to Europeans that Ukraine is part of the Western world and culture, which also fights for European security.

In this context, it is worth mentioning Oleksandra Matviichuk, the head of the Center for Civil Liberties and a human rights activist who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022. Matviichuk has emphasized the importance of achieving justice in her numerous public speeches, including during her acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize “We still look at the world through the lens of the Nuremberg Tribunal, where war criminals were convicted only when the Nazi regime fell. But justice should not depend on the stability of authoritarian regimes. After all, we live in a new century. Justice should not wait <...> In order for justice to be established, and for freedom and democracy to win the war against the dictatorship, it is enough to be in solidarity with Ukraine – you do not have to be Ukrainian to support Ukraine. Just being human is enough” [Matviichuk 2022]. It is not appropriate to claim that civil society's actions led to the international criminal court in The Hague

issuing a warrant for Putin's arrest. However, Ukrainian human rights defenders played a significant role in the fight for this decision. The decision of the International Criminal Court demonstrates that justice can be achieved without delay and the death of a war criminal. It also serves as evidence that the values on which Europe stands, and for which Ukraine is fighting, remain strong.

The European identity is shaped by values such as freedom and democracy. When referring to 'Europe' or 'the West', it is not so much about the territory, but rather the values, particularly personal freedom and justice. According to Polish-Ukrainian researcher Ola Hnatiuk, "when there is a conversation about European identity, they usually appeal to the concept of a community based on Mediterranean (Greek and Roman) culture and Christianity (sometimes together with its roots), which shaped Europe, as well as – although not always – to the heritage of the Renaissance. It is much less common to talk about the legacy of the Age of Enlightenment, which, however, is of fundamental importance for current European culture <....> as early as 1748, Montesquieu in the treatise "On the Spirit of Laws", sharing his thoughts on the meaning of Europe, noted that it is a secular concept, and it is not united by Christianity, but by the idea of freedom" [Hnatiuk 2005: 66–67]. Today, this concept is becoming increasingly relevant. It serves as a valuable reference point for the current united Europe and is a cause for which Ukraine is fighting.

In this struggle for freedom, Ukraine is gradually gaining support from the Western world, particularly Europe. Since gaining independence on August 24, 1991, many scientists, publicists, and politicians in Ukraine and abroad have supported the idea that Ukraine is culturally, mentally, and ideologically distinct. Some have even suggested that there are 'two Ukraines'. Ukrainian researcher Mykola Riabchuk has also highlighted this phenomenon, introducing the concept of 'two Ukraines' and adding, "...that in the past, the current western territories of Ukraine belonged to the Habsburg Monarchy and Poland, and the eastern and central territories to the Russian Empire. The differences between these "two Ukraines" are so strong that, as Ryabchuk claims, it is already worth talking about "different worlds" <...> they represent, rather, mutually exclusive "ideological concepts", the first of which, from these Ukraines, symbolizes the tendency "to return to USSR", and the other "return to Europe"" [Riabchuk 2001]. The average European has historically viewed Ukraine as a unified entity, although some consider it to be part of the Russian cultural sphere, characterized by corruption, poverty, and ruin.

This division was expected to cease after Ukraine gained independence. However, it is only disappearing now due to the physical destruction of Russian imperialism

and the mental destruction of the USSR in the minds of many Ukrainians. A 'third Ukraine' is emerging in place of physical ruins and mental emptiness. This new Ukraine is not only being born in the minds of Ukrainians but also in the minds of Europeans. Ukraine has historically been viewed as an object rather than a subject in geopolitical processes, likely due to its association with Russian cultural space. For instance, at the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit, Ukraine requested a roadmap for joining the alliance, but instead, six years later, it faced Russian military aggression and the annexation of Crimea. At the summit, Putin stated that Ukraine did not, does not, and cannot exist as an independent state. In particular, he addressed US President J. Bush, “You do understand, George, that Ukraine is not even a state! What is Ukraine? Part of its territory is Eastern Europe, and part, and a significant one, was a gift from us!” [Ukrainska Pravda 2008]. The West's weak reaction, or lack thereof, to Putin's words gave him the freedom to continue his aggressive actions.

The 2008 NATO summit demonstrated that Ukraine was not a subject but an object in the geopolitical arena. Additionally, Ukraine lacked a strong ally in civil society to support its foreign policy national interests. The state's lack of a strong civil society and ongoing internal division between the 'two Ukraines' made it vulnerable to both future conflict with Russia and the rise of a 'new third Ukraine'. Mykola Riabchuk, the researcher mentioned above, aptly refers to this new faction as the 'third Ukraine', “... it is unnamed, undefined, and ambivalent, until recently doomed to a political struggle for the role of an object, not a subject – a huge battlefield and in that at the same time, the main victory in the struggle between these two other "Ukraines" <...> therefore, this "third Ukraine" is not only a "great battlefield", but also a "main gain", on which the future of Ukraine largely depends” [Riabchuk 2001]. The future of not only every Ukrainian, but also many Europeans, including their security and stability, depends on the victory of this “third Ukraine”.

In the early stages of the war, the contrast between the liberal values of the EU and its involvement in the war was less apparent. The technocratic European Commission supported the war effort by proposing measures to arm and provide moral support to Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression. The decision to grant Ukraine candidate status was an extraordinary move for the bloc, driven by geopolitical imperatives and the tools of process-oriented bureaucracy [Leonard 2023]. Under the influence of Ukrainian civil society activities in the West, Europe is beginning to understand Ukraine in a different light. It is now widely recognized that Ukraine is a distinct entity from Russia. Today, Ukraine has come closer to Europe than ever before, culturally, politically, and economically. However, for full

unification to occur, Ukraine must complete its reformation process through cooperation between the government and civil society. Additionally, Ukraine must continue to adopt a European mindset, living according to the rules and laws.

Currently, there is a prevailing opinion among politicians and citizens in Europe, particularly in France and Germany, that Ukraine's large territory and post-war devastation will make it challenging to integrate into the EU quickly. For instance, in France, a referendum is held when the question of joining other countries to the EU arises. The integration of an economically devastated country, whose territory spans from London to Lviv, is not universally admired by Europeans.

However, Ukraine's territorial integration into the EU space is not a new issue, but it is acquiring new geopolitical contours. Ukrainian writer Yuriy Andrukhovych has reflected on this challenge for Ukrainians, noting that "Ukraine is the largest objective data in Europe in terms of area, which for this very reason fatally cannot fit in Europe..." [Hnatiuk 2005: 8]. However, the collective event recognises that Ukraine's buffer position no longer provides the desired stability for Europe. While integrating Ukraine into the EU presents a challenge, granting Ukraine candidate status may indicate that Europe has accepted this challenge. The completion of the integration process, however, depends on Ukraine itself in many ways.

Today, the Ukrainian government and civil society face three key challenges: winning the war with Russia, continuing internal reforms, and completing the process of joining the EU and NATO. These challenges require further unity of Ukrainian society. At the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Ukraine survived primarily due to the unprecedented unity in the middle of the country. Western support for Ukraine is based on the country's military resistance and internal unity. It is important for Ukrainians to maintain this unity, especially considering their unsuccessful attempt at statehood a century ago. Former Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko has commented on this issue, "national unity is the most important challenge for 46 million Ukrainians today. The lack of unity was and remains the main impersonal factor of social disharmony in recent years" [Yushchenko 2014: 4]. Both overcoming current challenges and being resilient to new ones depend on national unity.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that Ukraine is currently defending its independence and striving for freedom and democracy. The pursuit of freedom is a key component that aligns Ukraine with the European family and reinforces Ukrainian identity as European.

The interaction between the Ukrainian authorities and civil society is where this process takes place. Ukrainian civil society is aware of the challenges it faces and is attempting to oversee the actions of the authorities in terms of internal reforms. Additionally, civil society is appealing to Western leaders to provide arms for Ukraine and strengthen sanctions against Russia in the foreign policy arena. It is important to note that since 2014, all major reforms in Ukraine have been implemented due to the control and pressure exerted by civil society on the authorities. This is particularly evident in the establishment of anti-corruption bodies, which play a crucial role in Ukraine's ongoing European integration processes. It should be noted that Ukrainian civil society faced significant opposition from both current and former authorities when it came to reforming anti-corruption bodies. Following the full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine, civil society was forced to work on two fronts: internally, to control the Ukrainian authorities in domestic politics, and externally, to defend Ukraine's interests among Western countries. It is worth noting that President Zelenskyy's decision not to attend the negotiations with the Russians was influenced by civil society. The perception of Ukraine as a non-Russian cultural space in the West is largely due to the efforts of an internationalized civil society. Public activists, human rights defenders, journalists, and intellectuals, including Daria Kaleniuk, Oleksandra Matviichuk, Myroslava Gongadze (Voice of America), and Sevgil Musaeva (chief editor of Ukrainian Pravda), strive to keep the 'Ukrainian question' at the forefront of Western public and political discourse. Ukrainian human rights defenders, including Oleksandra Matviichuk, were involved in a historic precedent in international law, when an arrest warrant for war crimes was issued to the president of a nuclear state, Russia.

Ukrainian civil society continues to encounter numerous challenges in its activities, both in Ukraine and in the West. In Ukraine, public activists, intellectuals, and journalists must persist in exerting pressure on the government to implement the reforms necessary for further European integration. However, civil society on the Western front should focus on working with citizens of Western societies rather than solely pressuring Western politicians. This will lead to a joint victory over our common enemy.

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ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA DISCOURSE SURROUNDING THE 2021 POLISH-BELARUSIAN BORDER CRISIS¹

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Abstract

The paper analyses media narratives in Polish newspapers, magazines and media websites about the refugee crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border. The study uses methods from corpus linguistics. The aim of the research was to test the accuracy of the assumption that there are two parallel narratives in the discourse, one based on security and emphasising the danger posed by the migrants, and the other recognising them as victims and showing empathy towards them. The study found that the discourse is rather polarised, with most publications subscribing to only one narrative and borrowing very little from the other.

Key words: *Polish-Belarusian border crisis, media language, corpus discourse analysis, refugees.*

When observing the media, it becomes clear that various publications use different language to describe the same event. This was particularly evident during the 2021 border crisis in Poland, which began when the Belarusian regime began sending Middle Eastern migrants to the Polish border. The migrants became trapped in the forests near the border, with the Polish Border Guard preventing them from crossing into Poland and the Belarusian authorities refusing to allow them to return to their country of origin. Due to the complexity of the situation, two dominant narratives emerged. One narrative focused on the security threats to the Polish border, while the other focused on the tragic situation of the migrants.

The crisis can be traced back to the presidential election in Belarus held on the 9th of August 2020. According to official Belarusian sources, President Alexander Lukashenko, who has been in office since 1994, was re-elected with 81.04 % of the votes. However, this result was not recognized by the leaders of the EU member states. It is believed that Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the main opposition candidate, received more votes than the announced 10 % [Tóka 2021: 230]. The EU imposed sanctions on the Belarusian government due to the manipulated elections, imprisonment of Tsikhanouskaya, and brutal repression of protests [EP, 26.11.2020].

In response to the sanctions, Lukaszenko threatened to flood Europe with drugs and immigrants. Belarus, finding itself in an economic crisis, would no longer be able to prevent them from entering EU territories [The Week 28.05.2021]. From May to June 2021, the Lithuanian and Latvian Border Guards observed a significant increase in illegal border crossings, which reached its peak in July and August 2021 [Dudzińska 2021]. Subsequently, the crisis spread to the Polish-Belarusian border. Belarusian agencies conducted operations in countries such as Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria, manipulating people into travelling to Belarus by marketing it as an easy way to migrate to the EU, primarily to Germany. They have also increased the number of flights connecting the Middle East to Belarus. According to

reports, the planes were full on the way to Minsk but empty on the return journey. According to sources [InfoSecurity24 26.08.2021; Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej 2021], the migrants were transported to the border, where they were stripped of their personal documents and ordered to breach the fence.

Between August and November 2021, Polish institutions reported approximately 40,000 attempts at illegal border crossings. The migrants were used as a tool by the Belarusian state, posing a threat to Poland through mass uncontrolled migration. Although mass uncontrolled migration posed a threat to Poland, it is important to acknowledge that the migrants were victims of a humanitarian crisis. The Belarusian government prevented the migrants from returning to their country of origin, while the Polish Guard denied them entry into Polish territory. As a result, humanitarian aid and the media faced difficulties accessing the migrants from either the Belarusian or Polish side due to the Polish government's introduction of a state of emergency in the regions bordering Belarus [Wawrzusiszyn 2022, 57].

Despite media restrictions, the crisis became a prominent topic, resulting in numerous publications. Due to its controversial nature, there were significant differences in its presentation. While some media focused on the threats to Poland that the crisis had brought, others emphasised the critical situation of the migrants who were stuck on the border. Our research team hypothesised that there were two opposing narratives about the crisis in the Polish media. One narrative focused on the security threats resulting from the crisis, while the other focused on the humanity of the refugees. To test the hypothesis, we applied corpus linguistics methods.

Academics from various fields have published papers on the Polish-Belarusian border crisis, offering a wide range of perspectives. Specialists in national security and international relations have analysed the crisis as a hybrid threat and a component of broader hybrid warfare [Filipec 2021; Baziur 2022; Berzins 2022; Olbrycht 2022; Wawrzusiszyn 2022]. In his paper, Janko Bekić [2022] draws a comparison between the Polish-Belarusian border crisis and the Greek-Turkish crisis of 2020. Olesia Tkachuk (2022) highlights the absence of EU migration policies that address the instrumental use of a large influx of migrants by third-party states.

Authors specialising in law commonly focus on the humanitarian aspect of the crisis. Krzysztof Jurek [2022] presents the legal issues faced by humanitarian aid agencies. Other scholars acknowledge Poland's nonconformity with the already established EU migration policies and the EU's tacit approval of the member states'

actions [Bodnar Grzelak 2023; Grześkowiak 2022]. Klaus and Szulecka (2022) conducted a comparison of Polish migration policies towards Middle Eastern migrants at the Belarusian border and the policies towards the 2022 migration from Ukraine and Belarus. They diagnosed that the difference in policies was based on discrimination based on ethnicity. Anthropologist Agnieszka Halemba (2022) described the challenges faced by humanitarian aid agencies and their strategies for navigating them.

Media discourse surrounding the border crisis was the subject of several publications. Marta Jas-Koziarkiewicz [2023] conducted a frame analysis of the public TV station TVP, inspired by Erving Goffman. Monika Koźdoń-Dębecka [2023] also used a similar framework to compare the agendas of three mainstream TV stations. Nylec [2023] employed frame analysis to compare two journals, namely 'Sieci' and 'Przegląd'. In her work, Tymińska (2022) analysed hate speech in online discourse, with a particular focus on Twitter. The authors of the study conducted a statistical analysis of the main Polish news websites, with a focus on the portrayal of migrants [Karolina Bloch et al., 2022].

Based on the literature reviewed, there appears to be a research gap in the broader media discourse. The previous works examined only a few specific news sources, which limited the ability to draw more general conclusions about the discourse. Thanks to the methods of corpus linguistics (Conrad 2002; Baker 2006; Baker McEnery 2015; Biber 2007; Gray Biber 2011), we were able to consider a significantly larger number of news sources, gaining a better understanding of the media discourse surrounding this issue.

METHODOLOGY

In our analysis of press, journals, and internet news sources (hereafter referred to as 'publications'), we used techniques from corpus linguistics. Our aim was to analyze media narratives by examining the keywords used in articles about the Polish-Belarusian border crisis by the most influential Polish publications.

The initial stage of the research involved creating a specialized corpus of texts from the selected publications. We chose 17 publications based on their influence, as determined by the Institute of Media Monitoring [IMM 2021] ranking from October 2021². To access articles from each publication, we used the Google search engine

² The study only considered press and internet news websites, as well as weekly and bi-weekly magazines. Television and radio were excluded due to their lack of written text, as the focus of the research was on written language. Monthly and bi-monthly magazines were

and entered a search prompt such as 'granica białoruska site:wp.pl' (meaning 'Belarusian border site:wp.pl') for each publication. Only emotionally neutral words were used to refer strictly to the location, avoiding bias. To ensure that only articles related to the topic were collected, a custom date range was set. As the exact beginning date of the crisis is unclear, the data collection began on 01.01.2021 to ensure that none of the earliest articles on the subject were omitted. The date range ended on 23.02.2022, one day before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This enabled us to exclude articles that were not relevant to the subject under examination, such as those related to the war, including the Belarusian engagement in the invasion or the wave of Ukrainian war refugees. In total, we collected 1441 articles, containing a total of 1,136,373 words (Chart 1).

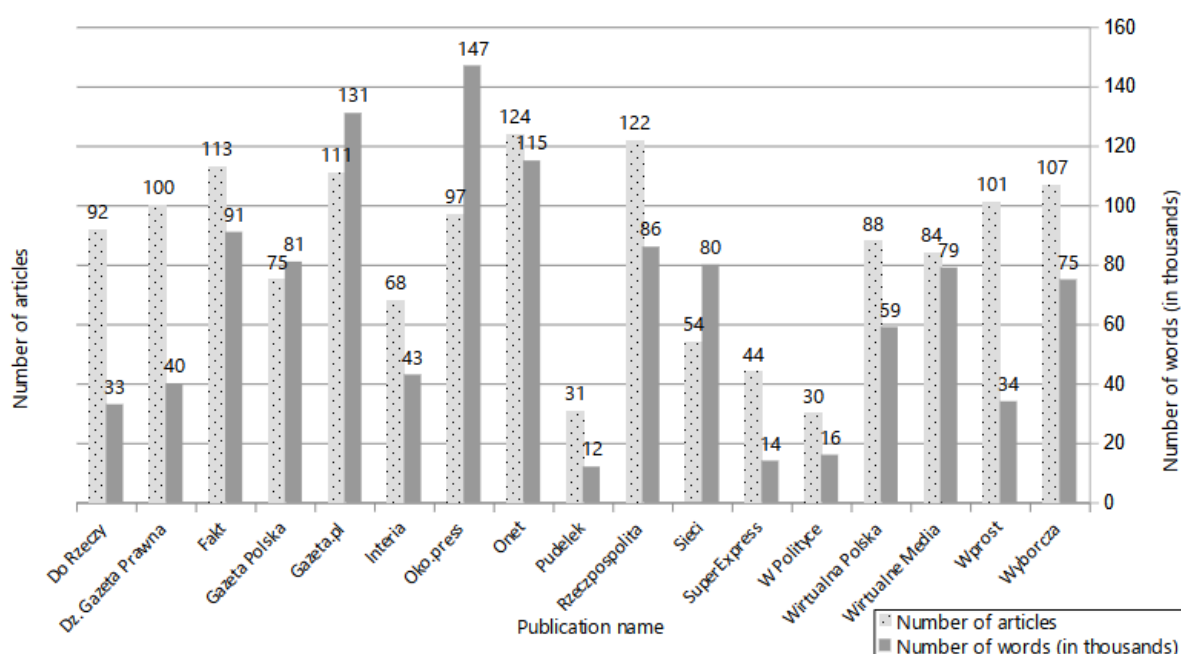


Chart 1. The number of articles and words of each publication (own elaboration)

The articles were then lemmatised to facilitate the analysis of the collected data³. This process was conducted thanks to a neural network model for the “SpaCy” Python library. Unfortunately, the model’s accuracy is estimated at about 94 %

also excluded as they were deemed less influential overall and did not provide a sufficient corpus for the research.

Publications such as “Money.pl”, “BusinessInsider.pl” and “Przegląd Sportowy” were omitted because their main foci are not social issues or security, but economics and sports. “Wspólnota.pl” and other regional publications were also omitted as their reach is limited to specific regions.

³ Lemmatisation is the process of reducing words to their root form. See A. Gillis, 2023.

correctly lemmatised words. Some mistakes were manually corrected whenever they affected the keywords. The collected articles were lemmatised using a neural network model from the 'SpaCy' Python library to aid analysis. Despite an estimated 94 % accuracy rate, some errors were manually corrected when they impacted the keywords.

The second step involved identifying the keywords that differentiate each publication from the others. We created corpora for each selected publication and a unified reference corpus for all 1441 articles. For each word in the reference corpus, we calculated the expected frequency of occurrence. We then tested the observed frequency of all the words in the publication's corpora. If a word's observed frequency was significantly higher than the expected frequency in the reference corpus, it was considered a keyword in this publication. Conversely, if a word's observed frequency was close to or lower than the frequency in the reference corpus, it was not identified as a keyword [Anthony 2023:1]. AntConc [Anthony 2022] was used to identify keywords, a computer program designed for corpus analysis. Grammatical words that carry no meaning (such as 'and', 'but', 'however', etc.) were excluded, as well as keywords that appeared in only one or two articles, as they were not representative of the publication as a whole. The context of each keyword was checked using the KWIC (Keywords in Context) option provided by the same program to determine which narrative it supported.

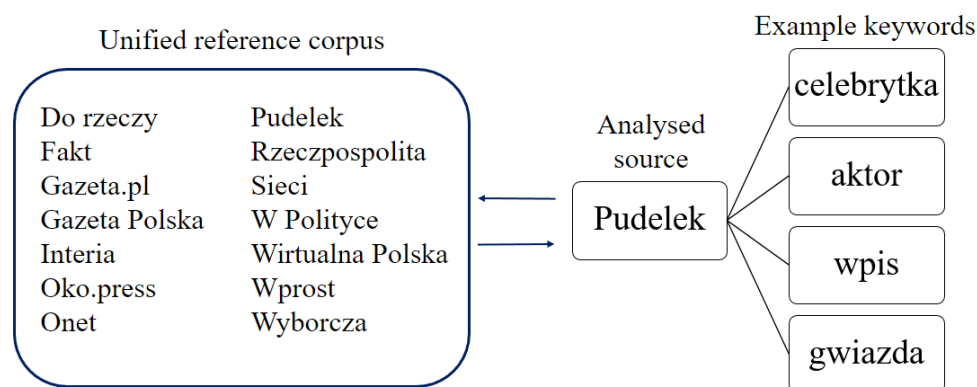


Figure 1. Process of comparing corpora to extract keywords (own elaboration)

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF MEDIA DISCOURSE REGARDING MIGRANTS AT THE POLISH-BELARUSIAN BORDER

The study identified two parallel narratives regarding the refugee crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border. One narrative emphasised the severity of the threats posed by the actions of the Belarusian authorities and the fear of migrants (referred

to as the security-based narrative), while the other focused on the plight of people stranded in the border forests (referred to as the human rights-based narrative). To determine if a division by narrative type occurred, we analysed the keywords in each publication, considering their context. This analysis helped identify which words were used more frequently in one publication than others and their intended referent.

The publications that best represent the security-based narrative are 'Do Rzeczy' and 'Gazeta Polska'. Upon analysing the keywords used in 'Do Rzeczy', it becomes clear that the word 'illegal' mainly refers to immigrants crossing the border or entering Poland. The most frequent collocations with the word 'illegal' are '*to cross*', '*attempt*', '*to record*' (*the border guard recorded 195 illegal attempts of crossing the border*), '*immigrant*' and '*immigration*'. This use implies that the actions of migrants are dangerous because they are illegal, which may create uncertainty in the reader. Similarly, the term 'territory' may seem insignificant, but when used in phrases such as '*attempts to invade the territory of Poland*', '*violating the territory of a sovereign state*', or '*illegally entering the territory of Poland*', it highlights the danger that the crisis poses to Poland and the inviolability of its borders.

The term 'attempt' is often used to describe security-related incidents such as *an attempted illegal incursion, a mass incursion, crossing or charging the border*. Another keyword used in this context is 'provocation', which refers to the actions of Belarusian services at the border. It is important to note that this term may not necessarily indicate fear on the part of immigrants, but rather emphasises the fear of possible actions from the Belarusian side. This is evident in contexts such as: *provocation by the Belarusian services, provocation by the Belarusian regime or by the Lukashenko regime*.

The keywords in 'Gazeta Polska' (Figure 3) suggest a security-based narrative. The top-ranking words include *Putin, Russian, and operation*. The word '*operation*' appears in the contexts of *hybrid operation, military operation, disinformation operation, and operation 'sluice'*⁴. These keywords indicate hostile forces and their actions aimed at breaching Poland's security. 'Gazeta Polska' refers to internal enemies using keywords such as '*opposition*', '*total*', '*Tusk*', and '*platform*'. These words all relate to the then ruling party, Law and Justice⁵ (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość), and its main rival party, Civic Platform⁶ (Platforma Obywatelska), and its leader,

⁴ See Baziur 2022.

⁵ Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) is the ruling party since 2016. See: <https://pis.org.pl/>

⁶ Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska) is the main opposition party since 2016. See: <https://platforma.org/o-nas>

Donald Tusk. The use of terms such as *'total opposition'* indicates a hostile attitude towards the mentioned actors. Other terms require context. For example, *Tusk and Lukashenko attacked simultaneously. The Civic Platform was willing to jeopardise Polish security in the name of its interests. TVN⁷ and PO (Civic Platform) gave Moscow the green light.* Another example of the keywords that appeared in the articles from 'Gazeta Polska' is *'front'*. This term refers to the border itself, portraying it as a battleground, or to the *'Warsaw front'* (front warszawski), which is an umbrella term for the liberal movements, the opposition party PO, and their voters.

	Keywords in Polish	English translation
1	białoruski	Belarusian
2	nielegalny	Illegal
3	granica	a border
4	polski	Polish
5	żołnierz	a soldier
6	Wąsik	(surname)
7	terytorium	territory
8	pas	a strip
9	wiceminister	vice minister
10	funkcjonariusz	an officer
11	poinformować	to inform
12	próba	an attempt
13	służba	service
14	graniczna	border (adjective)
15	prowokacja	a provocation
16	stwierdzić	to state
17	imigrant	an immigrant
18	przekroczyć	to cross
19	przekazać	to inform, to convey
20	minister	a minister

Figure 2. Keywords in 'Do Rzeczy' in order by keyness (own elaboration)

	Keywords in Polish	English translation
1	Putin	Putin
2	rosyjski	Russian
3	operacja	operation
4	Rosja	Russia
5	wojna	a war
6	totalny	total
7	opozycja	opposition
8	NATO	NATO
9	atak	an attack
10	Moskwa	Moscow
11	państwo	a state
12	Tusk	(surname)
13	Kreml	the Kremlin
14	KGB	The KGB
15	element	an element
16	platforma	a platform
17	hybrydowy	hybrid
18	armia	an army
19	front	a front
20	prowokacja	a provocation

Figure 3. Keywords in 'Gazeta Polska' in order by keyness (own elaboration)

The most exemplary instances of the human rights-based narrative are found in 'Oko.press' and 'Gazeta Wyborcza'. According to the study, *'human'* was the most frequently used keyword in 'Oko.press' (Figure 4). A detailed analysis of its usage revealed that this particular keyword primarily pertains to refugees who are in

⁷ TVN is a popular polish TV station owned by Warner Bros. Discovery. See at: <https://tvn.pl/o-nas>

extreme distress, on the brink of survival, frightened, hungry, victims of violence, and in dire need of assistance. The frequent use of this word underscores the migrants' humanity. Another term high on the list is 'activist'. Depending on the context, it can refer to someone who is *trying to help, being arrested, or raising awareness.* The term is frequently used in narratives that describe individuals at the border who require assistance. Activists who attempt to provide this assistance are often highlighted. Other relevant keywords include *Iraqi, right (human rights; rights to asylum; to protection; to apply for refugee status), convention (Geneva Convention; Human Rights Convention; Convention of the rights of the child) and asylum (they ask for asylum in Poland; in Germany; in EU countries).* In "Oko.press", as in "Gazeta Polska", we can notice the mentions of enemies. In this case the enemies are designated by the key word *pogranicznik (a border guard),* referring to the people who, according to the contexts: *do not allow refugees to return to Minsk; do not allow food to be given to refugees; are very brutal; beat; shoot with plastic cartridges; intimidate; and deport.* It is worth noting that these words refer to both Polish and Belarusian border guards.

	Keywords in Polish	English translation
1	człowiek	human
2	aktywista	an activist
3	ja	me
4	las	a forest
5	pogranicznik	a border guard
6	Irakijczyk	Iraqi
7	prawo	a right (to sth)
8	rodzina	a family
9	push (back)	push (back)
10	telefon	a telephone
11	migrantka	a migrant (fem.)
12	woda	water
13	kontakt	contact
14	Chrzanowska	(surname)
15	azyl	an asylum
16	konwencja	a convention
17	karetka	an ambulance
18	ubiegać się	to apply
19	osoba	a person
20	ośrodek	center

Figure 4. Keywords in "Oko.press" in order by keyness (own elaboration)

	Keywords in Polish	English translation
1	Al	Al (arabic name comp.)
2	Sterczewski	(surname)
3	żubr	a bison
4	protest	a protest
5	Bydgoszcz	(city name)
6	mur	a wall
7	budowa	construction
8	puszcza	a forest
9	autostrada	a highway
10	komenda	a (police) station
11	Kurdystan	Kurdistan
12	brat	a brother
13	zwierzę	an animal
14	droga	a road
15	Kretkowska	(surname)
16	uchodźca	a refugee
17	Podlaskie	Podlaskie Voivodeship
18	plot	a fence
19	śląski	Silesian
20	ogrodzenie	a fence

Figure 5. Keywords in "Gazeta Wyborcza" in order by keyness (own elaboration)

The keyword list for 'Gazeta Wyborcza' (Figure 5) demonstrates the newspaper's focus on a human rights-based narrative, as was the case in previous editions. The first word on the list is 'Al', which is a component of names such as *Al-Hasan*, *Al-Ensi*, *Al-Jaf* or *Al-Bawah*, used in the articles as names of migrants. The use of specific names rather than group terms, such as refugees or migrants, suggests a more personal approach to the individuals trapped at the border and aligns with a human rights-based narrative.

The second keyword on the list, '*bison*', is interestingly not related to refugees but rather to empathy towards animals. It pertains to two bison that became entangled in a barrier at the border and died. Only 'Gazeta Wyborcza' highlighted this aspect of the border crisis by including the *bison* and *animal* among its keywords. "Gazeta Wyborcza" is notable for its extensive coverage of the protests that occurred throughout Poland regarding the refugees. Therefore, the word '*protest*' and the names of cities such as *Bydgoszcz* are frequently mentioned.

Both 'Do Rzeczy' and 'Gazeta Polska' present a security-based narrative, focusing on the perceived dangers associated with migrants. The articles portray both migrants and Belarusians as enemies, creating the impression of a conflict between Poles and foreign forces. Additionally, the opposition is depicted as traitors serving the interests of the enemy. "Oko.press" and "Gazeta Wyborcza" focused solely on the humanitarian aspect, which was absent in previously analysed security-oriented publications. However, they did not address the international conflict between EU states and Belarus, despite Belarus being responsible for creating the crisis. The portrayal of the ruling party and Polish government agencies as the main culprits for not ensuring human rights and denying humanitarian aid to migrants is a subjective evaluation and lacks objectivity. The crisis should be treated as an international issue rather than an internal affair between the ruling party and the opposition.

One of the publications, 'Gazeta.pl' (Figure 6), appeared to represent a human rights-based narrative. However, upon closer inspection, it became clear that the keywords suggesting this, such as *violence* (on the border), *to appeal*, *humanitarian corridor*, *help*, *threat* (of escalation), *international protection*, all came from the same excerpt of text attached to the end of most articles. It was an appeal written by a nonprofit organisation Grupa Granica⁸, which was heavily involved in spreading

⁸ "Grupa Granica" is a social movement opposing the response of the government to the events taking place in the Polish-Belarusian border region. See at: <https://hfhr.pl/o-nas/sieci-wspolpracy/grupa-granica>

awareness about the migrant crisis. Once we removed the contents of the appeal from the corpus to investigate the language used in the articles, the keywords became different (Figure 7.).

	Keywords in Polish	English translation
1	przemoc	violence
2	granica	a border
3	migrować	to migrate
4	apel	an appeal
5	utworzyć	to create
6	prześladowanie	persecution
7	apelować	to appeal
8	korytarz	a corridor
9	ochrona	protection
10	nacisk	pressure
11	eskalacja	escalation
12	zdrowie	health
13	sytuacja	a situation
14	humanitarny	humanitarian
15	destabilizacja	destabilisation
16	osoba	a person
17	groźba	a threat
18	zapewnić	to ensure
19	oblicze	face (in face of)
20	główny	main

Figure 6. Keywords in “Gazeta.pl” in order without the by keyness (own elaboration)

	Keywords in Polish	English translation
1	Białoruś	Belarus
2	granica	a border
3	budowa	construction
4	plot	a fence
5	kilometr	kilometer
6	Usnierz	Usnierz Górny (village name)
7	gmina	a municipality
8	Bieszczadzki	Bieszczady (mountain range, adj.)
9	euro	euro
10	uchodźca	a refugee
11	straż	a guard
12	graniczny	border (adj.)
13	koszt	cost
14	żołnierz	a soldier
15	lekarz	a doctor
16	firma	a company
17	przeczytać	to read
18	Frontex	(agency)
19	drut	a wire
20	białoruski	Belarusian

Figure 7. Keywords in “Gazeta.pl” appeal in order by keyness (own elaboration)

The new keywords were mostly focused on the border wall that the Polish government was constructing: *construction, fence, kilometre (illegal 150-kilometre barbed wire on the Polish border; The wall has reached a length of 180 kilometres etc.), euro (construction is expected to cost around 7.5 million euro; 620 thousand euro per kilometre), cost (The cost of the wall will be over one billion zlotys; journalists tried to ask Morawiecki about the cost of the fence), company (The fence will be built by a company whose chairman is a Law and Justice activist; The first company will build a 105km barrier and the second 80km) and wire (the construction of the razor wire fence started; the first barbed wire fence is already in place)*. This may be a critique of the government's fiscal decisions, but it does not focus on the refugees themselves.

There are also other keywords that more align with the human rights-based narrative such as *doctor* which mostly refers to Doctors without Borders⁹ who: *had been continually trying to gain access to the prohibited zone since October; are withdrawing from the Polish-Belarusian border.* Another word that, when used in contexts, suggests a human rights-based narrative is *Usnarz*, referring to the village of Usnarz Górny, located near the border, where a group of around 50 migrants was camping. It appeared in contexts such as: *the tragedy of the Usnarz refugees and the cold-heartedness of the Polish authorities; Usnarz is only a small part [of the crisis]; in the case of Usnarz refugees, the humanitarian aspect is more important.*

The word *refugee* also appeared as a keyword. It was mostly used in the contexts that suggest a human rights-based narrative, for example, citing protesters who demanded: *the Polish Red Cross's implementation of comprehensive humanitarian assistance to refugees; locating and identifying refugees missing in Poland.* It also addressed the actions of the border guards: *border guards push refugees to the Belarusian side; border guards who do not let refugees through and do not allow them [the activists] to deliver food, among other things, have been joined by the military.* An interesting addition is a quote better suited to the security-based narrative: *residents spoke of their fear of a large number of refugees.*

The publication has a human rights-based narrative, particularly evident in the appeal by Grupa Granica. However, the majority of the keywords from the articles, excluding the appeal, focus on criticizing the government and the construction of border fences rather than raising awareness about the plight of the migrants.

Another major publication, 'Onet', also takes a human rights-based approach, as does Gazeta.pl. They use keywords such as 'zone', 'terrain', 'state of emergency', and 'journalist' in sentences condemning the media ban in the closed zone near the border. The term 'zone' is also used to describe the experiences of people living in the area (zone): *As residents of the state of emergency zone and aid organisations say – we will never know this number. Five migrant bodies are already buried in Podlasie; [...] the zone starts a few kilometres away. Monday's funeral for Ahmad will be the first such ceremony here; or Together with friends who also live in the zone, they formed an informal group to help people wandering in the surrounding woods.* Using those keywords, 'Onet' seems to subscribe to the human rights-based narrative. However, the word 'Lukashenko' also appears as a keyword in the following contexts: *[...] Lukashenko, who put everything on the line and has already*

⁹ Doctors Without Borders is an international organisation providing medical humanitarian aid. See at <https://lekarze-bez-granic.pl/o-nas/kim-jestesmy/>

clearly gone into open conflict with the West; By creating an artificial migration route, cynically using migrants, Lukashenko is trying to destabilise Poland, Lithuania and Latvia; It is an artificial crisis that Putin and Lukashenko have prepared for the EU. According to 'Onet', the Belarusian regime and Lukashenko were seen as the main cause of the humanitarian crisis, while 'Oko.press' and 'Gazeta Wyborcza' mostly attribute the blame to the Polish government. This perspective sets 'Onet' apart from other human rights-oriented publications.

	Keywords in Polish	English translation
1	Szudziałowo	(village name)
2	Łukaszenko	Lukashenko
3	strażniczka	a guard (fem.)
4	posterunek	a [guard] post
5	strefa	a zone
6	Kuźnica	(village name)
7	samochód	a car
8	placówka	an outpost
9	Podlaskie	(voivodeship)
10	policjant	a policeman
11	patrol	a patrol
12	migrant	a migrant
13	graniczny	border (adj.)
14	województwo	voivodeship
15	teren	terrain
16	wyjątkowy	emergency [state]
17	mijać	to pass/ to cross
18	dziennikarz	a journalist
19	rzecznik	spokesman
20	stan	a state (of emergency)

Figure 8. Keywords in “Onet” in order by *keyness* (own elaboration)

The tabloids 'Fakt' and 'Pudelek', in contrast to 'Gazeta.pl' and 'Onet', do not conform to the narratives outlined in the study. Their keywords (Figure 9, Figure 10) are dominated by the names of celebrities who are in some way involved in the events. Barbara Kurdej-Szatan's name appears particularly frequently, as internet users and the media heavily discussed her viral post criticising the border guards. Well-known names in Polish show business, such as *Stuhr*, *Warnke*, and *Ostaszewska*, were mentioned as keywords. Other frequently used keywords related to show business included celebrity, actress, and star, as well as words related to

social media such as *entry* or *Twitter*. The tabloids had noticeably fewer articles about the border crisis overall.

	Keywords in Polish	English translation
1	Kurdej	(surname)
2	lat	years
3	Szatan	(surname)
4	aktorka	an actress
5	Basia	(name)
6	wpis	an entry
7	Stuhr	(surname)
8	Emil	(name)
9	poinformować	to inform
10	Twitter	Twitter
11	Kaszuba	(surname)
12	aktor	an actor
13	wulgarny	vulgar
14	Ayrin	(name)
15	Michałow	(town name)
16	Kraków	(city name)
17	wolontariusz	a volunteer
18	prezydent	a president
19	serce	a heart
20	grób	a grave

Figure 9. Keywords in “Fakt” in order by *keyness* (own elaboration)

	Keywords in Polish	English translation
1	Kurdej	(surname)
2	Szatan	(surname)
3	Barbara	(name)
4	koncert	a concert
5	celebrytka	a celebrity (fem.)
6	Ostaszewska	(surname)
7	Stuhr	(surname)
8	zobaczyć	to see
9	TVP	(tv station)
10	podcast	a podcast
11	aktorka	an actress
12	Warnke	(surname)
13	wpis	an entry
14	Małgorzata	(name)
15	Katarzyna	(name)
16	postanowić	to decide
17	gwiazda	a star
18	Boładź	(surname)
19	Olga	(name)
20	aktor	an actor

Figure 10. Keywords in “Pudelek” in order by *keyness* (own elaboration)

Additionally, we decided to investigate how often the word *refugee* (*uchodźca*) was used in the analysed writings compared to the word *immigrant* (*imigrant*) or *migrant* (*migrant*). According to the “Great Dictionary of the Polish Language” (WSJP 2014), the term *uchodźca* (*refugee*) means “someone who leaves his or her own country for fear of being persecuted there for various political or religious reasons, or losing his or her life or health, e.g. due to warfare”.

Additionally, an investigation was conducted to compare the frequency of the words '*refugee*' (*uchodźca*) to '*immigrant*' (*imigrant*) or '*migrant*' (*migrant*) in the analysed writings. According to the 'Great Dictionary of the Polish Language' (WSJP 2014), the term '*uchodźca*' (*refugee*) refers to 'someone who leaves their own country due to fear of persecution for political or religious reasons, or due to the risk of losing their life or health, for example, due to warfare'. The terms '*migrant*' and '*immigrant*' are more neutral as they do not specify the reason for the change of residence.

However, in the context of the border situation, using these terms more frequently than *'refugee'* may suggest a reduction in their rights to apply for asylum or refugee status, which would align with a security-based narrative. Conversely, using *'refugee'* more often may indicate a human rights-based narrative. The Antcon programme counted the number of occurrences of the word *'refugee'* and divided it by the total number of occurrences of *'refugee'*, *'immigrant'*, and *'migrant'* to determine the proportion of times *'refugee'* was used to refer to migrants (Figure 2). It is worth noting that all publications used these terms interchangeably, possibly to avoid repetition. However, the repeated use of one word over another may indicate that the author made a deliberate choice to follow a particular narrative.

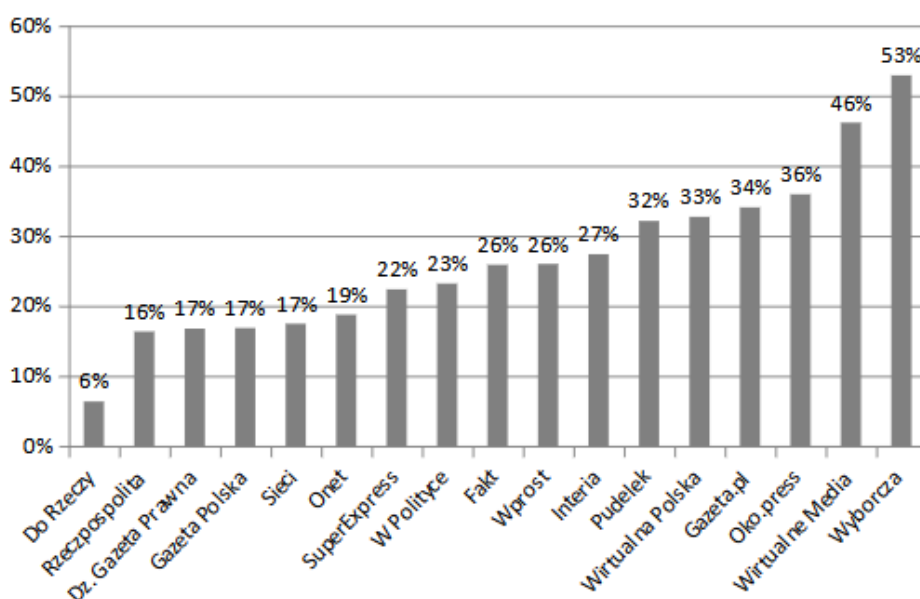


Figure 2. The usage of the word *refugee* (uchodźca) compared to *migrant* (migrant) and *immigrant* (imigrant). (own elaboration)

The chart above presents data that corresponds to the results of the keyword analysis. The publications previously assigned to the security-based narrative, namely 'Gazeta Polska' and 'Do Rzeczy', used the word *'refugee'* less frequently. Conversely, the publications assigned to the human rights-based narrative, namely 'Oko.press' and 'Gazeta Wyborcza', used it more frequently. Tabloids, as shown in the corpus analysis, are positioned in the middle of the scale on the graph. One exception is the publication 'Wirtualne Media', which appears to use the word *'refugee'* frequently. This exception may be due to the fact that this publication discussed migrants the least, with words referring to migrants making up only 0.15 % of all words in the publication. This is in comparison to the second to last publication 'Gazeta Polska' with 0.39 % and the first publication 'Rzeczpospolita'

with 1.25 %. The remaining publications partially lean towards one narrative or the other, but to varying degrees of intensity.

In summary, our analysis of 17 publications revealed that 6 favoured a security-based narrative and 6 favoured a human rights-based narrative. However, there were variations in the degree to which each publication adhered to their chosen narrative. Some were highly committed, using keywords that closely aligned with their narrative, while others were more flexible. Additionally, 5 publications did not fit into either narrative, mostly consisting of tabloids that focused on celebrity gossip related to the border crisis.

The publications 'Do Rzeczy', 'Gazeta Polska', 'Dziennik Gazeta Prawna', 'Sieci', 'W Polityce' and 'Rzeczpospolita' focused on a security-based narrative, with keywords suggesting that migration posed a significant threat. They portrayed the crisis as a conflict between Poles and foreign forces, and any opposition to the government's policies was deemed against the interest of the state and treated as treason. Those publications rarely discussed human rights violations and humanitarian aid, as the narrative allowed very little room for such topics.

However, 'Oko.press' and 'Gazeta Wyborcza' presented an opposing narrative, focusing solely on the humanitarian crisis, portraying the ruling party and government as the sole culprits responsible for the crisis. This narrative overlooks the international conflict between EU states and Belarus, as well as the human trafficking conducted by the Belarusian regime, thus reducing the conflict to an internal affair. Although only two publications committed to this narrative to an extreme degree, others, such as 'Onet', 'Gazeta.pl', 'Wprost', and 'Wirtualna Polska', leaned towards it to a lesser extent. There was very little overlap between the two narratives in all the publications. Only in the case of 'Onet' were the keywords suggestive of a full picture of the situation being taken into account. Both human rights violations were mentioned, and the blame for initiating the crisis was put on the Belarusian regime.

CONCLUSIONS

The study confirmed the hypothesis that there are two conflicting narratives about the migrant crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border in the Polish media. The discourse surrounding the crisis was polarised. Six out of 17 publications strongly supported a security-based narrative, condemning Belarus and highlighting the threat of mass migration. On the other hand, two publications supported an opposing, human rights-based narrative that focused solely on the humanitarian crisis of the migrants, for which the Polish government was blamed. Four other

publications leaned towards this narrative, but to a lesser degree. The remaining five publications did not lean towards either narrative. However, these were mostly tabloids focused on celebrity gossip and sensationalism. Based on the extent to which publications subscribed to one of the narratives, we conclude that the security-based narrative had a stronger representation in the most influential media.

