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REGULAR PAPERS

THE FUTURE OF ACADEMIC AUTHORITY IN SLOVAKIA, OR *CETERUM AUTEM CENSEO...*

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Abstract

Our contribution is focused on approaching the current situation in the field of academic autonomy in the conditions of the Slovak Republic. The paper contains a legal analysis and considerations on the self-government of higher education institutions against the background of an amendment to the Higher Education Act.

Key words: *academic autonomy, higher education institution, autonomy*

IN LIEU OF AN INTRODUCTION

The Roman senator Cato the Elder entered history with his stubborn persistance of the idea of the destruction of Carthage. Every senate speech of his (regardless of the discussion topic) was concluded by a clause „Ceterum autem censeo Carthaginem esse delendam!" – freely translated as: furthermore, I consider that Carthage must be destroyed. His dream came true in the Third Punic War, however, the pathetic parole took its own journey throughout history, and nowadays, it is interpreted as a strong and penetrative request or call. This article represents a reaction towards the running battle for sustainment and the form of academic autonomy in the area of higher education in the Slovak Republic.

1. AUTONOMY AND SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

One of the achievements of the events symbolically initiated in the Aula of Comenius University in Bratislava at the end of November 1989[1] was, inter alia, the provision of true freedom to higher education institutions. Freedom in a number of meanings, from the freedom to express opinions through the essential freedom of scientific research to the opportunity of self-management of the issues. The Greek root of the word autonomy, i.e. *auto* and *nomos*, thus means the possibility to introduce your own „laws" or wider normative acts governing the internal environment of higher education institutions.

As for the conditions in the Slovak Republic, the year 1989 is inherently connected with the development of a new form of public administration within which the state administration was extended by including the self-government. „In an advanced society, while pertaining human rights and freedoms, every such community has the right to administer its own matters, thus, to make independent decisions on social matters. In other words, the community is entitled to its self-government and it is the state´s duty to respect this right" [Vrabko et al. 2012]. The principle upon which the self-government is created (local or interest based) is the criterion of its categorisation. In the case of higher education institutions, there is an unambiguous application of the interest based principle, and thus a systematic possibility of public adminstration management in higher education institutions executed via bodies designated and created by a respective higher education institution is defined as an interest-based self-government. At least, it can be perceived as this at first sight. However, the legal nature of the higher education institutions in the SR requires more consistent legal analysis.

2. LEGAL STATUS OF THE PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The Law No. 131/2002 Coll. on Higher Education and on changes and supplements to some laws (hereinafter known as „the Law on Higher Education"), defining higher

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[1] Velvet Revolution in November 1989 resulting in the fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia was initiated by a students´ protest demonstration.

education institutions as legal entities fully disposing of legal personality, is a crucial regulation for conducting an analysis of the legal status of higher education institutions. After the legal modifications made in 2002, higher education institutions became legal entities only as units while before this date, they had been organisations financed by the state and had an independent legal personality, but managed the funds of the state. Faculties, as parts of higher education institutions, lost their legal personalities acknowledged by § 5 of Law No. 172/1990 Coll. on Higher Education. They became parts of higher education institutions and were entitled to act on behalf of them in selected matters within the scope of their self-government authority, and thus: to decide on admissions for study programmes of the particular Faculty, to create new study programmes, to decide on academic rights and obligations of their students, to undertake, to modify, conclude and dissolve employment relationships, or to cooperate with other education institutions, however, only upon respecting the internal rules of the higher education institution.[2] In the frame of performance of the measures mentioned above, the Dean was directly accountable to the Rector of a higher education institution, even in the case of Faculty management matters.

The Law on Higher Education defines a higher education institution as a top education, scientific and artistic institution.[3] The notion of establishment can be derived from the English term to *institute*. The notions of an institution and establishment with the qualifier of „public" belong to the area of administrative law defining them as public administration entities, while the notion of establishment is mainly connected with nationwide institutions active in the areas of science, education and culture [Vrabko et al. 2012]. Despite the fact that the Law on Higher Education uses the term of establishment in the definition of higher education institutions, the explanation mentioned above allows us to talk about higher education institutions as public institutions, and thus public administration entities. However, the Law on Higher Education also uses the notion of a public institution in concrete terms, and thus in the case of public higher education institution (hereinafter as „PHEI").

In par. 1 Art. 60 of the SR Constitution, within the definition of the scope of the Supreme Audit Office, we come across the notion of a public institution. However, the article does not contain any definition of a public institution, it only defines the possibility of an audit of its property disposal. In the SR conditions, public institutions started their activities in 1990, in this period they were administering state assets and later gained possession of them. In the case of a PHIE, these acquired the majority of their assets as of 1 January 2003.[4]

The public institutions find their legal definition in the Act No. 176/2004 on the disposal of the property of public institutions (hereinafter as „Act on PI") with § 1 de-

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[2] § 23 of Law No. 131/2002 Coll. on Higher edcuation as amended

[3] § 1(1) of Law No. 131/2002 Coll. on Higher edcuation as amended

[4] Explanatory memorandum to Law No. 176/2004 Coll. on disposal of property of public institutions and amending the Law of National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 259/1993 Coll. on Slovak forest chamber Slovenskej lesníckej komore as amended by Law No. 464/2002 Coll.

fining entities established under law and entities established by law as public institutions or authorities. An institution established under law directly refers to a PHIE in the meaning of § 5 of Law on Higher Education.

According to the theoretical definition of the notion of a public institution describing it as „an administering entity of public administration partially separated from the state and established by law for the purpose of securing needs of the public, and thus pursuing public interest by performing organizational activities, providing public services and creating pecuniary conditions in order to achieve desired status of the public administration object" [Vrabko et al. 2012], we can define its key cumulative features, and thus:

- separated from the state
- an administering entity
- established by law
- ensuring public needs.