There was minimal overlap between the two narratives. None of the publications focused on security issues and simultaneously considered the humanitarian aspect important enough to reflect it in their keywords. The migrants were mainly portrayed as enemies in all of the security-oriented publications, while only slight similarities were found in the human rights-oriented publications. Most publications did not acknowledge the Belarusian involvement in creating the crisis, except for 'Onet'.

This lack of overlap shows that most publications choose to omit certain aspects of the crisis and focus the blame on specific actors. Security-oriented publications blame the Belarusian government and Lukashenko, seemingly omitting the questionable actions of the Polish authorities. However, many publications focused on human rights fail to acknowledge the involvement of Belarus, instead placing all blame on the Polish government. This indicates a significant politicisation of the issue, which negatively impacts the quality of media coverage.

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS IN THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF POLES

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Abstract

The low turnout in the EP elections is puzzling, given the long-standing positive attitude of the majority of Poles towards EU membership. It is important to determine how Poles perceive the EP elections and whether this perception translates into voter turnout. The article hypothesizes that the high rate of voter absenteeism is caused by several factors, including the low participation of Poles in all types of elections, the perception of elections as unimportant and not directly relevant to voters' lives, and the lack of knowledge about the competences and influence of the European Parliament on the situation in the country. The research methods employed in the article include desk-based data analysis, empirical-statistical analysis, and historical analysis.

Key words: *Elections, Voter Turnout, European Parliament, Poles*

INTRODUCTION

One of the main priorities of the Polish authorities' foreign policy after 1989 was Poland's accession to the European Union (EU) [Parzymies 2001, Zięba 2005, Zięba 2010, Kuźniar 2012, Pawlikowska 2006, Zajączkowski 2006]. Formal accession negotiations between the Polish government and the then European Economic Community (EEC) began on 22.12.1990, to be followed over the years by successive

governments successively going through the various stages and implementing the necessary procedures and legal regulations established as part of the negotiations, as a result of which on 01.05.2004. Poland joined the EU as a full member, as evidenced by sources such as Wallas (2023), Domagała (2008), Kawecka-Wyrzykowska (1999), Kułakowski (1997), Chodubski (2001), and Stebelski (1999).

In November 1992, 80 % of Poles declared their support for accession to the EEC, while only 7% were against it and 13 % had no opinion on the matter [Komunikat 1990/42: 7; Komunikat 2004/75: 2]. According to surveys conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS), Poles have consistently shown support for EU accession, with the level of support never falling below 53 % between 1994 and 2001, and reaching a peak in June 2002 at 92 % [Komunikat 2023/55: 2]. In June 2003, one week before the accession referendum, 76 % of respondents were in favour of EU entry, while 13% declared that they would vote against it [Komunikat 2003/95: 1]. The nationwide accession referendum saw a participation rate of 58.85 % among eligible voters. Of those who voted, 77 % voted in favour, leading to the Supreme Court declaring the result valid and binding [PKW 2003].

Despite the long-standing positive attitude of the majority of Poles towards EU membership, the low turnout in the European Parliament (EP) elections is puzzling. High voter absenteeism is often considered as a symptom of a “broader phenomenon of waning involvement in community life. (...) is more a symptom of a deeper ailment of the political organism than the disease itself (...). Political knowledge and interest in public affairs are decisive determinants of more active forms of participation. If you have no idea of the rules of the game, don't know the players and don't care about the outcome, you are unlikely to try to play yourself” [Putnam 2008: 61].

Therefore, it is crucial to determine how Poles perceive the EP elections and whether this perception affects voter turnout. To test the hypothesis, we assumed that the high rate of voter absenteeism was due to several factors, including:

- low participation of Poles in all types of elections,
- the perception that elections are unimportant and have no direct impact on voters' lives,
- a lack of knowledge of the EP's competences and influence on the country's situation.

1. METHODS AND THEORETICAL CONTEXT

To verify the hypothesis, we used the following research methods: analysis of found data [Johnston 2014, Heaton 1998, 2008], empirical-statistical, and historical. The

CBOS survey results on the EU and EP elections, which the foundation has been conducting since the early 1990s, were analyzed using the first method. CBOS conducts a monthly survey on 'Current issues and events', supplemented by special one-off surveys resulting from significant events and circumstances in the public space that affect the functioning of the state and society. The survey research is carried out using the method of direct computer-assisted interviews (CAPI) on representative random samples of approximately 1,000 adult inhabitants of Poland. Classified as a comparative method, the empirical-statistical method enables the establishment of statistically significant correlations between particular types of elections and successive EP elections held in Poland. This, in turn, leads to targeted conclusions regarding the electorate's voting behaviour. The rank of factors influencing the absenteeism of Poles in successive elections was determined through quantitative and comparative analysis of empirical data [Michalak 2016: 19–21]. Additionally, the genesis and political context of the evolution in the perception of the rank and interest in the EP elections was outlined using the historical method [Żebrowski 2019: 27–28].

The perception of government action is fundamentally influenced by the dynamically changing political reality. The electoral outcome is ultimately determined by the assessment that citizens give to decision-makers. Therefore, the level of civic awareness and legitimacy of the elected authorities can be inferred from the electoral activity of citizens in a democratic state [Markowski 1993: 57, Czeńnik 2009: 3–5].

Since the first free elections in 1990, there has been a discussion in Poland regarding the factors that influence voter turnout [Korzeniowski 1995: 154–155, Czeńnik 2010]. With the development of marketing techniques and the mediatisation of elections, the influence of media messages on voter attitudes has been analysed extensively [Cwalina, Falkowski 2006: 239–290, Michalczyk 2010: 268–278, Jeziński 2004, Furman, Kuca, Szczepański 2016].

In the context of Polish elections, there is a widely discussed issue of significant discrepancies between citizens' declarations of participation in elections and their actual participation. This phenomenon is connected, among other things, with the concealment of actual views and behaviours, which may be negatively assessed in a given community due to social desirability bias [Fisher 1993: 303–315, Holbrook, Krosnick 2010: 37–67]. Low voter turnout was observed in all types of elections in Poland. However, the European Parliament (EP) elections have the worst absenteeism rates, which negatively impacts their legitimacy index [Skarżyńska, Chmielewski 1993: 239–264, Żukowski 2001: 234–243, Raciborski 2003: 209–213].

When analysing the phenomenon of political participation of citizens [Żukowski 2010, Duch 1998: 195–228], it is impossible not to agree with the statement of Robert D. Putnam. He considered participation in elections as the most widespread form of political activity and the embodiment of the most fundamental democratic principle of equality [Putnam 2008: 60]. According to this statement, citizens should perceive elections as one of the most important events in the state, particularly in the election year, and participate actively with high interest. However, in the case of Poland (and beyond), this assumption is often only theoretical, as demonstrated by successive elections [Czeńnik 2009, Wiszniowski 2008, Żerkowska-Balas 2017].

2. ELECTION RANK AND VOTER TURNOUT

The Polish electorate has historically shown the greatest mobilisation during presidential elections. The voter turnout for the elections held before 2023 are as follows: 1990 – 60.6 % (53.39 % in the 2nd round), 1995 – 64.70 % (68.23 % in the 2nd round), 2000 – 61.12 %, 2005 – 49.74 % (50.99 % in the 2nd round), 2010 – 54.94 % (55.31 % in the 2nd round), 2015 – 48.96 % (55.34 % in the 2nd round), and 2020 – 64.51 % (68.18 % in the 2nd round).

The 2023 parliamentary elections saw an unprecedented mobilisation of the electorate, with a turnout of 74.38 %. However, it should be noted that earlier votes had lower turnouts than the presidential elections. The turnout for individual years was as follows: 1991 – 43.20 %, 1993 – 52.13 %, 1997 – 47.93 %, 2001 – 46.29 %, 2005 – 40.56 %, 2007 – 53.88 %, 2011 – 48.92 %, 2015 – 50.92 %, and 2019 – 61.74 %. Seymour M. Lipset argues that the sudden increase in the voting electorate may be a reflection of the tensions and serious malaise of the government [Lipset 1998: 233]. A similar view is also held by Andrzej Antoszewski, who argues that “while abstention from voting may be a testament to disillusionment with the political offer; it may also prove that all political parties (or the vast majority of them) are considered equally prepared to govern, and that their 'order of finish' does not matter much” [Antoszewski 2009: 49].

Local government elections between 1990 and 2018 had a relatively low turnout, with fluctuations in the following percentages: 1990 – 42.27 %, 1994 – 33.78 %, 1998 – 45.45 %, 2002 – 44.23 % (35.02 % in the second round), 2006 – 45.99 % (39.69 % in the second round), 2010 – 47.32 % (35.31 % in the second round), 2014 – 47.40 % (39.97 % in the second round), and 2018 – 54.90 % (48.83 % in the second round).

In contrast, the European Parliament elections had the lowest turnout. It is worth noting that these elections are ranked the lowest by voters. According to the 2019

survey, the social hierarchy of different types of voting has remained unchanged over the years, with “Poles invariably consider the local government elections closest to citizens' concerns to be the most important. Three-fifths of the total number of eligible voters perceive local government elections as very important for people like them and, according to a 10-point scale, rate their importance at 9–10 points (60 %). The second most important vote for compatriots is the presidential election. In terms of importance, they are only slightly ahead of the parliamentary ones. The European Parliament elections are considered to be the least important and inferior to the national ones” [Komunikat 2019/67: 1]. In subsequent years, surveys have established the following average score (on a scale of 1 to 10) that respondents attributed to the EP elections: 2003 – 6.40 points; 2004 – 6.23 points; 2009 – 5.80 points; 2010 – 5.60 points; 2018 – 5.64 points; and 2019 – 7.16 points [Komunikat 2019/67:3]. These figures correspond with the low voter turnout: 2004 – 20.9 %; 2009 – 24.53 %; 2014 – 23.83 %; and 2019 – 45.68 %.

When analysing this data, it is important to note that in 2019, there was an increase in the rank of all types of elections, with the greatest increase being observed for EP elections (an average increase of 1.52 points) [Komunikat 2019/67:3]. This increase was also reflected in voter turnout, which increased by nearly 22 %. It is worth noting that the trend of increasing voter turnout in this type of voting occurred in 21 EU countries, with 7 of them experiencing an increase of more than 10 %. Poland had the highest voter turnout rate in the 2019 elections [Wybory 2019]. The significance of the shift in voters' attitudes towards voting is demonstrated by the fact that, prior to 2019, Poles had one of the lowest electoral participation rates compared to other EU Member States. In 2014, only two EU countries (Slovak Republic – 13.05 % and Czech Republic – 18.20 %) had a lower turnout rate than Poland. In the 2019 elections, Poland ranked 15th among EU countries in terms of citizen participation in voting, according to the recorded turnout. The CBOS survey from 2019 also confirms that “the relationship between the rank attributed to elections and the willingness to participate in them is weaker for those to the Sejm than for those to the EP. (...) It can be said that EP voters are more likely to go to these elections because they think they are important than people who vote in Sejm elections” [Komunikat 2019/67:5].

3. REASONS FOR ABSENTEEISM VS. INTEREST IN ELECTIONS

According to survey data, although there was high support for Poland's accession to the EU, this was not reflected in Poles' participation in the first EP elections.

Specifically, 68 % of those who declared support did not attend the elections, while 78 % of those who were against integration also did not participate in the vote [Komunikat 2014/96: 2]. It is worth noting that only 5 % of respondents explicitly stated that they did not vote because they were against membership. The largest group of absentees, comprising 43 %, declared that they were discouraged from participating in any election due to the state of affairs. It is important to note that at the time, out of the 25 societies of the EU countries, Poles were the least positive assessors of the functioning of democracy in their country. An analysis of the campaign conducted by the various groupings reveals that most politicians have not found a way to overcome these negative phenomena [Piasecki 2012: 183].

Research on voter absenteeism in successive EP elections has shown that dissatisfaction with the situation in Poland has gradually become less important as a reason for not participating in the vote. This trend is also observed for other reasons such as:

- ignorance of candidates;
- lack of suitable candidates;
- Ignorance of the programmes of parties and election committees as regards their planned activities in the EP;
- to regard the EP elections as unimportant and the low impact of this body on the situation in the country;
- opposition to Poland's membership of the EU (in 2019, this reason was not given by any respondent).

In contrast, an increasing number of respondents cited lack of time and being away from home on election day as reasons, as well as ill health making it impossible to vote. It is also significant that the number of people justifying their absence by a lack of interest in EU politics and affairs and a low level of knowledge of the European Parliament, its scope and powers remained stable (refer to Table 1).

In both 2014 and 2019, the primary sources of information about candidates and election committees for Poles were TV news and current affairs programmes, with 58 % and 63 % respectively. Election advertisements on radio and television were mentioned as the second most common source (53 % in 2014 and 52 % in 2019), followed by friends and family (27 % in 2014 and 39 % in 2019). Respondents also cited additional sources of information.

- billboards, election posters and leaflets (2014 – 30 % and 2019 – 35 %);
- radio news and current affairs programmes (2014 – 38 % and 2019 – 34 %);
- Internet (2014 – 16 % and 2019 – 26 %);

- newspapers and magazines (2014 – 27 % and 2019 – 22 %);
- their individual interviews with candidates (2014 – 5 % and 2019 – 5 %);
- rallies and election meetings attended (2014 – 2 % and 2019 – 3 %) [Komunikat 2019/86: 2].

Table 1

Reasons for voter absenteeism

Why did you not participate in the European Parliament elections?	Respondents' indications by survey date			
	2004 (N=678)	2009 (N=765)	2014 (N=679)	2019 (N=389)
	in percentage			
I had no time, I was away from home	14	18	26	31
I am not interested in politics at all	23	26	19	26
I was ill, I have a disability	9	8	10	19
I do not know enough about the European Parliament, what this institution does and what powers it has	14	15	12	11
What is happening in the country has discouraged me from taking part in any election	43	28	17	8
I did not know the candidates running in this election	25	16	15	6
There were no suitable candidates for whom I (could) have voted	18	13	16	6
I did not know the programmes of the various parties and election committees, I did not know what they wanted to achieve in the European Parliament	15	8	8	4
I have no interest at all in European Union affairs	5	4	5	4
It did not suit me that this election was treated by politicians as an opportunity to get well-paid jobs	21	19	18	3
I believe that these elections are unimportant, the activities of the European Parliament will have little impact on the situation in the country	7	3	4	2
Because I am against Poland's membership of the European Union	5	1	2	0
Another reason	7	6	7	7
Difficult to say	1	1	0	1

Source: Komunikat 2019/94: 13.

Therefore, it can be inferred that media coverage and electoral materials provided by staff compensated to some extent for the lack of knowledge about candidates and committees. However, this did not apply to knowledge about the European Parliament and the European Union. At the same time, according to respondents in 2019, “the information quality of the election campaign leaves much to be desired. Less than one in three respondents declare that they learned a lot during the campaign about the candidates running in their constituency (30 %, of which only 4 % learned a lot). Almost every second respondent (48 %) claims to have learned little, and every fifth (19 %) claims to have learned nothing” [Komunikat 2019/86: 3]. The aforementioned indications suggest that the electoral message is superficial and incomplete. However, the lack of interest in politics and EU affairs, as well as the associated lack of knowledge about the EP, is particularly concerning for the functioning of the state and the development of civil society. A lack of interest in politics, combined with a lack of knowledge about the citizen's state institution, may indicate the phenomena of anomie and political alienation. These concepts have been analysed in relation to Polish political reality [Szmajke, Bronowicka 1995: 149–163, Korzeniowski 1992, Schaff 1999], particularly in the context of successive elections and low voter turnout [Skarżyńska, Chmielewski 1995: 179–191, Bronowicka 1994: 25–45, Korzeniowski 1994: 93–100, Turska-Kawa 2012: 145–158]. Furthermore, CBOS multivariate analyses conducted in 2019 showed that “the main variable differentiating respondents' declarations of interest in the EP elections is the level of general interest in politics. The respondents who are interested are overwhelmingly those who closely follow what is happening in it, as well as those who only follow the main events. At the same time, it is worth noting that while among those who are interested in politics to a great or very great extent, the majority are those declaring a strong interest in the EP elections, among those who are moderately interested in politics, those claiming that they are rather interested in these elections dominate. The lower the interest in political issues, the less interested the respondents are in the May EP elections. As a result, among the respondents, whose attention is often not even drawn to important events, and among those who are not interested in politics, the majority declare a lack of personal interest in the EP elections, with more than half of those who are not interested in politics at all declaring a definite lack of interest in these elections” [Komunikat 2019/63: 3-4]. It is important to note that the level of interest in EP elections, as declared during successive campaigns, was significantly higher than the actual turnout in the respective elections (2004 – 20.9 %, 2009 – 24.53 %, 2014 – 23.83 %, 2019 – 45.68 %) (refer to Table 2). A similar phenomenon was observed

during the research on projected turnout. When asked if they would participate in the vote, respondents were more likely to indicate that they would (45 % in 2004, 36 % in 2009, 40 % in 2014, and 60 % in 2019). However, in reality, the level of absenteeism at the ballot box was much higher.

Table 2

Level of interest in European Parliament elections

Declared interest in European Parliament elections	Respondents' indications by survey date																	
	'03		'04		'09						'14					'19		
	X	III	V	I	II	III	IV	7-13 V	20-27 V	I	II	III	IV	IV/V	V	II	III	IV
	in percentage																	
One is interested in	47	40	41	32	29	33	30	34	38	32	28	31	33	35	40	44	54	56
One is not interested in	49	57	57	66	68	63	68	65	59	66	70	68	66	64	59	54	44	42
Difficult to say	4	3	2	2	3	4	2	1	3	2	2	1	0	1	1	2	2	2

Source: Komunikat 2019/63: 3

CONCLUSION

The data analysis shows that respondents consider the EP elections to be less important than other state authorities' elections, which leads to high voter absenteeism. However, it can be concluded that this assessment of the importance of the EP elections contributed to absenteeism at the ballot box, given the relatively low turnout in other types of elections (with the exception of the 2023 parliamentary elections).

The perception of the EP elections was influenced by several factors. Firstly, many voters lacked knowledge of the competences and powers of the EU and the EP, as well as information about the candidates and election committees. Secondly, a significant proportion of potential voters who did not participate were simply disinterested in politics, including the EU. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the reasons for the political alienation of this group of respondents to mobilise them to participate in future elections. In terms of voters who lack electoral knowledge, civic education should be advocated not only during the campaign but also outside of it, focusing on the EU, its bodies, and competences.

Attention should also be given to those who did not participate in voting due to dissatisfaction with the state of affairs. This group of respondents has gradually decreased in subsequent surveys, suggesting that the initial reason for absenteeism may have lost its significance or even motivated people to participate in voting in subsequent years (?).

The 2019 European Parliament (EP) elections saw a reversal in the trend of perception, interest, and participation compared to previous years. The rank of the EP elections has significantly increased, as reflected in the turnout rate, which rose from 23.83 % in 2014 to 45.68 % in 2019. The increase in voter interest is also evident, rising from 40 % in May 2014 to 56 % in April 2019. This trend suggests a shift in the civic attitudes of Poles, which was reflected in the mobilisation of the electorate during the 2023 parliamentary elections, resulting in a record turnout of 74.38 %.

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COLLABORATIVE CLUSTERS AS A PART OF NEW SECURITY ARCHITECTURE: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The article discusses the potential creation of a new transnational platform in the context of rethinking security architecture. The researcher proposes a theoretical-methodological basis for a collaborative platform in military and defense aspects, using a cluster approach and the phenomenon definition by G. Deleuze and F. Guattari. The author presents a collaborative cluster structure based on the smart specialization principle as an interactive platform for making joint decisions. Using a case study, the researcher conducts a comparative analysis of the budgets and security policies of international organizations (UN, NATO, EU) and countries from 2014-2022 to demonstrate the feasibility of revitalizing existing security institutions or creating new ones.

Key words: *collaborative platform, security, cluster, military.*

1. INTRODUCTION

One central aspect of recent political studies involves modelling the future consequences of political actions. Some scientists [8; 16; 20] acknowledge that the social world is non-deterministic and/or must be considered with epistemological limitations in mind. This significantly complicates forecasting. However, it is assumed that policy effects can be distributed probabilistically to obtain reliable estimates of expected utility and other significant criteria. The cluster approach,

which focuses on assessing stakeholders' potential for political action, is an interesting methodological tool in this context.

Over the last decade, intercluster cooperation has become a significant aspect of international organizations' political dimension. The European Community (ESCP-4i) holds the dominant position in strategic cluster partnerships, with the goal of enabling domestic producers to access third-country markets. The initial phase of the relevant policy, referred to as the 'First Generation', was formulated between 2016 and 2017 with the involvement of 150 cluster organizations from 23 European countries. These organizations created 25 voluntary consortia [Paton 2018: 10]. This achievement led to the introduction of the 'Second Generation' for 2018–2019. The initiative comprised of 23 alliances that united 123 cluster organizations across 25 European countries. The primary target markets for these associations were the USA, Canada, Japan, China, and Singapore.

The ESCP-4i program is cross-industry and covers a range of areas including healthcare, aerospace, logistics, agro-food, energy, marine and environmental, materials and photonics, construction, and sports. The second generation of the program is divided into eight areas of activity, including agriculture, energy, and the environment, as well as the creation of a smart city, logistics, and transport [1].

The 'EU-CELAC INNOV-AL Platform' [21] is a cluster initiative that aims to support the exchange of experience and best practices of EU regional policy between national and regional authorities, as well as specialized agencies, in Latin American countries such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Peru. This interaction is achieved through knowledge exchange in the framework of regional innovation systems, smart specialization strategies, and programs for small and medium-sized businesses. The European Commission previously developed the European Cluster Cooperation Platform (ECCP) through the European Observatory on Clusters and Industrial Change (EOCIC).

The implementation of cluster policy into trans-sectoral innovation strategies is a key trend in political development at local and intergovernmental levels. Creating unique clusters in specialized territories can generate a synergistic effect for further extrapolation at a global level. We propose applying a cluster approach to the emergence of new global actors in the international security architecture, amidst collaboration.

2. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BASIS: SYNTHESIS OF COLLABORATIVE CLUSTER AND PHENOMENON BY J. DELEUZE AND F. GUATTARI

According to the Smart Guide to Cluster Policy, a cluster is defined as “an organizational platform to increase the competitiveness of the actors involved,

facilitating collective action and deploying administrative policy tools for cluster companies and agents” [24]. We understand *a cluster as a potential tool for creating a transnational platform for joint actions, focused on the specialization of key stakeholders in terms of resources, the level of influence on the relevant industry, the consequences for the stakeholders' current state, and some other parameters, depending on the situative specifics, time-space conditions and dimensions of the predicted changes (economic, political, military, etc.)*.

The synthesis of the cluster approach with the definition of collaboration aligns with the principle of rhizome multiplicity by G. Deleuze and F. Guattari. This allows for the intersection of unified interactive platforms into a plan of consistency (planomenon). The rhizome space comprises 'regions of intensities' [Deleuze & Guattari 1980: 18], with each element constantly modifying its distance to other elements based on content articulation and the form of connections. Content articulation refers to the substance of the ideas, values, and beliefs of the participants, which are connected through a flexible network of sequences. Form articulation, on the other hand, creates functional, compact, and sustainable structures that embody cause-and-effect relationships for the current moment, thus establishing cooperation principles.

Drawing on the ideas of G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, it can be argued that a variety of rhizomes could be incorporated into an agreed structured geopolitical framework, or planomenon, that facilitates the development of collaborative relationships between stakeholders, which in turn enables the sustainable progression of different forms and substances. The author discusses the importance of both transparency in political decision-making and the availability of reserve meta-capital for stakeholders.

The principle of smart specialization is considered a key criterion for geopolitical rhizome stratification. In the context of supporting global stability and defence, strategic goals unification can be achieved through collaboration among platform participants. This includes easing tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, strengthening transnational capabilities to deter hybrid threats, creating a joint command centre for countering cognitive attacks, increasing military production of specific types of weaponry such as drones, and improving the security situation at the borders of European countries while reducing the number of states with nuclear arsenals. The proportionality of goals, products, and results forms the basis for future participants to identify the collaborative platform.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that transnational platforms can establish cause-and-effect relationships through a special dimension of deterritorialization known as the

'transversal' [Deleuze & Guattari 1980: 237]. This can modify both the external and internal environment of the collaborative cluster. For instance, ensuring an equal distribution of the financial burden among participants in the common political space to improve military capabilities and better deter external aggression, such as the decision made by NATO members to increase the share of GDP in the military dimension, or granting the right to vote at meetings in proportion to the participant's contribution to the platform's joint capabilities, could cause asymmetric effects. This could result in the nominal presence of some stakeholders during decision-making, as some NATO member countries do not fulfill the condition of 2 % of GDP for military needs but still retain the right to vote when solving topical issues.

The rhizome's multiple linear dimensions enable any actor within the cluster to join another interactive platform through various means, such as reputational capital, monetary resources, and network connections. However, it is important to note that involvement in an interactive collaborative cluster requires a relationship with the corresponding specialized touch points of cross-border platforms, in line with the smart specialization principle. In the case of a collaborative cluster in the military and defense industry, an actor seeking to join must consider their own level of importance and reasonability from the perspective of national and geopolitical contexts. This will determine whether or not they should become part of such a collaboration.

The rhizome forms along the segmentation line when the agreed parameters of geopolitical player involvement in the collaborative cluster allow for rhizome plateau stratification according to the domain principle. For instance, the military sector encompasses the interplay among national defence structures such as ministries of defence and digital transformation, non-state actors like transnational arms production companies and NGOs, regional security coalitions, and international associations. This is contingent on the level of threat escalation and its potential cascading effects on the global security environment.

It is important to note that the initial engagement parameters can serve as 'escape channels' for sub-sets (clusters) in case of imbalanced resource provision by partners or opacity in some participants' behavior regarding the agreed issue. The absence of an agreed position among NATO member countries on the types and terms of military aid delivery to Ukraine for countering Russian aggression caused some fluctuations in the shared security space.

Thus, the transversal vector enables sub-sets (clusters) to modify the pre-existing collaboration structure, by expanding or narrowing the inputs of the cluster, and thereby influencing the overall geopolitical plan for security consistency. If we

consider NATO as a collective defense alliance against armed aggression towards any of its members, some experts argue that it has transformed into a political-economic entity, prioritizing other input parameters. The current state of NATO, with its lack of coherence and inconsistency regarding its goals, not only impedes the development of a new military doctrine but also raises doubts about its continued role as a military actor in the international security arena.

According to G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, the consistency plan allows to save cluster subsets as variables, even “in the form of an undifferentiated collection of unformed substances” [Deleuze & Guattari 1980: 43]. In the author's opinion, the systematic support of collaboration space stability between subjects, specifically in the military-defense domain, has not yet been formed in a specific partnership format. Planomenon captures potential continuums of intensity as outbreaks of partnership to resolve a specific dangerous situation by the conjunction of interactive flows. This involves shuffling and shifting of actors based on their influence level to resolve the corresponding crisis issue.

Clusters know only “discrete, captured in certain forms, segmented intensities in time and space” [Deleuze & Guattari 1980: 55]. Involved subjects will only be aware of the platforms they were invited to during their intensive activity. The consistency plan is characterised by the continuum of intensities, which creates an environment of hybrid cooperation, and the conjunction of flows, which are priority factors for the key players' involvement.

When maintaining a continuum of intensities, it is important to consider the speed of relations between interactive elements, such as changes in situational context or transformations of relations between internal and external platform participants. Additionally, it is important to consider the corresponding cascading effects, including the 'longitude' and 'width' of the plan. By using these categories, we can understand the spatial dimension of the transnational cluster and the potential for it to expand or contract due to synergistic effects. If we consider longitude, the intensity of responses to threats and the strategy of attracting/creating specialized clusters, the plan's scope involves developing a heterogeneous action algorithm simultaneously in several domains (economic, political, military, informational, etc.) to ensure the integrity of multiple types of rhizome. Therefore, it is important to consider the factor of geographical proximity between stakeholders on the interactive platform, particularly in relation to the mobilisation and deployment of defence forces.

The structure of the plan is determined by the functions and roles of the substances. The consistency plan, which is the way of combining segments, enables

us to identify and eliminate 'empty' or 'malignant bodies' [Deleuze & Guattari 1980: 131], those that lack a meaningful element. If an actor's activity creates a 'gap' within the collaborative cluster, nullifying the decisions of other participants on the platform, they should be replaced by a more 'meaningful element' of the space. This element should create rational cause-and-effect links between the agreed daily order and the political vector of actions.

In our opinion, the transnational collaborative cluster based on the smart specialization principle involves the following steps:

1. The joint management process is being made more fundamental, with key agents being integrated into relevant interactive platforms. This involves identifying powerful and active players in the global security environment. Capacity criteria for evaluating a country's military industry may include the percentage of GDP spent on defence, participation in war-industry forums and conferences, development of the military and defence industry within the country, volume of arms exports, and assistance provided to other countries in resolving military conflicts.
2. This stage involves analysing the capability of the actor and the reasonability of their involvement in the collaborative platform. The aim of this stage is to develop a diagnostic panel that will enable us to determine the future model of the platform's industry specialization, compare its potential impact in the global context with similar structures, and recommend priority algorithms of actions and measures required to achieve the agreed objectives.
3. Resource base analysis should be used to determine priorities, and additional reserves should be created in case of force majeure, both at the national and transnational levels. For example, if a military conflict is prolonged or shifted to the territory of another state. It is also important to integrate agreed-upon steps.
4. Determination of funding sources for the plan implementation. At least three investment categories can be distinguished:
 - Basic support is provided through the formation of the collaborative platform's general budget from the funds of the participants, as well as from similar programs at the regional or national levels.
 - External funding is provided by partners or observers of the platform through fixed or variable payments (usually annual), depending on the type of service received (for example, training, work of instructors, etc.).
 - Strategic financing is projected directly by the participants during the collaboration for certain types of activities fixed at the joint space.

Over time, the proportion of funding from each source should change to ensure the platform's stability and flexibility. The gradual shift in financing sources is expected

to move towards a better balance between self-sufficiency and private investment, with the former being more dominant.

5. Monitoring the current activity of platform participants (from 2 weeks to 2 months), adjusting and updating measures (if necessary).
6. Criteria determination and duration of post-effects monitoring, prescription of scenarios for returning to a collaborative format.

Table 1* presents possible indicators of a transnational cluster collaborative platform. The list is not exhaustive and can be supplemented if necessary.

Table 1

Overview of indicators for the collaborative platform based on the cluster principle

CLUSTER STRUCTURE	
	Management form
	Drivers
	Specialization
	Involved participants
	External partners
	Relationships between platform participants
CLUSTER STRATEGY	
	Appointment of the coordinator of joint actions (person/secretariat) / clear identifying the involved participants roles and places / Inclusiveness degree among the participants in the decision-making process
	Strategic objectives, cooperation products, and results
	The number of participants from each of the key stakeholders
	Competencies of cluster staff
	Thematic and geographical priorities of the cluster
CLUSTER FINANCING	
	The balance between funding sources (mandatory/voluntary contributions, self-sufficiency, sponsorship) to the total budget of the cluster depending on the period of its existence
	The degree of financial stability of the cluster
SPECTRUM OF ACTIONS AND DYNAMICS OF THE CLUSTER	
	Exchange of information and experience between participants
	Prospects for expanding the meta-capitals of involved stakeholders
	Relations with external partners
	Attractive cluster effect
CLUSTER PERFORMANCE	
	Number of resolved issues/implemented solutions/projects
	The degree of cluster expansion (geographically, subjectively)
	Indicators of the involved participants' state improvement
	Coverage of the cluster's activities in the media space (content analysis, number of messages in the press, social networks, etc.)
	Impact of cluster activities on the relevant industry (improvement, deterioration)
	Influence on international activities in the relevant field (international institutions, regulatory bodies, review of documentation, etc.)

*Proposed by the author based on [25].

The phenomenon of space can be created in various formations by combining specialized subsets, such as scientific, ideological, and political. It is constructed gradually, step by step, through locations, circumstances, and approaches to the combination of interactive components. The consistency plan aims to create a specialized and cohesive formation by combining various types of collaborative clusters. Each segment has its place and functions according to its interests, but within the limits of a common plan, abstracting from national factors. The plan presents a space of continuous variation that is consistent with its collaborative nature by constantly placing and moving content and form variables.

Adapting the policy, structure, and governance of the cluster collaboration space to the specific domain features requires avoiding the general methodology, which assumes that each military situation is unique. It is important to consider the elements of meta-capital, the player's position (including their influence level and type), the availability of resources (including financing), and the needs and problems of the participants, as well as previous experience of joint activities. According to the principle of different vectors specialization [2], the spread of cluster-type transnational collaborative platforms in the future may lead to the emergence of what C. Ansell and A. Gash refer to as 'network politics'.

3. CASE STUDIES: MILITARY AND DEFENSE CLUSTERS OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS VERSUS NATIONAL ACTORS

In the context of transnational cluster creation as part of a geopolitical security plan, we will examine the policies and budgets of international organizations, specifically the UN, NATO, and the EU, regarding military and defense industry financing. We will compare these budgets with investments in the national budgets of key players for similar expenditure items.

3.1. UN

UN peacekeeping operation budgets are based on Security Council mission mandates, approved by the General Assembly (GA). Each operation has its own budget, which includes operational costs such as transport and logistics, as well as personnel costs such as salaries. The peacekeeping budget cycle runs from July 1 to June 30, but it rarely aligns with the Security Council's mandate.

The budget for UN peacekeeping is allocated to support and conduct peacekeeping operations, with the exception of basic management activities. The following outlines the budget's objectives:

- Special political missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Libya, Colombia, Yemen, and other countries in a conflict situation or that have a transitory period. UN representatives work on the preparation of peace negotiations, investigation of human rights violations, free and fair elections.
- Ensuring international implementation and compliance with sanctions adopted by the Security Council against terrorist organizations such as ISIS and al-Qaeda, as well as rogue states such as North Korea.
- International monitoring of human rights and advocacy campaigns (about 40% of funding comes from the regular budget).

In 2022, the peacekeeping budget amounted to \$6.45 billion [26], which is only 0.3 % of the world's annual military expenditures. The budget for the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 covers ten missions, 85,000 personnel, one support operation, three logistics bases, and a support account that funds headquarters staff. The multidimensional missions of the Big Four – MINUSMA, UNMISS, MINUSCA, and MONUSCO – consume a significant portion of the annual peacekeeping budget, accounting for almost 70 % of this year's allocation.

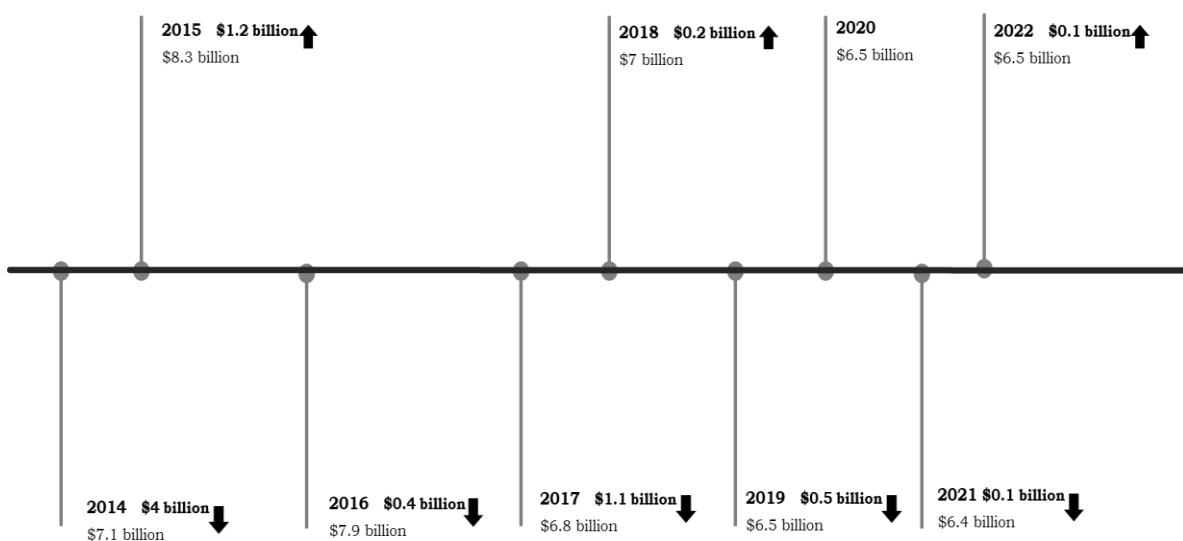
The rates of Member States are determined by the GA and revised every three years. The current assessment structure sets a maximum rate of 22 % and a minimum rate of 0.001 %, depending on the country's solvency. For instance, due to the high rates of economic development in the United States, it pays the maximum rate. The country has negotiated a reduction in its share several times, particularly in 2000, when an agreement limited the US contribution to 22 %. Prior to 2020–2021, the United States contributed 25 % of the regular budget of the UN, making it the largest financial contributor since the organization's inception. Currently, the top contributors are the USA (27.89 %), China (18.68 %), Japan (8.56 %), Germany (6.09 %), the UK (5.79 %), France (5.61 %), Italy (3.30 %), Russian Federation (3.04 %), Canada (2.73 %), and the Republic of Korea (2.26 %). It is important to note that the US rate has decreased from 31.7 % in 1994 to 27.89 % in 2021 [18]. However, in comparison to other countries, there has been an increase in rates. For instance, in China, the share increased from 3.14 % in 2009 to 18.68 % in 2022, indicating the country's economic improvement and growing role on the world stage.

Estimates of member state contributions for peacekeeping are calculated using the same criteria as the regular budget, with one additional factor: the five permanent members (P5) of the Security Council – the United States, the United Kingdom, China, France, and Russia – pay an additional contribution. Therefore, the 'peacekeeping' share is calculated at a slightly higher estimate than for the regular budget. It is important to note that the P5 has veto power over UN Security Council

decisions. No peacekeeping mission can be deployed without the support of the P5. Therefore, the P5 should bear greater financial responsibility, reflecting their unique role in authorizing peacekeeping operations.

The United Nations does not possess its own military forces, therefore, member states provide the necessary military and police personnel for each peacekeeping operation on a voluntary basis. Peacekeepers are compensated by their respective governments according to their national rank and pay scale. Member states that voluntarily contribute military personnel to peacekeeping operations receive compensation from the United Nations at a standard rate approved by the General Assembly. Similar to the standard budget, peacekeeper rates are reviewed every three years. The new rates for 2022–2024 were approved in December 2021 at \$1,448 per trooper per month, which is an increase of \$20 from the 2019 rate [26]. Police and other civilian personnel also receive compensation from each operation's peacekeeping budget. Contingent personnel reimbursement is a crucial financial incentive for many troop and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs) to participate in UN peacekeeping operations. However, some member states argue that providing military contingents from certain countries creates a disproportionate advantage, as military force could be perceived as a means for a country to avoid fulfilling certain obligations.

The budget for UN peacekeeping in 2022 has increased by approximately \$74 million (1.16 %) compared to the 2021 budget of 6.37 billion dollars. Refer to Graph 1* for further details on the budget changes.



Graph 1. Dynamics of the UN peacekeeping budget, 2014-2022

**Created by the author based on [18; 26].*

Increasing the budget indicates financial support and the ability to fulfill mandates. However, the key reasons for the increase are operational (70 %) and the growing salary of civilian personnel (23 %). UN peacekeeping activities are associated with significant fuel consumption, logistics, and transport issues. Given the disruptions in the global supply chain and Russia's war against Ukraine, the rising cost of energy sources is adding to the inflationary pressure on the UN budget.

Mission budget proposals are typically revised downwards, and in 2022, only UNMISS received full allocations while MINUSMA, MINUSCA, and MONUSCO had to cut their spending by more than 1 % [26]. However, after months of thorough and coordinated negotiations, a cross-cutting political resolution was reached in 2022. Diplomats have been attempting to reach a consensus on such documents since the last successful one in 2016. Reaching a consensus among the 193 member states on general UN policy documents in the field of peacekeeping is a significant challenge. The 157-member GA Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) failed to adopt consensus core reports in 2013, 2019, and 2022.

Although the UN's peacekeeping budget has increased for the first time in seven years, and there are some positive aspects to their activity, it must be acknowledged that the consensus reached during the session of the Fifth Committee-2022 is likely to be a fleeting moment rather than a signal of a new era in the UN. Negotiations between key power blocs in the General Assembly have secured a consensus solution. However, tensions between Security Council members are likely to rise over the coming months, which could significantly hamper the organization's political efforts.

The issue of imposing sanctions on countries that fail to meet their obligations remains unresolved. It is important to note that the majority of funding for the UN comes from voluntary contributions. In the 2020 fiscal year, the US Congress allocated approximately \$2.8 billion to pay for contributions to UN peacekeeping missions [18]. In the same year, the USA contributed over 8 billion dollars to the UN, with approximately 80 % of the funds allocated to WFP, UNHCR, and UNICEF. It is important for large organizations to have budget stability and predictability to plan peacekeeping operations, which requires significant time and preparation. This can only be achieved with guaranteed funding streams.

In recent years, there has been an increase in appeals to replace regular contributions with voluntary ones. However, transitioning to a completely voluntary funding system could result in significant budget deficits for crucial programs and activities. The requirement for all member states, including the least developed, to

contribute to the organization at certain levels prevents the financial burden from falling solely on a few states.

Voluntary financing of the UN's regular, peacekeeping, and specialized budgets may lead to underfunding by other countries. For instance, the UN's voluntary funding of global health activities, which are less controversial than peacekeeping and human rights, often suffers from chronic underfunding. In 2021, UN humanitarian agencies and partner organizations required \$37.7 billion to assist 174 million people in 60 countries. However, at the end of the year, they received only \$17.2 billion [18], which is 46 % of the total amount requested. Requiring all member states to contribute can help avoid this kind of shortcoming, but not all countries are willing to spend part of their national GDP on resolving military conflicts. This jeopardises the feasibility of the UN's existence as a global peacekeeping platform.

The UN's inability to propose a meaningful response to the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022 is confirmed. This is mainly due to the paralyzing effect of Russia's veto as a member of the Security Council and the lack of solidarity among UN members regarding the military situation in Ukraine. The United Nations primarily issued declarative resolutions expressing concern about sexual violence and torture against Ukrainian citizens, as well as reporting the number of deaths in the Russian-Ukrainian war. Currently, the creation of commissions to investigate war crimes and the grain agreement of July 22, 2022, are considered as achievements of the UN. However, in the context of the UN Charter and its key goals, it is difficult to deem these steps as having a significant impact on ending the war.

Therefore, the United Nations, as a potential collaborative cluster in the field of global security, has a weak position due to inconsistent financial leverage, the absence of its own military contingent, and, most importantly, a lack of political will to deter global threats. In most cases, the UN chooses to play the role of an observer, documenting the number of victims and the destruction caused by military actions. The United Nations (UN) risks facing the same fate as the League of Nations, which was unable to prevent the Second World War due to its symbolic approach to global security and the power imbalance among its members.

3.2. NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) appears more cohesive in the military-defense context. One of its key pillars is collective defense, where an act of aggression against one or more member states is considered an act of aggression against all. NATO's goals and operations are centered around cooperative security and joint crisis management. Managing the transcontinental political alliance costs

approximately \$3 billion per year, which includes expenses for defense, civilian personnel salaries, strategic command management, joint operations, early warning and radar systems, training, defense communication systems, airfields, and fuel reserves.

The NATO budget is comprised of direct and indirect contributions. Direct contributions fund joint budgets and programs that benefit all members and cannot be justified by any individual country, such as NATO air defense or command systems. These contributions represent only 0.3 % of the Alliance's total defense spending, which is equivalent to approximately €2.5 billion for the organization's command and military infrastructure.

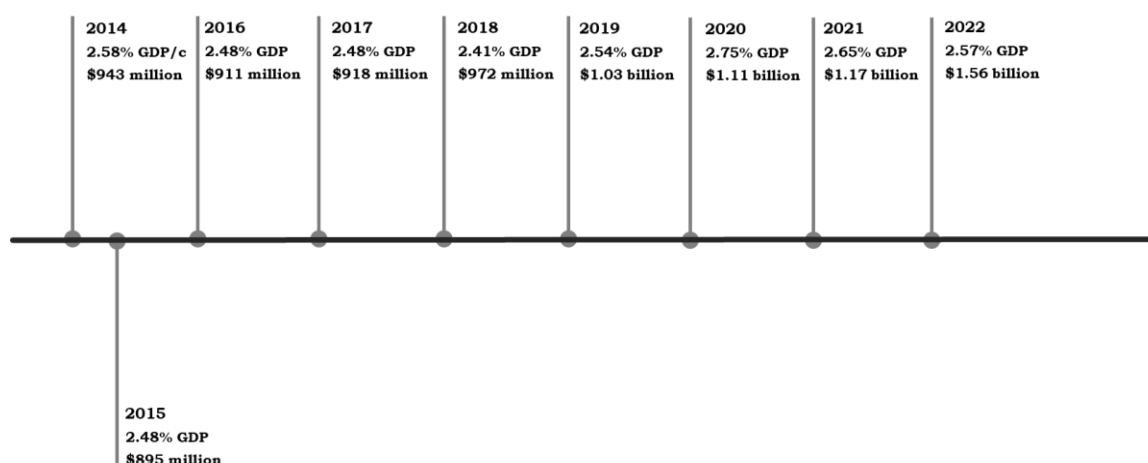
All members of the Alliance contribute to the NATO budget based on an agreed formula for cost distribution, which is determined by gross national income. This is done in accordance with the “principle of joint financing and sharing of the military burden” [19]. The funding mechanisms used include the civilian budget (which covers recurring headquarters costs), the military budget (which covers integrated command structure costs), and the NATO Security Investment Program (which covers military infrastructure and capabilities). Projects can also be co-financed, with participating countries determining investment priorities and mechanisms. NATO provides political oversight, while alliance members jointly decide which programs to finance, the volume of investments, and performance indicators for the medium term.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) aims to establish a political and military alliance between 30 countries. However, it is important to note that some member states possess stronger armies and defense systems than others. The use of NATO data allows for the analysis of the Alliance's general budget and the percentage of GDP spent on military and defense industries by each member country within the limits of contributions (refer to Graph 2*).