Within a comprehensive analysis of the classification of higher education institutions in the area of public administration, we distinguish also public corporations as „public administration entities organised by their members" [Vrabko et al. 2012] integrating both the state and local government entities. In this case, the determining element of an entity classified as a public corporation is its internally organised membership principle with a decisive role for its personnel substrate. The persons creating the personal substrate of a higher education institution are represented by its students and teachers [Prusák 2006]. This characteristics is only one of a number of possible interpretations differing due to the absence of a legal definition of the notion of a public corporation. The grammar interpretation of the notion of a corporation derives from the Latin word of *corpus* – a unit, body, person. According to some authors, the notion of a public corporation has been replaced by the notion of a public institution, and thus as such, it does not exist in the legal system anymore [Prusák 2006]. The common features of public corporations would be defined as follows:

- They are established by law or under law, or by a contract
- They pursue public interest
- They dispose of public authority
- They are based on personal substrate
- They dispose of their own enforcement bodies
- They have their own set of internal rules
- Their property qualifications are defined by specific regulation
- In some cases, their activities are limited to a certain territory [Prusák 2006].

While one of the interpretations distinguishes and factually subsumes the notion of a corporation under the notion of an institution, the administration law science also provides us with different opinions considering the notions of an institution and a corporation as the same [Škultéty et al. 2006]. We, personally, are in favour of the opinion distinguishing the notions of a corporation and an institution, since even the

grammar explanation of the notions is showing these differences. The notion of a corporation as an entity organised by members, fulfilling the above mentioned features also incorporating the state, is, according to our view, a wider notion compared to a public institution that can include an entity designated so in law. As for the issues of legal status and the authority of public institutions, we consider their absence in a separate law as a shortcoming.

From the view of classification of higher education institutions in the system of public administration, we can refer to them as its further executors. However, alongside with its activities, a higher education institution also executes an extensive scope of authority through its academic self-government.

The question to what extent we consider a higher education institution to be an self-government entity within the public administration organisation, is a subject for discussion. Even in this point, the views of theoreticians differ in the issue of the classification of higher education institutions into a group of entities. In some cases, a higher education institution is referred to even as an entity of mixed self-government authority [Sládeček 2005]. We agree with this view, since we consider the academic self-government to be a part of an extensive interpretation of the notion of self-government, however, its structure does not fit in the distinction of self-government into interest based and territorial based.

3. CAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS ADMINISTER THEMSELVES?

Since November 1989, higher education institutions have been almost constantly facing criticism that they do not „deserve" such an opportunity, that they misspend their budget and behave like a little child losing its toy when these freedoms are endangered. The de-autonomisation efforts of higher education institutions are coming in new waves all the time and currently, they are facing one of these waves taking the form of legislative efforts by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. The Ministry have drafted a major amendment of the law on higher education currently being circulated in academia.

We perceive the newly to be created Administrative Councils as the major intervention to the existence and functioning of the academic self-government (in the scope of the submitted draft act). An Administrative Council in which 4 out of 8 members will be appointed directly by the Minister of Education, is referred to as „a special university body" in the respective draft, in contrast with the group of bodies explicitly referred to as authorities.[5] Despite this categorisation, the legal nature of the Administrative Councils is determined clearly by their competencies including budget approval, elec-

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[5] § 7 The bodies of a public university are divided into: a) the bodies of academic self-government covering: - an academic senate of a public university, - a Rector, - a scientific council of a public university, an artistic council of a public university or a scientific and artistic council of a public university (hereinafter as „a scientific council of a public university"), - a disciplinary commission of a public university for students (hereinafter as „a disciplinary commission of a public university"), b) other university bodies – a Quaestor, - an administrative council of a public university, - bodies established to fulfil the tasks complying with an internal quality system of ensuring university education, if established.

tion of a Rector candidate, or granting prior consent to the selected legal acts. Making decisions on key issues of the functioning of a higher education institution, including the election of a statutory body, cannot be entrusted to a body directly influenced by a political power personalised by the Minister of Education.

The issues of the autonomy and self-government of the university is *conditio sine qua non* in relation to the culture of the society if we perceive it (*largo sensu*) as a tradition of reasonable progress, humanism and dignity of a human irrespective of the dread of external circumstances.

And the argument stating that higher education institutions are not able to „rule" themselves? Well, the biggest argument indicating the opposite is the pandemic situation that hit the entire world- the academic one as well. Universities´ conduct has been diametrically different from the conduct of state authorities. They have been acting reasonably, with foresight, consistently and always sufficiently clearly and have been communicating their steps in advance. Thus, they have been (together with some of the local authorities) a perfect example of how the pandemic crisis should be managed. The self-government, whether local, interest based or the academic one, simply proved the effectiveness of their management mechanisms, and other public (mainly state) authorities have often been ex-post inspired by our conduct[6]. Is this not a sufficient proof of authority and a justification of self-gevernment management principles? We do not deny that it is necessary to re-evaluate some of the legally conferred competencies of the academic authority bodies. Finetuning the competencies of the respective bodies, streamlining management by introducing reasonable managerial principles, or rationalising the internal mechanisms of property disposal will undoubtedly be beneficial for higher education. However, it cannot be achieved without a dialogue, open communication and a normal „partnership". What are we witnessing these days? Making decisions about us without us, because a kind of an ephemeral social requirement is ruling to dictate to the „incapable" academics how to manage their higher education institutions.

4. HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS VS. SOCIAL ORDER

The most frequent criticism of higher education institutions relates to the alleged ineffective utilisation of public finances. Why on earth would we need andragogists, aestheticians or classical philologists, paleontologists or theoretical physicists in the period of the roistering fourth industrial revolution?

We do not affirm that the system is not showing any shortcomings, but let us think on why do higher education institutions noawadays admit (almost) every passer-by, and why does a person who objectively does not measure up to the university diploma crave for one? We do not claim any comprehensiveness of the answer, but almost surely, it would oscilate around the crisis of social authorities, the sociologic scrutiny

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[6] On 8 March 2020, Comenius University on itw own initiative and without prior instructions transferred to the distant education method, and thus directly contributed to containing the effects of the first pandemics wave.

of the X, Z generations, the millenials and others, and also around the methodology of the allocation of grants for higher education institutions[7]. If one of the key criterion is a number of students studying in a particular field of study, a study programme or in a faculty or university, we will not achieve real selection in the course of the admission of study applicants.[8] And if there is no selection and everyone is admitted, the education loses its value. If we do not have to try hard to achieve something, we take it for granted and it is hard to create quality on the output when there is no quality in the input. Not necessarily, but hard.