At the 2014 Wales Summit, NATO Allies committed to investing at least 2 % of their GDP in military needs and 20 % for arms procurement and military research and development (R&D) [19]. According to the SIPRI database, only 8 out of 26 countries spent 2 % or more of their GDP on military needs in 2021 [23]. Therefore, France, the eighth largest military consumer in the world, broke the 2 % threshold for the first time since 2009. Spain is the latest country to announce a doubling of its defense spending by 2024. Currently, it is only 1 % below the agreed GDP target.

In 2021, NATO member states allocated an average of 24 % of their military budget to armaments and research, up from 22 % in 2020 and 12 % in 2014 [6]. Among the 26 European members of the Alliance, only Albania and Estonia did not

increase their budget allocation for weapons procurement and scientific research activities between 2014 and 2021. The trend of replacing outdated Soviet equipment to reduce dependence on the Russian Federation for spare parts and maintenance was particularly noticeable among the Central European NATO member states. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, several European NATO member states, including Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Romania, announced plans to increase military spending to meet or exceed NATO's 2 % of GDP target.



Graph 2. Dynamics of NATO spending on the military and defence industry, 2014–2022

**Created by the author based on [6; 19]*

Note: Montenegro joined NATO in 2017, while North Macedonia in 2020. Finland and Sweden were in the process of joining NATO at the time of writing, so they are not marked.

On December 14, 2021, Alliance members agreed on NATO's civil and military budgets for 2022, which amounted to 289.1 million euros and 1.56 billion euros [19], respectively. However, the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022 has raised concerns about NATO's ability to respond collectively to military aggression. The weaknesses of the Alliance include:

- Unbalanced positions and statuses of players due to uneven financial contributions. For instance, the US spends more on defence than any other NATO country, with 2021 estimates putting US defence spending at about \$811 billion [23]. This exceeds the defence spending of the other participants by \$448 billion, which could potentially undermine the bloc's political line.
- There is no unified agreed position regarding the war in Ukraine. For instance, Poland and other frontline states, when assessing the situation and the possible

threat of a Russian invasion, emphasized a tougher approach to the Alliance. This included the permanent deployment of additional troops, heavy weapons, and aircraft near the borders of the Russian Federation. However, more geographically distant partners limited themselves to promises of 'historic' decisions. The issue of differing interpretations of sanctions related to the transportation of prohibited goods to Kaliningrad should be addressed. To mitigate this, it may be advisable to consider expanding NATO's partnerships with Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand. These countries are unlikely to support the formation of a Sino-Russian alliance aimed at global dominance.

- There is a lack of operational interoperability of weapons systems among participating countries, as well as joint training and intelligence sharing. NATO has three joint command headquarters (Italy, the Netherlands, and the USA), although the headquarters of the joint forces is located in Belgium. Such dispersion of command along with military resources “can negatively affect the operational response in the case of aggression” [Rudischhauser 2019]. Furthermore, the current stock of military equipment is significantly inadequate, necessitating prompt adaptation of the defence industry to military requirements.
- The dominance of national interests over the subregional security architecture. The June 2022 summit in Madrid saw NATO acknowledge the existing problems and offer an updated package of support to Ukraine. However, the provision of such assistance became a matter of personal responsibility and interest for individual members of the Alliance. While Lithuania has successfully demonstrated the practice of crowdfunding military equipment for Ukraine, Hungary has taken a more hesitant approach, delaying the transfer of weapons to the Ukrainian military.

In response to criticism, the new NATO Strategic Concept [Aronsson & Swaney 2022: 21], adopted on June 29, 2022, aims to strengthen the permanent military presence by reinforcing it with appropriate equipment. Currently, there are already 1,000 combat armed units located in the three Baltic states, and the number of US military contingent in Poland has increased. However, the credibility of the collective defence platform will depend on the prompt implementation of the already announced commitments to increase defence spending and establish priorities in the event of large-scale military actions in Europe.

The coming months are crucial for NATO as it needs to develop its capabilities in various domains, including air, sea, land, cyberspace, space, and cognitive. By 2030, at the latest, the Alliance must enhance its capacity to conduct military operations simultaneously in multiple vectors. However, NATO countries are

currently unable to process the data required to accomplish the mission successfully.

As previously stated, the number of players on the collaborative platform has a significant impact on the decision-making process. In this case, NATO may be perceived as a cumbersome and inflexible instrument. On the military side, a small number of members, primarily the USA, dictate patterns of behavior. However, in the political context, even countries without an army, such as Luxembourg and Iceland, have the right to vote, thereby influencing the Alliance as a whole. Currently, there are significant differences between the participating states. For instance, Hungary, led by Prime Minister V. Orban, is attempting to balance between external pressures from the USA and Europe to put pressure on the Russian Federation. Meanwhile, President E. Macron of France and Chancellor O. Scholz of Germany are creating obstacles by prioritising their national interests and focusing on a peaceful resolution at the expense of Ukrainian territories.

The new global resilience strategy should aim to achieve a synergistic effect in the context of security by systematically addressing vulnerabilities to hybrid threats and open aggression through cooperation among Alliance members. Key challenges include protecting communication and energy hubs, critical infrastructure, ensuring national policy stability, enhancing cyber defense, improving military logistics, and countering disinformation and propaganda.

Considering the aforementioned characteristics, it can be stated that NATO, as a collaborative security platform, has thus far limited itself to making strong declarative statements against the use of nuclear weapons. Additionally, NATO has prepared a joint declaration with the EU [10] calling on the Russian Federation to end the war in Ukraine. In terms of specific actions, there is a focus on increasing military resources in the event of an escalation of Russian aggression against NATO members. However, there is still uncertainty regarding an agreed military-political line of behavior, as well as a shared vision of the future global security narrative.

3.3. EUROPEAN UNION

In February 2022, the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine, violating the European security order. This event has transformed the relations between the EU and Russia, which were previously based on economic and energy interdependence. The member states of the EU are now systematically severing the established economic ties through complex packages of sanctions. For instance, in the first half of 2022, Germany, Russia's most significant trading partner in the EU, experienced a 34 % decrease in exports [Besch 2022].

Since 2015, relations with the Russian Federation have deteriorated, following the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of hostilities in Eastern Ukraine. The EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy from 2016 [14] highlights the need for the Russian Federation to respect international law and the principles upon which the European security order is built, as outlined in the Paris Charter of 1990 and the Budapest Memorandum of 1994. However, it should be noted that the EU, like NATO, includes members who support a peaceful policy towards the Russian Federation, such as France, Germany, Italy, Austria, and Hungary. Therefore, it is expected that some participants may have ambivalent positions, which may influence the Union's overall policy.

In March 2016, the EU Foreign Affairs Council called for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. However, they also emphasised the principle of selective interaction with the Russian Federation, meaning cooperation in areas of mutual interest. For instance, Germany, which is increasingly dependent on Russian natural resources (65 % of German gas came from Russia in 2020) and supports the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, followed this policy. Despite the events in Ukraine in 2014, the German government agreed to sell several gas storage facilities, including one of the largest in Europe, to the Russian gas giant Gazprom in 2015 [Cavendish 2022].

The EU's attempt to formulate a new strategy towards Russia in light of the Crimea annexation and the war in eastern Ukraine was hindered by disagreements among member states over an agreed line, which limited Brussels' ability to take clear and concrete action. The EU has maintained the sanctions imposed in 2014, but has avoided making decisions that could harm major energy projects or economic cooperation, which are seen as valuable to both sides.

Following the Russian war against Ukraine in 2022, the EU implemented a series of sanctions packages. Additionally, the European Peace Facility (EPF) allocated 3.1 billion euros [12] to provide military aid to Ukraine and 19.7 billion euros in financial, humanitarian, and emergency aid. The EU also offered up to 18 billion euros in financial assistance for 2023 in the form of favorable loans. Despite the European Union's unity on sanctions and support for Ukraine, there is still no unified approach to future relations with Russia, with some exceptions, such as Hungary.

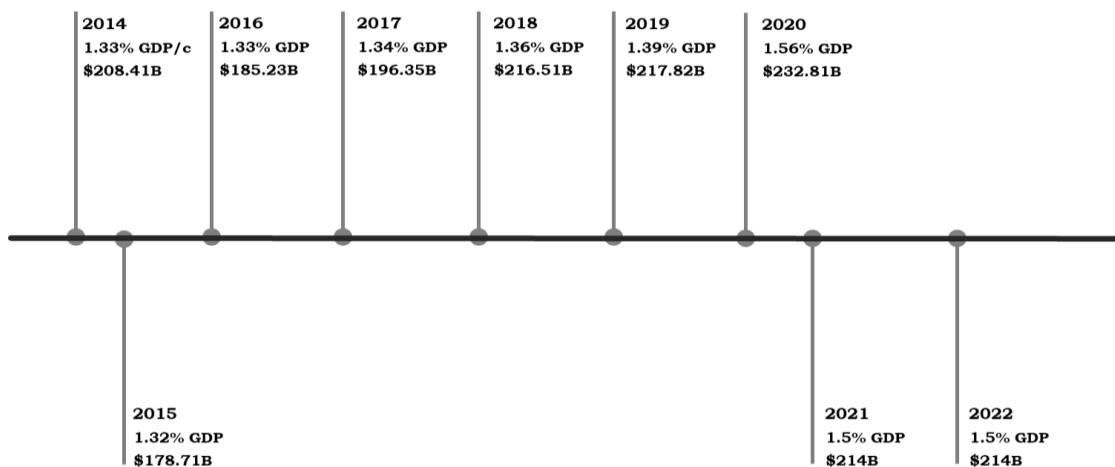
The EU has already made efforts to establish a collaborative regional security platform through joint institutions and policies, such as the annual defense review (CARD), military cooperation (PESCO), and military planning and training capacity building (MPCC). In this context, it is important to mention the European Peace Facility (EPF) 2021. The EPF aims to strengthen the EU's capacity to prevent

conflicts, build peace, and enhance international security. It provides the opportunity to finance operational actions within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The EPF has a budget of 5.69 billion euros for 2021–2027 [12], which is less than the military budget of some countries.

For comparison, the European Defense Fund (EDF) for 2021–2027 is €8 billion [11]. This fund will allocate €2.7 billion for joint defense research and €5.3 billion for collaborative development projects in the military sector. Since 2003, the EU has launched over 30 CFSP missions in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. On October 17, 2022, the EU Military Assistance Mission (EUMAM) was established to support Ukraine. However, reporting on the use of funds and the effectiveness of missions at the UN is still in the agreement stage.

The European Commission's report on defense investment, published in May 2022 in coordination with the European Defense Agency, highlights the insufficiency of existing military resources for full-fledged hostilities and the need for replenishment. However, defense procurement continues to occur primarily at the national level. In 2020, joint purchases accounted for only 11 % of the total volume of arms of the EU member states. To improve the situation, the Commission announced the European Defense Industry Strengthening through the Common Procurement Act (EDIPRA) in July 2022. A fund of EUR 500 million for 2022–2024 can be used for technical and administrative costs to encourage cooperation between at least three Member States in the military and defense sector.

Following President E. Macron's remarks on European sovereignty, we examine EU military expenditure for the period 2014–2022 (refer to Figure 3*).



Graph 3. Dynamics of military expenditures of the EU, 2014–2022

**Created by the author based on [13; 17]*

As we can see, since 2014, the share of defence expenditure in total government expenditure has slightly increased, while the share in GDP has remained stable at 1.2 % of GDP. In 2019, the ratio of national defence spending to GDP in the EU Member States ranges from 0.2 % in Ireland and 0.4 % in Luxembourg to 2.0 % in Greece and 2.1 % in Estonia. In 2020, we see the highest level of spending on the military and defence industry at \$232.8 billion, equivalent to 1.56 % of GDP. Due to the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine and growing concerns about national security, we should expect an increase in such spending in the coming years.

As a cooperative security forum, the EU has become more fragmented, less interested in expeditionary operations and more preoccupied with improving internal stability due to the migration crisis, the rise of right-wing populism and the lingering effects of the euro crisis. European states are currently more focused on integrating their own border security mechanisms in the face of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and instability in North Africa, which is seen as an alternative source of energy resources and a potential driver of large-scale migration. The EU has no desire to project military capabilities beyond the Petersberg tasks, so the common focus is on coordinating military and economic resources. NATO is likely to remain the main guarantor of European security, even as the US focuses less on Europe.

The war against Ukraine is accelerating the disintegration of the post-Soviet space, which is both a challenge and an opportunity for the EU. Russia can no longer guarantee authoritarian stability in the region, as the situation in the South Caucasus after the Nagorno-Karabakh war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2000 shows. Azerbaijan used its military advantage, backed by NATO member Turkey, to force Armenia into a so-called authoritarian peace. This means that if the EU does not become proactive beyond its economic and political transformations by becoming more involved in the regional conflicts of its eastern neighbourhood, other actors with non-democratic models of governance (such as the PRC, Iran and Turkey) could challenge Russia's role in the region.

Accordingly, the EU needs new short, medium and long-term strategies to shape a different security reality. We need a balanced approach between the interests of large and smaller member states, as well as the energy and economic separation of Europe from the Russian Federation, for example through the declared concept of mutual strategic dependence. The EU should present itself as a strong geopolitical actor through a proactive policy for the involvement of Eastern Partnership countries, as opposed to other blocs such as Russia, China, Iran and North Korea.

3.4. STATES AS INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS

To gain a comprehensive understanding, let us compare the budgets of the aforementioned international institutions, whose primary tasks include supporting peaceful coexistence and peacemaking, with national defence expenditures. According to data published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in 2022, global military spending increased by 0.7 %, reaching an all-time high of 2.1 trillion dollars [23]. The systematic growth of defence spending over the past seven years is evident. Table 2* displays the military and defence industry expenditures of national budgets per country for 2017–2022.

The indicators in the table were determined using open online sources, particularly the SIPRI¹ military expenditure database, as follows:

- Indicators should come from traceable and credible sources, such as international institutes, think tanks, or reputable scientists. In particular, military expenditure data from SIPRI includes current and capital expenditure on the armed forces, including peacekeeping; ministries of defence and other state institutions engaged in defence projects; paramilitary forces, if they are considered trained and equipped for military operations; and military space activities. Such expenses also include the provision of military and civilian personnel, i.e. pensions of military personnel and social services; operation and maintenance; purchases; military research and development; military aid.
- It is necessary to consider the global perspective.
- Be freely available to the general public.
- To be calculated on an annual basis.

Authors examine national military and defence expenditures, focusing on the results and peculiarities, as follows.

The results indicate that the USA and the PRC remain leaders among the countries with the largest military budgets, accounting for 38 % and 14 % of global military spending in 2021, respectively. In 2021, US military spending decreased by 1.4 % compared to the previous year, amounting to \$801 billion. The military burden also decreased slightly from 3.7 % of GDP in 2020 to 3.5 % in 2021. Additionally,

¹ Data on military spending are usually available in three forms: the initial budget, the revised budget, and actual spending. The initial budget is passed before the new fiscal year starts and indicates the resources the government plans to allocate to each public sector. The revised budget is published during the financial year. Actual expenditure reports are published after the end of the financial year, showing how much money was spent. In the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, data are most often available in the form of an initial or revised budget. Only a small number of countries publish actual spending data for the previous year by mid-February each year (when the SIPRI database is closed, meaning no further changes can be made).

funding for military research and development (R&D) increased significantly by 24 % between 2012 and 2021. Continuing to invest in scientific policies demonstrates that the American government prioritises quality over the accumulation of outdated US defence systems. In 2021, the largest increase in spending was related to nuclear modernisation. Additionally, the year marked the end of almost two decades of military presence in Afghanistan. Between 2001 and 2021, the USA invested approximately 85 billion dollars [23] in supporting the Afghan National Security Forces. The removal of the military personnel helped to reduce US military spending by nearly 21 %.

Table 2

**Dynamics of spending by countries in the military and defence industry,
2017–2022**

Country	Military expenditures (2017)	Military expenditures (2018)	Military expenditures (2019)	Military expenditures (2020)	Military expenditures (2021)	Military expenditures (2022)
USA	\$646.8 billion	\$682.5billion	\$734.3billion	\$778.4billion	\$800.7billion	\$770.0billion
China	\$210.4billion	\$232.5billion	\$240.3billion	\$258.0billion	\$293.4billion	\$230.0billion
India	\$64.6billion	\$66.3billion	\$71.5billion	\$72.9billion	\$76.6billion	\$49.6billion
Great Britain	\$51.6billion	\$55.7billion	\$56.9billion	\$60.7billion	\$68.4billion	\$68.0billion
Russian Federation	\$66.9billion	\$61.6billion	\$65.2billion	\$61.7billion	\$65.9billion	\$154.0billion
Germany	\$42.2billion	\$46.4billion	\$49.0billion	\$52.8billion	\$56.0billion	\$50.3billion
France	\$49.2billion	\$51.4billion	\$50.1billion	\$52.7billion	\$56.6billion	\$40.9billion
Japan	\$45.4billion	\$46.6billion	\$47.6billion	\$49.2billion	\$54.1billion	\$47.5billion
South Korea	\$39.6billion	\$43.1billion	\$43.9billion	\$45.7billion	\$50.2billion	\$46.3billion
Saudi Arabia	\$70.4billion	\$74.5billion	\$61.6billion	\$57.5billion	\$47.2billion	\$46.0billion
Australia	\$27.7billion	\$26.8billion	\$26.1billion	\$27.5billion	\$31.8billion	\$44.6billion
Italy	\$26.5billion	\$28.4billion	\$26.4billion	\$28.9billion	\$31.3billion	\$29.2billion
UAE	-	-	-	-	-	\$25.3billion
Canada	\$22.6billion	\$22.7billion	\$22.2billion	\$22.6billion	\$26.5billion	\$23.5billion
Brazil	\$29.3billion	\$28.2billion	\$25.9billion	\$19.7billion	\$18.7billion	\$18.8billion
Israel	\$19.4billion	\$19.8billion	\$20.5billion	\$21.7billion	\$24.3billion	\$17.8billion
Taiwan	\$9.6billion	\$10.4billion	\$10.9billion	\$11.9billion	\$12.6billion	\$16.8billion
Poland	\$9.9billion	\$12.0billion	\$11.8billion	\$13.0billion	\$13.7billion	\$14.5billion
Netherlands	\$9.6billion	\$11.1billion	\$12.0billion	\$12.6billion	\$13.6billion	\$14.3billion
Ukraine	\$3.6billion	\$4.2billion	\$5.4billion	\$5.9billion	\$5.9billion	\$11.9billion

**Created by the author based on [6; 23].*

In 2021, South American military spending decreased slightly by 0.6 % to \$45.3 billion. Brazil's spending fell to \$19.2 billion, but it remains the largest military spender in the subregion and was able to make scheduled payments on strategic arms programs for the purchase of 36 Gripen fighter jets from Sweden. Colombia's military spending increased by 4.7 % in 2021 to \$10.2 billion, placing it in second place in South America. Colombia's military spending has increased

annually since the 2016 peace agreement between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP). This can be attributed to ongoing conflicts between pro-government institutions and other armed groups.

In Central America, military spending trends are influenced by high levels of violent organized crime, as paramilitary forces become increasingly involved in the fight against drug cartels. For instance, Mexico's military spending has increased significantly since 2015, reaching \$7.7 billion, which is a 92 % increase compared to 2006. It is worth noting that Honduras, which has the second-highest number of murders in the world, has experienced a growth of 186 % in military spending between 2006 and 2015, the highest in the subregion. Additional information regarding the distribution by world subregions can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Dynamics of expenditures by subregions in the military and defence industry, 2017–2021

Subregion	Military expenditures (2017)	Military expenditures (2018)	Military expenditures (2019)	Military expenditures (2020)	Military expenditures (2021)
America	\$695 billion	\$735 billion	\$815 billion	\$853 billion	\$883 billion
North America (USA, Canada)	\$630 billion	\$670 billion	\$754 billion	\$801 billion	\$827 billion (94%)
South America	\$57 billion	\$55.6 billion	\$52.8 billion	\$43.5 billion	\$45.3 billion (5,1%)
Europe	\$342 billion	\$364 billion	\$356 billion	\$378 billion	\$418 billion
Western Europe	\$245 billion	\$266 billion	\$251 billion	\$273 billion	\$342 billion (incl. Central Europe)
Eastern Europe	\$72.9 billion	\$69.5 billion	\$74.0 billion	\$71.7 billion	\$76.3 billion
Central Europe	\$24.1 billion	\$28.3 billion	\$31.5 billion	\$33.6 billion	
Africa	\$42.6 billion	\$40.6 billion	\$41.2 billion	\$43.2 billion	\$39.7 billion
Middle East	-	\$145 billion	\$147 billion	\$143 billion	\$186 billion
Asia and Oceania	\$477 billion	\$507 billion	\$523 billion	\$528 billion	\$586 billion

**Created by the author based on [6; 23].*

In 2021, military spending in Asia and Oceania totalled \$586 billion, with the primary contributors being China and India. China, the world's second-largest spender, allocated approximately \$293 billion to its military, representing a 4.7 % increase from 2020. Notably, China's military budget has grown for 27 consecutive years, which is the longest continuous trend among countries according to the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.

India's military expenditure in 2021 was \$76.6 billion, making it the third-highest in the world. This represents a 0.9 % increase from 2020 and a 33 % increase from 2012. The country has prioritised the modernisation of its armed forces by strengthening its own arms industry, with 64% of the military budget being used for domestically produced weapons purchases. This is likely due to ongoing tensions and border disputes with Pakistan and the PRC.

The Japanese government has increased its 2021 military budget by \$7 billion, resulting in a total spending of \$54.1 billion, which is the highest annual increase since 1972. Meanwhile, South Korea's military expenditures reached \$50.2 billion, with a simultaneous reduction in the planned percentage due to the need to restore the domestic economy affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the three largest countries in Southeast Asia also increased their military spending: Singapore spent \$10.9 billion, Indonesia spent \$9.4 billion, and Thailand spent \$7.3 billion on military expenditure. The potential threat from PRC and territorial disputes in the South China Sea were among the drivers of this growth.

Europe's total military expenditure in 2021 was \$418 billion, which is a 3 % increase from 2020 and a 19 % increase from 2012. Specifically, the UK spent \$68.4 billion in 2021, which is 3 % more than in 2020 and exceeds the NATO target of 2 %. The UK government has recently released a new strategy that includes a 33 billion dollars increase in the Ministry of Defence's budget over the next four years. The additional funding aims to support defence and space research, enhance nuclear deterrence, and modernise the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy.

In 2021, France's military expenses reached 56.6 billion dollars, which is a 1.5 % increase from 2020. This increase is due to the Law on Military Planning for 2019–2025, which aims to align the country's military budget with NATO's target of 2 % of GDP by 2025. Germany spent 56 billion dollars on military needs in the same year and has pledged to invest over 3 % of its GDP in defense and diplomacy in the future.

The Russian Federation has increased its military spending by 2.9 % in 2021, amounting to \$65.9 billion and 4.1 % of GDP [23], respectively, due to high oil and gas revenues. The country has also been building up forces along the Ukrainian border. It is worth noting that Russia's military budget had decreased between 2016 and 2019 due to low energy prices combined with sanctions in response to the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Ukraine increased its military spending by 72 % to strengthen its defenses against the Russian Federation. However, in 2021, the spending decreased to \$5.9 billion,

which still accounted for 3.2 % of the country's GDP. Overall, Ukraine's military budget has grown by 61 % since 2006, including a 34 % increase since 2013.

In 2020, Poland's military expenditures accounted for 39 % of the total in Central Europe, amounting to \$13.0 billion. According to the National Security Strategy, Poland has pledged to increase its military budget to 2.5 % of GDP by 2024. Hungary, on the other hand, spent \$2.4 billion in 2020, following its chosen growth trend for the past six years. As a result, Hungary's military budget has increased by 133 % since 2014 to expand its military potential and replace outdated Soviet equipment. Between 2010 and 2019, military spending in four Central European countries increased by more than 150 %: Lithuania (232 %), Latvia (176 %), Bulgaria (165 %), and Romania (154 %).

In 2021, Australia's military spending also increased by 4 % to \$31.8 billion. According to Nan Tian, an expert at SIPRI, China's presence in the South and East China Seas has become a major driver of military policy in countries such as Australia and Japan. The trilateral AUKUS security agreement between Australia, the UK, and the USA is an example. It provides for the supply of eight nuclear submarines to Australia at a cost of up to \$128 billion.

In 2021, military spending in Africa reached \$39.7 billion, with the North and South regions accounting for 49 % and 51 %, respectively. The subregion's military budget has been consistently increasing since 2011, with seven years of growth (2011–2015 and 2019–2020) and only three years of slight decline (2016–2018), resulting in an overall increase of 42 % over the past decade. The country's prolonged economic stagnation has significantly impacted its military capabilities. In 2021, Kenya, Uganda, and Angola ranked as the third, fourth, and fifth largest military spenders in sub-Saharan Africa, respectively. Uganda's military spending increased by 203 % from 2012 to 2021, while Angola's military spending decreased by 66% over the same period. Angola's economy has been declining since 2015, mainly due to low oil prices and a drop in oil production. A similar situation is evident in Algeria, where military spending decreased by 3.4 % in 2020, amounting to \$9.7 billion compared to 2019, due to the decline in oil prices.

Sudan has faced an economic crisis, an ongoing violent conflict in the Darfur region, and a surge in anti-government protests, leading to instability in the country's military spending over the past five years. Specifically, military spending declined in 2014, 2015, and 2018, while it increased in 2016 and 2017. In contrast, Nigeria increased its military spending by 56 % to \$4.5 billion in response to attacks by Islamist extremists (Boko Haram) and separatist rebels.

Armed conflict is a significant contributor to instability in military spending in sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, in the war-torn Sahel and Lake Chad region, spending increased in 2019 in Burkina Faso (22 %), Cameroon (1.4 %), and Mali (3.6 %), but decreased in Chad (-5.1 %), Niger (-20 %), and Nigeria (-8.2 %). Military spending increased in the Central African Republic (8.7 %), the DRC (16 %), and Uganda (52 %), but decreased in Burundi (-4.5 %), among Central African countries involved in armed conflicts.

In 2021, military spending in the Middle East totalled approximately \$186 billion, which is a 3.3 % decrease from 2020. It is important to note that SIPRI has not estimated the total military spending in the Middle East since 2015 due to a lack of data for Qatar, Syria, the UAE, and Yemen. Additionally, six out of the ten countries with the highest military burden are located in this subregion. Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Jordan, and Qatar are among the countries with the highest military spending. In 2021, Saudi Arabia's military expenditures were estimated at \$55.6 billion, which is a 17 % decrease from 2020. This decrease is reportedly due to a withdrawal of military forces from Yemen, although the Saudi Arabian government has announced a redeployment of troops. Since 2015, Saudi Arabia's military spending has been decreasing due to a sharp drop in oil prices. This trend is not unique to Saudi Arabia, as many other exporting countries, including Angola, Ecuador, Iraq, Mexico, South Sudan, and Venezuela, have also been forced to cut their budgets, including military spending, as a result of the decline in oil revenues. In 2021, Iran increased its military budget to \$24.6 billion for the first time in four years, despite ongoing economic problems resulting from sanctions. The rise occurred amidst Iran's tense relations with Israel and the USA. As a result, the budget of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps accounted for 34 % of the country's total military spending. Prior to 2014, Iran's military expenditure had been consistently decreasing (by 31 %) since its peak in 2006. The primary decrease occurred in 2012–2013 following the imposition of economic and financial sanctions against Iran by the EU in January 2012. However, the Iranian economy has since begun to recover due to the gradual lifting of EU and UN sanctions. This recovery has contributed to a 37 % increase in military spending from 2014–2017, reaching \$14.5 billion in 2017.

In 2021, Israel's military spending increased by 3.1 % to \$24.3 billion [23] due to the government's military operations against Hamas and concerns about Iran's nuclear potential. However, it is worth noting that Israeli military spending fell by 13 % after a peak in 2015, which was associated with military operations in the Gaza Strip in 2014.

In 2021, Turkey's military spending decreased by 4.4 % to \$15.5 billion [23]. However, between 2012 and 2021, the country's military budget increased by 63 %. This increase in spending coincided with Turkey's expanded military involvement in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as an increase in the production of its weapons.

Qatar spent \$11.6 billion on military expenses, making it the fifth largest spender in the Middle East. This represents a 434 % increase from 2010, the last time the country released military spending figures. The increase in spending coincided with Qatar's involvement in the conflicts in Libya and Syria, as well as its investment in updating its military equipment.

Therefore, a country's military spending can be influenced by various factors, such as armed conflict, security perceptions, GDP, and fluctuations in oil prices. The latter poses a significant challenge to national budgets, as military expenditure patterns over the past decade have generally mirrored the rise and fall of oil prices. The decrease in oil revenues compelled exporting governments to reduce their budgets, including military spending, which impacted regional and subregional trends in Africa and South America. This pattern highlights the severity of the shock and underscores the necessity for sectoral reforms to diversify the economies of oil-exporting nations. Out of the 15 countries that have experienced the most significant budget cuts since 2015, only two (Guinea and Zambia) were not oil exporters.

Another important factor to consider is the presence of armed conflict in the country, as well as its proximity to nations where active hostilities are taking place. In particular, countries bordering the Russian Federation or Ukraine demonstrated escalating fear of a potential threat of invasion by increasing their total military spending in 2015. For instance, Poland increased its spending by 22 % to \$10.5 billion under its \$40 billion ten-year military modernization plan, which resulted in its military spending reaching 2.2 % of GDP in 2015 [23]. Romania increased its military spending by 11 % to \$2.5 billion and announced its intention to increase the military budget up to 1.4 % of GDP. Slovakia followed suit with a 17 % increase, while Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania increased their military spending by 6.6 %, 14 %, and 33 %, respectively. In 2022, there was an increase in national military budgets and readiness to join military blocs to protect the territorial integrity of countries due to Russian aggression against Ukraine. This behaviour pattern was observed in the UK, France, Germany, Finland, and Sweden.

4. CONCLUSION

The Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has caused concern among citizens of many countries, who fear the possibility of a new global conflict. According to the Halifax International Security Forum, 73 % of respondents anticipate a future global confrontation on the scale of the First and Second World Wars by 2047. In addition to these concerns, there is a growing call for the strengthening of national armies. On average, 64 % of respondents [9] in the 30 countries agree that their government should spend more on national military power. Meanwhile, 85 % of respondents believe that new international agreements and institutions should be established and run by strong democratic countries.

The citizens' desire to establish new international institutions in the context of transforming security architecture aligns with the need to reassess the structure and policies of existing security players. The UN-based collaborative platform can serve as a space for round negotiations, limited to declarative statements due to the absence of its own armed formations, weapons systems, and stable ideas about the future vector of actions against aggressors. The EU and NATO are in the process of restructuring their security missions, both regionally and globally. This will necessitate the development of new cooperation principles with partners, as well as additional time and resources.

The key to the sustainability of international security agencies lies in their ability to adapt to changing parameters. Institutions can disintegrate because they no longer have any functional added value, such as the Western European Union (WEU), or exist formally due to the loss of political support of their members. In the case of the EU, for example, the genesis of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and, in particular, the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) should be seen as a process “when an organization that was not explicitly established to externalize security gradually built up its institutional potential for this particular function” [Rudischhauser 2019]. By analogy with the EU, NATO has also begun work on adapting partnership programs to the changing global environment, abandoning the grouping of countries based on the experience of cooperation with NATO or the geographical principle. Instead, it is more appropriate to implement two or three new “matrix-type framework” [Aronsson & Swaney 2022: 43] programs to ensure maximum flexibility of the Alliance to the context.

When considering the creation of a new transnational entity for alternative security collaboration, it is important to take into account the experiences of other multilateral platforms. For instance, rather than emulating NATO's approach of

evaluating partnership programmes by category, a fundamental tenet of this collaborative cluster could be to conduct a comprehensive appraisal of a country's capabilities and level of influence based on pre-established guidelines. This is particularly relevant in our case, given our status as a major security player in contemporary geopolitics. Such parameters must enable the measurement of progress in the country's defence and security sector, as well as reforms in this area, and the country's compliance with the goals of the transnational platform. If the state is willing and able to participate in peacekeeping, is it reasonable to refuse its assistance based on ideological differences in other areas of joint initiatives? This question requires further research and answers.

In relation to the EU experience, progress reports for candidate countries could be used as a tool to identify, measure, and evaluate stakeholders and their potential for further involvement. These reports may include mechanisms for financial reporting, analysis of funds, expert evaluation, and verification of results using quantitative and qualitative indicators. The effectiveness of the collaborative cluster can be improved by using a combination of tools that are adapted to the specific situation, including the prescription of sanctioning measures in case of agreement violation.

To evaluate the success of the cluster, it is important to use general benchmarks and determine what worked and what did not. Additionally, it is important to assess the extent to which the country utilized the platform's assistance for its own interests and security needs. The platform's argument for 'functional continuity' enables the creation of a 'hybrid' security institution, with a variety of partnership formats of varying intensity, rather than a one-dimensional system of collective defence.

Therefore, for an international security institution to be successful, it must solve the specific security problem for which it was created, or at least transform it to the extent that it no longer poses an acute threat to the participating states. Failure to do so risks 'institutional embedding', where specific formats of cooperation, although still available, are no longer used.

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“IT SURPASSES OUR COMPREHENSION”. POST-WAR POLAND IN FOREIGN PRESS OF THE 40s.

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Abstract

This paper presents a depiction of Poland in the aftermath of the war, based on reports from foreign journalists and observers published in American, English, and Swedish newspapers and magazines¹. Unlike the Polish press, foreign observers who were able to penetrate behind the Iron Curtain provided descriptions of Poland in the 1940s as it was perceived at the time. The state they revealed was far from being politically independent and free. It was ruled according to totalitarian standards that were in stark contrast to the concept of democracy as understood by the West.

Key words: *post-war Poland, foreign journalists, totalitarian regime in Poland, propaganda, freedom of press.*

¹ Most of them was published in a collection edited by M.K. Dziewanowski and released in London in 1946. I decided to unite them in one place, to reveal and quote some of them in order to show a picture of Poland as it was seen by foreign journalists and observers just shortly after the war. At the same time Polish press was bringing their readers a very different picture of Polish reality and many topics as political prisoners and the fate of Home Army soldiers was not mentioned at all. The publisher of the book was Polish Freedom Movement “Independence and democracy”. It is also worthy to honor this book which seems to be forgotten nowadays. See more in: *Poland To-Day As Seen By Foreign Observers*, ed. by M. K. Dziewanowski, London 1946.

INTRODUCTION

After World War II, Poland was left in ruins, both economically and morally devastated. The country was the first to oppose the violence of the aggressor by arms and suffered more than any other country in Europe. In September 1939, our soil was invaded from both the East and the West. The Warsaw Uprising (August-October 1944) was one of the most heroic acts of resistance and struggle for independence ever, but it ended tragically. The Polish insurgents were left isolated and forced to act in desperation. The uprising left Warsaw completely destroyed, making it impossible to rebuild in its former shape. Contemporary historians consider this act a 'romantic gesture'.

Foreign observers and journalists who came to Poland shortly after the war were astonished that the people who suffered so much and contributed so much to the final victory over the Nazis did not receive the recognition they deserved for their bravery and courage. While other allies regained their independence and sovereignty, Poland fell under the control of the Soviet empire.

POLAND AS SEEN THOSE DAYS BY FOREIGN PRESS

In an article for the New York Times on October 21, 1945, Gladwin Hill Russians [New York Times, 21.10.1945] reported that while travelling in Poland as a foreign correspondent, he was frequently asked when the American Army would liberate the Polish from the Russians. Hill noted that many Poles compared the Russian occupation to the German one. Similarly, E.J. Williams, an American journalist, referred to the Russian invasion of Poland in September 1939 as 'the fourth partition of Poland' [Christian Science Monitor, 4.11.1945]. The article discusses Russia's political and economic influence over its satellite, Poland, noting the presence of thousands of Soviet troops in post-war Poland. "How many are here for other purposes, such as to influence internal affair in Poland is another question impossible to answer" – he added, noting the presence of thousands of Soviet troops in post-war Poland. Additionally, the author highlights the issue of Russian high officers in the Polish army who are unable to speak Polish, a problem that extends to many Polish government departments and institutions.

Major Tufton Beamish went to Poland in January 1946 as a member of the British parliamentary delegation. In his articles published afterwards in the "Daily Telegraph" we can read: "A visitor soon realises that we in Britain still underestimate what the Poles have lost and suffered at the hands of the Germans or how deeply the Germans are hated in consequence. (...) But the losses at the hands of the Russians are [also] very heavy" [Daily Telegraph, 25.2.1946].

In *Poland's Political Arena To-Day*, E.J. Williams emphasised that the governing Polish Workers' Party does not have significant support among the Polish people, even when combined with the Polish Socialist Party. "A great challenge to their power comes from the Mikołajczyk's Peasant Party, which still represents the solid conservative elements in the countryside, and which also may well prove the rallying-point for those sections of the urban population which opposed much of the nationalization" [Christian Science Monitor, 12.11.1945]².

The author quoted a fragment of a speech by Władysław Gomułka, the Vice-Premier Minister in the Provisional Government of National Unity of Poland³. Gomułka's concept of democracy differed from Western standards and was more aligned with the Russian model. He stated that Stanisław Mikołajczyk's Peasant Party needed to join a 'democratic alliance' of workers and peasants, or else be considered as reactionaries 'with whom we can only speak through fighting'. E. J. Williams commented: "His interpretation of democracy means no tolerance toward anything considered as "reactionary", and under that term seems to come everything which runs contrary to the Communists' conception of necessary political and economic changes".

In a similar vein, Charles Lambert, the British correspondent of the London newspaper 'Daily Herald', stated in an article published on 4th November 1945 that Poland was ultimately controlled by the Soviet Union. "The new Poland is not a democracy in the British sense of the term. Government circles themselves defined it to me as "semi-democracy". That is not how I, as a Western European, would put it. I would call the Bierut Administration a semi-dictatorship" [Daily Herald, 4.11.1945].

Another sensational article by E.J. Williams was published in the 'Christian Science Monitor' on 15th November 1945, discussing the issue of personal freedom. He wrote about thousands of people who were arrested solely because they were: "objectionable to the present regime or at least considered as unreliable" [Christian Science Monitor, 15.11.1945]. He stated that there were still hundreds of Poles who had come from Russia among the imprisoned, and they were waiting for the promised amnesty: "Some instances came to my notice of persons who have been arrested suddenly at their homes for no good reason known to either themselves or their relatives and who have been carried off from small towns and villages to

² Stanisław Mikołajczyk (1901–1966) was the Prime Minister of the Polish government in exile. He was the leader of the Peasant Party – the party that tried to oppose the communists.

³ In 1956–1970 he was the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party.

prisons in large towns many miles away. On our way to the city of Poznań, for example, we gave a lift to an elderly woman desirous of information of her daughter who had been summarily taken from her home by the security police without any charge being preferred”.

He wrote about thousands of Poles outside the country who decided not to return to Poland to avoid political persecutions. The former Home Army soldiers⁴ were also in this group: “Poland to-day is smaller in size than pre-1939 Poland, and has only about two-thirds of its population. Yet its so-called public security organizations are four times as large as those of August 1939. (...) Their activities certainly often extend beyond what could normally be described as the defence of state interests”. The author added that people were usually arrested without any reason and if a reason was given, it seemed to be “extremely shallow”.

Gladwin Hill reported in the New York Times on 22nd October 1945 [New York Times, 22.10.1945] that there was no guarantee of safety for critics of the regime in post-war Poland: “The official line advanced by some Government officers is that there are no more than 1000 political prisoners in Poland to-day. However, the Government officials have acknowledged to me that there were between 60 000 and 80 000. (...) The belief is widespread in Warsaw that there are 10 000 at Cracow alone, and some responsible observers think the total may be nearer 100 000”⁵.

Hill discussed the persecution of Home Army soldiers and the methods used by communists to eliminate official opposition. He described individuals who were arrested and imprisoned on false pretences, as well as many Poles who were suddenly shot to death. Hill's commentary raises questions about the explanation for these incidents: “The present provisional regime is going to these extremes to suppress opposition and perpetuate itself. The official attitude is that sweeping measures were necessary against the “reactionary” and “Fascist” elements at large in Poland who jeopardized national unity – an argument curiously as old as authoritarianism itself”.

Another article he published in the “New York Times” on 5th November stated: “Russia is pulling the strings of Poland’s Red Provisional Government. Even in Poland’s present dire economic straits a large amount of her industrial production is going to Russia”. All aspects of public life in Poland were controlled by the Government.

⁴ The Home Army (pol. Armia Krajowa – AK) was the dominant Polish resistance movement in World War II. The Soviet Union and the Polish communists viewed the underground loyal to the Polish government in exile as a force which had to be eliminated.

⁵ It is important to add, that Charles Lambert – the correspondent of the “Daily Herald” estimated that the number of political prisoners could be approximately 20000.

“The political police are numerous. Their agents are to be found even in small villages. (...) Every item published in a newspaper, including articles on literature, and theatre and film reviews, has to be submitted to censorship” [New York Times, 5.11.1945].

On 18th December 1945, Rhona Churchill, correspondent of the British newspaper 'Daily Mail', published an article titled 'Poland Under Terror'. In the article, she interviewed Jan Berezowski, a Polish soldier who fought under the Polish General Władysław Anders and voluntarily returned to Poland. Berezowski expressed his deep disillusionment and despair upon realizing that Poland was not a free country, no freer than under the Gestapo terror. He was surprised to learn that open discussion about the situation in Poland was not possible due to censorship of the press. Additionally, war heroes were being persecuted and the wives of Polish soldiers who fought abroad were being sent to concentration camps. “Already they have told me that General Anders was a traitor and that I must forget him. I feel they regard me as a traitor too, though all I want is to help my country” [Daily Mail, 18.12.1945].

During her conversation with some Poles, Rhona Churchill was repeatedly asked if England was aware of Poland's situation. The Poles were seeking hope and waiting for help that never arrived.

In his article published on 1st October 1945 in the 'Christian Science Monitor', E. J. Williams discusses land reform and its economic consequences. “By 15th July of this year nearly 70 per cent of the total area had been parcelled out. (...) This land had been divided up among “the dispossessed”, mainly farm workers, small tenants, small farmers and landless artists and craftsmen in the countryside. The procedure adopted was the following: Nobody was allowed to hold more than 125 acres. Had this meant in practice that the former owners could have retained this amount of land with some place to live, though not necessarily the big country-houses they formerly occupied, it might have been tolerable”. However, according to Williams' report, the large landowners were entirely dispossessed and not even allowed to reside within many miles of their former homes.

The land reform had the following consequences: new peasant-owners quickly discovered that the smallholdings were generally too small to generate profits. Furthermore, the correspondent noted that Polish peasants lacked agricultural machinery. “The consequences for the future of Polish agriculture are naturally very serious since production will be far less during the coming year than in pre-war times” [Christian Science Monitor, 1.10.1945].

In an article published in the Stockholm daily 'Svenska Dagbladet', reporter Rasmus describes life in post-war Warsaw. The city had been completely destroyed. "The German crimes in Warsaw can never be pardoned or forgotten. One could imagine a few fanatics capable of such mass systematic destruction, but that thousands of men could found for such an evil task surpasses comprehension" [Svenska Dagbladet, 14.12.1945]. The article describes the living conditions of approximately 400,000 people who attempted to reside and work in the ruins of Warsaw. The transportation system was limited to a few tramlines and lorries that were converted into buses. Residents of the less damaged suburb of Praga had to spend hours commuting to the city centre via the pontoon bridge. The inhabitants of Warsaw endured harsh living conditions, including a lack of water and electricity, and suffered from the cold due to delayed and insufficient coal supplies from the government. The correspondent compared prices and found that a pair of shoes cost 6000 zloty, a pound of sugar cost 120 zloty, and a pound of butter cost 160 zloty. The monthly salary was around 2000 zloty. The correspondent believed that a financial catastrophe was inevitable.

On 5th November 1945, Charles Lambert wrote in the 'Daily Herald' about the living standards in the ruins of Warsaw. The people were living in overcrowded rooms, frequently in basements. "A two-price system operates: fixed market prices for rationed foodstuffs at five or six times pre-war prices; and the free market where prices are as high as 100 times pre-war" – he added [Daily Herald, 5.11.1945].

"Warsaw's most striking contrast is the Polonia Hotel and the former Ghetto" – cabled the B.U.P. correspondent quoted by the "Manchester Guardian" on 22nd September 1945. The Polonia was the only hotel open in the city. It was reminiscent of a palace of luxury. It had running water, electricity and fancy food. "You can eat thick steaks three times a day if you have the money, and dance to the music of a seven-piece orchestra all in white jackets..." – wrote the author. Nearby, the Warsaw Ghetto presented scenes of misery. People were dying of starvation, dirty women and men lined up in the street to buy cheap soup.

Rhona Churchill wrote three articles for the London Daily Mail describing her impressions of Poland. The second article, titled '*Death Boards the Train to Utopia*', is particularly noteworthy [Daily Mail, 14.12.1945]. The images she presented were breathtaking. She wrote about thousands of Poles travelling from the East⁶ to Western Poland⁷, crammed into farm wagons. Many, especially children, could not

⁶ The part of Poland which after the conference in Yalta became a part of the Soviet Union.