Society should become aware of the fact that the purpose of higher education institutions and universities is not to produce a cheap (or even expensive) labour force for the national economy. And this is the basis of the necessity to maintain the principles of autonomy and self-govenrment of the higher education environment.

Industry, economics, and the national economy are directly dependent on the political impetus. The politicians make decisions (indirectly, even if we accept the „invisible hand of the market" with the related development conditioned corrections) on which segment will be supported, funded and which segment will be granted tax reductions etc. If we provide the politicians with the power to make decisions concerning the internal administration of the higher education institutions, we will resign once and for all to the progress in thinking, education and training of future generations in the spirit of the described principles and thus to the mission of higher education institutions standing for the education and training of people based on critical thinking principles. Higher education should provide society with a human who is value-anchored, large-minded, erudite, able to distinguish and weigh up at least within his or her expertise (or wider in an ideal case).

Consequently, such education would enhance the graduates´ ability to adapt themselves to the continually changing world, because the times when it was sufficient for a human to use his or her knowledge gained in the studies throughout the entire lifetime are long gone (if ever they existed). Such education teaches a human to raise a voice against injustice, to fight because he or she understands that, besides the power of economics and money, there is the power of ideals and values. That is the role of education which should be valued by society. Problems in society arise just when it sells short on the understanding, and allows education to be dictated only through the prism of economics or politics. These are being modified every single moment, however, it cannot happen to the values and principles and they cannot be subject to short-term waves of preferences.

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[7] Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR acting as the central state administration authority in the area of education administration ensures the activities of the universities via an annual funding provided from the state budget. The funding provided on a contractual basis is bound into the performance of acrredited study programmes, into research, development or artistic activities,the development of a university or students´ social support. The statutory allocation of the funding provision purpose is, at the same time, a formal distribution of the Methodology of the funding schedule of the state budget for public universities drafted by the Ministry.

[8] There is a long-term issue on allocation of the public funding based on quantitative indicators.

In the field of science as the second pillar of university essence, the core should be represented by free fundamental research inspired by one of the most human of human qualities which is curiosity. The origins of this kind of thinking dates back in general to the sixth century BC to the period titled by Jaspers as „axial". Thales of Miletus, Anaximandros or Anaximenés, Herakleitos or Parmenidés were simply curious. Did anyone order Descart or Leibniz, Newton or Kant on the subject of thinking? The absurdity of the answer is hidden behind the absurdity of the question.

Where would human progress be without science? A politician, even the most enlightened one, is not able to anticipate the outcome of particular scientific research. Did anyone have a clue as to the impact of the special theory of relativity without which you would not probably have read this text on a tablet or a smartphone? A number of the most useful inventions came into existence without being planned. A number of scientists faced jeers for the „uselessness" of their study subject- only to be proved by history that they were true geniuses (eg. Gottlob Frege in the field of logic, or Joseph Thomson and the electron discovery). The history of science is full of such stories. Curiosity and imagination are qualities not always corresponding with the economic and political citeria of the „benefit". The research in the field of logopedics, archeology or literature cannot be, as a rule, measured in investment returns but our language, our history and our stories create the basics of our identity.

Of course, *mutatis mutandis*, the above mentioned also refer to applied research linked directly to practice.

Therefore, we are at the crossroads: do we want our higher education institutions to produce people afflicted with „branch-idiotism"? Do we produce trained personnel for an industry while its existence depends on political decisions that may shift „support" to a different one? Will we feel distressed at every election about which political party will be taking over the Ministry of Education and whether they will shape universities in their own image? Or do we want an independent, autonomous and responsible higher education system (even with its shortcomings) able to train an educated person capable of thinking and using it as a tool to saturate his/her curiosity?

We will always be defending the second raised thesis. Even with shortcomings (though, every human makes mistakes), it still remains the best and historically proven model that has not been allowed to be overruled by actual political power, and while (almost) always being independent, it has been progressing, and society, states, and people have been progressing as well. We call it progress. On the other hand, where political power interferes with the autonomy and self-government of universities, we can barely speak about progress. In the case of Slovakia, this happened twice: in 1938 for the first time, in relation to the gradual formation of a fascist dictatorship, and in 1948 for the second time upon the formation of the communist (or people´s democratic at the beginning, if we choose) dictatorship.

5. WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN POLITICS AND AUTONOMY AND THE SELF-GOVERNMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS?

Even from the view of etymology, the fundamental basis of autonomy should be the possibility to use internal rules to adjust the internal matters of an entity, i.e. academic matters ruled independently by higher education institutions in this case. The academics, in the form of representative democracy or in a direct manner, should be the decisive element of the internal academic matters, because they are the best equipped to assess all the nuances of the complicated and comprehensive mechanisms being undoubtedly connected with a higher education institution. The question whether the academics should act directly or via their elected representatives in the academic senates does not make a major impact on the legitimacy of these processes. The answer obviously depends on a number of factors, such as the size of the particular higher education institution, its tradition or internal organisation.

The key prerogative of a university community (as the first medieval universities were established and titled as *universitás*, i.e. free communities of educators and students having a strong internal jurisdiction over their members) is the right to vote for their representatives, Rectors, Deans or otherwise titled officers among their number based upon their particular historical tradition. The current model of Administrative Councils preferred by the Minister of Education has nothing to do with self-government and thus neither with the autonomy of higher education institutions. The construction in which an Administrative Council consists of half of its members nominated by the Minister of Education and at the same time, it is entitled to elect university representatives, to approve university budgets and to have the final word in property disposition, cannot be labelled otherwise than academics politicisation. The nominees of the Ministry of Education (however „good" and „enlightened", though the future may bring even less flattering adjectives) are, whether we want it or not, political nominations, moreover with a preferred affiliation to the external environment, be it business, territorial authority or employers´ unions. As a rule, these people have no idea about internal relations and links at universities, about research, financial flows, let alone education. We are still not talking about the most important argument, about the legitimacy derived from having been the source of power for a long time, and the trust given by the academic environment. The introduction of such management mechanisms would widely lead to the replacement of the legitimacy and trust of the academic environment for political trust.