⁷ The land that Russia handed to the Polish as compensation for the loss of Eastern Poland.

bear the frost and froze to death. “They are among the first of thousands of homeless Poles who will freeze and starve to death this winter in cattle trucks and windowless passenger carriages on the railway sidings on the territory that was Poland. They number more than a million”.

According to Rhona Churchill, these people were deceived by the communists who promised them a better life. Rhona Churchill: “I talked to a young Jew (...) He said: >>My mother died three nights ago from exposure. The temperature was 18 degrees below zero, and we had no heating and no windows. I shall go on to Palestine<<. This young man, like many other Jews on these trains, had been promised that in Cracow he could get transport through to Palestine. I had not the heart to disillusion him. There is no transport to Palestine from Poland”.

CONCLUSION

Foreign journalists and observers who visited Poland shortly after the war provided an objective perspective on the 'transition to peace in Poland'. It is a fact that they presented a horrifying situation. They described the social, economic, and moral problems, as well as the great suffering and post-war trauma. The authors repeatedly stated that the Polish people lacked freedom and that the government in Warsaw was imposed upon Poland by Soviet Russia, and therefore did not represent the Polish people.

They also discussed political terror and the assistance provided to the Security Police by the NKVD and Russian military forces in Poland. Additionally, they wrote about the Soviet occupation of Poland and the Polish people's desire for independence. Those reports might have influenced the policies and perceptions of foreign governments in the West. However, it is clear that they did not.

Major Tufton Beamish wrote in the “Daily Telegraph” about a certain “duty” that the British had to Poland: “These deeply religious, cultured and intensely national people were our Allies from the first day of the war to the last. No nation has suffered more. It would be a tragedy that must not, that will not, happen if they should suffer still further from want of understanding, on the part of the United States and ourselves, of what is taking place” [Daily Telegraph, 25.2.1945].

It appears that the aforementioned words were merely meaningless.

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SLOVAK MEDIA (NOT ONLY) AT THE TIME OF COVID-19: WEAKNESSES, PROBLEMS AND THEIR FACTORS

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Abstract

Media play a crucial role in society, performing several important functions. Therefore, it is relevant to evaluate their quality and condition. This study aims to identify significant issues in the practice of Slovak mainstream media during the COVID-19 pandemic and to determine the factors contributing to this practice. It has been noted that the media faced difficulties in fulfilling their role during times of crisis, highlighting their long-standing weaknesses. As a result, the identified key contributing factors have led to a loss of credibility and authority. In terms of social and cultural contexts and expectations, it has been concluded that there is a need to reconstruct the media and their function as part of a socio-humanitarian mission. In the post-COVID digital society, it is important to consider both the new nature and conditions, as well as the appropriateness of applying a systemic

approach given the complex circumstances and participants. Additionally, it is important to strengthen ethical responsibility among all participants involved in media communication, while also considering their rights, duties, and responsibilities.

Key words: *Slovak Media, Professionalism of Journalists, Mainstream and Alternative Media, COVID-19.*

INTRODUCTION

Media, both globally and in Slovakia, play a crucial role in society by fulfilling several important functions. Public service media, in particular, should prioritize providing the public with access to events of particular interest, unbiased, independent, and pluralistic information, a forum for democratic discussion, and promoting education and culture (Sobotovičová, 2019, p. 137). The programme structure should cater to the interests of the public, regardless of physical distances, and pay attention to the minorities that are part of society. The objective of broadcasting should not be viewed as profit-oriented, but rather as a means of meeting the needs of all members of the audience (public; Višňovský, Mináriková, Kapec, 2022, 50). The social role of these media requires both high quality and accountability, as determined by the very definition of public service. In a democratic society, public service media are typically held to a higher standard than commercial media. Therefore, they should adhere to quality standards regarding professionalism, professional ethics, as well as the moral and social principles and values of contemporary democratic society (Lehoczká, 2012; Sobotovičová, 2019, pp. 136–137, 150; Sámelová, 2016; Sámelová, 2021, pp. 282, 284). In this context, the condition of the media, particularly their ability to exercise and fulfil the public service role, depends primarily on the quality of journalism and its ability to fulfil its duties (Velas, 2011, pp. 7–8; Czarnecki, 2018, pp. 10–11). In Slovakia, journalism is expected to support the public interest, bear a certain degree of social responsibility, and uphold democratic principles (Olejárová, 2019, p. 113).

The quality and condition of media, particularly their public service and evaluation, are relevant to society. This pertains to the long-term experience of media services and specifically includes the public's experience of media during times of social crises. As experts have pointed out, social crises reveal weaknesses in both societal systems and individuals. Difficult times or situations test the media's ability to fulfil their roles in society. They can also be seen as an ethical test of the media's

performance (Pitoňáková, 2020, p. 65; Orlová and Somr, 2021, p. 3). This can expose lies that contribute to false opinions, attitudes, behaviour and social structures (Modrzejewski, 2020).

The aim of this paper is to identify the significant problems and weaknesses of Slovak mainstream media through a critical analysis of their nature. We will also name the factors that contribute to the media losing their credibility and authority in Slovakia. The paper aims to capture some of the more significant elements, given the complexity of the task. The social responsibility of the media during the COVID-19 crisis, particularly the public service, was significant. Therefore, this study examines the practices of Slovak mainstream media, with a focus on Pitoňáková's (2020, pp. 56–65) research findings.

1 ON THE NATURE OF SLOVAK MEDIA: THE PROBLEM OH THEIR FITNESS AND PERFORMANCE (NOT ONLY) IN TIMES OF CRISIS IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

The informative function is traditionally considered to be the core of the social service of media. The quality of their performance or management comes to the forefront in times of social crises. The media has an important role in informing the public about a given situation using relevant sources (Orlová, Somr, 2021, 3). It is necessary for them to supervise the construction and creation of narratives with an emphasis on objective and reliable information. This includes creating appropriate and relevant headlines (pandemic; (Pitoňáková, 2020, 61). In this context, journalists are expected to regulate the news content presented by the media on behalf of society (Lewis, 2012). During the social crisis caused by COVID-19, the media in Slovakia and around the world helped the public orient themselves by providing necessary information. Therefore, their primary function was to inform.

Journalists have traditionally been regarded as playing a leading role in society, tasked with regulating the flow of information and mitigating chaos and situational panic. As noted by T. S. Hadžialić and V. Phuong, they have fought against fake news that can confuse public opinion (Hadžialić, Phuong, 2020, p.37). However, it is unfortunate that Slovak mainstream media has also been known to publish low-quality information, including unverified and inconsistent statements. It was found that the media content about the coronavirus lacked a clear and logical structure, making it difficult to understand the situation and find rational solutions. The content was chaotic and contained a large number of hoaxes, which were then spread by the media. Additionally, the media focused on negative news, which perpetuated a sense of hopelessness. Rather than reassuring the public and

promoting calm, this source has spread uncertainty, fear, and hopelessness (Orlova & Somr, 2021, p. 4)¹.

During the COVID-19 social crisis, the media's role in providing entertainment was emphasised, particularly for those who relied on it as their primary connection to the world. While some media outlets adapted flexibly to the situation, many overestimated the importance of entertainment journalism. Some journalists opt for tabloid-style presentation of information, which unfortunately often results in an immature approach to media content processing. It should be noted that the tabloidization and infantilization of the media space generally does more harm than good to journalists. From this perspective, it can be stated that the high standard of professional work of journalists in Slovak media was devalued during the COVID-19 pandemic. The media's pursuit of maximum profit has led to a focus on market value in journalistic reporting. This has resulted in a clear prioritisation of increasing revenues and minimising costs, which has had a significant impact on news coverage. As noted by Pitoňáková (2020, pp. 61–62) and Lovaš (2021, pp. 380–381), media outlets have adopted processes to achieve their financial goals. During times of social crisis following the COVID-19 pandemic, political influence has become more prevalent worldwide. This has led to a revival of political control mechanisms over news and journalism, as noted by Casero-Ripollés (2021, p. 65). It is common for political parties to appoint their own people to work in the media (Czarnecki, 2018, pp. 9, 10, 14). However, mainstream media in Slovakia has abandoned the idea of presenting diverse perspectives and instead adopted a singular, 'correct' opinion. The slogan 'Who is not with us goes against us' was revived once again. According to Lovaš, this situation highlights three issues with Slovak journalism: ideologization, activism, and propaganda (Lovaš, 2021, 376–379).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, talk shows were analysed by D. Orlová, M. Somr, and Vorčák. Their findings revealed poor selection and composition of discussants ("experts"), who were not specialised in medicine. Nepotism was also observed in the media coverage, with only people from the inner circle of the show's creators being invited to participate. Media only used one-way communication, which could give the impression that the recipient's opinions were not relevant (Orlová & Somr, 2021, p. 3). During the COVID-19 crisis, there was a failure to manage the format

¹ The huge flood of negative news at the time of COVID-19 had a severe negative impact on the recipients. Research has shown that regardless of the information provider, negative emotions were spreading when receiving the content. People began to experience fear, anxiety, and frustration increasingly. Without a brighter outlook for the future, they were succumbing to depression. They developed a distaste for life (in Orlova, Somr, 2021, 4–6).

of media debates epistemically and ethically. Media professionals, particularly journalists, failed to steer the discourse in Slovak talk shows and struggled to conduct rational and inclusive dialogues.

Based on the few examples of weaknesses of Slovak mainstream media mentioned above, it can be concluded that during the COVID-19 crisis, the media had difficulty fulfilling their role. As presented by K. Lovaš, this role was taken over by tabloids and, in many respects, by 'alternative' media (Lovaš, 2021, p. 379). Therefore, Slovak media were not functioning properly and were promoting the failures of politicians and the system as a whole. The current crisis has exposed the ongoing issues with Slovak mainstream media, particularly in terms of public service (Pitoňáková, 2020; Orlová Somr, 2021; Gáliková Tolnaiová, Gálik, 2022). These weaknesses are not new and have been apparent for some time. Together with other weaknesses or problems, these factors ultimately raise questions about the importance of media and can contribute to a loss of authority and credibility. This can lead to increasing apathy and ignorance towards media among the public. Currently, the situation is becoming critical for the media in proportion to this increase. Therefore, in terms of socio-cultural expectations, we can speak of the quality of media activities. We will continue to examine their long-term operation in practice, identifying their features and weaknesses as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, we will concentrate on identifying the key factors that contributed to these outcomes.

In Slovak media, entertainment and sensational information that generates profit have often been prioritised. The commercial sector, profitability, and cost-effectiveness have dominated for a long time (Lehoczká, 2012, p. 95; Veľas, 2011, p. 10). This trend is not only related to the current coronavirus crisis. Contemporary culture exhibits a general trend towards the economization or commercialization of the media environment (Lovaš, 2021, 381; Pravdová, 2017; Lehoczká, 2011). The current Slovak media landscape is shaped by processes such as infotainment, tabloidization of information, oligarchizing of ownership structures, and changes in the business model (Pravdová, 2017, 64). Several private media outlets, which have been taken over by oligarchs and financial groups, continue to pursue their own financial gain. This pursuit has a significant impact on politics, and these media outlets may even directly enter the political scene (Čekovský, 2021; Višňovský, Mináriková, Kapec, 2022, p. 33). It is important to note that media processes are primarily guided by profit-orientation, rather than ideals of public service. This leads to work goals and practices that serve the material and economic needs of the organization (Korkonosenko, 2012, p. 1728). By

doing this, the pursuit of public interests is compromised, which undermines the public service of the media. By doing this, the pursuit of public interests is compromised, which undermines the public service of the media. Instead, profit-orientation takes precedence, causing ethical principles to be neglected. With the above model of operation in practice, the communicated media content is primarily a means of obtaining profit from advertisement recipients, which can be exchanged for (monetary) gain. Unfortunately, there is no room for any social mission (Czarnecki, 2018, p. 13). In Slovakia, the importance of public service media for the cultivation of society has long been a matter of concern (Lehoczká, 2012, p. 96).

It is important to note that censorship and self-censorship are already embedded in the decision-making mechanisms of media in Slovakia (Pravdová, 2017, p. 62). While commercial media may appear to allow journalistic independence, public media may use these censorship mechanisms to present ideologically determined views (Dobeš, 2020, pp. 84-85). In the context of Slovak media's ideological and political interests and relations, there is evidence of a strengthening trend towards political-party activism among journalists (Lehoczká, 2012, p. 95; Pravdová, 2017). The ideologization, activism, and propaganda found in contemporary Slovak journalism largely undermine the original mission of journalists, which is to capture and convey information. Today in Slovakia, we often see a certain resignation to the truth in a significant part of the Slovak and mainstream media: Instead of searching for the real truth, we witness the search for those who affirm "their own" truth. It is a common situation to see journalists obsessed, especially in relation to certain topics (Lovash, 2021, 376–379). Sámelová notes (Sámelová, 2016, 321) that in the context of such preferred visions of the world, "inappropriate topics", opinions and people with "inappropriate" views are apparently often pushed out. In this context, the Slovak mainstream media publishes selective reports that correspond to certain (e.g. right-wing) narratives (Dobeš, 2020, 84). This is also the reason why most of the media provide what could be called 'identical content'. It can be concluded that the uniformity of the media has to a large extent become their actual cognitive sign (Lovaš, 2021, 379).

It is often forgotten in Slovakia that if the media have a function or moral obligation to shape society, it is only through participation in the debate and social action that recognises the equal rights of each actor in the public space, and not through the imposition of a vision of the world, even if this vision is considered valuable by the majority of society (Czarnecki, 2018, 13). It is necessary for media practice to manage and conduct a debate in a way that maintains communicative or discursive

conditions, based on the ethical premise that any subject capable of speech and action can participate in the discourse and challenge any claim, using argumentation that maintains basic logics (Chillón, 2016, 105). Unfortunately, however, in our opinion, dealing with debates in this epistemic and ethical way often proves to be a problem in the Slovak media. In Slovakia, J. Košč also points out that there is a particular inability to debate or to argue. As it turns out, a frequent by-product of these debates – due to the presented imbalance – is the ostracisation of other opinions (such as neoliberal positions, etc.) (Košč, 2020, 41, 42). We also see an apparent inability to conduct an inclusive dialogue in media discussions. Instead of facilitating such an open and respectful dialogue aimed at reaching a synthesis beyond the individual participants, the prevailing habit leads to quickly discrediting the opponent and attributing derogatory adjectives to him, as Lovaš points out with Pope Francis (Lovaš, 2021, 384).

We consider it appropriate and necessary to examine the moral and ethical side of the media and their influence. Indeed, in the context of multiplying global social problems, such as terrorism, mass migration or the COVID-19 crisis, the issue of morality, moral judgement and moral action, or the moral function of the media, is more than ever at the forefront of society (Keklak, 2016, 158, 159). Thus, if we talk about the function of forming moral judgement in Slovak society through its influence, as M. Lincényi points out, in recent years several experts and educators have pointed out that the activities of the media or journalistic activities should (among other aspects) be compatible with ethics and morality, because each individual journalist, as well as journalists as a group of professionals, contribute significantly to the state of morality in the country. In terms of their morality and ethics, Lincényi notes that the situation is often serious (Lincényi, 2017, 37). It can be said that this problem of the Slovak media or Slovak journalistic practice has been underestimated for a long time (Remišová, 2010; Hochelová, 2006, 164). Unfortunately, as a result of such an attitude it is possible to observe immoral and contradictory professional behaviour and actions of the media or media professionals, which has a negative influence on the public².

In this context, a question arises regarding the social mission of the media in Slovakia: to what extent are the ideals of a democratic society being fulfilled? The

² The professionalism of journalists' work depends primarily on their expertise and ethics, as demonstrated by an anonymous survey of journalists' opinions in early 2008. Questionable or unethical behaviour can take many forms, including distorting facts, failing to verify information, having close relationships with news subjects, invading privacy, accepting gifts, and committing plagiarism (Višňovský, Mináriková, & Kapec, 2002, p. 23). Unfortunately, this continues to be a problem in Slovakia.

core of a democratic society is well-informed citizens who can make informed decisions. This is especially important during times of social crises (Pravdová, 2017, p. 63). According to H. Pravdová (2017, 63), the main informational function of media has become a mere shadow of its original ideals in recent years. Bachletová (2014, 162) argues that media socialization can no longer be relied upon to create a sense of responsibility, whether political or civic. Additionally, P. Czarnecki notes that media no longer educate or guide their recipients. It has been found that instead of attempting to educate or guide individuals or civil society, the aim is to construct an ideal recipient for the content (Czarnecki, 2018, p.13).

According to K. Lovaš, and in agreement with the current Pope, media and journalists in today's world, particularly in Slovakia, have lost the ability to engage in dialogue and listen to others. Instead, their communication with the public has become a one-sided monologue. However, due to its subject matter, form, and content, this monologue appears to be of interest to fewer and fewer people. According to the author mentioned above, the prevalent broadcasting of facts and challenges often hinders dialogue. It allows individuals to use the faults of others as an excuse to maintain their own ideas, interests, and decisions without considering alternative perspectives. It can be argued that they have lost the ability to connect with people, navigate their environment and problems, and experience situations rather than solely solving them from the newsroom. To effectively influence the opinions of their audience, they may attempt to assert their authority (Lovaš, 2021, 380–384). This results in them becoming the authority that avoids any criticism or self-criticism. Contemporary experts agree with this perspective. However, these authorities do not accept any criticism. There is an almost complete lack of self-criticism in the media, and their inability to accept criticism aimed at themselves from the outside is evident. Unfortunately, journalists often dismiss constructive criticism as 'hecklings' and label any attempts to hold them accountable as 'attacks on the media'. This can prevent them from addressing unprofessionalism in specific journalists, stories, or programmes. It is important to maintain a critical eye on the media to ensure they remain accountable to society (Czarnecki, 2018, 12, 17; Lovaš, 2021, 380).

Ultimately, the Slovak mainstream "thought-shaping" media's weaknesses, including their inability to accept criticism and expose themselves to self-criticism, contribute to the loss of their authority and credibility. The loss of credibility and authority among mainstream media has allowed "new players" to emerge (Orlová, Somr, 2021, 4). Tabloids have taken over their role, and alternative media (Lovaš, 2021, 379) that challenge the monopoly of mainstream media over information

dissemination are gaining popularity (Olejárová, 2019, 126; Radošinská, 2017, 157; Kosho, 2021). This highlights the critical situation of Slovak mainstream and public service-oriented media.

2. ON FACTORS INFLUENCING THE QUALITY OR PERFORMANCE OF THE SLOVAK MEDIA, THEIR AUTHORITY AND CREDIBILITY

In general, no media can be a perfect instrument for meeting the needs of both society and its individual members. However, it is important to consider the quality, authority, and credibility of media not only for the public but also for the media themselves. This is often crucial for their existence and how they are perceived and evaluated by the public.

Therefore, it is important to reveal the factors contributing to the problems or weaknesses of the mainstream media in Slovakia. This can cause a loss of credibility and authority in society. Different perspectives can show a number of determining factors that contribute to this loss. We will try to identify, in particular, the key and structural ones in the system of numerous determinants that influence the Slovak media.

Above all, as for example also P. Czarnecki suggests, most of the time the reasons or factors that set the basis for doubting the fundamental and meaningful mission, tasks, or significance of the media, especially in terms of public service, are the very media themselves, their own nature. When considering the primary informational function of media, it is important to examine journalism. The quality of media, particularly public service media, is dependent on the quality of journalism and vice versa. As noted by Czarnecki (2018), scrutinising journalism is crucial (pp. 10–13). García Avilés highlights that media credibility issues often stem from a disconnect between journalistic practices and public expectations, when people know that are not receiving the public service that they deserve (in Chillón, 2016, 97).

In this context, we can observe the interests and relationships of the media, as well as other active factors that affect the professional and working conditions of Slovak media professionals. It is evident that there is a persistent weakness in the media industry that affects the overall performance, particularly among journalists. For instance, job insecurity is a prevalent issue within the profession. However, the issue of long-term employment for journalists and creative workers is not the only problem. Low salaries also contribute to the problem (Višňovský, Mináriková, Kapec, 2022, 26; Gálik, Vrabec, Gáliková Tolnaiová et al., 2022). Additionally, the media's interests and relationships appear to be a particularly problematic aspect of Slovak mainstream media and their practices. Media professionals may be

influenced by long-standing ethically problematic, improper, or questionable interests and relationships, such as ideological, political, or economic factors. Considering the ability of media to withstand pressure from both economic interest groups and political parties (Remišová, 2010), it can be argued that in Slovakia, journalistic practice has deviated from norms due to pressure from media institutions and influential political or economic groups (Lehoczká, 2012, 95; Pravdová, 2017; Lovaš, 2021; Kaisy, 2021, 20; Urbaniková, 2022). The pursuit of profit often leads to a disregard for ethics. Concentration of economic and media power, as well as non-transparent media ownership, poses a threat to freedom of speech and the press. (Remišová, 2010, 38, 39; Hochelová, 2006, 164) (Radošinská, 2017, 157; Višňovský, Mináriková, Kapec, 2022). These factors have been undermining the authority and credibility of mainstream media in Slovak society for some time. Regarding the nature and practice of Slovak mainstream media, we are referring to the freedom and independence of the media companies that journalists work with (Suárez Villegas, 2016, 5, 91). This is an essential ethical professional condition (Szarka, 2015). Emphasising the unconditional rule (Keyanpour, 2012, 608; Urbanikova, 2021) is crucial for the media and journalists to prioritise the public interest over commercial, political, and personal interests (Hadžialić, Phuong, 2020, 36). Since professionalism and quality are expected from public service media (Sámelová, 2012, 282), it is crucial for them to maintain independence from economic or state power to meet the conditions of professionalism (Lehoczká, 2012, 99; Czarnecki, 2018, 11). We can ask the inherently familiar and therefore "old but new" question of whether these Slovak media are really independent. As it turns out, it is common that less freedom of operation is allowed for the media in the period of transformation, which is a time typical for the lack of preserving their independence from politicians and attempts to interfere with the media content (Czarnecki, 2018, 9, 10, 14). Unfortunately, (also) in the Slovak environment, one of the persistent problems of traditional journalism is indeed the frequent lack of autonomy (Szarka, 2015, 403, 406). Currently, Slovakia has strict legislative, ethical, and educational conditions in place for media and journalism. These regulations guarantee freedom of the press and journalistic conduct is governed by codes of ethics. However, the practical implementation of these regulations raises concerns about the theoretical autonomy of Slovak journalists. In Slovakia, the most significant current ethical risk for journalists and media operating in the field of journalism is the influence of politicians and the pressure of media owners (Gálik, Vrabc, Gáliková Tolnaiová et al., 2022; Višňovský, Mináriková, Kapec,

2022, 33). This all is perceived by the public³, and affects the way the public assesses the authority and reliability of given media.

Another problematic factor for the quality of the Slovak media is, in our opinion, the media professionals themselves, or the personalities of media professionals themselves, as their performance is directly linked to the performance of the media. With regard to the aforementioned specific link between the quality of the media and the quality of journalism, this is particularly the case with journalists. As Š. Velas notes, it is important for journalism itself, its quality, and at the same time for the performance of the media, how journalism is represented by personalities, how they fulfil the basic journalistic function - a good journalist is a creative personality whose professional as well as personal qualities are important (Velas, 2011, 10). Based on these attributes, good journalists can ensure high-quality performance, which is desirable to the public (Szarka, 2015, p. 407). However, not all journalists in Slovakia can be considered professionals today, and journalism is no longer a creative expression of journalistic personalities (Lehoczká, 2011, p. 60; Lovaš, 2021, p. 375). However, in this context, the absence of creative and professional personalities in the media can be problematic as it may lead to a decline in the quality of media content. E. Bachletová argues that the absence of experienced journalists in Slovakia is a significant issue. This suggests that the younger generation of journalists may struggle to maintain the necessary standard of media content (Bachletová, 2014, p. 164). This has implications for the perceived authority and credibility of the media among their audience.

The quality of Slovak media performance may not solely be attributed to the level of experience of young media professionals. The quality of education and professional training of media experts also plays a significant role in determining the quality of media service. It is evident that journalists often make mistakes due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the art of journalism (Czarnecki, 2018, p. 15). The media in Slovakia is controlled by individuals with varying competencies and knowledge (Remišová, 2010, p. 159). It is evident that in recent times, particularly in the context of the social crisis related to COVID-19, deficiencies in the epistemic and ethical dimensions of Slovak journalism have become more apparent (Gáliková and Gálik, 2022a; Gálik and Gáliková, 2022b). It is possible to confirm a problem of cognitive and ethical competencies among media professionals in Slovakia. This

³ Median's February 2022 survey monitored views on media freedom and journalists' independence in the V4 countries. It showed that up to 43 % of Slovaks think that owners or other players who have economic interests influence media content (in Višňovský, Mináriková, Kapec, 2022, 33).

includes critical thinking, moral thinking, and acting. These issues have been identified previously.

According to A. Remišová, education plays a significant role in determining the moral and epistemic level within the media profession. The ethical practice of journalism as a public service is dependent on both professional ethical values and the personal moral values of journalists, including their own morality and moral integrity. Education in ethics has a positive interaction with journalists' morality (Remišová, 2010, 159). It is important for journalists to have a strong foundation in both ethics and logic to enhance their performance. We also believe that education in logic and philosophy positively correlates with the intellectual dispositions of individual journalists. In this context, it can be stated objectively that possessing sufficient knowledge and education has a positive impact on the moral and epistemic performance of media professionals. This was especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it remains crucial for journalists to possess adequate knowledge, competencies, and skills related to the use of digital technologies. Although, as N. Nahida Begun notes, merely completing journalism studies and acquiring technology-related skills does not guarantee a "good journalist" because "it has more to do with the inherent nature of being human" (Nahida Begun, 2014, 8, 9).

In this context, it is evident that knowledge, expertise, and education play a crucial role in the media industry. These factors contribute significantly to the high quality of media performance by shaping the personalities of media professionals. However, despite continuous efforts in Slovakia to improve the situation, there are still flaws in the education and professional training of journalists and media professionals that affect the quality of Slovak media performance. It is important to address these issues to improve the overall quality of media in Slovakia. Unfortunately, As previously noted by experts, the absurd reality of Slovak media is that they often seek young workers without proper journalistic education. It has become common practice to employ individuals without academic qualifications. This preference for lower education or inadequate qualifications is a recurring issue in newsroom (Bachletová, 2014, 164; Lehoczská, 2011, 60; Remišová, 2010, 159; Lovaš, 2021, 375). In the pursuit of economic interests in the media, cheaper labour is often prioritised. Additionally, when Slovak media outlets do employ university students, they are often 'educated' to meet the specific needs of the media (Bachletová, 2014, p. 164). For instance, media professionals may experience a decline in critical thinking, leading them to become what A. Sámelová refers to as the 'Spirits of the Newsroom' – editors, redactors, photographers, documentary makers, archivists,

dramaturgs, directors, and so on – who are trained and routinized, and therefore freed from logic and rationality. According to A. Sámelová, the systematic rationalisation of mass media production (of news, journalistic and documentary nature) is a significant contributor to this issue (Sámelová, 2016b, 322). This blurs not only the necessary critical dimension but also the moral dimension of thinking and complex performance in media professionals.

In order to monitor the quality of the performance of the Slovak media, it is important to assess the dynamic development of media technologies. As noted by A. Olejárová (2019), the Internet has transformed the media environment and its structure⁴. In this context, it can be argued that the ethical application of journalism in media as a service to the public depends on the personal and professional values of journalists, as well as external factors such as commercial, economic, or political conditions, and technological advancements (Remišová, 2010; Sarka, 2015; Suárez Villegas, 2016, 5, 91). However, the media in Slovakia often struggle to adapt to the evolving conditions of the journalistic industry, particularly in regards to multiplatform publishing (Gálik, Vrabc, Gáliková Tolnaiová et al., 2022; Višňovský, Mináriková, Kapec, 2022).

Alternative media are often considered to be in opposition to traditional media due to their open approach to media production, which represents an alternative to the traditionally applied practices (Olejárová, 2019, pp. 119, 122–124). However, it is important to note that they are not solely a result of the increasing prevalence of digital technologies. The reasons for their establishment and operation are also closely linked to the pursuit of independence in the realms of economy, politics, and culture (Lovaš, 2021, p. 379). Currently, alternative media in Slovakia are often viewed as a complement to mainstream media. The main motivation behind the creation of alternative media is to present marginalized topics (Olejárová, 2019, 124; Višňovský, Mináriková, Kapec, 2022, 104–109). New media platforms, including the internet, have provided media professionals with new opportunities and enriched the media landscape. However, they have also introduced certain risks. The use of these platforms has led to a crisis in traditional media production standards⁵. The

⁴ We can spot the impact on the organisational structure of the media. It is an interconnected ecosystem in which traditional and new media operate in parallel and complementary ways. Through the new media or Internet platforms, alternative communication channels have been or are being created, representing thus an extremely wide range of communication structures that, in terms of the organizational principle, is an open system modified by its users (Olejárová, 2019; Višňovský, Mináriková, Kapec, 2022).

⁵ The Print and Digital Council of the Slovak Republic managed to approve a new version of the Journalist's Code of Ethics and updated it to include digital environment cognition, but also

use of these platforms has led to a crisis in traditional media production standards. The influence of these factors on the normativity and deontology of journalism has been significant, leading to concerns about the quality of media products among both the public and professionals.

New media technology has caused a shift in the way Slovak society views traditional media. This has led to questioning the necessity of public service broadcasting or the validity of its concept (Lehoczká, 2012, p. 96). The expanding usage of this new technology, along with the growing influence of alternative media, appears to be contributing to the questioning or loss of authority of traditional Slovak mainstream media. The growing popularity of alternative media is, among other reasons, a reaction to the displacement of 'inappropriate topics' (Sámelová, 2016b, p. 321), opinions, and people with 'improper' views by the Slovak mainstream media. To a great extent, the loss of authority or the current lack of credibility appears to be a natural reaction to their unwillingness to be there for everyone and their readiness to accept only those who agree with their narrative (Lovaš, 2021, 379).

From another perspective, the media audience can be seen as a significant but often overlooked factor that influences the quality and authority of Slovak media. Let us examine the puzzle, as described by A. Sámelová, that burdens liberal society: 'Why do the media increasingly dumb down society with banalities and lie shamelessly?' However, it is also worth considering the opposite question: "How come that readers, listeners and viewers let themselves be dumbed down by more and more of media banalities and lies, how come they do not punish the media for this arbitrariness and shamelessness?" The audience is surely not at the mercy of some mass media sovereign. A. Sámelová identifies the problem not only in the media but also in their audience, who lack a critical perspective towards the media and its performance (Sámelová, 2016b, 322).

Related to the above is the high tolerance for immoral and unethical behaviour among (not only) journalists, which is visible among Slovaks regardless of social hierarchy and manifests itself in indifference to their exposed immoral or unethical acts (Sámelová, Krištof, Belianová, 2021, 48, 49). The lack of critical thinking is evident in Slovakia's overall moral situation. Additionally, the media audience lacks knowledge of their own roles, duties, and responsibilities, including those that arise from media ethics⁶. Regrettably, there is little awareness of audience ethics within Slovak society or the general public. Additionally, a lack of understanding regarding

potential risks resulting from changes in the media environment caused by social networks (Višňovský, Mináriková, Kapec, 2022, 18).

⁶ K etike publika ako súčasť etiky médií napríklad (Donev, 2017).

the role(s) of the media and the concept and value of public service, which appears to persist in Slovak society, can also be considered a contributing factor⁷ (Lehoczká, 2012, 95, 103). As also noted by A. Kaysi, based on more recent research, there is confusion among the media audience in Slovakia about the role media can play in promoting democratic principles and socially cohesive societies (Kaysi, 2021, 20). We agree here with M. Urbaníková and her idea that this is caused by a deficiency in media literacy in the Slovak public (Urbaníková, 2022, 18), despite the fact that there are currently efforts to improve media literacy in Slovakia with the help of media education (Kačínová, 2016; Vrabec, 2017; Gálik, Vrabec, Gáliková Tolnaiová, et al., 2022). This deficiency contributes to the crisis of Slovak mainstream media, particularly the public service media, and undermines their authority in society. Finally, the impact of the public's lifestyle and demands on this crisis cannot be overlooked. According to V. Lehoczká, public service broadcasting has found itself at a dead end in the era of globalisation and hypermodern trends. The original journalistic and informative principles of mass media communication, or the primary position of the producer and distributor of objective, socially significant and relevant topical information, has been shifted in the eyes of the average audience to the category of less significant stimuli, influenced by the very demands of the audience and their consumerist lifestyle, due to the selling of programme content and the environment being regulated or dictated by market interests (Lehoczká, 2011; Lehoczká, 2012, 95, 96). In this context, we can observe the interconnection between the dominant media and cultural logics in Slovakia. These logics prioritize the entertainment function of the media over other functions and do not seem to have a significant issue with banalities presented in media content.

CONCLUSION

During the COVID-19 social crisis, Slovak mainstream media faced challenges in fulfilling their role objectively. This highlighted their persisting weaknesses, which can be identified from various perspectives. The quality of their performance is influenced by several key factors, including their own nature and practices, which have long been shaped by prevailing cultural logics in Slovakia. One of the primary factors that affects media quality is the independence of media institutions. Additionally, the quality of media performance is influenced by media professionals, particularly journalists, who face a persistent crisis in terms of their personalities

⁷ Jej interpretácia sa v minulosti nesprávne posudzovala a ako taká stála za spochybňovaním opodstatnenosti či nutnosti existencie verejnoprávneho vysielania na Slovensku (Lehoczká, 2012, 95, 103).

and education. New media technologies, as well as alternative media, are also significant factors. Development in this field affects the media environment at all levels and directly impacts the quality of media communication. It is important to consider the recipients of the media, the public, as a key factor. In addition to the three factors mentioned above, our lifestyle and lack of media literacy also have a negative impact on the performance of Slovak mainstream media, particularly those that provide public service. All factors contribute to the loss of credibility and authority of the Slovak mainstream media. It is necessary to say the COVID-19 crisis has exposed problems and wrongdoing in the media, particularly in public service media. It has also highlighted the need to find ways to revive or reconstruct their ability to fulfil their roles in society. This crisis provided an opportunity for reflection on the world of media and journalism, including the media themselves (Pitoňáková, 2020; Lovaš, 2021; Perreault, Perreault, 2021; Orlová, Somr, 2021; Gálik, Gáliková Tolnaiová, 2022a). In this context, it is worth considering what form the media should take to be respected, credible, and engaging (Lovaš, 2021, p. 374). We suggest that a more comprehensive and in-depth discussion on this issue should be initiated in Slovakia. However, considering the socio-cultural contexts, the challenge today is to reconstruct the media for the future while taking into account their socio-humanitarian mission within deliberative social processes. It is important to aim for media to regain its authority (Czarnecki, 2018, 12) while considering the new nature and conditions of this mission in Slovak society, and adapting to the new circumstances of the socio-humanitarian mission in the post-Covid digital age. The media should focus on regaining respectability as a bearer or representative of values and dialogue (Lovaš, 2021). As such, their purpose is to support the deliberative potential of society by providing accurate information and promoting rational debate among diverse groups⁸. Media professionals must possess ethical integrity and solid education to be considered competent personalities. Additionally, Slovak media requires a media-literate public with sufficiently developed media competencies.

The desired renaissance or reconstruction of Slovak media and their function depends on several interlinked conditions, paths, and actors due to the complexity of various contexts and influences in society. An appropriate systemic approach includes the media themselves, together with journalists and other media workers, media professionals, government, politicians, educators and also the public. As A. Kaysy pointed out, media development interventions should be performed in

⁸ <https://www.mediadelcom.eu/deliberative-communication-concept/>.

cooperation with civil society, local organizations, and other partners to ensure that each participant can build on the evident successes that are currently emerging (Kaysy, 2021, 20). The renaissance and development of Slovak media and their operations require all partners involved in media communication to have rights, duties, and responsibilities. Ethical responsibility, in particular, needs to be strengthened. It is crucial that media ethos is based on a genuine humanisation of society, rather than just a formal declaration, as noted by H. Pravdová (2017, p. 96).

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SQUATTING MOVEMENT AND PRACTICE OF PROCUREMENT HOUSING FOR POOR PEOPLE¹

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the squatting movement and the practice of procuring housing for poor people, which are needs neglected by the government. The squatting movement and practice have developed in the Western world in two waves of urban movement: in the 1960s-1970s and from 2000 up to now. This topic has become important again in the neoliberal world of growing social inequalities.

Research methods include the analysis of existing studies, a comparison of Geneva (Switzerland), Rome (Italy), and New York (USA) as case studies, and the generalisation of lessons learned.

The main recommendations are the reform of housing policy and the recovery of welfare state instruments.

Key words: *squatting movement and practice, housing policy, gentrification, financial and real estate speculations, homelessness, housing poverty.*

INTRODUCTION

The squatting movement emerged during two waves of urban movements in Europe and the USA as a response to the lack of housing for poorer citizens. This issue became prevalent during the 1960s–1970s when homeless individuals or those

¹ Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technology financially supported this research, through Scientific Research Plan implemented on FPS, Belgrade.

living in inadequate housing conditions were compelled to occupy vacant apartments and reside in them for free. This radical approach resulted in significant conflicts with the authorities and apartment owners, who sought to evict squatters from the premises. Squatters often organize themselves for protection from violence through the squatter movement. Eventually, governments in most countries have had to legalize their status, offer them licenses for apartments, and provide more adequate housing.

1. CONTEXT

The squatter movement and practice began due to a shortage of housing for low-income citizens. The root cause of this issue is worth exploring. During the 1960s and 1970s, many Western cities aimed to become regional or global hubs. Therefore, the process of renewal, also known as gentrification, was initiated. This involved the destruction of poor settlements in the city to make way for elite residential areas, luxury shopping districts, and prestigious business centres. The residents of these settlements, who were mostly workers, migrants, minorities, students, artists, and other vulnerable populations, were resettled to the periphery. (Sassen, 2001: 190–195).

During the era of the welfare state, significant investments were made in public services, including the provision of housing, which was considered essential for citizens' wellbeing. As a result, many countries had substantial funds for public housing, which were made available to those who could not afford to buy or rent higher quality apartments. Furthermore, the government mandated that investors include a portion of apartments for vulnerable populations when issuing building permits. This policy legally requires the permanent renewal of the public housing fund and limits the amount of rent that landlords can demand for an apartment. As a result, citizens generally do not face any issues with the availability of apartments.

However, in capitalist societies, there is a strong desire to increase the profits of individuals (Harvey, 1988). Therefore, the construction sector often receives preferential treatment and banks offer them excellent interest rates. City governments frequently fail to meet legally defined quotas for the construction of public housing. Additionally, government involvement in profit division can harm the public good. The practice of financial speculation in the construction process, as well as real estate speculation where housing is kept empty in order to reduce the supply, thereby raising the price of rent or the price of apartments when sold,

has led to a decline in the availability of apartments for poorer citizens. The authorities responsible for solving these problems often ignore them until they lead to serious social and political conflicts.

The practice of squatting and the experience of the squatting movement, which was closely connected with other movements for the protection of human rights and the environment, have highlighted to the public that the source of many problems lies in the greed and selfishness of the ruling class, which prioritises its wealth over the needs of the people. This has led to demands for systemic corrections and improvements, including better quality services in this policy area. During the era of the global neoliberal order, a similar social scenario was observed. The housing policy was liberalised, resulting in the sale of social housing, and the responsibility of caring for the needs of the poor was shifted to individuals and families who were expected to find accommodation on the market. Rent limits were removed by law, leading to an increase in housing poverty and homelessness. Once again, squatting remains the only option for vulnerable populations to acquire housing, as they are more numerous than ever. It is important to note that this is a subjective evaluation and should be clearly marked as such.

2. RIGHT ON SQUATTING IN CONTECST OF CONTEMPORARY CAPITALIST CITY

Neoliberal globalism has resulted in the growth and development of many third world cities. However, it has also led to changes in distribution methods worldwide, such as the privatization of public housing. This has caused numerous problems, including a decrease in the availability of housing for the poor and middle class, including young people, single parents, and artists. Thus, the European financial institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund pressured national authorities to support banks after the 2008 crisis, despite the harmful effects of their policies on Western societies. The crisis resulted in widespread job losses and many people were unable to pay their housing loan instalments, leading to the loss of their primary residence. The number of homeless people has significantly increased, but authorities often remain silent. Their primary focus is on initiating economic development, which further enriches the ruling class. Worldwide, distribution tends to favour the wealthy social class and disadvantage vulnerable marginal groups, leading to the decline of the middle class (Martinez & Garcia, 2018; Martinez, 2020).

On the other hand, the practice of gentrification and gating wealthy neighbourhoods from other citizens is spreading, which is harmful to the quality of

life and democratic processes. Social segregation is a concern that needs to be addressed. In this context, the squatting movement is experiencing a renewal and growth, as well as stronger support from numerous NGOs that deal with the issue of insufficient availability of apartments on the market for the increasingly growing poor class of people (Thorn, Wasshede, Nilson, 2011).

The squatting movement in Europe is largely decentralized, and connections with various squats are more difficult to establish. Squatting is often criminalized and punished with imprisonment. The police can be brutal when ejecting squatters from occupied housing. Squatters develop self-governance, self-help, and direct democracy. They fight against the selfishness of the neoliberal capitalist order, where exploitation is growing and social democratic standards are being destroyed. (Martinez 2020: 53–56) The community is currently debating alternative squatting practices, better networking and cooperation, improved campaign strategies, increased visibility of housing issues, and effective solutions to win over decision-makers and the public.

It is important to note that while some squatters in both the first and second wave of urban movements may not have the ambition to change the system, their primary goal is to provide affordable housing.

3. CASE STUDIES OF SQUATTING PRACTICE AND SQUATTING MOVEMENTS

This text presents three case studies of Geneva (Switzerland), Rome (Italy), and New York (USA). The sample includes two European societies with a developed social democratic concept of government and the USA as a more liberal society. They are useful for comparison because their specific social context can either facilitate or hinder the implementation of welfare instruments in housing policy, which directly affects the availability of housing for vulnerable social groups.

3.1. Geneva – Switzerland

Switzerland has a well-developed squatting culture within the first and second wave of urban movements. Squatting involves moving poor people into empty apartments as a form of rebellion against a system that neglects the needs of the less fortunate. The challenge to property rights was prioritised over people's existential needs, and an alternative way of life, production, consumption, and societal organisation was created. (Pecu, 2011: 21–35)

The squatter movement in Geneva emerged during the civil movements of the 1970s, following the revolutionary year of 1968. Vulnerable marginal groups, such as immigrants, youth, minorities, and artists, faced a shortage of available

apartments and were therefore compelled to occupy vacant ones. This was particularly evident in the tall buildings located in the central district known as Les Grottes (the Caves). (Boltanski and Chiapello, 1999; Pattorini, 2014: 64) During this period, the city's policy aimed to relocate workers and poorer residents, such as artists, students, and migrants, from the city centre to peripheral neighbourhoods, creating new settlements for a more affluent population. This practice of gentrification is a constant feature of capitalist urbanism, shaping space. The left party group supported the squatters who argued that the apartments in the buildings slated for demolition were in good condition and only required renovation. The squatters were willing to invest their time, money, and energy to restore the space and adapt it to their lifestyle. The tenants took pride in their freedom to shape the space as they desired. They painted the facades in various colours, which is not a freedom afforded to regular citizens. Additionally, they demolished walls to create more common spaces, allowing them to engage in activities together and enrich their community. This process of arranging the space facilitated socialisation among the tenants, allowing them to get to know each other better and often form close friendships.

They implemented a self-management system within their community and adopted a participatory approach to decision-making, prioritising agreement, tolerance, and consensus as guiding principles to ensure the well-being of all members. As a result, they held regular meetings, organised cultural, artistic, and educational events, provided space for theatre performances and other cultural activities, and established libraries. They frequently cooked together and organized joint meals where everyone contributed according to their personal capacities with money, ideas, skills, and creativity. The obligation of all tenants was to clean and maintain the space, as well as participate in the financing of common essential activities. (Gross, 1987; Pattorini, 2014)

They often generated income from improvised bars at festivals and selling arts and crafts items. A non-institutionalised and free kindergarten is being established, where tenants take care of the children. The kindergarten is intended for the children of the settlements as well as the neighbours who are interested but cannot afford regular kindergartens (Breviglieri, 2009; Pattorini, 2014: 69–70).

The alternative way of life implied a departure from capitalist logic and standards and affirmed the tenants' self-management and participative decision-making on all important issues of their lives. The squatters were proud of the free shaping of an alternative way of life that they provided through squatting. All their events were

open to everyone. The impact of their activities on the environment was positive. The neighbours frequently participated in their initiatives, and the surrounding cafes and public spaces adopted their approach to working, interior and exterior design (including painting on facades and alternative arrangements of spaces suitable for joint activities).

There are numerous examples of other cities around the world that have adopted this alternative approach to shaping spaces. Montreal in Canada, Melbourne in Australia, and certain neighbourhoods in New York City are examples of places where squatting is prevalent. Additionally, many European cities have a tradition of shaping spaces and objects in an artistic and autonomous manner (Barthes 1977; Breviglieri, 2009).

Critics of the capitalist system, particularly squatters, condemn financial and real estate speculation as tools for maximizing profit rather than for the production and provision of housing for citizens, often neglecting the needs of vulnerable social groups (Ranciere, 1998: 112; Tilly, 1978; Pattorini, 2014: 67–68).

During the 1980s, the city authorities offered squatters the opportunity to legalize their status as a temporary measure until alternative housing projects became available. This was done with the intention of eventually vacating and demolishing these buildings, and redeveloping the area in a more upscale manner. In the 1990s, the rate of mortgage loans decreased, making it easier to purchase apartments. As a result, many squatters were encouraged to move out with the promise of social apartments and other benefits (Pattorini, 2014: 76).

Some squatters rejected this offer, seeing it as fraudulent, while others who were primarily concerned with finding a solution to the housing issue accepted the contracts without resistance to the capitalist system. The initial group, prepared to resist, would often arrange protest events such as rallies, street football matches, boat races (which they would often construct and design themselves), or mass bicycle rides through the streets as a means of protesting against their eviction project (Pattorini, 2014: 68, 71).

Since the 1990s, there has been increasing pressure on squatters. In 2000, a 'zero tolerance for squatters' policy was implemented, resulting in evictions from apartments (Pattorini, 2014: 75). The displacement of tenants from the Les Grottes settlement was a gradual process. The apartments offered were located on the city's periphery, often leading to resistance and conflict. The Rhino settlement eviction of squatters was a highly controversial case that resulted in major riots, demonstrations, and physical conflicts between tenants, representatives of the squatter movement, and the police.

However, in the 2000s, the foundations of the welfare state were largely undermined by neoliberal policies, leading to the relativization of the right to the city and the right to an apartment. In the challenging area of housing policy, market logic often becomes an imperative that democratic societies struggle to oppose effectively. In 2009 and 2010, over 1,000 squatters were displaced.

Statistics indicate that during this period, the main investments were made in the reconstruction of various parts of Geneva, as well as in other Swiss cities, in order to develop their capacities as European and world cities. Therefore, in gentrified areas and throughout the city, there is an increase in rents and apartment prices. As a result of these processes, there is a significant increase in the number of citizens living in poor housing conditions, including substandard apartments with high rents, as well as an increase in the number of homeless people. The data indicate that poverty and homelessness result from neoliberal regulation. Squatting remains a practice that offers housing to vulnerable citizens who are often ignored by the authorities.

Due to the inaccessibility of the city centre for the economically disadvantaged population, nomadism or living in caravans has emerged as an alternative form of housing. This vulnerable social group leaves the centre in search of a place where they can park their camper trailer and live for free. However, it is not uncommon for city authorities to expel them from these areas. They may be allowed to stay in areas that the city has no plans to use in the foreseeable future, which are often polluted and neglected. (Du Pasquier, Marco, 2009 and Pattorini, 2014:78) The European nomad movement is gaining momentum during this challenging phase of neoliberal capitalism. It is noteworthy that nomads, due to their close relationship with nature, often initiate ecological projects related to food production, such as growing herbs, fruits, and vegetables, preparing healthy food, and building greenhouses (Pattorini, Togni, 2009, and Pattorini, 2014:79).

3.2. Roma - Italy

Italy, like many other European countries, underwent two phases of development: the welfare state from the 1950s and the neoliberal state from the 1980s. The quality of spatial planning, construction, and housing policies were shaped by the dominant values of these two phases. The first instances of squatting occurred during the initial wave of urban movements from the late 1960s through the 1970s. These activities are led by the Communist Party of Italy. Since the 1970s, other left-wing parties and groups have joined in because the KP was losing strength. Since

the 1980s, numerous non-governmental organizations interested in the problem of poor housing availability have also become involved. Since 2000, the housing crisis has been caused by the privatization of public housing funds and the purchase of apartments by citizens on the market. This has led to an increase in the mobilization of vulnerable citizens and the networking of numerous organizations that help them (Balestrini & Moroni, 1997).

This paper specifically analyzes the squatting movement in Rome, the largest and capital city of Italy. This city has a rich archaeological history and beautiful architecture, but it also has neglected areas on the outskirts where working-class, poor citizens, and immigrants reside. These areas are known as borgata in Italy. According to Insolera (2011) and Mudu (2014: 137), the city government of Rome prioritised further construction for the wealthy and the economic development of the city, rather than addressing the poor quality of life in settlements. Additionally, speculation in the financial and housing markets has made it difficult for low-income citizens to afford housing.

Italy has a constant influx of migrants. However, for a long time, they did not have citizenship, political, or electoral rights. Only since 1961 has this been legally ensured. Nevertheless, in practice, their election to local authorities such as municipalities, cities, or regions remains questionable (Clementi and Perego, 1981; Berlinguer and Della Seta, 1976; SĐ, 2018: 471–480).

During the first wave, KPI strongly advocated for a solution to the problem of affordable housing. As both an opposition party and a party in power in many cities and municipalities, they contributed to improving living conditions for citizens. These activities were in line with the welfare state concept, which aims to provide good quality housing for society. In cases of homelessness, occupying empty apartments and abandoned spaces was deemed acceptable by both society and the authorities. In the processes mentioned by Daolio (1974) and Mudu (2014: 138), squatting was primarily directed towards vacant public spaces.

However, since the 1970s, with the rise of real estate speculation, the squatting movement has also targeted private apartments and spaces. Between 1969 and 1975, approximately 20,000 unoccupied apartments were occupied by squatters in Italy, with 4,000 in Rome alone. Therefore, for many individuals, squatting remained the only viable option to secure housing.

Conflicts between squatters and the police were common and often violent, resulting in evictions, beatings, and even deaths. For instance, in September 1974, a militant member of the Autonomy movement was killed during riots in the

workers' settlement of San Basilio in the north-east of Rome (Lotringer and Marazzi, 2007; Mudu, 2014: 139).

The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) loses its innovative edge and its ability to mobilise vulnerable inhabitants of Rome's peripheral neighbourhoods. This ability was crucial as the city's plan was to reconstruct those neighbourhoods while further marginalising this population. As a result, many political and civil actors from the left wing of the political spectrum have become involved in helping this vulnerable group resist this policy and find new, suitable housing. (Coppola, 2008) Since 2000, housing policies in Italy and Rome have been largely neoliberal, leaving the issue of housing to individuals and the market for buying and renting. This has resulted in a housing crisis. During this period, a network of non-governmental, non-profit organizations has been created to fight for the rights of homeless and vulnerable social groups. These organizations are also internationally connected. In 1971, Italy had approximately 47 % of citizens who rented apartments. Similarly, Germany had a comparable policy. However, by 2001, due to the privatization of the public social housing fund, only 20 % of citizens remained in that housing regime. Instead, almost a quarter of the population focused on purchasing an apartment. Over time, interest rates on home loans steadily increased, providing banks with a steady and growing income. During the crisis, the city government issued building permits despite the fact that 40,000 newly built apartments of medium and better quality remained unsold. The government neglected the need for apartments for socially vulnerable people, whose numbers increased permanently. (Mudu, 2014: 157)

Simultaneously, rents increased due to the initial expansion of rent limits under the law, which were eventually removed. As a result, apartments have become less available, as evidenced by the high percentage of citizens' income spent on rent or housing loans. The standard burden should not exceed 30 % of income, yet currently, it ranges from 67% to 97% on average. The data for 2010 confirms that the rents for average apartments, according to contracts from that year, ranged from 740 Euros to 1100 Euros. Additionally, the average salary was 1200 Euros. Private investors were obligated to allocate 10 % of the construction fund for sensitive social groups, but this obligation was often evaded through corrupt practices such as bribing politicians and officials. The preserved fund of social apartments has provided some assistance to the vulnerable population. However, the rents for these apartments are relatively high, ranging from 540–600 euros. It is important to note that this offer did not include the poorest residents (Mudu, 2014: 141).

3.2.1. Severity of the problem

Rome is a city with a population of 2.6 million. The 1962 spatial plan aimed to increase the population to 5 million, but the more recent 2008 master plan is more moderate, limiting growth to 3 million. In 2001, there were 1 million apartments in Rome, with 11% of them being vacant, indicating a trend of real estate speculation. This percentage is believed to be lower in other Italian cities, around 6 %. (Berdini 2008, Mudu 2014: 142)

With the economic crisis of 2008 and the complete transfer of housing policy to the market, problems have been growing. The Movimento per il diritto all'abitare (The movement for the right to housing), the largest network of organizations focused on providing housing to vulnerable citizens, has a list of 30,000 people who urgently need housing. According to Franchetto and Action (2004), a list of 42,000 citizens in need was created, including a large number of evicted tenants who were unable to pay rent (over 8,000 people) in 2009. It is important to note that the city only provides a maximum of 1,500 apartments annually for vulnerable citizens, which is clearly insufficient.

In this context, there are illegal settlements and the practice of squatting, which is particularly prevalent among immigrants who moved into abandoned buildings in the 1980s and 1990s. Refugees from Bangladesh settled in the area of the abandoned factory Pantanella, near Porta Maggiore in the city centre. Similarly, refugees from Poland settled in the neighbourhood of San Basilio, while migrants from Latin America found accommodation in the massive complex of buildings of the Institute for Social Housing in the Corviale area in the southwest of Rome. Pakistani refugees, on the other hand, settled in the sea hostel Ostia. Migrant policy is becoming stricter, and the previously guaranteed right to family reunion is being denied. Additionally, migrant policies are increasingly being criminalized rather than being treated as a social policy issue. The authorities are struggling to address this problem, as they are allocating less and less housing for vulnerable residents. During Mayor Veltroni's term from 2001–2008, 1,700 apartments were reserved for vulnerable residents. However, during Mayor Alemanno's term, only 300 apartments were allocated to vulnerable residents. These figures are paradoxical given the constantly growing needs (Mudu, 2014: 146).

3.2.2. Squatting movements in Rome

Three squatting movements emerged in Rome: the Coordination of Citizens for the Struggle for an Apartment (Coordinamento cittadino lotta per la casa, 1988), Action (2002) and the Precariat Metropolitan Bloc (Blocchi Precari Metropolitani, 2007).

Each movement has its own specific way of creation, methods of work, and achieved results. However, their contribution to providing housing for the poor population is immeasurable.

The Citizens' Coordination for the Struggle for the Apartment was founded by the Autonomist group and has been active in the San Basilio area, assisting in the occupation of approximately 350 apartments for squatters. One notable achievement is the settlement of 130 families in Porto Fluviale, a former military barracks complex located in a semi-central area of the city.

The Action was initiated by two activist groups from the 1990s, All White (Tutte Bianche) and Right to Flats (Dritto alla Casa), in the San Lorenzo neighbourhood. Their efforts resulted in the housing of 50 families in a centrally located building owned by the Italian Central Bank.

The mobilisation for a general union strike can create a *precariat metropolitan block*. For example, 40 families were placed in a vacant salami factory on the outskirts of the city.

Better organisation encourages action, as seen in 2002 when squatters occupied 8 vacant public buildings that were waiting for demolition and reconstruction projects to be implemented. Simultaneously, right-wing parties and groups are increasing pressure on squatters and squatting groups, posing a significant challenge to the squatting movement. To reduce conflicts, Action has started cooperating with the city of Rome. Organizations should maintain lists of suitable buildings for occupation, vulnerable families and individuals with a list of priorities, and establish good relations with the media. They can also use the internet to gain a better overview of available spaces for housing squatters. Careri and Mazzitelli (2012), Smart (2012), and Mudu (2014: 148–150) suggest that organizations should aim to immediately occupy entire buildings instead of just individual apartments. Furthermore, they tend to occupy public spaces rather than private ones, and only do so under certain conditions such as when the owner is negligent or careless. This indirectly reduces the number of evictions and potential conflicts in the city.

In 2009, a group of migrants from North and Central Africa (Tunisia, Morocco, Sudan and Eritrea), Latin America (Peru and San Domingo) and Eastern Europe (Poland, Ukraine and Romania), along with a group of Roma, occupied a vacant salami factory in Metropolis. The squatters were supported by the Precariat Metropolitan Block and adapted the space to their needs by building apartments. The Block facilitated the establishment of standards that must not be violated, including participation in cleaning and maintaining the space, prohibition of alcohol, and respect for women and children (Mudu, 2014: 152)

In all of these squatting situations, the members developed a sense of community and worked together to organize the space, provide basic necessities such as water and electricity, and solve legal and other issues. They also arranged spaces for work, meetings, and children, including a kindergarten (Porto Fluviale) and even established a school for learning the Italian language. (Careri and Mazzitelli, 2012) Additionally, the majority of squatters embraced the movement's belief that the distribution of resources by the system is inadequate, particularly when they found themselves in a challenging situation that the system was unable to resolve. It is worth noting that the squatting movement was predominantly leftist (Pruijt, 2013). The following statements and requirements are usually emphasized:

- a. provides the homeless with an apartment,
- b. reform society in terms of fairer distribution of goods (certainly in the area of housing, but also in terms of employment, better wages, working standards and rights, abolition of exploitation and precariat, provide adequate pensions for the elderly, provision of more adequate social and health care, etc.),
- c. improvement of ecological standards and more serious planning of land use (avoid urban unplanned expansion, which creates unsanitary and unorganized wild settlements) and
- d. finally, better integration of migrants into society. (Pruitt, 2013)

Official statistics show that 70 % of evictions are due to non-payment of rent. This includes pensioners, the unemployed, and low-wage workers supporting families, often with children. Individuals, single parents, families with special needs, and others are particularly vulnerable. In Italy, the housing issue of refugees was ignored for a long time, putting this large social group in an extremely difficult situation. As a result, this population was forced to squat. For instance, around 500 migrants from Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea occupied Hotel Africa (owned by the railway) between 1999 and 2004. In 2006, migrants also inhabited an abandoned factory in the Salaam Pace neighborhood.

It is evident to the squatters that their actions are justified due to the numerous injustices of the system. This movement not only aims to provide housing for those in need but also resists the segregation of poor social groups and the racist values of the ruling class. These injustices are concerning a large number of ordinary citizens who support the need for significant reforms of the system. (Corr, 1999)

The squatter movement offers an alternative approach to housing people more efficiently than the government. They inhabit the city in a different way. From 2000–2005, the city of Rome provided 1700 social apartments, but only to those

who could afford to pay 599–600 Euros in rent. In contrast, the squatter movement provided over 2,000 apartments free of charge to vulnerable individuals (Mayer, 2007).

3.3. New York – USA

After the Second World War, and particularly during the welfare state era, the USA constructed social housing and ensured its availability. The amount of rent is legally regulated and limited by the Rent Control Law. Investors were legally obligated to allocate a portion of the apartments to poorer citizens during construction. As a result, poorer citizens had reliable access to apartments, despite occasional housing shortages and crises (Smith, 2002).

The urban movements of the late 1960s and 1970s also emerged in the USA. In 1967, riots and protests took place in 128 cities across the country, with criticism directed towards the profit-driven method of production that prioritised financial gain over the needs of citizens. The issue of unemployment was also highlighted. Moreover, the issue of racial and ethnic inequalities is highlighted, as African-Americans and Latin Americans are often treated as second- and third-class citizens. In this context, the need to address the position of women (through feminist movements) and the LGBT population is also emphasised. Another significant problem is the limited availability of affordable housing for low-income citizens, which has led to urban movements fighting against gentrification. In this country, the process of gentrification and rebuilding various parts of the city is a constant presence as part of the project of economic development of American cities. This is often accompanied by the displacement of workers, minorities, and poorer citizens from their settlements in the central parts of the city to the periphery (Lees L, 2008).

Urban movements argue that the root cause of these issues is the practice of financial and real estate speculation, aimed at driving up housing prices and rents, ultimately benefiting the already wealthy. This leads to a diminished quality of life, particularly for vulnerable groups, who experience a decrease in income and an increase in expenses. The urban and squatting movements of the 1970s made significant contributions to legal regulations across all policy fields (Smith, DeFilippis, 1998).

However, with the rise of neoliberal management, public housing funds were partially privatized, resulting in a decrease in the construction of such facilities since 1990. As a result, the availability of apartments for both purchase and rental

has been negatively impacted. Research conducted at the time indicated that individuals with average incomes had to allocate 30 % of their monthly earnings towards housing. Shockingly, up to 30 % of those surveyed had to allocate 50 % or more of their income towards housing. Fast forward thirty years, and the situation has worsened significantly. Nowadays, a large number of people are forced to allocate close to 90 % of their salary towards rent, which often requires them to work two jobs just to make ends meet. Since the economic crisis of 2008, many people have lost their apartments and now live in camper houses. The population has also significantly increased (Pruitt, 2014: 47).

In contrast to the Netherlands, Germany, and Scandinavian countries, authorities at all levels in the USA have always taken a harsher stance towards occupying someone else's apartment. As a result, the squatting movement has faced significant pressure and encountered numerous obstacles in its development.

3.2.3. New York

The squatting movement in New York began in the Upper West Side of Manhattan, which was historically a working-class neighbourhood. This plan led to the emergence of the squatting movement. The city authorities aimed to evict poorer citizens and gentrify the area, attracting wealthier residents and businesses. The city had promised that the evicted citizens would return to new apartments after the reconstruction. However, in the area where the resettlement was successful, the citizens were deceived (Pruitt, 2014: 123).

In this context, the Operation-Move-In Movement (OMI) emerged, which relocated people to abandoned public buildings in the city, and opened its office in a squat. The squatting movement is strengthened as a means of negotiating with representatives of the city and its offices responsible for implementing the spatial plan and reconstruction. (Mazuo, 2009:124; Schwartz, 1986:12)

OMI and other organisations maintain records of homeless individuals and families, create waiting lists based on the severity of their situation, and keep a list of vacant properties suitable for squatting. No changes were necessary. They also provide assistance in occupying apartments, offer legal aid to squatters, and maintain relationships with the public and media. There are many interesting examples. In the building on Morningside Heights, which has remained empty for a long time due to the desire to organize a home for the elderly (and the owner had a hard time to gather funds for this purpose), several young people, who studied near this place, are moving in. (Brotherton, 1978: 196) In this case there were no problems, because the owner accepted this situation and later, in a court battle, this squat was

legalized. In this context, the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB) was created to help squatters.

Additionally, the hippie movement emerged, with activists opening local free shops, cooperatives for food production and sale, publishing a magazine (Broadway Local), making films, and advocating for a free lifestyle.

In the Bronx, the government attempts to regulate the process of squatting and keep squatters under control. In 1974, a local housing agency was established as a public institution. This agency selects vulnerable residents and provides them with an apartment, with the tenant's obligation to keep and maintain the real estate (Borgos, 1986: 432). However, some citizens were unable to meet the required conditions for becoming tenants. A new squatting group called Banana Kelly conquered three buildings in the Bronx. The city service allowed the situation but required the squatters to tidy up the area through voluntary work in order to stay, which was acceptable to the squatters. However, conflicts arose when the squatters who had arranged the space were eventually expelled, leading to barricades being organized to prevent forced eviction.

New York City municipalities were active participants in these processes. They attempted to establish procedures and institutions, offer contracts to squatters, and negotiate important issues with them on behalf of the city. This level of organization was not present in many European cities. The public institution Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) registered squatters and required them to sign contracts with the city or city municipality. The authorities prioritised the *restoration of abandoned buildings and spaces*, making settlement a reward for invested work, ideas, and energy. Future tenants must fulfil a list of conditions.

Frank Morales, one of the authors analysing the squatting movement, has lived in the South Bronx since 1980. The area is known for being the home of hip hop, rap and graffiti, and despite its beautiful location in Manhattan, it is also extremely poor. Morales testifies that after the eviction and reconstruction of neglected spaces, only 11 buildings remain with a community of squatters in a highly gentrified area (Pruijt, 2014: 131–132). The squatters were encouraged to invest in their buildings and surroundings, but this led to over-indebtedness, which is a subtle way of pushing poor citizens out of gentrified areas. This behaviour by the government is referred to as 'The World Bank Model', which, instead of improving the conditions of users, further enslaves them with expensive loans and high interest rates.

3.2.4. The Wave of Movements after 1980s

Upon closer analysis of these processes in New York, significant social changes in the wealth of the population can be observed in most municipalities. Of particular interest is the *lower east side* of Manhattan, followed by the *west side* and the *lower west side*. Unfortunately, some apartment owners resort to ejecting low-income tenants and even employing criminals to drive them away in order to renovate the space and rent out the apartment at much higher rates (or sell it at a higher price). The reason for the renovation is to increase the apartment's rental value or sale price. The Rent Stabilization Law of 1971 allows for more flexible rent changes, resulting in annual rent increases. This has led to more frequent tenant turnover in order to maximize profits. Moreover, there has been a rise in the number of buildings being renovated or demolished to construct new ones, with the aim of increasing the value of the entire area (gentrification) (Pruijt, 2014: 48). Despite the negative consequences of this trend, further liberalisation of rent prices was permitted. In 1994, it was legally mandated that rents over \$2,000 would be exempt from regulation. This is known as deregulation or the removal of public control from luxury housing (luxury decentralisation). As a result, many apartment owners sought to enter this category, leading to a further increase in rent. (Pruijt, 2014: 49) In areas where the city authorities have yet to make plans for reconstruction, some building owners have resorted to setting fire to their properties in order to collect insurance money. This has resulted in a decrease in the availability of housing for underprivileged individuals, particularly vulnerable social groups, and has led to an increase in the number of people living in substandard housing or experiencing homelessness.

According to Ferguson (2007), a significant squatting community has emerged in the Southeast Manhattan area. The community has grown in terms of the number of squatters, inhabited buildings, and strength of the movement. The community has developed a culture of mutual assistance, cooperation, and understanding of squatters' problems and needs. The residents engaged in various activities, including joint voluntary actions to tidy up the space, arrange gardens, cook and dine together, socialize, organize political, cultural, and artistic performances, and establish good relationships with their neighbours. In 1983, six buildings on East 13 Street were occupied. By 1992, this number had increased to 25 buildings up to East 9 Street. (Pruijt, 2014: 128) During this process, the authorities were only able to legalize certain squats, which occurred in 2012 with 11 buildings that were beautifully decorated and renovated. However, other buildings and squatters were rejected, and their status remained uncertain.

This squatter organization connected with other squatting movements in America and Europe to exchange experiences, develop models of struggle, and strengthen strategies, tactics, techniques, and instruments to help and protect squatters. The influence of a strong Dutch movement led to a focus on improving the quality of living conditions in housing, resulting in the creation of a handbook with this information. Squatters from this area of New York are pleasantly surprised by the excellent condition of the apartments in Amsterdam. As a result, they are motivated to improve the living conditions in their own buildings.

An example of the success of New York squatters is demonstrated by the city's failed attempt to take the *ABC No Rio Municipal Center* from a group of artists who were squatting there. The city tried to force them out by turning off their water and applying various pressures, but the squatters resisted strongly. Finally, the city allowed the squatters to purchase the building for \$1, an offer which they accepted. The squatters are raising funds to renovate this building and construct another, in order to expand their activities. They have also established a bicycle repair workshop, which has helped to promote and strengthen the cycling movement in the city as an alternative to driving cars. (Pruijt, 2014: 129–130)

Simultaneously, the NY Department of Housing Preservation and Development permits non-profit organizations to restore abandoned buildings and apartments (Gould et al. 2001). This policy has also fostered squatting, with squatters occupying derelict city-owned buildings in the lower part of eastern Manhattan that require renovation or demolition. Initially, there were 500 squatters residing in 20 buildings. Over time, the number of squatters increased to approximately 3000, occupying around 25-30 buildings (Pruijt, 2003: 139).

The city government initially tolerated the squatters in this valuable part of the city, but later had ambitions to rebuild it for wealthier residents. They decided to privatize social housing, but, due to the fact that most squatters could not afford to buy housing, the Mayor's administration decided to provide them with some form of accommodation. Between 1998 and 2002, Mayor Giuliani signed contracts with approximately 200 squatters to legalize their tenant status, which accounted for less than 6 % of the squatter population (Pruijt, 2014: 49; Schwartz, 1999). Although most squatters opposed the city's plans, they risked eviction without support if they did not cooperate with the authorities. The city collaborated with squatter organizations on this project. Following the *housing bubble burst* in 2007, *Organize 4 Occupation* (O4O) and *Picture the Homeless* opened new squats in abandoned buildings and assisted vulnerable citizens in finding housing (Martinez, 2013).

Since 2012 and 2013, squatting has become more prevalent and the Organization for Occupation (O4O) has been active in encouraging numerous actions. One such action was the Occupy Wall Street movement, which was a response to the state's support of banks that caused the global economic crisis through bad speculative loans for real estate, resulting in the loss of housing for a large portion of the population. The perpetrators were not held accountable, and the state's policy was to cover the losses and continue with old practices.

At the time, it was estimated that there were approximately 20 million vacant apartments and around 4 million homeless people in the USA. Simultaneously, globalization and the emigration of capital from the USA to less developed parts of the world with cheaper labour and lower environmental standards have led to the depopulation of numerous American cities. Many cities have lost 25 % of their population from 1950 to the present day, and some have lost 40–60 %. This context created the ideal basis for the renaissance of squatting.

4. DISSCUSION – THEROETICAL AND PRACTICAL BACKGROUND

The squatting movement is typically associated with left-wing politics and advocates for corrections or complete changes to the capitalist system, particularly the liberal type. Critics argue that it is based on the exploitation of people and that profit is the primary motive for production, which leads to increased social inequalities and impoverishment. This, in turn, results in a decline in the quality of services across all policy areas. It is argued that the neoliberal housing policy has led to an increase in homelessness and housing difficulties.

The theoretical basis for their attitudes, values, and demands lies in left-wing theorists such as anarchists, social-democratic theorists, and communist thought. For example, we can link them to Proudhon's theory of private property, which arises from illegal appropriation (Proudhon, 1866), or Engels' analysis of the difficult working and housing conditions of the working class (including women and children) in 19th century London (Engels, 1884). Engels suggests that public housing is one effective instrument for improving such a dire situation. During the initial urban movement, Henri Lefebvre's publication *'The Right to the City'* had a significant impact. Lefebvre emphasises the right of every individual to relocate to the city, secure employment, and obtain affordable housing (Lefebvre, 1964).

Socialist countries, as well as social democratic western countries, aim to improve housing policy by making affordable housing a standard public service for all populations. In cases where shortages occur in the housing market, squatting and illegal settlements may be seen as self-help measures for vulnerable populations.

It is important to note that squatters, both in the first and second wave of urban movements, often have no ambition to change the system. Their primary goal is to provide affordable housing without opening up political issues. In the past, it was easier for owners to allow new tenants to stay in the housing, only requiring them to maintain the building and apartment and pay for utilities. However, when the owner demands that the housing be vacated, this often results in a court ruling and the eviction of the squatters. Squatters can only continue their search for an empty space they could occupy.

Finally, the authorities never viewed squatting sympathetically, as it highlighted the government's inability to provide housing for citizens. Only under public pressure did they seek a solution, often focusing on families with children in need. These families were provided with licenses as a recognized right to an apartment, with the promise that they would receive it when the necessary conditions were met. Statistics from all countries show that squatter movements are more effective in providing housing for homeless people.

5. CONCLUSION

European societies, Switzerland and Italy, used to have social democratic system, treasuring values of social support to vulnerable social groups. Switzerland is a rare example of a country with direct democracy and developed citizen participation in decision-making. This environment is excellent for tailoring social services to citizens' needs, particularly in housing policy, which greatly contributes to the quality of life for families and individuals. Italy is a regional state, which means that it is highly decentralized. However, there are significant differences in entrepreneurial and developmental capacities, as well as wealth, between the north and south, which presents a great challenge for society. A social democratic regime promotes empathy and support for vulnerable social groups in all policy areas, including housing. In this country, religion and the traditional importance of family create an atmosphere of solidarity and support for people in need, which contributes to social homogeneity. The United States is traditionally a liberal society. Despite having the most developed economy, it also has significant social inequalities, as indicated by the Gini coefficient. Therefore, even in the era of the welfare state, there is an unacceptable number of poor and homeless people from a social democratic perspective. Our case studies demonstrate that the social democratic concept of housing policy has greatly contributed to good housing availability for the entire society, including those who are economically

disadvantaged. During the first urban movement, weaknesses in all policy fields, including housing policy, were identified. Western countries developed additional instruments to correct these practices, such as developing a greater fund of social housing, defining rent limitations, and legally mandating special quotas for the construction of housing for socially vulnerable groups. After the 1980s, during the period of neoliberal society, all these instruments were rendered useless in both the USA and European countries. As a result, vulnerable social groups were left with only squatting practice, illegal settlements, and nomadism as means of procuring housing. The criminalization of squatting practice and government aggression towards it indicate that capitalist society prioritizes profit, wealth, and capital over the welfare of its citizens. Therefore, this type of society has two options: either to acknowledge these dangerous weaknesses and correct them by implementing good welfare instruments and practices for procuring housing for sensitive social groups, or to stubbornly maintain these conditions, which could result in deeper conflicts and even revolutionary changes. It is important to remember that significant disparities in wealth can undermine democracy. Therefore, the government should strive to promote the well-being of the entire society rather than serving as a tool for enriching an already wealthy ruling class.

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**THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM
IN KYRGYZSTAN ON APRIL 11, 2021,
OR THE RESTORATION OF POST-SOVIET
AUTHORITARIANISM**

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Abstract

The Article examines the form of government in Kyrgyzstan established by the constitutional referendum of April 11, 2021, identifies its most important essential features and shortcomings, and attempts to precise its scientific classification. The possible consequences of the functioning of the new form of government are indicated.

On April 11, 2021, a constitutional referendum was held in Kyrgyzstan, at which amendments to the Constitution of the state were approved. On the same day, the elections of the President of Kyrgyzstan were held, which were won by the acting President, politician Sadyr Zhaparov. This clearly indicated the role of the subjective factor in the constitutional process. The changes concerned all sections of the Constitution and marked the emergence of a virtually new Constitution of Kyrgyzstan. The most important consequence of the constitutional changes was the establishment of a new eclectic form of government with an exaggerated constitutional status of the president. In this form of government, the president combined in his person the functions of head of state and head of executive power, administratively subjugated the government and deprived it of the status of an independent authority.

Key words: *constitution, constitutional referendum, form of government, president, executive power, rule of law, separation of powers, responsibility of power.*

RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC

The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the emergence of new sovereign states on its territory, which marked the beginning of a period of active constitutional rule-making in the post-Soviet space. This process continues to this day. Constitutional reform in the post-Soviet states is primarily aimed at finding the optimal form of government. The post-Soviet republics face the dilemma of needing to introduce strong presidential power while limiting the associated risks. This is particularly clear in their situation. Attempts to find a practical solution to this dilemma in the post-Soviet space have mostly been unsuccessful. In many cases, the attempt to increase the effectiveness of the executive power by giving the president more influence was carried out carelessly, resulting in the development of the phenomenon of a super-presidency.

To evaluate different variations of the republican form of government objectively, it is crucial to examine the state-building experience of Kyrgyzstan. The country has undergone significant changes in its form of government over time. Since 2007, there has been a trend towards parliamentarization, which was interrupted by the constitutional referendum of April 11, 2021. The referendum reintroduced a form of government in the country that many consider to be a presidential republic. The results of the Kyrgyzstan referendum on 11 April 2021 demonstrated that in the absence of stable democratic traditions and a developed civil society, and in the

conditions of weak influence on the state mechanism by political parties, there is a constant threat of the restoration of authoritarian presidentialism. Studying the most recent Kyrgyz experience of state building enables the identification of features and patterns of development that are common to many post-Soviet political systems.

REVIEW OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON THE TOPIC OF THE WORK

Specialized political studies have yet to focus on the evolution of the form of government in modern Kyrgyzstan. However, Russian researcher O. Zaznayev has indirectly and partially addressed this topic in works such as 'Defects of the forms of government of the CIS countries', 'Presidentialization of the semipresidential system', and 'Super-presidential systems in the post-Soviet space' (Zaznayev, 2006, 2008). This text explores the problems related to the development of the form of government in the post-Soviet space. It specifically references the works of American researcher S. Holmes, including 'The Post-Communist Institute of the President' and 'The Superpresidency and Its Problems' (Holmes, 1994, 1995, 1996), as well as the Italian-American scientist G. Sartori's 'Comparative Constitutional Engineering'. A Study of Structures, Motives and Results") (Sartori, 1987, 2001) and the Ukrainian constitutionalist V. Shapoval (Executive power in Ukraine in the context of the form of state government (experience before the adoption of the Constitution of Ukraine in 1996) (Shapoval, 2016).

OBJECT, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study aims to examine the form of government in modern Kyrgyzstan. The research objectives are reflected in the following: The aim of this study is to examine the evolution of the form of government in Kyrgyzstan from the adoption of the first Constitution of sovereign Kyrgyzstan to the present day. The study will classify the form of government established by the primary edition of the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan dated May 5, 1993, the form of government established by the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan dated May 5, 1993 in the edition dated October 21, 2007, and the form of government established by the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan dated June 27, 2010. The aim of this research is also to analyse the normative features of the form of government introduced by the constitutional referendum of April 11, 2021, and identify any reactionary features. Additionally, the consequences of its functioning will be predicted. Another research problem is to provide a scientifically correct classification of the current form of government in

Kyrgyzstan and examine its influence on the development of democratic political institutions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This work employs historical, comparative, and legal dogmatic methods of scientific research. The use of the historical method was necessary due to the historical development of the form of government in modern Kyrgyzstan, which has undergone significant changes over time and under different circumstances. The historical method enables formulating conclusions about the impact of the past on the current state of the government in Kyrgyzstan and its future development.

A scientific study involves using all facts related to the object and searching for cause-and-effect relationships. This requires analysing similarities and differences between individual cases. This study employs the comparative method to identify similarities and differences between the variations of the form of government in Kyrgyzstan. The comparison includes individual parameters and aggregate features, as well as the degree of their similarities and differences. By comparing the variations, knowledge is obtained that cannot be obtained by studying only one of the Kyrgyz form of government. The comparative analysis data confirmed the theories of separation of powers, popular sovereignty, and the rule of law. We studied the evolution of the form of government in Kyrgyzstan in the context of these provisions.

The legal dogmatic method enables the verification of research results' conformity with legal doctrine. As the form of government is a legal institution, and its most significant features are always normatively expressed, analyzing the essence of the researched form of government and its elemental composition inevitably involves using the legal dogmatic method. The legal dogmatic method played a fundamental role in interpreting constitutional norms related to the form of government, particularly those governing the organization of state power. This method allowed for the analysis of relevant provisions in all modern Kyrgyzstan constitutions (including revisions), and their explanation and interpretation using legal concepts and categories. The application of this method provided our research with a proper theoretical basis, ensuring unity, uniformity, and consistency in the legal terminology and conceptual apparatus used.

INTRODUCTION

Kyrgyzstan has undergone several constitutional revisions regarding its form of government. These changes have accompanied and legally formalised important

political events in the country's history. The first constitution of sovereign Kyrgyzstan, dated 5 May 1993, established a form of government that shared many legal features with a presidential republic, but was not identical to it. The form of government in question has undergone multiple adjustments. The constitutional changes made on 21 October 2007 resulted in a more parliamentary system of government, but did not fully eliminate its authoritarian nature. The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, as amended on 21 October 2007, still maintains a semi-presidential system, as noted by the Venice Commission. According to the Venice Commission (2017), 'The semi-presidential system was retained, but ...but... In reality, political powers are once again concentrated in the hands of the President'. In 2010, a new Constitution of Kyrgyzstan was adopted at a referendum, resulting in a fundamental revision of the form of government. The Constitution established a parliamentary-presidential mixed republican form of government with both a parliament and president.

In October 2020, the ruling political forces of Kyrgyzstan initiated a constitutional reform with the main goal of changing the form of government. They declared their intention to establish a presidential republic. On 11 December 2020, the country's parliament (the Zhogorku Kenesh) adopted the Law 'On calling a referendum (popular vote) to determine the form of government of the Kyrgyz Republic'. The Kyrgyz Republic Law (2020) allows for the choice between a parliamentary or presidential republic. A constitutional referendum was held on January 10, 2021, to determine the form of government in Kyrgyzstan. The majority of voters approved a presidential republic. It is important to note that on the day of the referendum to determine the form of government, extraordinary presidential elections were also held. These elections were won by Sadyr Zhaparov, the main initiator of the constitutional reform and the acting head of state. This indicates the influence of subjective factors in the constitutional process. By endorsing Sadyr Zhaparov's candidacy in the presidential elections, the referendum participants simultaneously granted him the relevant powers.

On 9 February 2021, the Zhogorku Kenesh published the draft Law 'On the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic' as the final version of the proposed constitutional changes for public discussion. It is important to note that the draft of the constitutional law was prepared by the Constitutional Council, a body established on 20 November 2020 by order of the then acting President of Kyrgyzstan, and not by the Zhogorku Kenesh. The body responsible for the constitutional changes in Kyrgyzstan was not provided for by the current Constitution and lacked constituent

power. Its creation undermined the legitimacy of the changes it had worked out. On 11 April 2021, a constitutional referendum approved the Law 'On the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic'. Although the initiators of the constitutional reform stated the need for a new edition of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Justification Note to the draft Law 'On the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic' (Justification Statement, 2020), the scale of the constitutional changes that affected all sections of the Constitution indicates that the constitutional reform resulted in the adoption of a new constitution for Kyrgyzstan. Although the Law 'On the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic' was intended to be a new version of the current Constitution with amendments (Law of the Kyrgyz Republic (Draft), 2020), it has effectively replaced the existing Constitution of Kyrgyzstan. The Venice Commission correctly noted in its Opinion on the Draft Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic dated March 19-20, 2021, that the title is misleading (Venice Commission. 2021). The enactment of the 'Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic' halted the trend towards a parliamentary form of government in Kyrgyzstan, which had been ongoing since 2007.

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BY PRIMARY VERSION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF KYRGYZSTAN ON MAY 5, 1993.

The May 5, 1993 version of the Kyrgyzstan Constitution established a form of government that was mainly associated with a presidential republic. This form of government was also established in most post-Soviet states during their initial stage of sovereignty. According to Ukrainian constitutionalist Volodymyr Shapoval, this form of government has a distinctive feature: According to Shapoval (2016, p. 72), the president holds a concentration of power and dominates the sphere of state power, with a certain convention of separation of powers.

The form of government established by the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan on May 5, 1993 cannot be classified as a presidential republic, even with significant reservations. However, it would also be incorrect to classify this form of government as a mixed republican one. The government form combines features of both presidential and mixed republics, with a noticeable predominance of presidentialism. It aims to maintain a balanced approach and avoid bias in its evaluation of the two forms of government.

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, dated May 5, 1993, defines the President of Kyrgyzstan as the guarantor of the unity of state power. Chapter three, titled 'The President', regulates the status of the Head of State. Article 46 states that 'The

President of the Kyrgyz Republic ensures the unity and continuity of state power, and the coordinated functioning and interaction of state bodies' (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 1993). Article 46 states that 'The President of the Kyrgyz Republic ensures the unity and continuity of state power, and the coordinated functioning and interaction of state bodies' (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 1993). Article 46 states that 'The President of the Kyrgyz Republic ensures the unity and continuity of state power, and the coordinated functioning and interaction of state bodies' (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 1993). The status of the president is a constitutional feature of a mixed republic. According to the revised version of the Constitution, the President is the highest official of the state and the real head of the executive branch. The Constitution outlines the process for determining the structure of the Government (paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Article 46). The appointment of the Prime Minister requires the consent of the upper house of the Parliament (paragraph 8 of Part 3 of Article 58, Part 1 of Article 71). Other members of the Government are appointed after consultations with the Prime Minister. According to paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Article 46 of the Constitution, the President had the power to dismiss officials from office. Additionally, according to paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Article 46 of the Constitution, the President had the right to terminate the powers of the Prime Minister or the Government, as well as the right to suspend or terminate government acts as stated in paragraph 4 of Part 5 of Article 46 of the Constitution. It is worth noting that acts of the President did not require a countersign from the Prime Minister or Ministers of the Government. The newly elected President's assumption of office resulted in the resignation of the Government, as stated in Part 3 of Article 70 of the Constitution. According to Part 1 of Article 69 of the Constitution, the President has control over the Government's activities and may chair its sittings.

In a presidential republic, the president holds full executive power and embodies it. Therefore, the constitutional definition of the president as the head of the executive branch is one of the distinguishing features of a presidential republic. However, the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, dated May 5, 1993, does not include any provisions regarding the leading role of the President in relation to the system of executive authorities. According to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic in 1993, the President was not considered a subject of executive power. The exercise of executive power was assigned to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, subordinate ministries, state committees, administrative departments, and local state administration (Article 69). The Kyrgyz Republic's Constitution defines the

Government as the highest body of executive state power (Part 1 of Article 70). While the President can control the Government's activities and chair its meetings, they do not formally lead the Government or hold membership within it.

The separation of powers in the presidential form of government is rigid, and as such, the president does not have the right to dissolve the parliament ahead of schedule. However, in accordance with the Constitution, the President of Kyrgyzstan had the right to prematurely terminate the powers of the Legislative Assembly (lower house of Parliament), the Assembly of People's Representatives (upper house of Parliament), or both houses of Parliament simultaneously (Part 2 of Article 63 of the Constitution). Another indication that there is no strict separation of powers is that the President and the Government are permitted to propose legislation (as stated in Article 64 of the Constitution). The Constitution also allows for a vote of no confidence in the Prime Minister by the Assembly of People's Representatives (as stated in paragraph 18 of Part 3 of Article 58 and Part 1 of Article 71 of the Constitution). Although the upper house of Parliament can express no confidence in the Prime Minister, as outlined in Part 5 of Article 71 of the Constitution, this does not meet the criteria of a presidential republic. The resignation of the Prime Minister is only required if the President decides to dismiss them. Simultaneously, the administrative subordination of the Government to the President and the transformation of the Head of State into the actual head of the executive branch demonstrate that there is no dualism in the form of the executive branch of power. However, this circumstance alone does not allow us to determine the form of government as a mixed republic (Sartori, 2001, p. 115).

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF KYRGYZSTAN DATED MAY 5, 1993, AS AMENDED ON OCTOBER 21, 2007

The most recent edition of the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, dated May 5, 1993 and updated on October 21, 2007, indicates a shift towards a parliamentary form of government. This edition further moved away from a presidential republic. The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan underwent changes from its initial version dated 5 May 1993 to the version dated 21 October 2007. The former established a government that gravitated mainly towards a presidential republic, while the latter fixed a form of government that imitated a mixed republic. The Venice Commission, in its opinion 'The Constitutional Situation in the Kyrgyz Republic' dated December 14–15, 2007, commented on this change. According to the Venice Commission (2007), although the Constitution establishes a semi-presidential system, in practice, the President has practically unlimited powers and there are few checks and balances.

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, dated May 5, 1993, and amended on October 21, 2007, designates the President as the head of state rather than the head of the executive branch. Part 3 of Article 42 of the Constitution preserves the provision that the President is responsible for ensuring the unity of state power and the coordinated functioning and interaction of its bodies.

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, amended on October 21, 2007, includes the right of the President to dissolve the Parliament early (paragraph 3 of Part 6 of Article 46, Part 2 of Article 63). According to the Kyrgyzstan Constitution, the President has the power to initiate legislation (paragraph 1 of Part 5 of Article 46, Article 64), convene a session of the Zhogorku Kenesh (Parliament) before the scheduled time, and decide on the issues to be discussed (paragraph 1 of Part 6 of Article 46). Additionally, the Government has the right of legislative initiative (Article 64). Furthermore, the Parliament was required to give special consideration to draft laws designated as urgent by the President or the Government, as stated in Part 2 of Article 65 of the Constitution.

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan stipulates that executive power in the Kyrgyz Republic is exercised by the Kyrgyz Republic, subordinate ministries, state committees, administrative departments, other executive authorities, and local state administration, as outlined in Article 68. According to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (2007), the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic is the highest body of executive state power and its activities are headed by the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic. As per the Constitution, the executive power comprised of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers, ministers, and chairmen of state committees (Part 2 of Article 69). Therefore, the President was not a structural component of the executive power and did not hold a leading role in relation to its bodies.

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, dated May 5, 1993 and amended on October 21, 2007, established a partially parliamentary system for forming the government. As per Part 3 of Article 69 of the Constitution, the government is formed by the political party that wins more than 50 % of the number of deputies in the Parliament elected under the proportional system during the Zhogorku Kenesh elections. The Prime Minister was appointed by the President, but their candidacy was presented by the mentioned party for approval. Once in office, the Prime Minister determined the structure and personnel of the Government, submitting them for approval to the Zhogorku Kenesh. According to Part 3 of Article 69 of the Constitution, it was the Zhogorku Kenesh, and not the President, who approved the structure of the Government and its personnel.

However, the government established by the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan dated 5 May 1993, as amended on October 21, 2007, cannot be classified as a mixed republic. The level of presidentialization is high, and the President's degree of influence on the executive power does not meet the criteria of a mixed republic. The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, dated May 5, 1993 and amended on October 21, 2007, does not include the parliamentary investiture of the government, which is a fundamental feature of a mixed republic. The approval of the program of activities of the Government of Kyrgyzstan by the Zhogorku Kenesh was not a requirement for its authority. This circumstance significantly distorted the parliamentary process of forming the government and increased the President of Kyrgyzstan's influence on the executive branch. Additionally, the lack of parliamentary investiture of the Government, with an appropriate alignment of political forces in the Zhogorku Kenesh, made the President of Kyrgyzstan the sole head of executive power, thereby eliminating its dualism.

Although the Constitution includes a provision stating that the Government is responsible and accountable to the Zhogorku Kenesh (Part 1 of Article 71), a vote of no confidence by the Parliament does not automatically result in the Government's resignation. Ultimately, the decision to resign lies with the President (Part 7 of Article 71 of the Constitution). According to the Constitution, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic has the right to decide on the resignation of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic or disagree with the decision of the Zhogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic after expressing no confidence in the government. If the Zhogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic passes a vote of no confidence in the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic within three months, or if the President of the Kyrgyz Republic dissolves the Zhogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic must resign. This is stated in Parts 6 and 7 of Article 71 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (2007). However, in situations where the government's existence is dependent on the political will of the President, the government can only be held accountable to parliament if it aligns with the President's interests. This is particularly true when the President seeks to avoid responsibility for the failure of the government's political agenda. Furthermore, the Parliament's repeated expression of a vote of no confidence in the 'presidential' Government inevitably led to the early dissolution of the Parliament.