If, according to the actual proposal, the Faculty Senates cease to exist and the prerogative of the universities to vote for their representatives (who (inter alia) negotiate with the government and industry representatives) is removed, it will mean the end of the principles being the only guarantee of research freedom. If the officials and university representatives are directly appointed by the actual political establishment, they will only be puppets and figurines in the hands of the mighty ones. The true freedom will cease to exist in the place where (perhaps in these one and only type of institution) it was (in a certain form and extent, but yet) always present, despite any

external circumstances. And the institutions are the most essential elements of democracy: strong, independent and autonomous. And universities should be the leaders. It is the duty of us, their temporary representatives, to fight for these principles, to protect and promote them.

And therefore, we are (moreover) of a view that a university Rector should be elected by a Senate (*Ceterum autem censeo rectorem universitatis a senatu eligendum esse*).

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SEPARATING THE CAPITAL REGION IN POLAND – THE RATIONALITY OF THE POLITICAL CONCEPTION

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Abstract:

Thematically, the thesis is in the field of research on politics and administration and electoral geography. The subject of the research is the division of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship, which is the largest in terms of territory and population, into two smaller administrative units, planned and announced by the Polish government. The purpose of the analysis is to assess the rationality of the planned decisions regarding the creation of a new voivodeship (region) in Poland. Multidimensional analysis was used in the study of political and local government conditions and in the characteristics of the financial and local government policy of the European Union. The results of the conducted research indicate that the division of Mazovia is a classic example of gerrymandering.

Key words: *election, gerrymandering, Mazovia, region, voivodeship, Warsaw*

INTRODUCTION

Establishing special capital regions and introducing in these cases nonstandard legal entities has a long tradition. There are some well-known examples like the Federal District of Columbia in United States, Berlin as a land in the Bundesrepublik and Great London, which according to British law is an administrative region, but not a city. Because of its history of politically motivated decisions it is a good point of reference to the situation in Poland in 2020.

Warsaw, capital of Poland since 1586, traditionally was a late capital of Mazovia province and a place of gatherings of the Polish parliament from around 1500. After the Second World War, in 1946, a new administrative map of Poland was introduced, with Warsaw being at the same time a separated city and a capital of a voivodeship (region). The was the same for four of the other biggest Polish cities – Lódź, Cracow, Wroclaw and Poznan. There was no tradition of separating Warsaw and neighbouring communities from the Mazovia Voivodeship. It is important to state that traditionally this province was economically underdeveloped and Warsaw relatively small compering to other historically prominent cities – Cracow, Gdansk and Torun.

The phenomenon of the special capital regions as well as the political, economic and social conditions of such decisions about their formation are present in both historical and contemporary scientific research. Brussels is an important case of a special capital region – situated somewhere in between Flanders and Wallonia, politically separated as a legal entity, linguistically an island. Belgium is a country where regional separatism is threating the very existence of a state. Administrative divisions are introduced to serve one general purpose – to provide an effective structure for the management of social and economic issues on a state and regional level.

Another example is Great London. It covers 1579 km2 with about 8,2 million inhabitants. It consists of the City of London and 32 other London boroughs, divided into two groupings: Inner London – City of London and 12 communities, and Outer London – 20 communities. There are formally two cities in the region – the City of London mentioned before and the City of Westminster. The Conservative British government in 1986 dismantled its regional authority delegating its competences to small communities. It was a politically motivated decision – voters in London traditionally elect Labour MPs [Kochan 2008; O'Leary 2009]. Londoners voted in a referendum in 1998 to create a new governance structure for Greater London. The position of directly elected Mayor of London was created by the Greater London Authority Act 1999 in 2000 as part of the reforms. The role became important and visible in the country as a whole. It is occupied by politicians, who sometimes use it as a trampoline or a phase in their career [Mansley, Demsar 2015]. The most famous example is, of course, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. The case of Greater London can serve as a proof that governing a capital (or administrative unit with a capital) carries important symbolic meaning and can became politically highly beneficial. The rationality of a management system, regional borders and the effectiveness of local government were

not the main goals of leaders of the country.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of exercising power in the capital or the largest city in the country has always aroused emotions in politicians. No wonder that the electoral rules in such centres and related administrative regions are subject to frequent changes. Voting rules [Wendt, Bógdał-Brzezińska 2020], constituency boundaries, terms of office of elected authorities or the rules for assigning seats to elected local government bodies are changed. However, the most frequent changes introduced in order to obtain current, real political benefits is the manipulation of the boundaries of constituencies and more broadly of administrative units.

The borders of the administrative units follow historical divisions and/or are a product of efforts to adapt their size to a changing reality (number of inhabitants, economic potential, economic links) of proficient space management. The introduction of a democratic political system and common voting rights resulted in the politically motivated manipulation of constituencies' borders. This practice was named after the most infamous user of this tool, Elbridge Gerry (1744-1814) as gerrymandering. As a governor of Massachusetts he introduced new borders to help candidates of his party to win. "The gerrymander is an American name for a political abuse, which, though by no means exclusively American, has been most widely practiced and generally tolerated in this country. (…) Nor is it suited to European conditions, because it is difficult there to shift electoral boundaries. European electoral units in large part have a clearly defined historical basis, which in turn rests upon geographic coherence" – C. O. Sauer wrote more than 100 years ago in his still useful work "Geography and the Gerrymander" [Sauer 1918]. The prevention of such a malpractice was considered important for democracy [Vickrey 1961]. The term refers to the "deliberate manipulation of legislative district boundaries in order to achieve some political or personal objective that serves the interests of those in power, who have been charged with drawing the lines" [Keena et al. 2019]. It occurs in electoral systems that assign seats in a legislative body to localised constituencies in order to advance the goal of territorial representation. Nowadays this practice is analysed by researchers from the US, Europe and Asia [Malesky 2009; Bowen 2014; Tan 2016; Kennedy 2017]. Research has been both in theoretical [Alexeev, Mixon 2018; Gatesman, Unwin 2020], as well as political [Chen, Rodden 2013; Ong et al. 2017; Ross 2018; Warrington 2018] regional aspects and even educational (Allen 2020). Gerrymandering and its consequences have been studied in recent years in Slovakia [Halás, Klapka 2017], Romania [Giugăl et al. 2017], Italy [Ratto Trabucco 2019] and in Turkey, in local elections [Aygul 2016] and in the capital [Tuysuz, Gülmez 2019].