The President's acts did not require countersignature from the Government. However, the Government was constitutionally obligated to ensure the execution of the President's acts (paragraph 1 of Part 2 of Article 72 of the Constitution). This

combination of circumstances allowed the President to impose his political agenda on the Government in areas of their shared responsibility.

In its conclusion on 'The Constitutional Situation in the Kyrgyz Republic' dated December 14–15, 2007, the Venice Commission (2007) identified the excessive concentration of powers in the hands of the President and the absence of a system of checks and balances as essential features of the form of government. According to the Venice Commission's assessment of the form of government, the new version of the Constitution aims to establish the undeniable supremacy of the President over other state authorities through legal means (Venice Commission, 2007).

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF KYRGYZSTAN DATED JUNE 27, 2010

The constitution of Kyrgyzstan, which was adopted by referendum on June 27, 2010, established a form of government that is commonly referred to as a parliamentary republic. This determination was made by the Venice Commission in its Conclusion of June 4, 2010, on the draft version of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, which was published on May 21, 2010. However, it is important to note that the Venice Commission made an important reservation in this document: According to the Venice Commission (2007), the powers of the President of Kyrgyzstan appear to exceed those assigned to the president under the proposed system of separation of powers. Therefore, the form of government established by the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan on 27 June 2010 can be more accurately classified as a mixed parliamentary republic. The primary distinctions between this form of government and a parliamentary republic are the enhanced constitutional status of the President, specifically the discretionary authority of the Head of State to dissolve the powers of the Parliament if it refuses to trust the Government (Part 1 of Article 86 of the Constitution), and the dualistic organization of executive power.

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan manifests a dualism of executive power, requiring the President to coordinate with the Prime Minister on personnel powers related to foreign policy representation of the state. This dualism is unique in its own way. The President appoints and dismisses a separate group of Government members, including heads of defence and national security bodies, as well as their deputies. The circumstance enhances the President's influence on government activity in relevant areas, but also poses a risk of reduced diversity. The Kyrgyz form of government differs from the classical mixed republic in that it lacks constitutional provisions requiring members of the Government to countersign acts of the President.

The President of Kyrgyzstan holds discretionary power to terminate the powers of the Parliament, as well as the right to appoint and dismiss individual members of the Government. Additionally, the Government lacks control over the rule-making activities of the President, as his acts do not require countersigning by members of the Government. These factors indicate that the status of the President of Kyrgyzstan cannot be equated with that of the president of parliamentary republics. The election of the President of Kyrgyzstan through popular vote cannot be considered a definitive indication of a parliamentary republic.

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, dated June 27, 2010, establishes a parliamentary form of government with joint and several parliamentary responsibilities of the Government. The President has the discretionary right to accept the resignation of the Prime Minister, the Government, or its individual members. The President has the discretionary right to terminate the powers of the Prime Minister (Government), but only if an appropriate initiative is taken by the Prime Minister. This feature is characteristic of a balanced-mixed republic.

The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (2010) confirms in paragraph 3 of Article 81 that the Parliament can override the President's veto with a two-thirds majority vote of its constitutional composition. This provision is a characteristic of a mixed republic.

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF KYRGYZSTAN DATED MAY 5, 1993, AS AMENDED ON OCTOBER 21, 2007

The last edition of the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan of May 5, 1993, dated October 21, 2007, testified to a tangible “drift” of the form of government in the direction of parliamentarism. The form of government established by this edition further distanced itself from the presidential republic. If the initial version of the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan dated May 5, 1993 established a form of government that, in essence, gravitated mainly to a presidential republic, then the version dated October 21, 2007 fixed a form of government imitating a mixed republic. In its Opinion “The Constitutional Situation in the Kyrgyz Republic” dated December 14–15, 2007, the Venice Commission stated: “Formally, the Constitution establishes a semi-presidential system, but in reality the powers of the President are practically unlimited, and there are practically no checks and balances” (Venice Commission, 2007).

In the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan dated May 5, 1993, as amended on October 21, 2007, the President was determined as the head of state, and not as the head of the

executive branch. The provision on the President as the guarantor of the unity of state power, the coordinated functioning and interaction of its bodies was preserved (Part 3 of Article 42 of the Constitution).

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, as amended on October 21, 2007, also fixed such a distinctive feature of a mixed republic as the right of the President to carry out early dissolution of the Parliament (paragraph 3 of Part 6 of Article 46, Part 2 of Article 63). The President of Kyrgyzstan also had the right to initiate legislation (paragraph 1 of Part 5 of Article 46, Article 64 of the Constitution), could convene a session of the Zhogorku Kenesh (Parliament) ahead of schedule, and determine the issues to be considered (paragraph 1 of Part 6 of Article 46 of the Constitution). The Government was also subject to the right of legislative initiative (Article 64 of the Constitution). Moreover, the Parliament was obliged to consider in an extraordinary manner the draft laws defined by the President or the Government as urgent (Part 2 of Article 65 of the Constitution).

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan contained provisions *that “executive power in the Kyrgyz Republic is exercised by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, subordinate ministries, state committees, administrative departments, other executive authorities and local state administration”* (Article 68), that *“the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic is the highest body of executive state power* (highlighted by us) *of the Kyrgyz Republic”* (Part 1 of Article 69) and that *“the activities of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic are headed by the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic”* (Part 2 of Article 69) (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2007). According to the Constitution, the Government consisted of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers, ministers and chairmen of state committees (Part 2 of Article 69). Thus, the President was not a structural component of the executive power and, within the meaning of the Constitution, did not exercise a leading role in relation to the system of its bodies.

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan dated May 5, 1993, as amended on October 21, 2007, established a partially parliamentary way of forming the government. In accordance with Part 3 of Article 69 of the Constitution, the Government was formed by a political party that won more than 50 percent of the number of deputies of the Parliament elected under the proportional system in the elections to the Zhogorku Kenesh. And although the Prime Minister was appointed by the President, the candidacy of the Prime Minister for approval by the President was presented by the mentioned party. It was the Prime Minister, after being approved in office, who determined the structure of the Government and its personal

composition, submitted them for approval to the Zhogorku Kenesh. The Zhogorku Kenesh, and not the President, approved the structure of the Government and its personnel (Part 3 of Article 69 of the Constitution).

Nevertheless, the form of government established by the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan dated May 5, 1993, as amended on October 21, 2007, cannot be considered a mixed republic. The level of presidentialization of this form of government is high and the degree of influence of the President on the executive power clearly does not meet the criteria of a mixed republic. The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan dated May 5, 1993, as amended on October 21, 2007, does not reflect such a fundamental feature of a mixed republic as parliamentary investiture of the government. The approval by the Zhogorku Kenesh of the program of activities of the Government of Kyrgyzstan was not a condition for its authority. This fundamentally important circumstance distorted the nature of the parliamentary way of forming the government and significantly increased the influence of the President of Kyrgyzstan on the executive branch. Moreover, the absence of a parliamentary investiture of the Government, with an appropriate alignment of political forces in the Zhogorku Kenesh, turned the President of Kyrgyzstan into a real head of executive power, thereby eliminating its dualism.

Although the Constitution contained a provision that the Government in its activities was responsible and accountable to the Zhogorku Kenesh (Part 1 of Article 71), the expression of no confidence in the Government by the Parliament did not entail its automatic resignation and, ultimately, the decision to resign the Government was made by the President (Part 7 of Article 71 of the Constitution). The Constitution stipulated that “after expressing no confidence in the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic has the right to decide on the resignation of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic or disagree with the decision of the Zhogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic. In the event that the Zhogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic within three months repeatedly decides on a vote of no confidence in the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic announces the resignation of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic or dissolves the Zhogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic” (Parts 6, 7 of Article 71 of the Constitution) (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2007). But in conditions when the existence of the Government depended to a certain extent on the political will of the President, the parliamentary responsibility of the Government was possible only when it met the interests of the President, for example, in a situation where the President sought to avoid responsibility for the

failure of the political course of “his” Government. Moreover, the repeated expression by the Parliament of a vote of no confidence in the “presidential” Government inevitably entailed the early dissolution of the Parliament itself.

Acts of the President did not need countersignature from the Government. At the same time, the Government was constitutionally charged with the obligation to ensure the execution of the acts of the President (paragraph 1 of Part 2 of Article 72 of the Constitution). The combination of these circumstances gave the President the opportunity to impose his political course on the Government in the areas of their joint competence.

In its Conclusion “The Constitutional Situation in the Kyrgyz Republic” dated December 14–15, 2007, the Venice Commission (2007) noted such essential features of the form of government as “excessive concentration of powers in the hands of the President and the absence of a system of checks and balances”. Summarizing its assessment of the form of government, the Commission pointed out that “the main thrust of the new version of the Constitution is to establish by all possible legal means the undeniable supremacy of the President in relation to other state authorities” (Venice Commission, 2007).

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF KYRGYZSTAN DATED JUNE 27, 2010

The constitution of Kyrgyzstan, adopted by referendum on June 27, 2010, established a form of government that is often defined as a parliamentary republic. In this manner it was determined, in particular, by the Venice Commission in its Conclusion of June 4, 2010 on the draft version of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, published on May 21, 2010. At the same time, in this document, the Venice Commission made an important reservation: “It seems that these powers (the powers of the President of Kyrgyzstan. – *R. M., O. D.*) exceed the rights assigned to the president under the proposed system of separation of powers” (Venice Commission, 2007). Obviously, the form of government established by the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan of June 27, 2010 can be more correctly classified as a parliamentary mixed republic. The main differences between this form of government and a parliamentary republic are the strengthened constitutional status of the President, in particular, the discretionary right of the Head of State to terminate the powers of the Parliament in case of its refusal to trust the Government (Part 1 of Article 86 of the Constitution), and the dualistic organization of executive power.

A manifestation of the dualism of executive power in the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan is the requirement for the President to coordinate with the Prime Minister the exercise of personnel powers in the field of foreign policy representation of the state. The dualism of executive power at the same time shows some originality. A separate group of members of the Government – heads of bodies in charge of defense, national security, as well as their deputies are appointed and dismissed by the President. This circumstance enhances the influence of the President on government activity in the relevant areas, while causing a certain risk of its diversity. The difference between the Kyrgyz form of government and the classical mixed republic also reflects the absence of constitutional provisions on the countersigning of acts of the President by members of the Government.

The discretionary right of the President to terminate the powers of the Parliament, the right of the Head of State to appoint and dismiss individual members of the Government, the lack of control over the rule-making activities of the President by the Government through the countersigning of his acts by members of the Government – all these signs indicate that the status of the President of Kyrgyzstan cannot be identified with the status of the president of the parliamentary republics. The election of the President of Kyrgyzstan by popular elections cannot be considered a natural sign of a parliamentary republic.

The elements of the form of government established by the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan dated June 27, 2010 are the parliamentary investment of the Government and its parliamentary responsibility. At the same time, the form of government combines the joint and several parliamentary responsibilities of the Government with the discretionary right of the President to accept the resignation of the Prime Minister, the Government or its individual member. The discretionary right of the President to terminate the powers of the Prime Minister (Government), burdened with the requirement of an appropriate initiative on the Part of the Prime Minister, is a feature of a balanced-mixed republic.

The provision of paragraph 3 of Article 81 of the Constitution confirming that the Parliament can override the President's veto by two-thirds of the votes of its constitutional composition (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2010) is also a feature of a mixed republic.

FORM OF GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BY A CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM ON APRIL 11, 2021

The constitutional referendum held on April 11, 2021, brought about a significant revision of the form of government. The new form of government closely resembles

the one established by the original version of the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan on May 5, 1993. The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan of May 5, 1993 concealed the dominant position of the President of Kyrgyzstan in the state mechanism and the administrative subordination of the Government to the President through formal provisions on the independent status of the latter. The main difference between these forms of government lies in this fact. The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan demonstrates the drafters' intention to avoid the dualism of executive power found in a mixed republic. As such, the President is constitutionally designated as the head of the executive power, and the principle of their personal responsibility for the activities of the executive power bodies is proclaimed. Thus, the potential authoritarianism of the government established by the April 11, 2021 referendum is high, similar to that of a traditional presidential republic.

The Venice Commission's Opinion on the draft Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, dated March 19–20, 2021, states that “the system proposed in the draft Constitution represents a return to a strong presidential model” (Venice Commission, 2021). The form of government established by the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan on April 11, 2021, is classified as presidential by the Venice Commission. However, this classification appears to be conditional. The main differences between a parliamentary republic and a presidential republic are the lack of a strict separation of powers and the presence of elements that are not typical of a presidential republic. The Constitution, specifically paragraph 2 of Article 66, enshrines the provision that the President of Kyrgyzstan ensures the unity of state power (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2021). The president is constitutionally defined as the guarantor of the unity of state power and the coordinated functioning of its bodies. This is a distinctive legal feature of a mixed republican form of government. Article 70 of the Constitution states that the President of Kyrgyzstan appoints the Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, his deputies, and other members of the Cabinet of Ministers with the consent of the Zhogorku Kenesh. However, this provision contradicts the logic of the organization of state power in a presidential republic. Based on the content of this article, it is clear that the consent of the Zhogorku Kenesh is founded not only on formal legal but also on political grounds.

The presence of the right of legislative initiative by the President of Kyrgyzstan and the Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers (paragraphs 2 and 4 of Article 85 of the Constitution) and the obligation of the Cabinet of Ministers to report to the Zhogorku Kenesh on the execution of the republican budget (Article 89 of the Constitution) does not align with the characteristics of a presidential republic.

According to the current Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, the President holds executive power (Article 89, Part 1), decides on the structure and composition of the Cabinet of Ministers (Article 89, Part 2), oversees its activities, issues instructions to the Cabinet of Ministers and subordinate bodies, and monitors the implementation of these instructions. The President has the power to cancel acts of the Cabinet of Ministers and subordinate bodies (Part 3 of Article 89), preside over sittings of the Cabinet of Ministers (Part 4 of Article 89), dismiss members of the Cabinet of Ministers on their own initiative (paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Article 70), and appoint or dismiss the heads of local state administrations (paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Article 70). According to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (2021), “the President is personally responsible for the results of the activities of the Cabinet of Ministers and the executive branch”. However, it is worth noting that the status of the President and the Cabinet of Ministers is defined in different sections of the Constitution, specifically in Chapter I and Chapter III of Section Three. The regulation of executive authorities cannot be explained solely by the principles of organizing state power in a presidential republic.

The referendum held on April 11, 2021 established an eclectic form of government, which is reinforced by the provisions on the status of a special body named the People's Kurultai. In the Constitution, this body is referred to as the 'public representative assembly' (Article 7), while the Zhogorku Kenesh is referred to as the 'highest representative body' (Article 76). This raises the question of how the representative nature of the Zhogorku Kenesh and the People's Kurultai are correlated. The establishment of the People's Kurultai challenges the legitimacy of the Zhogorku Kenesh, particularly in situations where the decisions of the Zhogorku Kenesh conflict with the recommendations of the People's Kurultai or when the Zhogorku Kenesh rejects a bill proposed by the People's Kurultai. Additionally, the People's Kurultai can be exploited by the dominant ruling entity, namely the President, to justify their own decisions that contradict those of the Zhogorku Kenesh.

Part 2 of Article 7 of the Constitution states that “the organization and procedure for the activities of the People’s Kurultai are determined by the Constitution and the constitutional law”. However, the Constitution does not provide any provisions on the organization and operation of the People's Kurultai, which means that there are no guarantees of its representative nature. The constitutional provisions on the status of the People's Kurultai are fragmentary, which makes it possible for its nature as a body of popular representation to be distorted at the legislative level.

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan has several defects in the legal regulation of the President's status, particularly in hypertrophying their power. According to Part 1 of Article 66, “The President is... the highest official” (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2021).

According to the theory of separation of powers, the president is one of the highest organs of the state, alongside the parliament, the government, the highest judicial body of general jurisdiction, and the body of constitutional jurisdiction. The power of the president would have been supreme, leading to the subordination of all other higher organs of the state to the presidency. The implementation of the principle of separation of powers involves a system of checks and balances. The highest bodies of the state, including the president, are subject to these checks and balances, indicating their equal status. Thus, the definition of the president as the highest official of the state may lead to a distorted understanding of the relationship between the president and other high-ranking bodies of the state.

Paragraph 1 of Part 2 of Article 70 of the Constitution states that the President of Kyrgyzstan “can initiate a referendum or it can be initiated by at least 300,000 voters or the majority of the total number of deputies of the Zhogorku Kenesh” (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2021). Based on the constitutional provision cited, it is important to note that the appointment of a referendum is at the discretion of the President and not a constitutional duty. It is possible for the President to block a referendum initiated by voters or the Zhogorku Kenesh for personal or political reasons.

The Statement of Justification for the Draft Law 'On the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic' proposes that “the Presidential Administration should be responsible for ensuring the activities of the Government, in order to optimize the number of state employees” (Statement of Justification, 2021).

In situations where the president holds full executive power and heads the government, but the constitution also establishes the cabinet of ministers as a collective governing body of executive power, the latter also assumes the functions of the presidential administration. Therefore, having the Administration of the President of Kyrgyzstan as a structurally separate body of state power, in addition to the Cabinet of Ministers, appears to be unnecessary. The constitutional provision in Part 2 of Article 89 states that “the Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers is the head of the Presidential Administration”, indicating that the Cabinet of Ministers performs the functions of the Presidential Administration. Chapter III of Section Three “Executive Power of the Kyrgyz Republic” does not establish any norms regarding the powers of the Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, which reflects

their role as the head of the Presidential Administration. The constitutional regulation of the Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers' status includes provisions that the President “can give instructions to the Cabinet of Ministers” and chair its sittings. This indicates that the Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers is responsible for ensuring the execution of the President's powers.

Article 70, Part 11 of the Constitution establishes that “the President exercises additional powers as provided by the Constitution and laws of the Kyrgyz Republic” (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2021). This grants the President broad authority. As the President holds a dominant position in the state mechanism, legislative expansion of the President's constitutional competence could lead to an uncontrolled increase in their power. The political situation in Kyrgyzstan is characterised by a significant issue of abuse of presidential power, as noted by the Venice Commission in 2021.

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, adopted on April 11, 2021, grants the President the power to halt the legislative process during the promulgation stage of a law. According to Article 87 of the Constitution, 'The law passed by the Zhogorku Kenesh is sent to the President for signature within 14 working days. The President signs it or returns it with objections to the Zhogorku Kenesh for reconsideration within one month of receiving the law.' If, after reconsideration, the law is approved in the previously adopted version by a two-thirds majority of all Zhogorku Kenesh deputies, it must be signed by the President within 14 working days of receipt (Venice Commission, 2021).

The act of refusing to sign a law that has been approved by a two-thirds majority of the Zhogorku Kenesh, despite the President's veto being overcome, is not a criminal offence. Therefore, the President is not obligated to sign the law passed as prescribed in Part 3 of Article 87 of the Constitution “The President may choose not to sign a law that has been approved in the previously adopted version by a majority of at least two-thirds of the total number of deputies of the Zhogorku Kenesh, even though it is prescribed in Part 3 of Article 87 of the Constitution”. One possible solution to this issue would be to include a provision in the Constitution stating that if the President fails to sign a law within the designated timeframe, which the Zhogorku Kenesh has overridden the President's veto on, the law will be considered signed and put into effect.

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, adopted on April 11, 2021, includes provisions regarding the constitutional status of the President that are considered reactionary. According to Part 6 of Article 116 of the Constitution, “the President signs the law

on the adoption of the Constitution, amendments, and additions to the Constitution” (Venice Commission, 2021).

According to the concept of constituent power, the people's constituent power is primary in relation to derivatives from it. This includes established authorities such as legislative, executive, and judicial bodies of the state. Constitutional laws that introduce new norms into the act of constituent power, the constitution, are also acts of constituent power. The President, as a representative of one of the established powers derived from the founding power, is not entitled to exercise the right of veto or the right to promulgate constitutional laws. Granting the President the power to sign constitutional laws provides an opportunity, contrary to the corresponding provision of the constitution, to impede the implementation of decisions made by the constituent power of the people by not signing the constitutional law.

The constitutional referendum of April 11, 2021 established a form of government with several fundamental shortcomings. The President of Kyrgyzstan holds a dominant position in the state mechanism, rather than a balance of 'separated powers'. The Venice Commission explicitly states that “in the case of the draft Constitution under consideration ... the principle of separation of powers is not implemented” (Venice Commission. On The Draft Constitution...). The separation of powers in such an asymmetric system creates a risk of the degradation of statehood to a state of political monocentrism (Krasnov and Shablinskij, 2008, pp. 11–12).

As there is no stable party system in Kyrgyzstan, unlike the party systems of developed democracies, the Kyrgyz government should establish the necessary conditions for the development of political parties. However, the form of government established by the constitutional referendum of April 11, 2021 does not provide political parties with the necessary incentives to develop. The form of government weakens the influence of political parties on the state mechanism as it does not establish means for their direct participation in the process of forming the government. The method of forming the Cabinet of Ministers is non-parliamentary, and the parties represented in the Zhogorku Kenesh cannot determine the political course of the government, make daily adjustments to it, exercise effective control over its activities, or hold it accountable.

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, established on April 11, 2021, does not provide any constitutional mechanisms for resolving conflicts between the President and the Zhogorku Kenesh that may arise due to the unsuccessful policies of the President-led government. These conflicts are almost inevitable when the parliamentary

majority and the President represent opposing political forces. However, the conflict between the President and the Zhogorku Kenesh cannot be resolved through either the parliamentary responsibility of the Cabinet of Ministers or the dissolution and early elections to the Zhogorku Kenesh. This is because these institutions are not recognized by the form of government established by the Constitution. The lack of constitutional mechanisms to resolve conflicts between the President and the Zhogorku Kenesh may lead to their resolution through political or forceful means.

Combining the roles of Head of State and Head of Executive Power in the President of Kyrgyzstan has an obvious consequence: the inability to ensure unity of state power. The provision in the Constitution that the President of Kyrgyzstan is responsible for the security of state power is merely a legal fiction. The president's role as head of the executive powers precludes him from performing coordination and arbitration functions. As a coordinator-arbitrator, the president must not interfere with the competence of other state authorities, violate their independence, or replace them functionally. This status requires the president to be equally exacting, neutral, and impartial towards all public authorities and their officials. The president's ability to simultaneously act as both a coordinator-arbitrator and the head of the executive branch is hindered by the motivational pull towards the latter role, due to the combination of relevant statuses. This prevents the president from fully realizing their role as a guarantor of constitutional values, coordinator of the mechanism of interaction between authorities, and mediator in state-legal conflicts. In post-Soviet presidential republics, the president has taken on the role of head of the executive branch. However, they have been unable to effectively act as a coordinator or arbitrator within the state mechanism. In the Opinion on the Draft Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic dated March 19–20, 2021, the Venice Commission directly states that the form of government established by the Law “On the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic” “implies a lack of balance between the various branches of power” and “creates a real threat to the separation of powers and the rule of law in the Kyrgyz Republic” (Venice Commission. 2021).

The constitutional structure of Kyrgyzstan acknowledges the negative outcomes of an overly powerful presidency. The government system outlined in the May 5, 1993 Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, particularly in regards to the president's excessive power and its relationship with the executive branch, bears similarities to the government system established through the April 11, 2021 referendum. It is noteworthy that the experience gained from the functioning of a presidentialized republic, established by the Constitution of May 5, 1993, did not seem to have

taught the drafters of the Law 'On the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic' anything.

The initiators of the constitutional reform argue in the Justification Note to the Draft Law that the existing system of power is inefficient and lacks mechanisms for accountability (Statement of Justification, 2020). The assertion appears to be unfounded. According to the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan dated June 27, 2010, the Government is formed through a parliamentary process and is held accountable to parliament. The Constitution establishes a form of government that enables voters to identify the responsible party for government policy results during the next Zhogorku Kenesh elections. It also allows for immediate accountability of the Government for the consequences of its policy. The government's form ensures the possibility of inline correction of its course, and the threat of parliamentary responsibility compels the Cabinet of Ministers to consider the demands of the parliamentary majority. However, the form of government established by the constitutional referendum of April 11, 2021, does not include an institution of parliamentary responsibility for the government. Instead, full responsibility for the results of government policy is assigned to the head of the executive branch, namely the President. According to Part 5 of Article 87 of the current Constitution of Kyrgyzstan: According to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (2021), "the President bears personal responsibility for the activities of the Cabinet of Ministers and the executive branch". However, it is unclear how the President can be held accountable for the results of these activities. It is important to note that the Constitution does not provide for the impeachment of the President based solely on the Cabinet of Ministers' unsuccessful political course. Article 87, Part 6 of the Constitution states that "if the Zhogorku Kenesh deems the report on the execution of the republican budget unsatisfactory, the President assumes responsibility for the members of the Cabinet of Ministers (highlighted by us)". The proponents of constitutional reform question the extent of the President's personal responsibility for the outcomes of the Cabinet of Ministers' activities. In a presidential government, the lack of parliamentary oversight means that society may have to endure ineffective policies until the next election.

It is important that the upcoming elections are not falsified and the incumbent authoritarian president does not secure re-election. However, even if a legitimate and talented presidential candidate is elected, there is no guarantee that they will have a worthy successor.

The fullness of executive power endowed to the president is an unsurmountable relic of monarchism. This is because the reproduction of this regressive and archaic

attribute of the monarchical organization of state power in a republican form of government entails the same consequences. The identification of the president with the executive branch should be considered a reactionary interpretation of the principle of separation of powers.

It is important to note that the rule of law does not allow for the irresponsible exercise of power (Venice Commission, 2020). Therefore, any increase in the president's means of influence on the legislative and executive authorities must be accompanied by a proportional increase in their constitutional and legal responsibility. Additionally, the procedure for removing the President of Kyrgyzstan from office, as established by Article 73 of the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan dated April 11, 2021, indicates the complexity of its actual implementation.

Part 4 of Article 73 of the Constitution states that “the President may be removed from office if the Zhogorku Kenesh accuses them and the Prosecutor General confirms the presence of signs of a crime in the President's actions” (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2021). However, according to paragraph 1 of Part 5 of the Constitution, the President appoints and dismisses the Prosecutor General. While the President exercises personnel powers “with the consent of the Zhogorku Kenesh”, the Prosecutor General's dependence on the President raises doubts about their ability to make an impartial decision in an impeachment procedure that could lead to the removal of the President from office. It is suggested that the Supreme Court should be responsible “for determining “the presence of signs of a crime in the actions of the President. Members of the Supreme Court, who are appointed by the Zhogorku Kenesh before reaching the age limit” (as stated in Part 6 of Article 95 of the Constitution), will act independently of the President.

The impeachment procedure is complex, and it is important to note that the Prosecutor General, who is appointed by the President, cannot give an opinion on the presence of signs of a crime in the President's actions (as stated in Part 5 of Article 73 of the Constitution). According to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (2021), the removal of the President from office requires a two-thirds majority vote from all Zhogorku Kenesh deputies within three months of the accusation. According to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (2021), the removal of the President from office requires a two-thirds majority vote from all Zhogorku Kenesh deputies within three months of the accusation. Failure to reach a decision within this timeframe results in the rejection of the accusation. Therefore, the President will not be removed from office if, within three months of the indictment against them, the Prosecutor General fails to take the necessary action.

There is an issue related to the impeachment of the President. According to Part 2 of Article 73 of the Constitution, “the President can be removed from office for violating the Constitution...” (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2021). However, the President can only be dismissed from office if the Prosecutor General concludes that “there are signs of a crime in the President's actions” (highlighted by us). It is evident that not every action of the President that violates the Constitution, such as refusing to sign a law adopted by the Zhogorku Kenesh, in respect of which the President's veto was overridden, or refusing to call a referendum to approve amendments to the Constitution, entails criminal liability.

Therefore, the form of government enshrined in the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan of April 11, 2021 significantly reduces the level of accountability of the government to society.

One issue with the government structure established by the Constitution is the inadequate legal regulation of the constitutional jurisdiction body's status. Paragraph 6 of Article 95 of the Constitution states that 'Judges of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court are elected before reaching the age limit' (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2021).

Unlike courts of general jurisdiction, members of the bodies of special constitutional control must be appointed and elected for a certain, relatively short period of time. Despite the theory accepted by constitutional law that the profession of a judge requires special knowledge and experience gained in the long-term practice process, but this rule does not apply to members of constitutional jurisdiction. In some countries, law limits their terms of office to a certain age, but this approach is not typical in most democratic countries. In order to ensure the political neutrality and impartiality of the constitutionally competent body, the legislation should limit, together with the establishment of a certain age limit for the term of office of its members, their term of office for a certain period. The requirement that members of the constitutional control body are appointed or elected for a single term of office corresponds to the same objective.

A major flaw in Kyrgyzstan's Constitution of 11 April 2021 is the absence of provisions on the number of members of the Constitutional Court and its procedures for formation. Article 97 of Article 7 of the Constitution states that “the composition and procedures for the establishment of the Constitutional Court and the procedures for the implementation of constitutional proceedings are determined by the Constitution” (Constitution of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, 2021).

It is of fundamental importance to determine the size of the body of constitutional jurisdiction and regulate the procedure for its formation directly in the constitution.

Failure to do so creates the possibility of legislative changes in the number of judges of the Constitutional Court of Kyrgyzstan and the procedure for its formation, which may be influenced by political interests. Thus, individuals and political entities may attempt to influence the Constitutional Court to make decisions that align with their interests. Furthermore, if the process for establishing the Constitutional Court of Kyrgyzstan is solely regulated by legislation, there is no assurance that this process will not have a significant impact on the Court's activities by the dominant authority in the state mechanism, namely the President of Kyrgyzstan. It is no coincidence that the vast majority of constitutions in countries with a European model of constitutional control establish the size of the constitutional jurisdiction body and determine the procedure for its formation.

The determination of the number of members and the procedure for the formation of the Constitutional Court of Kyrgyzstan is not immutable in its legal status. However, the "hard" procedure of amendment of the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan suggests that the number of judges of the Constitutional Court and the procedure for its formation can be optimised in accordance with the interests of society as a whole, rather than in accordance with the interests of individuals or political forces.

CONCLUSIONS

The form of government established by the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan on April 11, 2021, is potentially harmful to democracy. The Venice Commission has pointed out that "such a form of government can easily develop into an authoritarian one" (Venice Commission, 2021).

The concentration of power in the hands of the President means that the form of government lacks effective checks and balances. Without the necessary institutional restrictions on the President's power, the form of government encourages uncontrolled functional hypertrophy.

The success of democratic reforms in Kyrgyzstan will depend to a decisive extent on the personal characteristics of the President due to the transition to this form of government. However, relying solely on the power of the president is a risky means of achieving democratic change. As demonstrated by world practice, including that of many post-Soviet states, combining the roles of head of state and head of executive power in the person of the president can lead to authoritarianism. Concentrating power in the hands of the Kyrgyzstan President will likely reinforce the authoritarian traditions already present in Kyrgyz society.

The combination of the roles of head of state and head of executive power in the person of the president is a regressive genetic trait inherited by the presidential

republic from absolute monarchy. In parliamentary and mixed republics, the democratic principles of state power organization have led to the replacement of sole leadership with collegial executive power. In the modern era of republican government, it is becoming less common for one person to hold both the position of head of state and head of executive power in a 'pure form'. This combination is unnatural for the principle of popular sovereignty. The combination of the president's roles as head of state and head of executive power can lead to authoritarianism in presidential republics. This is evident in countries where the president is the head of the executive branch, both in practice and often in law, resulting in a phenomenon known as super-presidency. The initiators of the constitutional reform in Kyrgyzstan should be reminded that the empowerment of Hitler with the powers of both Reich Chancellor and Reich President paved the way for him to absolute power and the country to totalitarianism. Can the initiators of the constitutional reform name a post-Soviet state where having the president serve as both head of state and head of executive power has led to the formation of a fully developed civil society and a democratic political direction? It is worth noting that in Western and Central European countries, adherence to the principles of democratic state building has led to the rejection of the presidential form of government and significant constitutional limitations on the power of the head of state.

The excessive presidentialization of the form of government in Kyrgyzstan may lead to the development of super-presidentialism and the erosion of democratic institutions that have not yet been strengthened. The authoritarian nature of the government may also provoke revolutionary changes in the country's political system.

To prevent the transformation of the President's power into a personal dictatorship in Kyrgyzstan, it is crucial to maintain and increase the level of influence of the Parliament on the executive branch. Additionally, creating constitutional conditions for the development of a super-presidency can provide valuable political experience for building a democratic state in the future.

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THE THREATENING SHADOW OF SOVIET ARCHIVES IN CONTEMPORARY GEORGIA

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Abstract

The act of unveiling Soviet archives stood as a key commitment made by successive Georgian governing bodies following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the notion of transparency faces significant challenges, leading to ongoing discussions within relevant circles. Despite claims of openness, assessments by researchers suggest that Soviet archives in Georgia remain somewhat restricted. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the distinctive policies governing the management of Soviet archives and their primary influencers in present-day Georgia.

Key words: *Politics of memory, Soviet archives, Transparency, post-Soviet Georgia,*

INTRODUCTION

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, one of the most requested endeavors in newly independent Georgia was the initiation of the lustration process. The popular and various interest groups predominantly voiced their support for this initiative. By the adopted memory policy, there exists a noticeable divergence in viewpoints regarding lustration within the offices of the Georgian president. Nevertheless, the primary argument put forth by each successive government to justify sidestepping a thorough lustration process was the disorderly nature of the

Soviet archives in Georgia (Karaia, 1997). Similar to other post-Soviet nations, Georgia encountered significant challenges across various facets of societal operation, including underdeveloped political institutions, socio-economic turmoil, political discord, and more. In such a milieu, the quest for transparency in Soviet archives was not a paramount concern for society. Nevertheless, it intermittently garnered attention, particularly in the wake of emerging security threats.

The concept of archives in Georgia emerged in the 20th century of XX. When Georgia's Democratic Republic was established in 1918, the nascent government endeavored to establish regulations, leading to the creation of a central historical archive in 1920. However, the country's independence was short-lived, lasting a mere three years, and the institutionalization of archives took shape during the Soviet era in adherence to Soviet protocols. In the development of the archive, we mean gathering the archival collections, establishing rules of preservation, and defining the role of the keeper of the archives.

The locution "archival revolution" has been used by historians and social scientists as a shorthand term to denote the qualitative leap in access to Soviet archival institutions since the disintegration of the USSR into fifteen separate states in 1991 (Kragh, Heldung, 375, 2015). However, this revolution did not happen in Georgia. In this study, the Soviet archival management system is considered part of the ruling system, a unity of closed, untransparent procedures, perceived archives as guardians of files repository. According to the respondents, even in the Soviet period, granting access to part of the archival records through patronage was possible, which was the general way to pass the barriers. However, some archives were entirely closed and inaccessible, including the intelligence service and military archives (In-depth interview with the former representative of the archive management 12.11.2022).

Due to how it was developed, there is an expectation that the Georgian State Archives' institutional memory wears Soviet influence. The archive as an institution and archivists as the service providers do not have experience working in different political systems; however, in the Soviet era, upgrading this practice to a democratic one was a prolonged process.

When we speak about the opening archives, we mean opening data counting from entering the eleventh army of Russia in Georgia in 1921 until regaining independence in 1991. Another essential fact that needs to be considered is that according to the official data, due to the chaotic situation and civil war in the 90th of XX, only 20% of the archival materials are left. It was caused by two reasons: 1) In particular, in 1988, after the uprising of the national movement in

Georgia, one of the main arenas of the protesters' gathering was a square in front of the Soviet Security Committee Office, where the corresponding archival files were kept. There were cases of invasion protesters in the archive office and carrying away some materials during the protests. To prevent future invasion of the archive data, the officials from Moscow decided to store them away. For this reason, approximately 800 bags packed with the secret files were sent to Russia in - Smolensk. Later, part of the shipped materials, especially the personal files of the current intelligence agents, were destroyed in Smolensk; another part was returned to the country (In-depth interview with the representative of the former archive management 15.02.2023). 2) On December 22, 1991, the civil war started in Tbilisi. The security committee building, where existing archive materials were kept, was burned in the fire. According to the data, the balance of the security committee was 230,000 archive files; approximately 80 % were destroyed, and only 20,000 were left (Public Broadcasting 18.11.2018). Precisely this: 20 % of the archival materials left is a subject that evokes fear or uncertainty in independent Georgia. Access to the archive material and its potential usage were two main parts of the debates between President Gamsakhurdia and his opponents – primarily representatives of the intelligentsia. The term "KGB agent "was the prominent epithet for blaming. In their oral interviews, respondents -former representatives of security bodies describe the interests of the political elite in checking the names of the opponents in the soviet security files and using this data against them (Sakartvelos Dabadeba, 2022). The absence of the archive regulatory legislation was another obstacle to the archive modernization process.

The archive management system has gone through the hard way of development in Georgia. Every government, purpose or not, is influenced by the archive development process. The period from 1990 until the Rose Revolution in 2003 was the hardest, according to every source reviewed during the research. In the 90th of XX, archive keepers worked in the frozen buildings using individual heating facilities. The existing infrastructural and material shortages also influenced the researchers. Archives were almost empty. This factor also influenced the process of dealing with the past.

During Eduard Shevarnadze's presidency, a few infrastructure projects were initiated; archive collections (e.g., emigrant and Harvard archive record collections) were added to the archive collection, but the significant change toward the soviet period files had not happened. However, the treatment of the archives experienced a notable shift after the Rose Revolution, during the Presidency of Mikheil Saakashvili, and his administration developed a more or less determined policy

regarding memory. The archival data was then deemed to play a crucial role in this context. Changes in legislation, inviting researchers, develop research divisions within the archive were notable steps during the period. In 2012, after the parliamentary elections, the new coalition government of the "Georgian Dream" Party also changed its policy by initiating the law of Personal data and its follow-up regulations.

Officially, the state archives in Georgia are open (The Law on the National Archival Fund and the National Archives. Article 22). However, the researchers and activists have different perspectives regarding this topic. According to them, one of the main obstacles to conducting research on the soviet past in Georgia is an unorganized and untransparent state archive system. Correspondingly, there arises the question – what type of policy of unarchiving the Soviet archives do we have in contemporary Georgia, and what are its main determinants?

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Archives and other communicational resources, such as oral and ritual traditions, help transfer information and sustain memory from generation to generation (Foote, K. 1990). Foucault examines that society's truth and reality are created by the forces that are the power and have the potential to develop their "regime of truth" (Foucault, 1975). That means that powers are engaged in the hegemonic knowledge development process, which relies on archive development and management. With the emergence of the modern state, archives became the storehouse for the material from which national memories were constructed' (Featherstone, 2006, p. 591). At the same time, it is a new organizational model, as it also marks a crucial turning point in how the preservation and interpretation of culturally significant material are understood and institutionally framed (Robinson, 413, 2012).

Correspondingly, archive management and its priorities are crucial for memory study as a scientific discipline. The emerging term "memory institution" and archives alongside museums and libraries are essential in memory policy development (Cathro, 2001; Dupont, 2007; Tanackovic & Badurina, 2009). As Dupont once mentioned, "It is understood that libraries, archives, and museums can be grouped conceptually around the theme of memory because they all exist to make a better future by helping us remember and understand the past" (Dupont, 2007, p. 13).

Considering memory as a social concept, mediated through complex mechanisms of conscious manipulation by elites and unconscious absorption by members of society (Halbwachs, 1980), the archives can represent the primary source of a selection of historical facts. As much as post-Soviet countries started to deal with

the past and develop new identities that mainly confronted the previous soviet ones, the meaning of the archive for the process mentioned above was central. Scientific literature shows that the architecture of the political system influences the archive usage level and possibilities (Pell S., 2015; Sieber S., 2016). Hence, the monopolist access to the archives gives the powerholders the potential to create corresponding political discourse, monitor the process of remembrance and forgetting, and create a so-called "strategic" narrative, "representations of a sequence of events and identities, a communicative tool through which political actors – usually elites – attempt to give determined meaning to the past, present and future to achieve political objectives" (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 3). The archives are sources of development "history from the below," which mainly is essential in case of totalitarian countries, where the official history was manipulated as part of the propaganda (Graziosi A., 1999). In case of limited access to the archival data, developing an alternative narrative by the societal groups takes time and effort (Wertsch et al., 2009).

Governmental monopoly on the archive records creates the potential to develop the collective memory construction process as exclusive, nontransparent, and top-down oriented. Opening archives can also be discussed from the perspective of the rising level of democratization as much as it demands transparency, accountability, and participatory processes. Archives could serve as a democratic instrument by devolving access to data to the general public and empowering groups confronting identity insecurity. The digitalization of the archives is seen as an indicator of democracy because, in the digitalized version, archival materials do not "hold custody of the records as they would in private repositories" but "work towards the democratic interests of the general public by entitling citizens access to sizable databases and thereby enhancing state accountability" (Japanwala Z. 2021).

Opening archives in post-totalitarian countries is a "brave" decision because, from another perspective, archives represent threats, as it "evolved an official bureaucratic function, providing 'raw' content that could be mined, interpreted and manipulated by scholars, governments and other external users for, among other things, the production of historical narratives" (Robinson, 418, 2012). Correspondingly, scholars identify various challenges in the soviet archive opening process. Among these challenges, the main concerns were made toward the commercialization and politicization of archival materials (Hagen M., 1993; Mickiewicz A., 1993), which, as it seems from the collected data, are the main obstacles to opening the Soviet archives in Georgia.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research fieldwork was conducted in 2022–2023 and aimed to analyze contemporary Georgia's "unfinished" memory projects. According to our vision, one of the "unfinished" initiatives is to open the Soviet archives. The main goal of the research was to analyze archival memory policy in Georgia, its priorities and "self-preservation" strategies, and how researchers and advocacy makers are eligible to influence the policy implementation process.

The research data was collected by using qualitative research methodology. Within the framework of the desk research, we have analyzed printed periodicals from 1990–2022. We have selected four newspapers: "Sakartvelos Respublika" (Georgian Republic), "Eri" (Nation), "Ganatleba" (Education), and "Droni" (Period). Fifteen articles from these periodicals devoted to managing archival data in post-soviet Georgia were selected and analyzed. Besides, to track the discussions and debates regarding archive management, Facebook pages, and YouTube channels were analyzed by the corresponding actors (researchers, politicians, etc.). Another source of information was the TV show "Born of Georgia." Fourteen series have been analyzed where the developments of archives and related institutions were narrated. At the same time, eight in-depth interviews were conducted with the representatives of the former and current archives management, historians, and researchers included in the open archive advocacy campaigns. One of the main aspects of selecting respondents was their personal or institutional experience and attitudes.

3. THE MAIN BARRIERS TO OPENING SOVIET ARCHIVES

After the Rose Revolution in Georgia, reforms and changes started in every field of societal life, including the archive. President Saakashvili declared the policy of rejecting previous presidents' legacies as old-style and ineffective (Saakashvili M., 2004). The young politicians were invited to the governmental bodies, which would clean the system from soviet influences. In this context, President Saakashvili described the importance of opening soviet archives to screen collaborators as the potential threat to the reforms and state-building process. Moreover, he mentioned that he used to see the names of the current intelligentsia in the lists of collaborators in the archives when he was a Ministry of Justice of Georgia. Because the previous governments had not passed ahead or had no will to open archives, now it is time to start this process. He commanded the new minister of justice, Zurab Adeishvili, to open the archive and make it possible to screen the wrongdoers (Dilis Gazeti, 2004). After this command, some steps were made toward fulfilling the

promise; among them were modernizing infrastructure, granting easy access to the records, and activating the archive as a research institution (preparing publications, organizing exhibitions and presentations, etc.). The using archival data or inviting researchers was especially observable in 2006–2012 when Georgian-Russian relations spoiled and the memory policy was oriented to create a collective memory of Soviet occupation (Karaia, 2016). However, researchers underlined that due to these initiatives being part of the occupation project and mainly oriented to discovering data that would benefit the strategic narrative, they have not supported the development of modern European standards of open archives (In-depth interview with the Soviet history researcher 2.12.2022). Moreover, Saakashvili government also changed the conception of the archive from the memory repository to the donor of information as created by the National Agency of Public Registry. Correspondingly, data essential to ensure public services (e.g. registration of the property) are easily accessible.

After changing Government in 2012, the new Government of the "Georgian Dream" Party changed the priorities of memory policy. They started normalizing relations with the Russian Federation and rejected the previous strategic narrative of victims of Soviet occupation. This type of undetermined attitude influences the conditions of the archive policy. Moreover, the Government's efforts to modernize archive infrastructure are observable. However, debates on the worsening access to the soviet archives are activating time by time.

While evaluating the condition of the archives in Georgia, researchers were concerned they were "mostly closed, "not open, "or "partially opened, "They are modernized Soviet-type archives and part of the archives or collections are more or less accessible; other parts exist still in the Soviet order (In-depth interview with the advocates of the open archive 10.03.2023). According to the respondents, the main argument of this type of evaluation is that the legislation permits access; however, its preconditions, bylaws, and infrastructure create boundaries and limit it. At the same time, respondents highlight a worsening tendency regarding the transparency of the archival collections considering the previous years: If last year was notable readiness for opening, it decreased during the years, which, according to the activists, is the worst part of the problem: "those days as Saakashvili's and Georgian Dreamers at the first years of the governance attempted to create at least the reflection of opening archive records; however, it is last 5–7 years the legislation development have been sealed to ensure the environment where researches are paused or postponed or stop and keep the tabu on the XX century" (In-depth interview with the researcher of the Soviet past 20.03.2023).