It can be treated as a condemned malpractice but also as a quite routine type of action that ruling parties are susceptible to use, especially in a situation of low political culture and weak civil society or as a tool to transform political regimes into

authoritarian or hybrid ones. The last case can be treated as a sign of crisis of poorly rooted or unstable democratic regimes. The question of gerrymandering is also a point of growing interest to the mathematicians – it provides some good examples of an interdisciplinary approach [Hodge et al. 2010]. The subject of research was also the rationality of the gerrymandering phenomenon [Bertrall 2018].

Also in Poland, as early as the 1990s, political scientists began to focus on the issue of manipulating administrative borders in the context of changes in electoral procedure. Because of the political transformation new democratic laws concerning free elections were relatively unstable and some researchers asked a question whether parties benefit from the manipulations [Kamiński 2020]. However other issues became prominent; how to model an electoral system to prevent gerrymandering (Haman, 2003) and how big is the risk of such manipulations to the so-called young democracies [Żukowski 2003; Pierzgalski, Stępień 2017; Balicki 2018]?

In the next decade more attention was focused on the requirements of legal solutions aimed at protecting existing administrative structures against gerrymandering and malapportionment [Pierzgalski 2015]. Attention was also paid to the increasingly subtle and frequent occurrence of experiments with constituencies changing in the context of the particularly important reforms after 1997 and local elections [Flis, Stoicki 2016].

2. AIM AND METHODS OF RESEARCH

The aim of this study is to evaluate how the situation of political polarisation stimulates the redrawing of administrative borders in the context of gerrymandering in local elections. The authors have analysed the case of the planned division of the Mazovian Voivodeship into two units using basic space and statistical analysis together with a critical review of literature provided by political science. The work uses statistical analysis to evaluate the potential of the existing and planned voivodeships. The same methods were used to evaluate the planned results of local elections in the new provinces. Multidimension analyses was used in the study of political and local government conditions and in the characteristics of the financial and local government policy of the European Union [Kulas, Wendt 2018].

In general, redrawing administrative borders should be treated as a common practice to keep divisions functional with a growing population or new responsibilities of the local government. Especially being a member of European Union creates a new situation with cohesion funds that are distributed on a regional basis. Well thought out changes can result in financial gains and better management structures enabling both central and local governments to work more efficiently. In the analysed case the situation is different – a reason for the division of the Mazovian Voivodeship into two parts is to enable Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PiS), ruling in Poland since 2015, to seize control of the local government of one of the proposed parts. Because the party is not popular in the liberal and cosmopolite city electorate, the size of Warsaw and mobilisation of its voters prevented them from taking control of the

management of voivodeships in 2018. It is not a new idea anyway. The division of Mazovia into two regions was already discussed in 2016 and met with substantial criticism [Swianiewicz 2016; Opolski, Modzelewski 2017].

To test this hypothesis this study puts together basic economic variables and electoral preferences data trying to assess the probability of getting the desired outcome (control of the local government, limiting the influence of the Warsawian electorate on the province) by planned division. In further parts of the study we refer to the existing province as Mazovian and to the planned units as the Mazovia- Warsaw and the Mazovia-Region Voivodeships.

3. THE IDEA OF THE MAZOVIA DIVISION AND ECONOMIC DATA

The Mazovian Voivodeship was created together with 15 others in 1997 in the biggest local government reform since World War II. The main purpose of the changes was to strengthen the principle of autonomy of the local communities and widen their responsibilities . It was considered a necessary step in the political transformation ending the centralisation practices of the authoritative communist regime (Levitas 2018; Regulski 2003). As Poland was already entering the period of membership negotiations with EU it was also important to create units big enough to enable them to effectively absorb future European funds. The transformation from 49 small to 16 big Voivodeships combined with introducing powerful regional marshals resulted later in local governments' gaining substantial competence concerning the spending of cohesion funds.

The Mazovian Voivodeship was the biggest of all, uniting not only the historical province of Mazovia but also territories to the south with the city of Radom [Łysoń 2017]. Warsaw is continuously a dominating central economic point counting for 71% of GDP. The capital with its agglomeration provides 84% of fiscal revenues in the budget for voivodeships.

The idea of separation of the capital from the rest of province was introduced for the first time in 2006. The local elections that year - only 11 months after the general elections that brought to power the right-wing government of PiS – were won by the opposition. The Mazovian local assembly was controlled by Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska - PO) and the Polish People's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – PSL). The same parties controlled it after the next four elections (Table 1).

Table 1. Mandates in Mazovian Voivodeship (regional) Assembly; coalition in power versus opposition

Election Year	Ruling coalition (PO, PSL + left parties)	Opposition (PiS and its coalitions)
2006	36	24
2010	36	14
2014	31	19
2018	26	25

Source: own elaboration based on official data of Mazovian Local Assembly.

Polish politicians were aware of the differences in gross income in Warsaw and other parts of the voivodeship. From the EU's perspective the fast economic development of Warsaw was putting at risk the city's eligibility to use cohesion funds in the next seven-years' budget. The solution proposed in 2015 was based on the principle that every member state determines by itself the borders of the most important NUTS 2 EU regions. The Polish government of PO/PSL divided the voivodeship into two NUTS 2 units leaving the administrative framework intact. The official proposition was sent to the European Commission in 2016 and the necessary regulation came into force on 1 January 2018.