Among the reasons why this type of condition has been developed, the following were highlighted:

PROCEDURAL LIMITATIONS: Following the Rose Revolution reforms, registration as a researcher in the archive was a time-saving procedure: "It was used to check applicants' ID cards and other documents. If everything were in order, the access would be granted. Fifteen minutes was the time limit for the procedure (In-depth interview with the former representative of the state archive management 5.04.2023). However, the procedure changed after 2015: "The application evaluation time increased to five days to check the information on researchers (ibid). Another barrier is the shortened duration of access permission, which has been shorted from a year to three months, which, from the researcher's perspective, is a potential possibility to cut down researchers' access to the archive if they do not "behave wisely "(In-depth interview with the researcher of the Soviet past 20.03.2023). The researchers highlighted that this type of bureaucratic complexity has negatively influenced both the researchers and archive administrations because of increased paperwork and waste of time (In-depth interview with the former representative of the state archive management 5.04.2023). Respondents highlighted existing limitations for the researchers of their nationality. At the same time, there is observable aggression toward revising historical facts and attempting different interpretations. In this situation, the answer is not publishing the counter materials but mainly restricting access to them.

LEGISLATION: Even though archives in Georgia are regulated by a single law (the Law On the National Archival Fonds and the National Archives), various archives, except the National one, have established their regulations or charters of internal order. Therefore, different archives have different working conditions and no unified strategy for physically storing documents, keeping records, processing search queries, and using documents for scientific issues (IDFI, 2018).

For example, within the framework of the Internal Affairs Ministry of Georgia, special divisions have been developed. According to order #150/05.04.2007 of the President of Georgia, the Communist Party archive was granted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs archive governance. This division united the archives of the Soviet Party and the Soviet Security Service archives. According to the official discourse and website (<https://police.ge/ge/useful-information/shss-arqivi?sub=428>), they are open based on the Ministry of Internal Affairs order issued in 2009. However, the order is secret, and it is unknown which documents are available and which are not (In-depth interview with the Soviet history researcher 2.12.2022). Most of my

respondents attempted to get access to the order but were unsuccessful. The different bylaws create challenges in inter-institution archives like the Ministry of Education or Justice archives. All of them collect data and send it to the national archive. However, the detailed regulation of what type of documents are stored or destroyed is not precise.

The primary laws from Georgian legislation regulating the aspects of archives are the law of Personal Data Protection and another norm of the law of national archive funds and national archives. According to them, after the person's death, to use his personal data, you have to get permission from his family member or start research after 30 years after his death (Law of Personal Data Protection, article. To access the criminal law files and conduct research, 75 years of distance is required (The law of National Archive Funds and National Archive. Article 22, B). All the above mentioned norms show that it is impossible to research developments after the 50th of the XX century. At the same time, when requesting the files, researchers have to prove that the persons included in the files are dead or executed. However, identifying or proofing is impossible because archive management covers the delivered personal information. Therefore, there arises the question of what is the duty of the archive keepers: are they responsible for keeping documents in a proper condition, or are they accountable for maintaining the contents as well; because in the current situation some archive keepers sometimes attempt to keep records out of sight of researchers and take a monopoly on the knowledge (In-depth interview with the Soviet history researcher 2.12.2022).

At the same time, respondents highlight a worsening tendency regarding the transparency of the archival collections considering the previous years: If last year was notable readiness for opening, it decreased during the years, which, according to the activists, is the worst part of the problem: "those days as Saakashvili's government as Georgian Dreamers at the first years of the governance, attempted to create at least the reflection of opening archive records; however, it is last 5–7 years the legislation development have been sealed to ensure the environment where researches are paused or postponed or stop and keep the tabu on the XX century" (In-depth interview with the researcher of the Soviet past 20.03.2023).

DIGITALIZATION OF THE ARCHIVE FILES: In 2015, it was declared that the National Archive of Georgia moved to digital format. According to the official version, it was part of the "Open Governance Program" fulfilling requirements" (IDFI, 2018). From a broader perspective, this initiative must solve various problems and support transparent access in this field. At least researchers would get open access, and archive administration would secure files from wear out or

destruction. Moreover, archive keepers would re-use scanned documents; archive records would become more systematized. However, the way of the implementation upset all actors and became "another obstacle for the researchers to harvest archive files" (In-depth Interview with the advocators of the open archive 10.03.2023).

According to the general understating, digitalization means issuing requested files on the scanned version. Researchers will be charged if they request access to the original files. At the same time, scanned archive files were not sent to researchers.

"The rule said that to order the copy of archive documents, you have to visit the institution to order files; after three or four days, when the copies would be ready, you have to visit the archive anew, find a free computer to get access to the digitalized copies. The archive software was inconvenient for a long time while working and usually is out of space. If you request additional files to be copied, you need to erase the previous one from the system because there is no room for the previous one due to the limited space. Then we (researchers) requested the management to make accessible already digitalized files, but the answer was negative" (In-depth interview with the researcher, involved in the advocacy campaign 10.03.2023).

The digitalization process was challenged for archive management as well. They said more than four days were needed to digitalize the requested files. Another challenge was arranging scanned documents by protocol; however, it did not happen because they needed more human and technical resources. Correspondingly, digitalization could have been more chaotic with listing and archiving. Finally, archive management declined the procedure and returned to delivering the original materials. The challenges of digitalization become more visible during the COVID 19 pandemic, because restrictions as a necessary measure to contain the spread of the virus negatively influenced the archive working process in Georgia. According to the World Health Organization guidelines, workspaces were closed, and remote services for archive material delivery were unavailable, as previously noted. Consequently, the collection of research data was halted nationwide. Despite the conclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resumption of everyday activities, no changes were observed, and the archive system continued to operate as before for a long time.

REDUCING OF THE WORKING SPACE IN THE ARCHIVE BUILDINGS: Before the modernization of the archive infrastructure, the archives' working spaces were distributed based on the archive collection; each collection had its own working space. Uniting all working spaces was justified by renovating it. However, in reality,

the space was shortened. Correspondingly, "Now visitors are not guaranteed to find a free spot to work there" (In-depth Interview with the researcher 12.02.2023).

At the same time, the former KGB archive was transferred from the Police Academy building to the Academy of the Internal Affairs of Georgia. In a small building, there is no separate working space for visitors. They have to share the room with the archivists. The two computers available are usually busy; if the third researcher appears, he/she will be extra". This regulation (working in the archive space) is nonsense because researchers are working on the digitalized files in these computers. Correspondingly, It would be a great option to do the same job from home" (In-depth Interview with the researcher 12.02.2023).

The same problem appears to be in the Communist Party's archive. The archive was abandoned to destroy when the government sold the building of the IMEL (Institute of the Marks, Engels, and Lenin) in 2007. The archive supporters and activists transported the records to the office of Electronic and other communication (In-depth Interview with the former representative of the state archive management 5.04.2023). Nowadays, This archive exists in hazardous conditions, surrounded by electronic devices, and under the permanent threat of fire. Another challenge is using this data for the researchers: a tiny working room for visitors makes the entire repository unfriendly for the working. "This unique repository is on the four floor; the lower three floors are full of the communication apparatus and cables and create a good condition for the fire" (In-depth Interview with the researcher 12.02.2023).

A HIGH PRICE FOR COPING ARCHIVE RECORDS: This issue, especially, is valid for the former KGB and Communist Party archives. According to the researchers, "These prices make it impossible to harvest and work on the data secured in the Georgian archives, or you are forced to reduce the research area" (In-depth interview with the researcher of the Soviet past 20.03.2023). The agreement between the archive and Hoover Institute provided this type of charge. The management set the price for the Hoover Institute, which later spread to the Georgian scholars". The archive management representatives confirmed that one of the main reasons for selecting that price range was precisely the above mentioned argument (In-depth interview with the former representative of the state archive management 5.04.2023). Considering the country's social and economic situation, only the scholars supported by the financed research projects can afford to copy the archive files.

4. CIVIL ORGANISATIONS ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS AND THEIR STRATEGIES

The depiction above of the archival policy highlights the assertions put forth by researchers and civic activists engaged in historical research. Their aim is to bring

attention to this matter and place it on the political agenda. Nonetheless, the endeavor has proven to be a complex undertaking.

Discussing advocacy campaign implementation for opening archives, we consider two Civil Society Organizations representatives. They are SOVLAB – Soviet Past Research Laboratory, the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), and a few independent researchers are also observable.

During the advocacy campaign, the activists and organizations collaborated with various stakeholders, and some even negotiated with political parties – a practice uncommon among Georgian civil movements. The primary aim of all actors was to ensure unrestricted access to archive files. During the advocacy campaign, there are the following characteristics observable: These organizations do not function as a unified coalition in this domain; each maintains its distinct perspective to achieve a goal and the involvement of partners in the process. The primary point of contention revolves around including political parties in these proceedings. Furthermore, the divergence arises from the fact that these organizations are affiliated with diverse projects and donors, with their respective requirements and sustainability objectives shaping their behavior patterns.

Among the strategies used by Civil Society Organizations, we can identify judicial and nonjudicial ones. These strategies were transformed based on their understanding of the problem's insides. The common factor of the advocator organization is that at the initial stage, researchers thought that the problem of the system's bureaucratization determined the archive's closing. "We thought that they do not know how to run the institution in a better way or they do not know our (researchers) perspective, and if we make them informed, they will review their rules" (In-depth Interview with the representative of SOV lab. 18.03.2023). This attitude can be explained by the vision of the donors (mostly German ones), who have Western European experience dealing with the system archives and consider the possibility of its transfer to Georgian reality.

Evaluating the abovementioned strategy, nowadays, advocacy makers call it a "Waste of time" because "at the beginning of the campaign, archive managers and decision makers did not enroll in the process; after our massive effort, we managed to make them attend meetings, but later, they were more aggressive than ever" (In-depth Interview with the representative of SOV lab. 20.03.2023). Correspondingly, this initiative has not found support from the governmental circle.

After failing the campaign of cooperation with the archive management, the advocacy strategy moved its interest toward raising awareness among the members

of society. At that stage, Civil Society Organizations attempted to spread information by posting videos on social networks on existing conditions in archives, their challenges and peculiarities, and organizing discussions with the participation of various stakeholders and meetings with the representatives of civil society organizations, academia, political circles, etc. The campaign's primary goal was to raise society's awareness and make them believe that this problem exists, influences various topics of societal life, and needs to be solved.

A critical part of the advocacy campaign was the collaboration of the political parties¹. Regarding this decision, advocators had diverse attitudes. Some choose the opposition one, while others avoid it due to the unwilling affiliation and potential negative influence from the ruling party, which has majority seats on the legislative body. The SOV Lab's idea of collaboration with the opposition political party "The European Georgia" aimed to register an initiative to improve archive policy in the parliament, ease personal protection law, and allow researchers to photocopy archive files. Two parliamentary committees proved the initiative, first the financial and then the juridical. This type of initiative's success "switched the alarm in the system" (In-depth Interview with the representative of SOV lab. 25.03.2023), and they developed counterarguments. Concretely, the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Internal Affairs representatives addressed parliament and asked to reject the abovementioned changes. Due to governmental resistance, the initiative has failed.

The same faith had the initiative of the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information in the parliament (N1-7153/19; 10.04.2019), which, besides the two things mentioned above (ease the law of personal protection and allow researchers to photocopy archive files), additionally demanded shortening the date of registration of the researchers in an archive and publicizing the list of the destructed or lost archive records. They attempted cooperation not with a single or opposition political party but with the entire parliament; however, the initiative, like the previous one, has failed.

Advocators, besides the collaboration, the society and governmental bodies also attempted to use judiciary resources. For example, the SOV lab applied to the court to cover information in the archive catalogs of the rehabilitation cases of the Soviet repression victims (Gvadzabia M. 2020). However, this direction of the advocacy was unsuccessful as well.

¹ We must mention that the movements in Georgia do not accept collaboration with political parties, especially with the opposition, because they would be affiliated with the opposition side, and it will close the potential collaboration possibilities with the decision-makers.

Evaluating the advocacy outcomes, activists highlight the main factors influencing the process. The primary is a lack of interest in the archive data and research, which is affected by a lack of deliberative process toward dealing with the soviet past and educational system, where the research component is under development (In-depth Interview with the researcher 12.02.2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the aforementioned data, it can be inferred that there exists a disparity between the official and societal interpretations of open archives.

In the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there emerged an anticipation for the unveiling of Soviet archives, rendering them accessible and transparent. Yet, this aspiration was accompanied by apprehensions of potential disharmony. Such a mindset endures to this day. Amidst these concerns, another pertinent argument pertains to external threats. To the political system, the archive gives a monopoly to control the information. The general argument for this type of decision was to ensure state security. However, it is hard to understand why most data are included in this type of category.

On the road to democratization, one of the main aspects are effective governance and transparency of the data. The prior law on archives declares them open; however, subordinated regulations create additional barriers. In the legislation, there is the possibility of finding gaps that give interested persons the possibility of manipulation and interpretation. Some notable cases of that type of manipulation are granting permission for the work in an archive, infrastructural challenges, restrictions on making photocopies, higher fees for making copies, etc.

Besides, the activists' attempt to open the topic-opening archives can't gather social attention, which can be explained by the fact that thorough the Georgia's independent history this topic is not popular in the social and political agenda despite the activists' attempts. This can be explained by the fact that every initiative to construct the collective memory in Georgia aimed to spread and internalize the official master narrative. This process has not promoted deliberative processes, including research in the archives, discussions, etc.

Researchers and Civil Society Organizations interested in the open archive cannot manage to uniting resources to make the resistance effective and result oriented. Moreover, developing distinguished strategies by the advocators is not a precondition to success in the archive opening process. Correspondingly, in independent Georgia, the the archive as an institution that uses a self-defense

system for preservation and do not follow upgrade process as it is declared in the official discourse.

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**EXPLORATION OF AN EMPLOYABILITY PLATFORM
FOR THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY OF GEORGIA
THROUGH SYNERGY OF THE POTENTIAL ACTORS:
WHAT DO THEY THINK AND WHAT CAN THEY NOT
REGULATE?**

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Abstract

The research paper is based on seeking the interrelationship of points of view between academics, graduates, and employers and is attempting to analyse the main aspects of graduate employability skills development according to the "supply-demand" regulation between HEIs and the modern job market. It considers an approach to finding a new higher education trend. The central and main achievement of results is an innovative approach to the challenge of change study programmes through the involvement of research components in the subject area of specialization, which will allow HEIs to respond to gaps in the supply of skilled graduates to meet high-growth competitive job market needs.

Key words: *Higher Education and employers – Face-to-face actors, “Supply and Demand” and job market, a platform for exploration and synergy, the teaching of research components in practice.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, in the era of ICT development, it is not enough to have a degree with good grades; what do employers need? The interest is in promoting graduate employability through the core skills, which are: common skills, problem-solving skills, using new technology skills, creativity, critical thinking, and decision-making skills. Since 1990, interesting approaches from higher education institutions (HEIs) have addressed employability by introducing courses concerned with promoting graduates' employability and suggesting employability skills by requiring the job market and employers. The increased demand is growing rapidly for higher qualifications, with the job market demand based on ICT skills requirements. The OECD (2022) has developed different skill frameworks that support an understanding of the skills that are important for students. Furthermore, the important approach is to consider the labour markets under ICT development that change job market requirements, but its problem cannot be considered without the content of the teaching of ‘Research and Research in Practice’ in HEIs and the influence of research components studied by subjects area on graduates as job seekers to the job market ranges in the frame of the interrelationship between HEIs and the job market requirements, as are:

- How do we consider the implementation and integration of research competencies into knowledge creation for job market requirements?
- How do we want to transform a real learning environment for graduates employability?
- How do we teach to enhance students' career prospects during their studies at university?

1.1. KEY FINDINGS IN THE RESEARCH LITERATURE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEIs, GRADUATES, AND EMPLOYERS’SKILLS DEMAND

There is considered research literature that is focused on skills demand in the labor market that may help graduates move between skills, job seekers, employment, and carrier. It is relevant when job skills are subject to changes day-to-day. because the world economy changes systematically. By David H. et al (2013) academics are skeptical to incorporate job market skills into the teaching process through

enriching study programs, but Knight and York (2002) argue that the curricula and course contents can be designed for employability skills development. It is the challenge of globalization, too, as indicated by Mary Kwar, (2011). At the time the implications of a labor market can be considered as a reason for unemployment. Economic and Social Councils (2011) observed the problem in labor markets and the results were discussed as a discrepancy between job market requirements with the growing needs and graduates' skills formation by Higher Education Institutions. The frame of the employer's perspective gives an interesting direction with aims (Julio Hernández-March, et al, 2011).

Universities and their relationship with the labor market is an important aspects. Still, the excessive number of university graduates without modern job market requirements is a serious reason for the high unemployment of graduates because global labor markets are segmented (Brown, et al, 2011). Nicolescu et al (2009) indicated that the job markets need high-quality and talented workers and HEIs have to think about this requirement. Some authors have moved to understand of graduate employability and employers requirements which included contextual factors (Rothfell and Arnold, 2007):

- The student's skills and abilities;
- The labor market's demand in academic performance by the student's subject field.

A relation between the research on finding employment for university graduates and the possibility of reaching an expected job position is really by the soft skills required by the labor market (Hana Stojanová and Veronika Blašková, 2014) but the views of employers and graduates are different and this problem is under discussion between HEIs and companies (Kuriaki Matsouka; Dimitrios M. Mihail 2016).

An important question on the integration of research and research in practice competencies into knowledge creation through higher educational science and subject knowledge under labor market requirements becomes more and more competitive. In the frame of discussions about competitiveness, this concept considers the question more globally: What are high-quality graduates for the job market and how does the HEI develop graduates' knowledge with the required skills? (Nora Bruning; Patricia Mangeol, 2020). Today, understanding competitiveness has reached an interesting phase and its indicator can be measured, in terms of labor market skills that can be considered as potential skills (Tristan Hooley 2021). But on the other side, it is not possible to assess how the HE system considers

graduates as job market seekers. The efficiency of graduates in the job market demands knowledge formation according to the employers' requirements (Mekvabidze R., 2016) as follows:

- Improvement of information about the demand of job markets;
- Improvement of the educational components of research by the study subjects area.

Mahbub Sarkar, et al, (2016) under the project (GEMS) seeks employers' views on skills needs of employability and graduates' problems that will be solved via the curricula. In this case have to be answered on the questions:

- What do graduates and employers consider to support employment better?
- How does employability influence the labor market?

Such an approach helps understand graduates and explain the skill changes (Autor, et. al, 2017). About 50 % of Graduates have no jobs at graduation in Britain and the United States. Today, the labor market maximizes a demand for the matching of skills and qualifications for suggested work. But, high-level skills are typically associated with technical and professional skills, that are delivered through 'Teaching-Learning-Research and Research in Practice' programs (Mekvabidze R., 2016). it means, that developing the teaching of research and research in practice gives students critical and logical thinking and practical experience as it is clear that it helps to mobilize resources to meet the rising demands of the job market. OECD (2022) has identified graduates' skill profiles for sociology graduates. Fatima Suleiman (2018) concluded, that labor market information systems, educators, and policymakers in aligning labor demand and educational offerings.

The scientific paper of Mahri Uddin (2021) addresses the employability of business graduates and suggested updating course curricula but most employers recognize that students have learned a lot during their period at university that they can redeploy in the workplace. The group of authors: Jesús García-Álvarez et al (2022) from the employers' perspective show the competencies and skills that are needed for introducing "Pedagogies for Employability".

In 2022 under internal funding realized a research project about an analysis of the higher education potential in the context of job market requirements (2021–2022, Order #5-37, 06.04/2021. The Head of Administration of Gori State University (GSU) G. Khorbaladze). The GSU (Georgia) has provided research together with the Opole University of Technology (Poland). The research has considered the finding of the relationship between HEIs teaching trends according to modern job market

requirements for revealing the employability skills of graduates. The main respondents in the research were academics, graduates, and MA students. ***Professional skills creation requires using intensive teaching of research in practice by the main subjects of specialization*** for developing the job market skills as are: practical, logical, analytical, and creativity skills. These skills were acceptable for employers, too (Mekvabidze; Smietanski, 2022). Wondwosen (2022) considers the challenges of graduate employability becoming a serious problem of demand and supply between universities and the labor market.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Rapid technical changes, digitalization, and globalization changed job market skills requirements and moved them to the serious discussion as day-to-day. It is influenced by technical progress. Accordingly, the main objective of the study consists of finding a more acceptable teaching-learning trend between higher education institutions, employers and graduates for the formation of an effective job seeker for the competitive job market with the aims as follows:

- To reveal up capacities of HRIs for cooperation together employers to enhance a better exploration of their potential;
- To examine the interrelationship of the visions between academics, graduates, and employers on employability skills' formation of graduates through the teaching of 'Research and Research in Practice';
- Consideration and the implementation of the components of research into the curricula accordingly subject area of specialization;
- To improve the modernization of T-L through research and innovation under the fast development of IT;
- What competencies are required in the labor market?
- How can regulate the 'demand and supply' in the context between:
 - HEIs and graduates,
 - HEIs and employers,
 - Graduates and employers.

There are suggested approaches as are:

- Classifying the main approaches for exploration of the teaching process modeling study;
- Developing integration knowledge and competencies of research by subject area of specialization;
- Graduates' employability skills development to meet tomorrow's demand;

- Understanding of demand and supply of employability skills between Higher Education and Employers.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology that matches the realization of the objectives considered the activities are as follows:

1. Preparing the questionnaire with the statements as variables (vars) for the respondents: academic personnel, graduates, and employers. The questionnaire with the statements for academics, graduates, and employers indicated as “var” and these statements were considered as the components for the variable – The competitive job market requirements through research“ (VAR) which is presented as a function of the statements for each category of respondents (Mekvabidze, Smietanski, 2022). The questionnaire is identical for all respondents.
 2. Data processing was provided for analysis and revealing the approaches of academics, graduates, and employers according to the introduction for teaching research by studying subjects area that is the basis instruments for developing the needed skills of employability for the competitive job market. Program software STATA was used for the data processing.
 3. An assessment of the reliability of the statements/indicators of the questionnaire are measured using Cronbach's alpha (Table 1).
 4. The Likert scale is used with 5 parameters: (SA), (A), (N /Do not know), (DA), (SD)).
 5. The survey was carried out online. The total amount of respondents was 1668. The study covered public and private universities, employers presented various companies. By category, the respondents were as follows: 541 academics, 925 graduates, and 202 employers.
- Note. The survey was carried out in the frame of the Gori State University (GSU) research project. (Project author: R. Mekvabidze; Order# 5-37, 06.04.2022)
6. The demographic information of respondents was provided by categories of respondents (Tables # 2, 3, 4).
 6. 12 Statements are presented in the survey as variables (“var”) for academics, graduates, and employers.

4. RELIABILITY ANALYSES

The reliability of statements/ indicators/ items in sections of the questionnaire was measured using Cranach’s alpha. The variables with their statements/indicators as the questionnaires and results of Cranach’s alpha are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Reliability analysis

Name of variable	Statements/indicators (var)	Number of the statements/indicators	Cranach's alpha
VAR	Academics', graduates', and employers' vision on the interrelation of employability according to the job market requirements	12	0.8657

5. DEMOGRAPHY INFORMATION ABOUT RESPONDENTS INFORMATION ABOUT RESPONDENTS

The demographic information about respondents (academics, graduates) is given in tables 2–4.

Table 2

Demography information of academics

Category	Classification	Frequency	%
Status	Professor	71	13.12
	Associate professor	116	21.44
	Assistant professor	161	29.76
	Teacher	101	18.67
	Invited teacher	92	17.01
Subject area	Economics	113	20.89
	Management	168	31.05
	Business	105	19.41
	ICT/IT	76	14.05
	Finance	79	14.60
Teaching experience, year	Under 5	101	18.67
	5-10	141	26.06
	10-15	138	25.51
	15-20	112	20.70
	Above 20	49	9.06

Table 3

Demography information of graduates

Category	Classification	Frequency	%
1	2	3	4
Status	Employed by specialism Years of Graduation Work Experience	377	41.67
	Unemployed Years of graduation	548	58.33
Subject area	Economics	220	23.68
	Management	215	21.57
	Business	218	20.50
	ICT/IT	176	23.07
	Finance	96	11.18

The End of the Table 3

1	2	3	4
Job seeker, Year by specialism	Under 6 months	441	47.67
	Under 1	208	22.49
	1-2	206	22.27
	Above 2	70	7.57

*Table 4***Demography information of employers by company/NGO**

Category	Classification	Frequency	%
Status	Head	44	21.79
	Manager	78	38.61
	Auditor	30	14.85
	Administrator	50	24.75
Job skills	Creativity	32	15.84
	Problem solving	31	15.34
	IT& program software	35	17.33
	Critical thinking	27	13.37
	Team work	23	11.39
	Research	35	17.33
	communication	19	9.40

6. THE RESULTS OF DDATA PROCESSING

The data processing of respondents that is around the main variable – ‘The competitive job market requirements through research’- are grouped according to the vision of respondents’ categories, as are: Academics, graduates, and employers (tables:5). We estimate a mean of results by all five components of the Likert Scale. By the tables, we estimate the means of results by the positive answers of the respondents (table 6).

Analysis of the academics answers. 530 respondents (Q2: 97.97 %) think that research and Research in practice will develop an effective strategy for knowledge creation, and in addition, ICT and program software use will increase graduates' practical and professional skills (Q5: 527:97.41 %) and they agree on the link between HEI and the labor market as global to according to labor market requirements (Q8:529:97.78 %) and becoming as job seeker means to be a creative thinker (Q7:525:97.04 %). They approve that the relationship between HEIs and employers has to be more closely (Q9:525:97.04 %) and together of quality teaching (Q6:523:96.67 %) as the teaching research increases critical thinking in general (Q1:524:96.86 %). By the other answers, it is interesting the answer on Q10 (487:90.02 %) that HEIs have to consider the job market requirements changes. It

is less active (N=45, DA=7, SD=2) but it may be explained by hard work that is connected to curricula reforms. They agree that graduates have to be interested in job market requirements too before graduation (Q12: 505:93:34 %). By positive answers, we can indicate academics' willingness to help students and enrich the quality of teaching of the subjects of specialism with the components of 'research and research in practice' because a variation of answers in the percent is the interval 90.02–97.78 %.

Table 7

Respondents' vision by the positive answers

Name of the variable (VAR)	Indicators/Items (var)	Employers' Vision		Academics' vision		Graduates' vision	
		Positive answers	%	Positive answers	%	Positive answers	%
The competitive job market requirements through research	Implementation of research teaching by the disciplines helps a student to increase critical thinking	198	98.02	524	96.86	895	96.76
	An effective strategy for knowledge creation is the teaching of research in practice by subject area	202	100.00	530	97.97	908	98.16
	The teaching of Research in practice develops student's skills for teamwork and communication	191	94.55	496	91.68	900	97.30
	In accordance with the job market requirements graduates need to accumulate knowledge in 'research and research in practice'	189	93.56	516	95.38	904	97.73
	Knowledge of ICT and program software helps graduates to promote practical thinking and professional skill	197	97.52	527	97.41	898	97.08
	Quality research teaching improves students' competitiveness in the job market	180	89.11	523	96.67	898	97.08
	Becoming a job market seeker is providing creative thinking and practical potential skills	202	100.00	525	97.04	910	98.38
	Higher Education and the job market are considered as the global actors according to labor market requirements	201	99.50	529	97.78	918	99.24
	Do you think the necessity of inter-relationship Higher Education and industry more closely?	192	95.05	525	97.04	917	99.13
	Do you think that HE has to consider job market requirements changes?	197	97.52	487	90.02	915	98.92
	To be job seeker graduates has to control their study program according to the job market requirement	198	98.02	517	95.56	903	97.62
	Do you think that student has to be interested in job market requirements changes before they finished their study?	193	95.52	505	93.34	909	98.27

Analysis of the employers' answers. All employers (Q2&Q7:100 %) agree that research and Research in practice will develop an effective strategy for knowledge creation (as think the academics, also) and it is a possibility to become a job market seeker with potential practical skills. Besides that, they considered the link between HEIs and employers more important (Q8:99.50 %). More, to become a job seeker, the graduate has to control job market requirement changes (Q10:97.52 %), HEIs have to need a closer relationship to the industry (Q9:95.05 %) and graduates have to manage their study programs and the job market requirements (Q11:98.02 %). Besides this, employers agree that among the market's requirements are essential knowledge of ICT and the use of program software (Q5:97.52 %), teamwork, and communication skills which are connected and developed in the frame of the teaching of research in practice (Q3:94.55 %). A variation of employers' answers in the positive frame is 93.56–100.00 %. It means that employers based on the real situation of the job market dynamics support enriching the subject of specialization by introducing research and research in practice as a new subject that will be useful for students and graduates.

Analysis of the graduates' answers. Interestingly, graduates want to know all kinds of information to become job seekers. The variation of their positive answers is in the interval of 96.76–99.13 %. They strongly agree that HEIs and the industry have to be in close contact (Q9: 99.13 %) It means, that HEIs must consider market requirements' changes (Q10:98.02 %) and involve them in the study program. They understand to be a job seeker they have to acquire practical potential skills (Q7: 98.38 %) and accumulate knowledge in research and research in practice (Q4:97.73 %) in addition, they agree that the area of their interests according to changes in the job market requirements are before they will finish their study (Q12:98.27 %). As a rule, graduates know that knowledge and practical skills of modern technology are their privileges as Job seekers (Q5:97.08 %). Estimation of research teaching by subject area of specialization is an effective strategy for knowledge creation (Q2:98.16 %) and its implementation in the teaching process develops teamwork activities (Q3:97.30 %) and increases critical thinking (Q1:96.76 %).

Table 8

A mean estimation of the respondents by the positive answers (SA+A)

Respondent's status	Positive answers	Mean	Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]
Academics	$\overline{SA+A}$	517.00	4.00	508.1961- 525.8039
	%	95.56	.7394136	93.93506 - 97.18994
Graduate	$\overline{SA+A}$	906.25	2.256724	901.283 - 911.217
	%	97.97	.2435904	97.43636 - 98.50864
Employer	$\overline{SA+A}$	195.00	1.846372	190.9362 - 199.0638
	%	96.53	.9141615	94.51878 - 98.54289

By the estimation of the means of respondents by their positive answers, we can discuss the creation of the internet platform "Demand-Supply" on the regional levels where will be possible to exchange new approaches between the actors (HEIs and Employers) responsible for the employability of graduates. The platform will be considered for graduates' formation with the skills required by the job markets.

Note. If the curricula changes take a long time, HEIs have to organize a special short program for graduates according to job market demands.

CONCLUSION

The fast technological development with the recent economic and social changes significantly affects the role of universities and they need to review their mission and perfect their approaches and practices to teaching-learning. They are responsible for a new social and job market-oriented direction based on enhancing their Tteaching-learning-research environment to produce needed knowledge that meets the needs of modern society with new approaches and a new vision for providing new changes complying with modern university functions.

HEIs have to be based on involving research elements more intensively and integrating them in the educational process that will help students to develop applied skills for the job market and integration knowledge, research competencies, and job market requirements between general educational science and subject knowledge by the main subject area.

Graduates have to think about their future careers but: What do graduates know about the major indicators of labor market outcomes or how do labor markets work? To implement 'Research and Research in Practice' for BA, MA, and Ph.D. students teaching-learning process have to bring experiences and skills into the workplace as these approaches help graduates for analysis and estimate the job market requirements that are under changing day-to-day. Based on these assumptions Academics-Employers-Graduates interaction has a common approach and what do academics have to do? On one hand, as we see academics know about the problems of graduates but on the other hand a situation becomes complex waiting for changes in the study program as it needs according the demand of the job market.

All understand:

- 'Research in Practice' is a platform from higher university to the job market;
- Research-based teaching is a measure of graduates' knowledge of the job market;

- Research in practice is the basis of applied research and an important component of the job market requirements;
- Higher education institutions with the increased research and research in practice activities gain students to be a perspective job seekers and are good providers;
- ‘Research and Research in Practice’ teaching is essential for the formation of innovation element in the knowledge triangle;
- Understanding the responsibility of HEIs of the research teaching in practice requires relevant transformation according to curricula changes.

The policy of higher education directions recognizes the challenges of graduate employability and has to respond to demands from the side of employers by organized and efficient approaches. The graduates' employability with the actual needs of job markets is dependent on an effective understanding of employers' requirements and universities' educational potential. The narrowing of the gap between university graduates' skills and the actual needs of job markets has to be realized through effective cooperation. This approach is supported by the HEIs, employers, and graduates (Q8: 99.50 %; 97.78 %; 99.24 %). The educational policy has to transform according to the modern demands of employers and is required by them. HEIs and employers have to be more closely (Q9: 99.13 %, table 7) and introduce the teaching of research by the main subjects of specialization. It means academics have to analyze and realize the content of the textbook from BA to Ph.D. levels and organize it to develop the needed skills consequently of the labor market requirements. The labor market and employers' requirements change day-to-day accordingly to technology progress. It is not possible to adapt curricula constantly to meet conditions of technology progress but have to be realized the approaches that help graduates to increase their employment readiness by approaches below:

- workout the needed textbook with the components required for research in practice;
- Provide changes in the subject area by specialization to increase cooperation between universities and employers;
- Involving graduates in the practical training for research in practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Preparation of a guide for the textbook “Research in Practice” according to the main subjects of specialization.

- To create a platform for exploration and synergy for developing the employability skills of graduates.

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DECODING THE TRANSFORMATION OF THREE DECADES OF AI RESEARCH: A SOCIAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This article discusses the dynamics of developing scientific publications related to artificial intelligence research. Based on the comparison of 20 research documents studied using the sigmoid analysis method, the paper determines the dynamics of publications and research methods related to artificial intelligence. The paper aims to study the nature of AI-related publications from the social and political science perspective and to determine the transformation of development dynamics.

Key words: *Artificial Intelligence; Social Sciences; Scientific Research; Transformation.*

INTRODUCTION

The view that the 21st century is the age of information technology has long been unquestionable [Tyner, 2014], although it is getting stronger yearly. The development of Internet technologies, which accelerated at the end of the twentieth century, is proceeding at an ever-increasing pace. Since the 1990s, when the Internet became available to the public [Curran, 2012], the technology has evolved and is much more flexible, intelligent, and scalable than its original version.

Even though the first connection between computers dates back to 1969 [Campbell-Kelly & Garcia-Swartz, 2013], it was not yet – “The Internet” as the world knows it today. It was just a network connecting computers until Sir Tim Berners-Lee introduced the world's concept of the World Wide Web (WWW). The first Internet server was launched in 1990, and this date can be considered the birth of the version of the network that humanity today knows as The Internet [McPherson, 2009].

Soon, it became clear that the WWW had a huge potential to become an object of mass consumption, and it did... By 2000, there were 360 million Internet users [DiMaggio et al., 2001]. In 2023, according to World Bank data, 5.3 billion people used it [Statista, 2023].

As the number of internet users grew, so did the nature of the Internet. In addition to the fact that it has become faster and more effective, its content has also changed. If the original WEB 1.0 allowed the user only one-way interaction, since 2004, with the integration of social networks, the Internet has evolved to a new stage in terms of the WEB 2.0 version [Nath et al., 2014]. The mentioned model allowed users to arrange virtual space according to their own opinions, and this new possibility led to a radical increase in the amount of data available online.

Personal information like text, video, photo, or audio material uploaded by citizens to the virtual space daily increases the amount of data available on the Internet. It was the growth of the amount of online data that contributed to the return of the issue of artificial intelligence to the agenda with a new interpretation...

The term: “Artificial intelligence” was first used in 1956 at Dartmouth College Summer School when a group of scientists developed a project to create a machine that could think like a human [McCarthy et al., 2006].

Although a lot of resources were invested in artificial intelligence research, in 1970-80, due to failed attempts to create a machine able to imitate human thinking patterns, there was a period of stagnation called "the first AI winter." The frustration with artificial intelligence, associated with the "second AI winter," covers 1980-90 [Floridi, 2020]. During the mentioned period, the interest in artificial intelligence continued to reduce, and the skepticism about creating a mechanism that could imitate human thinking increased.

Since the 90s, the world has been introduced to Internet technologies, which have changed all areas of human life, including artificial intelligence. Three main components made it possible to develop a new vision of artificial intelligence.

The development of **computing power** allowed modern computers to process larger volumes of **data**; on the other hand, the development of the fast Internet and the

increase in Internet users led to the accumulation of a large amount of digital data. This process led to the creation of appropriate **algorithms** that allow companies with big data to process raw material into valuable information. No company has enough human resources to process and sort millions of gigabytes of data daily [Allam & Dhunny, 2019].

Artificial intelligence is a technology that allows any data to be processed for various purposes. Therefore, the development of the mentioned technology has had an evolutionary and revolutionary impact on numerous areas of human life.

In the 21st century, most states are increasing the efficiency of the governance process by integrating modern technologies, including artificial intelligence, into the public administration process. Due to the digital evolution of governance forms, political science faces new challenges. New fields require developing and constantly adapting state-of-art research methodologies [Chen, 2009].

Due to the velocity of technological development, it is difficult for science to reflect modern trends in AI development. For example, it may take several years to prepare, edit, and publish a scientific article in a peer-reviewed journal, while assessing technological progress, two or three years may be crucial; in other words, current technological innovations at the time of starting working on the article and their impact on political processes may no longer be relevant at the time of publication of the article, which is why scientists may find themselves in a difficult situation. The academic sector lags behind the speed of technological progress.

A second issue makes AI more challenging to study from a political science perspective. Due to the novelty of the issue, scientists cannot agree on precisely what the field of AI includes. Therefore, academic research on artificial intelligence is complex because studying integrated AI is done with diverse perspectives.

This article addresses the above-mentioned issues and aims to identify the academic trends of research in the field based on the analysis of the existing scientific literature on artificial intelligence. It Demonstrates how the methodology and focus of study from a social science perspective change with the development of technology.

To assess the research dynamics of AI from a social science prism, the article reviews the papers published on AI over the last 3 decades from 1990 to 2020, including both scholarly articles and research reports.

The conducted research activities make it possible to analyze, structure, and categorize the existing studies on artificial intelligence. This will create a clear picture of the research design and applied methodology from the social science of AI technology, which will contribute to developing a scientific field.

Due to employing random sampling from the JSTOR database, a prominent repository of scientific literature, 20 documents were systematically chosen for analysis. This selection encompasses a variety of materials, including scientific articles, research reports, and book chapters wherein the term "artificial intellect" is featured in the title. Employing a content analysis methodology, particular emphasis was placed on the documents' substantive and structural aspects. Subsequently, the research materials were categorized based on their publication years, fields of study, and research methods.

The purpose of this paper is to reflect the differences between the scientific publications related to the AI topic and to reveal the research trends in the field from a social science perspective.

Nowadays, the main driving force of artificial intelligence is the private sector and its business interest, which is why the scientific research of the field is mainly focused on a narrow technological focus, leaving significant deficiencies in the exploration topics such as ethical, social, or other broader implications of AI.

Limitation of research – The number of selected documents was determined following the features of publishing a scientific article in social sciences. The review period of a scientific article may vary from 6 months to several years, while the preparation and editing of an article may take more than 6 months. Therefore, the paper's author considered that 20 papers were the number of documents that could be studied in depth in a reasonable period so that the work would continue to be adequate and relevant in the expected publication period of the article. The purpose of this paper is not to analyze the validity of the content of selected documents but to present how many different topics with different methods can be studied under the term Artificial intelligence.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH 1990–2020

1 – An article published in 1990 in the journal "Behavior and Philosophy" entitled: "Natural Problems and Artificial Intelligence" is the oldest published work analyzed in this article. In this paper, author Tracy B. Henley discusses the different approaches to artificial intelligence. The article is particularly interesting because it was published in 1990 when the Internet was not widespread. Therefore, humanity is unfamiliar with the new vision of AI technology – AI as a big data processing algorithm.

The author discusses the philosophical and psychological aspects of artificial intelligence. He asks, "What would count as demonstrating that entity was

intelligent?" and tries to get an answer by reviewing the scientific literature surrounding this question [Henley, 1990].

The paper is a compilation of existing approaches to artificial intelligence that tried to define the concept of intelligence from an AI perspective and determine how feasible it was to create such a product.

In the first chapter: "Debunking And Other Philosophical Positions," Henley discusses the philosophical narrative about artificial intelligence developed by John Haugeland, according to which: "Nothing could be intelligent without X...; No [AI] system could ever have X; therefore; No [AI] system could ever be intelligent. Where X – can be feelings, creativity, personality, freedom, intuition, morality, and so on", which a machine will never have. In the same subsection, the author discusses Searle's position, according to which the main difference between a machine and intelligence is intentionality, which a machine does/can not have.

The next chapter – "The Perspective Of Psychology," discusses existing psychological models of intelligence and examples of attempts to measure this phenomenon with various tests, including artificial intelligence assessment models, including the Turing model.

The final chapter – "Ethical Considerations," begins with a discussion of the approach that intelligence tests such as the Turing Test are unacceptable because they are based solely on behavior. The author asks the critical question: "If observable behavior is insufficient to determine whether a creature has intelligence, then what is?"

This chapter also discusses Minsky's theory, which he developed in 1968: "AI is the science of making machines do things that would require intelligence if done by men".

Structure – Based on the article's content, the author relies on already existing philosophical approaches and, in the form of a compilation, tries to gather the existing philosophical and psychological approaches to intelligence. Using the method of quoting the phrases of the leading scientists tries to answer the main question - whether it is possible to create artificial intelligence.

2 – An article published in 2003 entitled: "Artificial Intelligence and Human Nature" discusses the philosophical perspectives of artificial intelligence. In contrast to Hanley, Charles T. Rubin tries to criticize the existing theoretical approaches by discussing several hypothetical examples of the development of artificial intelligence [Rubin, 2003].

The work consists of seven chapters, where Rubin criticizes the "Extinctionist approach" to the development of artificial intelligence, according to which AI technology will develop so much that in the end, humans will be replaced by

machines, which was not only inevitable but even necessary according to the supporters of the mentioned theory. He points out that this approach is pointless from an evolutionary and moral perspective.

In the chapter – “The Road to Extinction”, – like the already discussed article, there is an attempt to define the essence of artificial intelligence; specifically, the author says that if the human brain is a mechanism that obeys the laws of physics and has consciousness, then it is possible to duplicate it. Therefore, if it is possible to create such a mechanism, it is possible to improve it and create a machine more powerful than the human brain.

The second chapter – "Wretched Body, Liberated Mind" – discusses theories of how, in a few decades, the human physical form could be replaced by machinery. This chapter asks when a mechanism can be considered conscious, and human perception of the world is compared to the brain's processing of the body's sensory inputs (Data).

The third chapter – "The Temptations of Artificial Life", discusses a model of a futuristic world where human consciousness can be copied by scanning the brain and creating an identical mechanism, so it will be possible to insert the human brain into a developed mechanism that will no longer have weaknesses.

In the fourth chapter – "Them and Us", – the opinion of extinctions – according to which robots will replace humans due to the evolutionary cycle – is criticized with two arguments: 1- it will not be acceptable for humans to be replaced by creatures developed over them, 2 – from an evolutionary perspective, it will be incomprehensible why humans will give up a dominant position in the world by their own will? The author asks an important question: "If the copied human mind continues functioning in a mechanism, will it retain its human identity?"

The fifth chapter – "Humanity's Last Stand" – raises the following issues: 1 – Will human desires be related to immortality, health, etc., would still be desirable if body-related deficiencies no longer existed? How will machines with robot bodies and human minds treat ordinary humans as parents or as victims?

In the sixth chapter – "Against Post-Biological Life", the author points out that although the extinctionists' views on the evolutionary process should not be taken seriously, their utopian approach raises questions that may become more and more relevant in modern technological progress. In the same subsection, the author responds to the discussed theory with the following phrase: "Nothing in evolutionary theory suggests that we have any obligation to commit suicide".

In the last chapter - "Finitude and Dignity" - Rubin discusses the moral aspects of the Extinctionists' vision. He asks questions that illustrate his position concerning

the mentioned theory: "There is no reason to assume that the post-human world will be morally superior to our own".

Structure – The paper mainly analyzes the existing philosophical issues about predicting the future; however, at the same time, it tries to answer the question necessary for studying artificial intelligence: When will a machine be considered a thinker?

3 – In an article published in "The Journal of Educational Technology & Society" in 2004, author Vladan Devedžić discusses essential aspects of Web Intelligence (WI) in the context of Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED) research. This paper focuses on the possibilities of integrating artificial intelligence in the educational field [Devedžić, 2004].

Within the framework of the work, from a technical point of view, the author reviews semantic web, programming languages, WI-related work in AIED, Setting for WI-AIED systems, WI and Personalization of Learning, Ontological Engineering, Intelligent Web Services, intelligent Educational Servers and Portals; Web Mining and Social Networks.

The paper focuses on such features of web intelligence as web services, semantic markup, and web mining, as well as the possibilities of their application in AIED. The article, published in 2004, discusses the potential role of artificial intelligence in education, specifically by reviewing various technical solutions and web-based models.

Structure – in the article published in 2004, the author uses various research methods, including case studies, and strengthens arguments by quoting different authors. The author describes the chronology of the development of technologies, their characteristics, and their role in the education process, and, in conclusion, presents a forecast related to the growth of the role of mechanisms related to AI technology in the education process.

4 – The following document studied and analyzed within the article is a research report, – a work published in 2016, entitled - "India And The Artificial Intelligence Revolution".

The research report begins with analyzing the gaps and prospects in implementing artificial intelligence in India and a summary of the research findings. The author highlights the leading role of the private sector in AI-based application development focused on consumer goods and the educational system being outdated in today's economic environment, etc. Based on the mentioned findings, the author elaborates on five recommendations [Vempati, 2016].