The income gap between parts of the province was expected to grow in the future. It was estimated that by 2020, GDP per capita of Warsaw and its closest communities would reach 147% of the EU average. Other portions of the voivodeship will be among the least developed regions in the whole of the EU with GDP per capita only approximately 60% of the EU average [TVN Warszawa 2018]. As early as 2007, the government of Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński initiated studies to divide the Mazovian Voivodeship before the 2010 local elections. His losing power after the early 2007 elections put a halt to such plans. The issue returned in 2009 when Lech Kaczyński, twin brother of the former prime minister and a Mayor of Warsaw, met in Radom with the Mayors of five cities that had lost their status after the 1997 reforms. He opted for an exclusion of the Warsaw agglomeration from the Masovian Voivodeship stressing that it will end the huge paradox – the richest province after taking Warsaw and Plock out is at the same time the poorest one. Plock is an ancient capital of Mazovia, much older than Warsaw, nowadays the centre of the oil industry, housing the biggest refinery in Poland. It lost its place as the second biggest city to Radom, which - as we stated before - historically was not in the region. The rivalry as to which of the cities should be the capital after the planned separation is continuously present and was not solved till redaction of this work. As long as Civic Platform was in power at a national level the plan would be mothballed and an alternative solution – NUTS separation, was chosen (Fig.1).

**Fig. 1.
Planned division
of Mazovian Voivodeship
into two units**

Source: [Kaczor 2020]
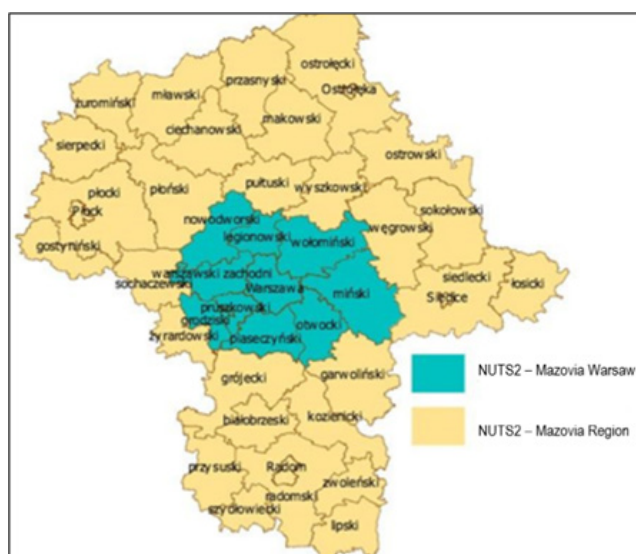
In 2015 quite unexpectedly the idea returned during the election campaign for the Polish parliament. The PiS local leaders from Plock promised the division of Mazovia and setting the capital of the non-Warsaw part of the region in Plock. Same party leaders from Radom strongly opposed this. Their voice was given meaning by the fact that Radom was at that time the biggest city with a Mayor from PiS [Portal Plock 2020; Biznes Wprost 2020]. The rivalry inside the ruling party was intensive and, with much more pressing issues at stake, the ruling party let the problem seemingly die during its first term in office (2015-2019).

In 2020 it became clear that the issue had just been postponed and PiS waited for a politically feasible moment. A defined plan for separating Warsaw and 33 neighbouring communities from the Mazovian Voivodeship was presented, although the door for slight changes was left open. At the same time, a prominent MP from the town of Wolomin, Jacek Sasin [Gazeta Prawna 2019] entered the cabinet and it became clear that he would be the person to give the initiative its final shape. According to the separation plan (Figure 1,) the new Mazovia Region would clearly be land which formed a group of the less developed regions of Poland. The same characteristics of the small but densely populated Mazovia Warsaw Region would make it stand out even more when comparing it to the Polish average figures (Table 2).

Table 2. Basic economic data comparing Polish Voivodeships in 2018

Voivodeships	Population Poland =100%	GDP NUTS2, Poland =100%	Monthly income Poland =100%	Beds in hospitals / 10 000 person	Housing / 1000 person	Cars / 1000 person
Lower Silesia	7,6	8,3	102,3	51	409	629
Kuyavian-Pomeran.	5,4	4,4	86,5	46	362	598
Lublin	5,5	3,7	88,7	52	369	593
Lubuskie	2,6	2,2	88,0	42	372	648
Lodzkie	6,4	6,0	92,1	51	415	616
Lesser Poland	8,9	8,1	96,5	44	353	576
Mazowieckie (now)	**14,1**	**22,6**	**122,3**	**48**	**426**	**678**
Mazowia Warsaw	**8,0**	**17,4**	**135,4**	**53**	**480**	**701**
Mazowia Region	**6,1**	**5,2**	**95,5**	**40**	**356**	**648**
Opole	2,6	2,0	90,8	45	362	649
Podkarpackie	5,5	3,9	85,9	47	315	555
Podlasie	3,1	2,2	88,8	50	385	525
Pomeranian	6,1	5,9	98,4	39	377	598
Silesian	11,8	12,3	100,2	55	391	585
Świętokrzyskie	3,2	2,3	86,3	46	360	569
Warmia and Mazury	3,7	2,6	84,2	45	363	546
Greater Poland	9,1	9,8	91,7	43	352	671
West Pomeranian	4,4	3,7	90,7	46	388	579
Poland*	38411,1 thous.	496,4 bln euro	1068,0 euro	47	381	610

*Average gross monthly income Poland =100%
**Poland - Sumary data with out Mazowieckie Region and Mazowieckie Warszawav
Source: own elaboration based on data from Polish Statistical Office (GUS).

The new Mazovia Warsaw will rank first in almost all sets of indicators. The new Mazovia Region will be one of the underdeveloped, peripheral regions, with limited revenues and problems in healthcare availability. Potentially it will be economically unsustainable. It will also gather historically separated subregions, now linked by the central position of Warsaw in the radial structure.

4. POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION

The plan looks feasible only from the political point of view – in a region separated from the Warsaw agglomeration, the ruling party can expect a landslide victory in elections for the local assembly. It will overshadow the defeat in 2018, when electoral predictions and calculations were favourable, but eventually because of the one mandate, PiS had to form the opposition on a voivodeship level. Power slipping from the hands of the ruling party created turmoil and internal debate resulting in the push for province division.

Closer look at data from the 2018 local elections in the Mazovian Voivodeship supports the hopes of the right-wing government. Victory in the counties forming a new region is highly probable. The Warsaw agglomeration amounts to the majority of votes casted for the opposition. Traditionally it comes together with the position of the Mayor of Warsaw and a comfortable majority in the City Council for centrist-liberal political forces. In Warsaw itself the opposition in 2018 elections won twice as many votes as PiS (Table 3).

Table 3. Main winners and losers of 2018 elections for the regional assembly in Mazovian Voivodeship by counties (winners in bold)

Counties and cities with county status	Turnout (% of voters)	Main parties and coalitions (%)	
		PiS and its coalition (governmental parties)	PO and its coalition (opposition parties)
Planned Voivodeship Mazovia Warsaw			
Warsaw	66,49	25,77	**54,92**
Piaseczyński	59,91	28,25	**50,96**
Nowodworski	59,20	30,74	**47,80**
Grodziski	59,99	29,39	**46,15**
Warsaw West	62,30	30,64	**44,11**
Pruszkowski	61,19	30,22	**43,56**
Legionowski	62,29	29,18	**43,25**
Otwocki	59,93	**39,11**	37,75
Miński	56,55	**42,43**	35,58
Wołomiński	58,02	**39,24**	34,38
Planned Voivodeship Mazovia Region			
Przysuski	65,23	**57,68**	22,51
Garwoliński	57,34	**56,56**	26,46
Szydłowiecki	61,85	**50,97**	28,05
Ostrowski	58,13	**50,44**	33,14
Siedlecki	57,79	**48,95**	32,90

Radomski	59,60	**48,25**	28,57
Białobrzeski	58,17	**47,50**	36,73
Sokołowski	61,87	**46,86**	34,55
Węgrowski	57,79	**46,72**	38,53
Siedlce	53,75	**46,44**	30,86
Pułtuski	62,47	**44,92**	40,11
Ostrołęcki	57,61	**43,47**	34,54
Łosicki	55,27	**42,58**	40,10
Wyszkowski	59,20	**42,27**	36,97
Radom	52,72	**41,66**	40,86
Zwoleński	59,77	39,97	**44,48**
Lipski	57,84	39,45	**39,54**
Ostrołęka	55,54	**38,96**	36,69
Kozienicki	60,28	38,70	**43,79**
Makowski	59,03	37,63	**49,21**
Przasnyski	57,36	37,28	**46,68**
Gostyniński	58,48	37,03	**49,78**
Żyrardowski	54,85	36,94	**42,61**
Grójecki	57,50	36,85	**41,87**
Płoński	55,83	36,67	**49,61**
Mławski	56,35	36,44	**47,77**
Ciechanowski	57,74	34,43	**49,83**
Płocki	57,60	33,98	**51,42**
Żuromiński	59,22	33,95	**54,90**
Sochaczewski	54,86	33,09	**52,22**
Płock	54,75	32,23	**56,31**
Sierpecki	61,26	28,46	**58,10**

Source: own elaboration based on official data of self-governmental election 2018.

Taking into account the actual political preferences shown by the votes casted in 2018, the predicted outcome will support the political reasoning for the separation. In the newly created Mazovia Warsaw Voivodeship parties opposing the national right-wing government can count on 15 seats out of the total number of 26. Comparatively speaking, the ruling party can expect to take 14 out of the 25 seats in the assembly of the new Mazovia Region Voivodeship (Table 4).

The leaders of Warsaw and the members of the Mazovia Assembly together with civil activists are strongly against this planned division. In January 2020 they accepted a document on the issue, that was widely distributed in the hope of influencing public opinion against the new regional structures. They stressed especially three main points, that all the documents, strategic plans and indicative programmes concerning European funds will expire the moment the planned division will be introduced. It poses a risk of losing previously appropriated funds. New programmes would have to be negotiated with the European Commission and it will negatively affect both Warsaw (e.g. subway funding) and the new region. Additionally the division of the

Table 4. Results of 2018 elections for the regional assembly in Mazovian Voivodeship by counties in the new proposed division for two new Voivodeships

No.*	Man-dates	The geographical scope of constituencies	KO & others	PiS & others
-	51	Existing Mazovian Voivodeship (existing)	26	25
1	5	Warsaw borroughts: Ursynów, Wilanów, Śródmieście, Ochota, Mokotów	4	1
2	5	Warsaw boroughs: Bemowo, Bielany, Ursus, Włochy, Wola, Żoliborz	3	2
3	5	Warsaw borroughts: Białołęka, Rembertów, Targówek, Wawer, Wesoła, Praga Północ, Praga Południe	3	2
7	11	Counties: grodziski, legionowski, nowodworski, otwocki, piaseczyński, pruszkowski, warszawski zachodni, wołomiński	5	6
-	26	Proposed Mazovia Warsaw Voivodeship (new)	15	11
4	9	City of Płock; counties: ciechanowski, gostyniński, mławski, płocki, płoński, przasnyski, pułtuski, sierpecki, sochaczewski, żuromiński, żyrardowski	5	4
5	7	City of Radom; counties: białobrzeski, grójecki, kozienicki, lipski, przysuski, radomski, szydłowiecki, zwoleński	3	4
6	9	Cities of Ostrołęka and Siedlce; counties: garwoliński, łosicki, makowski, miński**, ostrołęcki, ostrowski, siedlecki, sokołowski, węgrowski, wyszkowski	3	6
-	25	Proposed Mazovia Region Voivodeship (new)	11	14

*Number of the constituency for the local council
**County of Miński is set to be the part of capital region
Source: own elaboration of data of Polish State Election Commission.