In the introduction, the author discusses the growing relevance of AI and its impact on everyday human life. The author notes a considerable risk that India will fall behind China in AI development in the same chapter.

In the next chapter – "Moore's Law Spurs Recent Advances in AI" – the author discusses the reasons for the development of AI from the perspective of Moore's Law, according to which hardware becomes cheaper and more accessible over time.

In the next chapter – "Internet Boosts AI Proliferation in India, but Steep Barriers Persist" – the factors hindering and facilitating the implementation of AI in the country are determined, including existing Internet users; the abundance of data; improper infrastructure, in particular lack of databases, due to which Indian IT companies do business abroad.

In the next chapter, "AI Research–China Steals a March," the author discusses the successful model of Chinese AI, namely Baidu's language platform, as a successful implementation of AI technology by a non-Western nation. The author notes that India should focus not only on creating the Indian version of Google but also on the organizational structure, facilities, and customs required for these technological leviathans.

In the chapter "Funding AI Research–Global Lessons for India," the author considers the attraction of personnel employed in the academic sector by large companies as a potential hindering factor for state AI implementation. In the remaining part of the mentioned chapter, the author reviews in detail the chronology of artificial intelligence funding by years, using the example of different states or organizations.

In the next chapter – "Understanding AI's Impact on Indian Jobs – Encouraging Skill Development for Future Jobs," the author discusses the impact of artificial intelligence on the work environment in different countries and India. The document mentions that although India does not suffer from a brain drain of top-quality AI talent from university research labs to the industry, it must be wary to avoid this concentration of intellectual energy. Threats and challenges related to AI, such as criminals acquiring AI capabilities to mount sophisticated cyberattacks, public fear of modern technologies and the need to overcome this fear, and Outdated educational systems that cannot respond to the challenges of modern technologies, are also discussed in the section.

In the final part of the report, the author formulates a policy guide for developing artificial intelligence in India based on the findings. The "AI Policy Road Map for India" section discusses Short-Term, Medium-Term, and Long-Term state strategies for AI implementation.

Structure – Within the framework of the document, the author analyzes the gaps and prospects in the direction of AI implementation in India, using several research methods based on successful examples from around the world. The author relies on secondary sources, uses excerpts from various newspaper interviews, analyzes the international practice of implementing artificial intelligence, and, based on the summary, identifies the gaps that India is facing and accordingly formulates recommendations that are important to consider for the implementation of AI policies in the short, medium and long term.

5 – The following document discussed in this paper is one of the chapters of the collection of research reports entitled "Artificial Intelligence And The Future Of Defense" – subchapter: "What Is Artificial Intelligence?" [De Spiegeleire, Maas, & Sweijs, 2017]

In the first chapter, three subsections discuss such terms as Intelligence, Artificial Intelligence, Narrow, General, and Superintelligence. In the initial part of the paper, the literature regarding the development of definitions of intelligence and the existing literature on this term is discussed chronologically. This is followed by a chronology of the term “artificial intelligence” development and the definition of AI from different perspectives. The authors review the differences between ANI, AGI, and ASI in the next part of the paper.

The second chapter of the paper is devoted to the history of AI development. The winter and spring periods in the development of AI after the Second World War are chronologically discussed.

Specifically, the reasons for AI's two winters and three springs. Early Enthusiasm: The First AI Spring ('56-75'); The First AI Winter ('74-'80); The Second AI Spring ('80-'87); The Second AI Winter ('87-'93); A Third, Sustained AI Spring ('93-'11), Big Data, Deep Learning, and an Artificial Intelligence Revolution ('11-present). The authors review the differences between ANI, AGI, and ASI in the next part of the paper.

The following section of the second chapter is devoted to analyzing the reasons for the arrival of the third spring of AI, specifically big data and deep learning. This chapter discusses examples of the use of AI in the development of facial recognition systems and cyber security applications, as well as cases where the algorithm successfully passed the Turing test.

The third chapter – "AI: A Cookbook of Components, Approaches and Design Architectures", – discusses the components of AI and the working process of intelligence in both human and machine cases. In the next part of this chapter, special attention is focused on the machine learning method, explicitly discussing

the differences between machine learning approaches such as 1 – deep learning; 2 – Evolutionary programming; 3 – Bayesians (knowledge obtained with new information); 4 – Symbolists (creating hypotheses and verifying them based on data); 5 – Analogisers – decisions based on analogies.

Structure – In this research report, the author reviews the existing theoretical approaches to artificial intelligence and the chronological stages of the phenomenon's development. The paper also discusses concrete examples of how AI works in cases such as IBM's Deep Blue (Chess) and Watson ('Jeopardy!'), Google's AlphaGo (go), and others.

6 – In a collection of research reports entitled "Artificial Intelligence And The Future Of Defense," one of the chapters entitled "AI – Today And Tomorrow" examines the current state of development of artificial intelligence and potential ways forward. The paper begins by comparing AI and humans and analyzing the areas in which the computer is superior to the human mind [De Spiegeleire, Maas, & Sweijjs, 2017]. In the subsection "Core Technologies and Applications," 3 main areas of AI use are discussed: 1 – information aggregation, integration, and analysis; 2 – Currently used AI systems; 3 – AI-enabled services used for targeted advertising and customer segmentation;

In the chapter – "Markets amidst the Artificial Intelligence 'Insights Revolution", – the author, based on secondary sources and quotes from stakeholders' phrases, discusses the impact of AI on the transformation process of various fields and the financial resources spent by multiple states in its development. Based on the reviewed materials, the author defines the trends in the development of AI in the private and public sectors.

In the third chapter, "The Timing of AI Development: Future Scenarios", – the author discusses two opposing hypotheses about the development of AI, according to which the current AI spring will end soon or vice versa. To illustrate this, the paper cites the results of a study, according to which there was a 90 % probability that by 2075, AI will be able to master the majority of human occupations.

In the fourth chapter – "Disruptors & Wild Cards", it is noted that although it is impossible to determine the exact details of the development of AI, the article still tries to define both likely hindering and facilitating factors of the development of AI, including growing difficulty of breakthroughs; possible hardware limitations; A breakthrough in cognitive neuroscience; human enhancement; Quantum computing; A 'Sputnik event' creating significant development incentives; Societal collapse – or existential catastrophe; Societal distrust and disinclination.

In the fifth chapter – "Caveats: Legal and Ethical Concerns over AI", – the author discusses legal and ethical concerns related to AI, focusing on such issues as unemployment, machine bias, legitimacy problems, driving public distrust of, and even societal backlash against AI.

In the sixth and summary chapter – "Summing up – The AI Tipping Point" – the author defines the differences that distinguish current AI spring from previous AI spring, among them: the level and diversity of funding, the mode of cumulative knowledge building; Big data and the abundance of visible success. In the next section, the author discusses how ANI can acquire elements of AGI using the example of Google search.

Structure – In this research report, the author uses several research methods, including a case study and a comparative analysis. Like the previous works, this document also includes elements of prediction.

7 – The following paper, which was discussed in the framework of this article, deals with the issue of artificial intelligence regulation. In the first part of the paper, authors Amitai Etzioni and Oren Etzioni discuss the factors, such as data and computer power, that have enabled AI to overcome decades of frustration and significantly benefit humanity. The article raises the ethical aspects of data processing and asks: "Who should process, for what purposes, and how!?"

The paper also discusses 2 main risks associated with artificial intelligence: 1 – risks related to using AI for military purposes and ethical issues; 2 – risks associated with introducing AI technology into the work process and its potential impact on job reduction. The article also discusses successful examples of AI usage and reviews the dangers of excessive regulation of AI research [Etzioni et al.; O., 2017].

The second part of the article details the integration of AI into the military field and employment market. A petition launched in 2015 against using AI in the military is discussed, and suggestions are made for regulating the field.

The last part discusses the possible scenario of the cyber revolution and the predictions of what may result from replacing the workforce with AI.

Structure – In this paper, the authors study the specific examples and define potential directions for future AI development.

8 – Although most articles and research reports discussed in this paper include elements of predictions regarding artificial intelligence, Matthew Price, Stephen Walker, and Will Wiley's research report – "Implications of Artificial Intelligence in Strategic Decision Making", is based mainly on a modeled future overview.

In the first section, "The Two Hour Road to War," the authors model the time frame between 04:35 and 6:24 on May 17, 2024, during which the so-called 'flash war' emerges. According to this modeled future, a nuclear confrontation occurs between the United States of America and China" [Price, Walker, & Wiley, 2018].

In the next section, "Did AI Cause the Flash War of 2024?", the authors discuss potential scenarios of what could happen if the final decision-making in military matters depended on artificial intelligence, and they determine the potential threats of AI development;

In the section "When We Say AI, What Do We Mean?", the authors define the existing positions and main approaches to artificial intelligence between – Ani, Agi, and Asi. It is also specified that the article's purpose is not to predict the likely future but to review the extreme scenarios of the widespread use of AI technology in the military field.

In the following chapter, "Ambitions for Military Use of AI", based on a review of an analysis of policy documents such as The U.S. National Defense Strategy (NDS), the authors define the United States' position on artificial intelligence, according to which future defense spending will focus on AI. In the same chapter, the policies of China and Russia regarding the financing of artificial intelligence and the policy documents developed are reviewed.

The next chapter – "U.S. Military Guidance and Attempts to Establish International Norms," discusses the American Department of Defense (DOD) Directive 3000.09, "Autonomy in Weapon Systems," which serves as the governing document for AI technology in DOD. The authors note that the document's purpose is to minimize the shortcomings of autonomous systems and keep the "appropriate levels of human judgment over the use of force." The section discusses the experience of other countries and international organizations on the regulation of AI in defense.

In the next part – "How Autonomous is the U.S. Military Arsenal?" – examples of how the United States of America uses autonomous systems for specific weapons are discussed. In the chapter – "AI Evolution and Adaptation and the Changing Character of War," on the example of private companies like Uber, The Man Group, and others, the role of artificial intelligence in the decision-making process and the potential development areas are discussed. However, the authors believe that despite the technological progress of AI in military matters, the said technology will only be an additional tool in the decision-making process.

In the section – "Implications for Deterrence and Conflict Escalation", – the authors, based on historical examples, discuss the potential role of artificial intelligence in the issue of conflict escalation or containment.

The article concludes with the section “Recommendations and Conclusion”, where the guidelines for integrating artificial intelligence in defense are presented.

Structure – The scientific article adopts an innovative model, focusing on modeling potential future scenarios to explore the integration of artificial intelligence in the military field. The authors utilize diverse research methods, incorporating citations from various authors, examining instances of AI technology implementation by state and private organizations, analyzing policy documents from state and international bodies, and conducting comparative analyses.

9 – The following document analyzed in the given paper is a 2018 research report titled “Adoption Of Artificial Intelligence”, which examines the integration of artificial intelligence in both the private and public sectors [Hunter et al., 2018].

The introductory part of the paper discusses artificial intelligence and two different narratives regarding AI: AI as a dystopian futuristic phenomenon and AI as an already existing and integrated technology.

The authors highlight that none of the narratives focus enough on aspects such as algorithms, a supporting ecosystem, a skilled workforce, robust data management practices, proper computational and networking infrastructure, and a well-defined deployment strategy.

The authors note that the problem is a lack of "ready metrics and measures for assessing the "degree of AI" incorporated into a solution, which would be valuable for both public and private sectors". The authors conclude that it is necessary to implement AI tailored to needs, not the other way around.

In the second chapter – Adopters In Commercial Sectors, examples of AI use from the private sector are discussed. According to the authors, AI is best developed in data-rich sectors. In this section, the challenges of the private and public sectors in the process of integration of AI technology are also discussed; according to the authors, the state sector can benefit from the experience in the private sector; for example, the states may directly implement the accumulated experience in the management of unmanned vehicles in defense systems.

The next chapter – "Adopters In National Security", looks at potential ways to adapt AI to the military sector. Three cases where state institutions use private organizations' AI products for forecasting national security matters are discussed. The paper also discusses the JAIC (Joint AI Center) establishment in 2018 and its goals.

The following chapter, “Barriers and Enablers to AI Adoption in National Security”, discusses such hindering factors of integration of artificial intelligence in defense

issues as lack of data, lack of training, the time factor, lack of competence of employed persons in relation to the issue of artificial intelligence. The authors also point out that, unlike some fields, data in the defense sector is not always in a processable format and often needs to be mined. Therefore, although data is the cornerstone of AI, some companies cannot collect the proper amount due to the strict legal environment (citizens' personal information).

In the chapter – "Public and Private Entities in the AI Ecosystem", – the authors define the main factors of integration into the AI ecosystem, including data administration, computing power, relevant digital competencies, etc.

The importance and potential of AI have led to the fact that the state and defense systems cannot monopolize the development of this technology. Due to the democratization of technology, small private companies have the opportunity to make essential contributions in responding to national security challenges.

In the chapter – "Workforce and Organization" – the authors discuss the issue of monitoring AI products. According to the document, there should be difficulties in tracking the machine learning process. The authors identify a problem – an insufficient workforce capable of measuring the effectiveness of AI. At the same time, many state structures are unsure about the effectiveness of AI, which is why many agencies refuse to implement AI technology. It is easier for private companies to accept the risks associated with AI because it will be possible to fix them. At the same time, the state tries to implement already well-tested technology.

Structure – the authors of the research report, based on the study of successful cases of the implementation of artificial intelligence in private and public structures, try to determine the potential ways of integrating artificial intelligence in the military field and related challenges and perspectives.

10 – Another research report studied within the framework of this paper entitled "Artificial Intelligence: What implications for EU security and defense?" focuses on the role of artificial intelligence in the EU security issue.

At the beginning of the article, the authors, Daniel Fiott and Gustav Lindstrom, review the potential positive impact of AI on various fields. The introductory part of the paper discusses the optimistic and pessimistic scenario of the development of artificial intelligence [Fiott & Lindstrom, 2018].

The next part discusses the actions of international organizations and states in relation to AI regulation. For example, on 12 September 2018, the European Parliament passed a resolution calling for "meaningful human control over the critical functions of weapon systems." The authors discuss examples of specific AI

projects of other countries, such as the US military to interpret satellite and drone surveillance data feeds (nicknamed 'Project Maven') or the 'Made in China 2025' strategy to harness hi-tech sectors for its economic development. The section discusses EU AI policy, specifically the strategies developed by the European Commission and the allocated budget regarding the AI R&D process, and the formation of a Commission-led European AI Alliance and High-Level Expert Group on AI dealing with pertinent ethical questions. The section also discusses examples of international cooperation related to artificial intelligence.

In the next chapter, "Understanding AI," artificial intelligence is discussed as a strategic enabler, highlighting the difference between different AI models. The section discusses the leading role of private companies, such as Amazon, Google, Apple, etc., in developing AI. The authors also emphasize the importance of data for developing artificial intelligence. According to the document, the main drivers of AI development are private companies such as Amazon, Google, and Apple, not a state. The authors note that it is difficult to determine exact data on how much money each country spends on AI R&D. However, some country-by-country data can be obtained from publications in the Scopus databases. The authors rely on a forecast that by 2025, the financial benefits of AI will be around 6.5–12 trillion.

The next chapter, "AI and Common Security and Defence Policy" (CSDP), discusses opportunities to use AI in security and defense policy and specifically discusses three directions: detection, preparation, and protection. Examples of these directions are broken down in detail. For example, the authors think that AI may be displayed in the logistics direction as well -AI-supported analysis could help identify safe locations for basing, suitable transport infrastructure, landing tracks, proper evacuation routes, and/or proximity to local and regional supply chains.

In the section "Deep learning and EU defense", 2 problems are discussed: 1: ethical issue: how independently AI should make decisions in military matters and to what extent humans should interfere. 2: Military AI may end up in the hands of a non-state actor. In conclusion, it is noted that the EU and NATO should harness the potential of AI.

Structure: Within the framework of the work, which discussed the possible influence of artificial intelligence on European security issues, the authors analyze successful cases and policy documents of different countries, on the basis of which they try to define the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (the role of artificial intelligence in CSDP), current challenges, and identify potential development paths.

11 – The following document, analyzed within the scope of this work, is a scientific article entitled "Building Trust In Artificial Intelligence." In the introductory chapter

– "What is Artificial Intelligence?" two approaches to AI are compared: – I – codes and programs that always make accurate conclusions, and II – algorithms and data processing decisions, which always contain an error rate.

Within the framework of the work, the author – Francesca Rossi, highlights such aspects of AI functioning as – A Problem of Trust – companies process a large amount of data. Therefore, there is a need for transparency. Some questions must be addressed: "Who, how, and for what purposes process customer data?" [Rossi, 2018].

The author discusses the principles of 7 significant institutions working on the issue of AI in relation to the use of artificial intelligence and briefly reviews them. IBM, Google, The Asilomar, Partnership on AI, AI4PEOPLE, World Economic Forum, and The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers represent these institutions.

In the next part of the article – "Practical Implementation of High-Level Principles," the author, from his point of view, defines the principles of AI, such as I – Explainability, II – Bias Awareness and Mitigation, III – Trusting AI Producers, IV – Driving and Facilitating Trusted AI. According to the authors, these principles must be fulfilled to gain society's trust in AI.

In the chapter "Driving and Facilitating Trusted AI", – the author discusses the policy of Europe and the United States of America for fostering the responsible development and deployment of AI.

In the concluding part, the author gives recommendations on how the potential of artificial intelligence can be used to the maximum extent and what should be done to build society's trust towards AI or How to define Issues of bias, explainability, data handling, transparency on data policies, and design choices.

Structure – In the discussed article, where the author reviews the phenomenon of artificial intelligence and the elements necessary for its functioning, with an emphasis on trust, the method of comparative analysis is used, according to which the author defines the best practices of the policies of different states and organizations and determines the recommendations as a conclusion.

12 – An article published in the spring of 2019 – "Artificial Intelligence: The Ambiguous Labor Market Impact of Automating Prediction" - aims to determine the potential impacts of automating predictions on the employment market. The authors Agrawal, Gans, and Goldfarb believe that artificial intelligence using the Deep learning method will be able to predict any issue based on the analysis of big data: "Take any old problem where you have to predict something, and you have a

lot of data, and deep learning is probably going to make it works better than the existing techniques." [Agrawal et al., 2019].

In the introductory part, the authors discuss the concept of prediction and define 4 direct effects that prediction can have on the employment market. However, the authors explain that since artificial intelligence applications have many dimensions that may both reduce and increase the demand for jobs, it is impossible to determine the net effect of artificial intelligence.

In the first chapter of the work – "Automating Prediction Tasks", the authors discuss the potential scenarios of replacing human power with artificial intelligence and its possible effects in automating or increasing the demand for labor in the decision task. In the first chapter, the authors use the example of Kira Systems and Blue J Legal's AI to discuss how integrating this technology in legal matters can automate specific legal processes.

In the next part of the chapter, based on the various examples, it is discussed how the AI prediction model helps drivers in the decision-making process. According to the authors, it is unclear what effect this will have on the general labor market, and although it may hurt the income of taxi drivers, in the end, it may have a positive effect overall. In the same part, "Predictions in Email Responses", the authors discuss the effect of the automation of the email system on the example of Google Mail and what impact it can have on the employment market.

In the second chapter of the paper, "Automating Decision Tasks", authors discuss examples where automation of prediction through artificial intelligence can improve human decision-making and, thus, labor productivity; in addition, the role of automation in forensic and medical decision-making is discussed.

In the following subsection – "Indirect Effects: Augmenting Labor on Other Tasks", the authors, from the perspective of drug discovery and language translation, discuss cases where an automated decision-making system might produce better results. In the paper, The Case of Radiology is discussed as a separate example, according to which, in the case of proper integration of AI, automation of the mentioned field may occur to some extent. The same chapter lists 29 radiology-related activities that can/cannot be replaced by artificial intelligence.

The next chapter, "New Tasks through New Decisions," discusses how different companies use the automation of decision-making by machine learning and what impact the development of this technology has on the direction of scientific research.

In the summary section, the authors discuss cases where artificial intelligence makes the prediction process much easier based on the processing of existing data

and provides an opportunity to replace human labor. This, in turn, makes the decision-making process more efficient.

Structure – Based on the analysis of various cases and author citations, the authors in the study discuss the potential consequences of the impact of artificial intelligence on the employment market of decision process automation.

13 – A research report published in 2019 titled "Wars Of None: Artificial Intelligence And The Future Of Conflict" deals with predicting the role of artificial intelligence in future conflicts. The report is divided into 5 chapters, summarized in the concluding section.

In the first chapter of the paper, authors Can Kasapoğlu and Barış Kırdemir review the evolution and importance of AI in military affairs; the authors use excerpts from interviews with famous scientists, such as Yoval Noah Harari's 2018 speech, according to which the upcoming dominant species will be more different from us than we were different from the Neanderthals [Kasapoğlu, 2019].

The second chapter deals with the impact of AI in the short term, where the authors review the role of AI technology in medicine and other social fields. The following section is devoted to AI geopolitics, where the authors compare American, Chinese, and Russian AI policies and explore the AI Race between them.

The fourth chapter is devoted to defining the role of AI in future physical, information, and cognitive warfare operations. The authors detail the prospects for using AI in land, sea, and air spaces. For this purpose, the functioning of combat devices of different countries is discussed based on specific examples, such as: "Uran 9", a remotely controlled Russian military vehicle tested in Syria in 2018.

The last chapter of the paper deals with the discussion of NATO's AI policy and the development of recommendations.

Structure – In the framework of the study, the authors used combined research methods, including the case study model. The paper reviewed the phrases of various authors about the technological future of humanity, as well as passages from state documents of multiple countries, such as the US Joint Operating Environment 2035 Report.

14 – In the introductory part of the research report published by Ulrike Franke as part of the European Council's research in 2019, the author reviews the phenomenon of artificial intelligence and the main reasons for its development. In the following subsection - "Why AI Matters," artificial intelligence is discussed as one of the tools for determining interstate politics. For example, the paper quotes the former president of Google China, Kai-Fu Lee Remar, according to which

AlphaGo is compared to the Sputnik moment, which is Typical of the US and China AI Race [Franke, 2019].

The author considers AI technology as a phenomenon that may become of cultural and historical importance for society and provides an example of 280 million people in China watching Alphabet win at Go against one of the world's best human players.

In the paper, artificial intelligence is considered a tool of geopolitical importance. Therefore, the official documents of the states where the development of the mentioned technology is defined as a strategic interest of the state are discussed; for example, Executive Order on Maintaining American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence (13859) states that: "Continued American Leadership in AI is of paramount importance to maintaining the economic and national security of the United States and to shaping the global evolution of AI in a manner consistent with our Nation's values, policies, and priorities."

In the next part of the document, "Elements of AI – and how the main players fare", the three main components of AI technology such as human resources, data, and computer power, are defined. According to the mentioned components, the authors compare the examples of the USA, China, and the European Union.

In the following subsection – "AI in Europe: Key issues" – the author identifies the key issues of European AI, including a high level of dependence on external actors (in the case of chips or applications) and a low rate of citizens' trust in AI technology.

The mentioned chapter ends with 5 recommendations; according to the author, it will be possible to promote the development of AI in the EU with the following components: a unified data collection system; Increased and smart investing; regulations; integration into military affairs for non-literary purposes; Education;

In the conclusion, the author discusses the aspects needed to achieve sovereignty in AI, including access to talent, data, and hardware – the three critical elements of successful AI. At the same time, the author believes that Europe, along with the development of the mentioned components, should adopt the relevant regulations; thus, it will have a chance to go beyond mere sovereignty and become a norm-setter, embedding its ethics and values into AI governance and development.

Structure: The research report's purpose was to study the international practice of implementing artificial intelligence and to discuss the European perspective of the AI race; different research methods, including the case study, citations, comparative, and document analysis methods, were used.

15 – The following document discussed within the scope of the paper is a part of the research paper – "New Tech, New Threats, and New Governance Challenges" entitled

"Artificial Intelligence". In the document, author – Camino Kavanagh discusses the current policy and regulatory landscape around artificial intelligence.

In the introductory part of the paper, the author reviews definitions of AI. In this part, the author also discusses the field of artificial intelligence that can bring significant benefits. However, in the same part, Kavanagh also reviews the risks associated with increased cyber threats [Kavanagh, 2019].

The second chapter, "The Current Policy and Normative Landscape," discusses such actors and their AI policies as Nonprofits and multi-stakeholder initiatives, Commercial actors, Governments, and Multilateral Forums. In the mentioned chapter, the author analyzes the AI-related policies of the mentioned actors based on the case studies and document analysis method.

The next chapter, titled: "What Lies Ahead?" includes a prediction for the future and 5 recommendations identified by the author on what relevant stakeholders should do to make the integration of AI as effective as possible and bear the least risk.

Structure – Within the given research report, the author uses such research methods as a case study, document analysis, and citation of existing literature. The author discusses the practice of administering the policy of artificial intelligence on the example of private, NGO, state, and international organizations, and, as in most of the examples discussed so far, he also uses elements of prediction.

16 – In another scientific article entitled: "Near-Term Applications Of Artificial Intelligence," author Christian H. Heller, based on the review of dozens of examples, analyzes how successful examples of AI in the private sector can be integrated into the systems of the DON (Department of the Navy) [Heller, 2019].

In the first chapter of the paper – "Definitions Of Artificial Intelligence", based on a review of the literature related to AI, the author discusses the different approaches, structures, and types of AI.

In the same chapter, the current progress and perspectives of AGI development are discussed, along with concrete examples of how Narrow AI applications are used in practice. For example, Amazon's Alexa and Apple's Siri are both examples of narrow AI beginning to make regular, continuous changes to people's lives; however, regardless of the level of development of AI technology, the HITL (Human-in-the-loop) system is still a priority.

The following chapter – "Public Use Leads to DoN Application", discusses examples of private AI initiatives that can be adapted into DoN systems. In the author's opinion, the best applications have been successfully operating for years, including Google Maps – AI to program the most efficient routes; Chatbots such as Siri, Alexa, and Microsoft's Cortana output to support the personalized needs of their users

even better; Uber-dynamic pricing – accurately pricing a commodity or service between supply and demand; Etc.

Continuing with the section "The Department of Defense and Artificial Intelligence", the author explores the DOD's stance on integrating artificial intelligence. This perspective is based on a 2016 Defense Science Board (DSB) report. The report emphasizes six crucial mission parameters that warrant consideration: the speed of decision-making, the heterogeneity and volume of data, the quality of data links, the complexity of the action, the danger associated with the mission, and the required persistence and endurance.

This chapter also discusses the costs of specific DOD AI projects. However, the last paragraph emphasizes that despite research and integration of new systems, DoD policy mandates strict human oversight of autonomous or semiautonomous weapons systems.

In the next chapter – "Near-Term AI Applications For The Navy And Marine Corp", the author delves into the potential repercussions of incorporating AI applications into the military in the short term. The exploration spans nine key aspects: Administration, Personal Productivity, Planning, Logistics, Crisis Response, Training, Intelligence, Force Protection, and Force Structure. The author discusses successful examples of existing AI applications for each aspect and analyzes how they can be implemented in Navy and Marine Corps operations.

In the following section, the author discusses the aspects needed for the successful implementation of AI, including: - when the right people are paired with the right data; – Necessity of military specialists with knowledge of AI; – human-AI collaboration; – AI-database interworking; – AI ethics and policy;

Along with this, the chapter discusses the AI policies of such tech giants as Amazon, Google, Microsoft, etc. In the last chapter – "Costs And Trade-Offs", the author discusses the costs incurred for integrating AI applications in the defense sector of the United States of America. In the same chapter, the author compares the costs incurred in China's and Russia's AI projects and, based on secondary sources, makes predictions about the economic benefits related to AI.

In the concluding remarks, the author highlights that the ultimate cost of AI development may not solely be quantifiable in terms of dollars spent or the cancellation of other projects by the Department of the Navy. Instead, the profound impact lies in how AI has the potential to reshape the operational landscape of the Navy and Marine Corps.

Structure – In the reviewed article, the author uses such research methods as document analysis, comparative analysis, and case study, and at the same time,

strengthens his positions by quoting the opinions of famous authors or experts in the field.

In addition, it reviews the policy AI implementation of various states based on secondary statistical data. The article also included an element of prediction: "If these nations achieve usable AI integration for economies and militaries, the rest of the world may be left behind for decades".

17 – The following document, "Humane Artificial Intelligence: The Fragility of Human Rights Facing AI", is a research report dealing with the threat of violation of fundamental human rights from the perspective of AI. Human Rights such as equality and anti-discrimination towards everyone may be at risk due to algorithmic prejudice. Therefore, the author discusses the need to create "data ethics".

According to the author, Human Rights is a top priority; in response, the EU is working on a draft document (adopted in 2023) that will outline the issue of human rights protection concerning AI. The author also discusses the importance of a 2018 Council of Europe document highlighting AI's threats to human rights [Cataleta, 2020].

In the next part of the document, the author discusses specific cases of human rights violations, for example, in the field of facial recognition systems and employment or the issue concerning crime prevention (Compas; PSA; HARM).

The chapter titled "AI and Protection of Human Rights in Europe" revolves around the imperative for regulations. It is observed that the implementation of such regulations is often delayed by several years, reflecting the experience with GDPR. The challenge lies in the struggle to keep pace with the rapid advancements in technology, highlighting the inherent difficulty in synchronizing regulatory frameworks with the swift evolution of technology.

In the next chapter – "AI and Digital Security: the Protection of Personal Data Online" – the author discusses the ways in which the rights of Internet users regarding the protection of personal data can be violated; the chapter discusses some criticisms concerning personal data protection from the perspectives of principles and provisions of GDPR.

The following chapter discusses the "declaration on the manipulative capabilities of algorithmic processes adopted" on 13 February 2019, where the Committee of Ministers of the European Union affirms that: "attention must be paid to the capacity of digital technologies to use both personal data and non-personal data to identify individual vulnerabilities, and it thus encourages member states to take appropriate measures". The same chapter discusses the OECD's five basic principles for regulating AI and critics' opinions on the mentioned document. This

general agreement aimed at setting standards has been signed by 36 Member States, including the world's major economies, but excluding China.

In the last part of the article – "The Chinese Threat: The Enjoyment of Human Rights in the Face of Invasive AI", – the American and Chinese policies for the development of artificial intelligence were compared. The author believes that due to the specificity of China, the country can overtake the United States in the "AI race" because the state has access to a much more considerable amount of big data, which in turn contributes to the creation of better AI products. The author also cites that by 2080, humanity may be fighting to save itself from AI.

Structure – The paper's framework reviews the general threats associated with integrating AI technology in terms of personal data protection and the policies of different countries or international organizations to solve the mentioned issue. The author studies concrete examples, cites various stakeholders, analyzes policy documents and regulations, and, based on comparative analysis, identifies the peculiarities of different countries or organizations' policies regarding AI regulation.

18 - The introduction of the research paper "Constructivism and its risks in artificial intelligence" discusses the concerns of famous people and experts about the high risks associated with the transformation of artificial intelligence (AI). This part of the paper focuses on the constructive role of human choices and theories in developing artificial intelligence and its associated risks; the need for technical research and assessing socio-economic impact are emphasized.

In the chapter – "The history and development of AI", – the author chronologically discusses the stages of the development of artificial intelligence in the last decades and the existing opinions about the transition from ANI to AGI. The mentioned chapter ends – with a discussion of three general foundational approaches to building AI – Symbolic-computational, connectional, and neuromimetic [Lea, 2020].

In the next part – "Translating philosophies of mind into AI: assumption underlying approaches " – the author compares artificial intelligence from the perspective of well-known social and economic theories. In the work, the author discusses different fundamental approaches to intelligence, including acting humanly (Turing test approach), thinking humanly, thinking rationally, and acting rationally. The author relies on the opinion of Norvig and Russell, according to which, although signs of all four components are visible in AI research, the dominant approach is still the rational agent – acting rationally. In the same chapter, the theories of authors such as Becker, Hayek, Simon, and Kahneman are discussed and compared.

In the next part of the paper – "the chess problem or the problem with chess? Models and measurement" – the author discussed an example of the integration of

artificial intelligence in a chess game and the main factors in developing chess skills among players. The paper criticizes the approach that a machine beating a human in a chess game can be seen as a superiority of the machine over the human mind because it is still a narrow AI (ANI); therefore, its comparison with human thinking is not justified.

In the next chapter of the paper – "AI in Social and Economic Races", – the author discusses practical examples of AI development based on comparing various state policies. Specifically, the budget spent on AI R&D, followed by examples of how AI is used in everyday life. In the same part, the author discusses examples from the private and academic sectors.

In the next part – "The Risk of AI Reconsidered" – the author reviews the risks related to AI, such as the eventual destruction of humanity, reduction of jobs, engineering, and algorithmic bias, as well as loss of identity, cyber vulnerability, espionage by government or private corporations, and weaponization of AI.

Structure – In the paper author reviews both the philosophical approaches to AI, the practical manifestation of the mentioned technology, and the issues of its financing, using both public and private sector examples. In the last part of the work, based on prediction, the author determines the probable threats that may threaten humanity in the worst scenario of the development of artificial intelligence. Within the framework of the work, the author uses quotes, studies the cases of different companies and states, and makes a comparative analysis; the author also describes in detail the chronology of the development of artificial intelligence and discusses the predictions of threats related to AI.

19 – The article "Artificial Intelligence: A Threat to Strategic Stability" by James S. Johnson aims to determine the potential consequences of integrating artificial intelligence in the military field. This article addresses how and why AI could affect strategic stability between nuclear-armed great powers (especially China and the United States) and the multifaceted possible intersections of this disruptive technology with advanced conventional capabilities [Johnson, 2020].

Chapter one, "Conceptualizing Military Artificial Intelligence," outlines four essential components of AI integration in the armed forces: 1 – The incorporation of AI will speed up operations without changing the core laws of strategy; 2 – AI has an impact on decision-makers that goes beyond technology since it depends on human viewpoints and shapes their perceptions; 3 – The integration puts major military forces under more strain and raises the possibility of standards and safety concessions brought on by technical competitiveness; 4 – The most significant risk

is the integration of AI with nuclear weapons without sufficient testing, which could lead to a catastrophic outcome.

The same chapter discusses the threat of how the proliferation of AI in the military field can make modern warfare more difficult in the given competitive political environment. The paper discusses the three cases of how integrating AI into a non-nuclear weaponry system can escalate warfare. It has been suggested that the military would be reluctant to hand over too much control to the machines, but the AI Race may outweigh those concerns.

The next chapter, "Autonomous Weapons, swarming, and Instability" (AWS), discusses how AI-augmented drones can be used in conventional combat situations, giving one side a massive advantage. A nuclear state with a weak defense may find itself in a "Use them or lose them" situation. The paper suggests that states may turn a blind eye to the risks of AWS development. This section discusses specific examples of AI integration with AWS (the 2011 case of MQ1 drones being infected with malware). According to the forecast, the capabilities of UAVs (Unmanned aerial vehicles) will be further improved using artificial intelligence, making drones more effective in counter-offensive operations. This section of the work discusses the importance of the human factor in the process of nuclear deterrence. The paper also discusses the case of DARPA, which is working on ASV (autonomous surface vehicle) development, and the opinion of experts on the mentioned topics.

The author reviews four scenarios for the use of drones in the future. As a summary of the chapter, it discusses how important AWS can play in shaping future conflict. The examples of China and the United States of America are discussed as a comparison.

The chapter – "Hypersonic Boost-Glide Technology and Missile Defense" – discusses how AI can adapt to these combat techniques, solve the gaps that have existed so far, and have a general impact on the conflict process.

The paper concludes with the assumption that new-generation AI capabilities will inadvertently increase the risk of nuclear confrontation. The conclusion is based on an analysis of the potential impact of AI on the strategic stability between the major nuclear powers – the US and China. It is noted that, regardless of technical capabilities, AI's conclusions will be based on a human-made algorithm, which can be subjective and biased.

Structure – By analyzing a specific military technology as an example, the article identifies how future threats may arise from integrating artificial intelligence into military affairs. The author uses a case study method while developing pictures of

various potential futures of how integrating AI into military affairs could change the warfare model.

20 – Research Report – "Humane Artificial Intelligence Inequality, Social Cohesion And The Post-Pandemic Acceleration Of Intelligent Technology" – Author Peter D. Hershock – analyzes the pandemic's impact on artificial intelligence's development process. In the introductory part - the author explains that such cataclysms as pandemics and wars have often become one of the factors in reducing social inequality. Therefore, COVID-19 can play a similar role against the existing inequality in the world, and modern technologies can become one of the main factors [Hershock, 2020].

In the first chapter of the work – "The First Pandemic in the New Era of Intelligent Technology", – the author emphasizes how the combination of such aspects as big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence can intensify the risks to human privacy and social cohesion, examples of which are already seen in the modern technological world. The author explains that the Covid pandemic is the first global pandemic in the age of smartphones and discusses examples of how it has contributed to the acceleration of technological progress.

In the next chapter – "Trajectories Forward: A Range of Possibilities" – based on articles by various authors and examples of specific organizations, several technology development scenarios are predicted. The author deals with such an issue as citizens' loss of data privacy versus a swifter end of the pandemic, and based on China's example, it discusses a case when the government has a legal right to all data produced within the country's borders.

In the next part of the chapter, the author discusses the impact of accelerated digital connectivity and online education on the normalization of digital socialization, the potential risks of social learning, and the growing role of educational technology (EdTech) in reshaping formal education.

In the same chapter, the author discusses new opportunities in education and socialization using examples of specific companies and their technologies. However, it is noted that – "Not every public good that can be privatized and marketized should be" – and notes the danger that may follow.

In the next chapter – "Digital Socialization and the Potential for Social Learning Deficits", the risks associated with remote learning are discussed, including – online education, which would place biosocial developments at risk that is foundational for ethical deliberation.

The paper's last chapter – "Social Cohesion and Social Resilience after COVID-19" – discusses the impact digital connections can have on post-Covid social relations.

The author notes that digital communication has created more opportunities for disinformation campaigns, fake news, and deep fakes. The text explores how the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed social insecurities and value conflicts at various scales and highlights the importance of addressing these issues.

Structure – Within the framework of the work, the author uses several different methods, including quoting the statements of famous authors and experts, conducting case studies, providing a chronological description of events, and presenting statistical information based on secondary data.

CONCLUSION

The rapid development of artificial intelligence has had a significant impact on all areas of the modern world. It is difficult to find a field where AI technologies do not play an essential role. Therefore, science needed to adapt to technological evolution. Social and political sciences are no exception. Today, it is impossible to analyze political systems without considering the influence of modern technologies because digital technologies have become the primary tool of current political processes.

Scientific research and analysis of artificial intelligence have shortcomings; the field is developing so quickly that a document might lose its relevance after the time spent preparing and publishing a scientific article.

In addition to the mentioned problem, other aspects make the scientific study of AI even harder. Artificial intelligence covers many fields, and the problem is that it is usually considered from one perspective; for example, for representatives of the information technology field, it is associated with algorithms, data, and computer power; for economists, AI is an alternative to human labor, for political scientists, it is a tool for political mobilization and public management, for public administration specialists it is a simplified and effective means of providing state services, etc. Accordingly, representatives of all directions have their scientific interest in the mentioned phenomenon, which makes the ambivalent concept of artificial intelligence even more vague.

This article aimed to determine the main trends in AI research methods and directions based on the study of dozens of papers on AI published in the social sciences over the past 30 years. Within the framework of the article, based on the analysis of the content and research methods, 20 documents were studied. It was determined that the interpretations of artificial intelligence in scientific research papers have changed over the years.

The chronology of published articles on artificial intelligence clearly shows the moment of arrival of the fourth spring of AI, as the most significant time interval

among the 20 documents studied within the scope of the work is fixed from 2004 to 2016. This is the period when the WEB 3.0 Semantic Web was being developed, and artificial intelligence finally gained the understanding that the world knows it today – the application of algorithms that use data and computing power to enable machines to model human-like intelligence and perform complex tasks autonomously.

The subject matter also differs between the documents published before 2004 and those published after 2016. If in the older papers, the authors mainly studied the philosophical nature of AI, in the works of the modern period, they are already discussing various AI applications and their practical importance. For example, how can it change the human workforce, current military activities, or medicine? What economic impact will it have on a particular country, organization, etc?

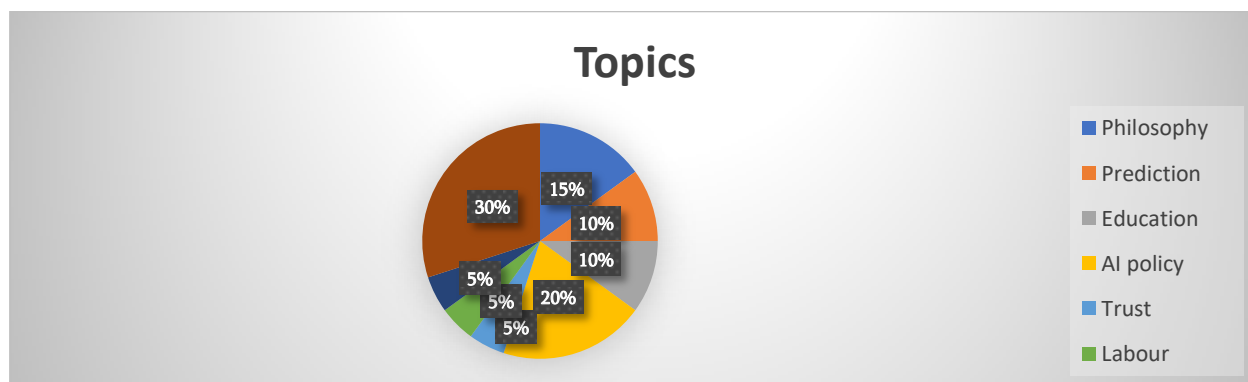
Over the years, articles on artificial intelligence have consistently raised growing concerns about the technology's development. Whether addressing specific topics or not, these concerns include the security of citizens' personal data, job displacement, economic repercussions, military risks, and more. Almost every analyzed document published after 2004 contains concerns regarding AI implementation.

It is also worth noting that the prediction component plays a significant role in most studied papers. Since AI is new to the modern world, including science, many analyzed documents have contained predictions about the potential effects of artificial intelligence on various fields.

It is worth noting that a large part of the studied documents discussed the integration of artificial intelligence in the military field from different angles; the papers also covered such issues as AI policy and regulations, AI and human rights, etc. (see Table N1).

Table I

Distribution of topics



Due to the multidisciplinary nature of artificial intelligence, in all the reviewed works, the authors use several research methods, both quantitative and qualitative, such as Case studies, comparative analyses, chronological description, document analyses, secondary statistical data, etc. (see Table N2).

Table II

Research Methods Utilized in Artificial Intelligence Studies

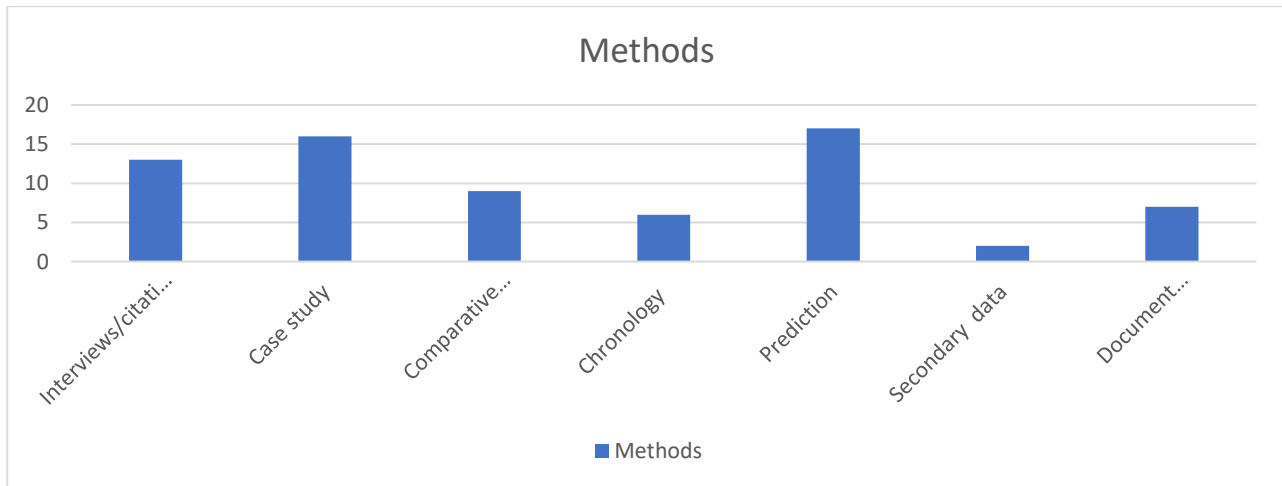


Table III

An overview of Analyzed documents by year, content, and methodology

a.	Topic	Year	Citation from interviews	Case study	Compa-rative analyses	Chrono-logy	Pre-dic-tion	Sec-on-dary statisti-cal data	Docu-ment Analyses
1.	Philosophy	1990	V			V			
2.	Prediction	2003	V				V		
3.	Education	2004		V		V	V		
4.	AI policy	2016	V	V	V	V	V		
5.	Philosophy	2017		V	V	V			
6.	Prediction	2017	V	V	V		v		
7.	AI Policy	2017		V			V		
8.	Military	2018	V	V	V		V	V	V
9.	Military	2018		V			V		
10.	Military	2018		V			V		V
11.	Trust	2018			V		V		
12.	Labour	2019	V	V			V		
13.	Military	2019		V			V		V
14.	AI Policy	2019	V	V	V				V
15.	AI Policy	2019	V	V			V		V
16.	Military	2019	V	V	V		V	V	V
17.	Human Rights	2020	V	V	V		V		V
18.	Philosophy	2020	V	V	V	V	V		
19.	Military	2020	V	V			V		
20.	Education	2020	V	V		V	V	V	

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