Mazovian Voivodeship will bring major obstacles for the inhabitants of the Mazovia Region to gain specialised healthcare. Of 26 hospitals and other crucial elements of the infrastructure 14 are located in Warsaw. Provincial hospitals serve the general purposes of the local populations – hospitals in Warsaw are typically highly specialised clinics of regional importance, supported by the Voivodeship budget serving all the inhabitants. The division will be detrimental in this crucial area for an ageing population. Voivodeship regional strategies and planning documents will also expire, what can result in new obstacles for citizens and business alike. The preparation of crucial documents for spatial urban planning take typically 2-3 years, and the consequences for the issuing of, for example, building permits will be potentially disastrous [Sabak-Gąska 2020].

As far as revenues and spending are concerned, there are major transfers from the Polish capital to other parts of the existing Voivodeship. Warsaw counts for 84% of revenues from CIT tax (2 billion from 2,34 billion PLN). Because of the higher income in the capital it absorbs also higher sums from the local segment of PIT. In 2019 the budget of the Voivodeship was 2,65 billion PLN – the planned Mazovia Warsaw Voivodeship consumed 1 billion comparing to 1,65 billion for the Mazovia Region – it counts for 61% of spending. The separation of the Warsaw metropolitan region is unreasonable from the fiscal point of view.

The division of the Mazovia Voivodeship follows the general political strategy of PiS

which is to win the support of local communities by promises to create new units of territorial administration. At least two other Voivodeships were present in public discussion, especially during the election campaigns: Czestochowa and Middle-Pomerania. One needs to remember that the Polish local administration reform of 1997 originally opted for 12 big Voivodeships, but because of local interest and politically motivated pressure, this number was changed to 15 and later to 16 [Wendt 2001; Wendt 2006; Śleszyński 2018]. Losing the function of local administrative centres for more than 30 cities created some problems, including depopulation and peripherisation. But the Mazovia division is a single idea, and not part of general efforts to minimise the negative effects of the 1997 reform on smaller urban centres.

CONCLUSION

The policy of a coalition of right-wing parties in Poland regarding the division of Mazovia is in line with the nature of gerrymandering. From the perspective of efforts to improve the current results in parliamentary and local elections, it meets the criteria of rational political decisions indicated in the literature. A push for the Mazovia division and the separation of the Warsaw agglomeration will benefit PiS in five major aspects: seizing power in the regional assembly in a new, definitely rural Voivodeship; sending a strong message to other peripheral regions in Poland that the interest of their inhabitants are high on the party priority list, building trust and support in these regions; the possibility to choose, directly or indirectly, high ranking officials in the new territorial unit and fill positions in local government controlled legal entities, especially communal agencies (Wendt, 2018); defining clearly on the political map major societal division between liberal and pro-European cities and conservative, patriotic provincial areas; and the ability to deprive the new, small and rich Warsaw Voivodeship of a big chunk of revenues using the redistribution mechanism and hinder the realisation of investments or other electoral promises made by the Warsaw Mayor and assembly, controlled historically by the opposition. The use of the redistribution mechanism was introduced in Poland in 1997 and makes richer voivodeships provide some part of their yearly revenues to poorer ones.

In the concept of the planned Mazowieckie Voivodeship, however, one can see deficits in the rationality of the decisions of the Polish government in relation to the effective functioning of this new administrative unit. The potential threats are: a very small budget for the planned Mazovia Region Voivodeship (which is possibly too small to fulfil basic functions); the risk of strengthening the already visible tendency for a "brain drain" – educated young people migrate to big cities looking for jobs and a less oppressive society. Warsaw will offer not only a higher standard of living but also the possibility to express oneself and follow a chosen style of life; the rivalry between cities for the position of the capital of the new region, with conflict inside the ruling party in her traditional base; a greater level of accountability in the new region with the same party controlling both national and regional government and the inability

to shift responsibility to "big city politicians". Although the leaders of the ruling party stress the issue of European funds it should be treated as a smoke screen as changing the NUTS 2 division in 2018 had already settled the problem.

The plan to separate Warsaw from the rest of the region follows a ruling scheme favourable to the ruling PiS party – underlining and redefining the divisions in society, pointing out that liberal elites, living in big cities and seizing disproportionally a larger part of the benefits of fast economic development are willing to cement the status quo. Only the conservative party will put an emphasis on traditions, the Christian legacy and national pride which will serve the interest of the peripheries.

The pandemic of Covid-19, omnipresent in 2020, makes predictions much harder. After intensive discussions in the first five months of 2020, the new law project was expected to be presented by early autumn. We are still waiting for the political decision – the lockdown and the economic and societal costs of the pandemic made all the steps very risky especially to the ruling party. The outcome of the planned early local elections in two new Voivodeships could be quite different from expectations and predictions based on previous data. Rebuilding support for the old former agrarian party PSL is one possible scenario. In that case, in place of a swift victory in the new regional unit, PiS can face a double defeat – traditionally in Warsaw and surprisingly in the Mazovia Region. The economic consequences of Covid-19 are the main reason behind Next Generation Europe – a huge financial programme of post-pandemic reconstruction with a strong ecological component [European Commission 2020]. All the regions of Poland are eligible for the funds and their distribution should be a priority.

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POLISH AMERICANS, POLITICAL PARTISANSHIP AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS VOTING: 1972-2020

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Abstract:

Although there are 10 million Polish Americans in the United States, this group has been understudied recently, with most work relying on unrepresentative samples. We fill in knowledge gaps on party affiliation and presidential voting with data from 1972-2018 waves of the General Social Survey. Until the last decade, Polish Americans were consistently Democratic in party identification and presidential voting. Recently, however, this group's voting has become more moderate, bringing it into greater alignment with the overall American electorate. Our findings support current political thought about US Poles overall, while challenging secondary assumptions in ways that suggest further longitudinal study.

Key words: *Polish Americans, Voting, Partisanship, Ethnicity, American Politics*

INTRODUCTION

Immigrants swelled the United States during the years 1890-1920, adding millions to the population of the country. At that time, they were mostly poor and unskilled in search for work opportunities and freedoms available in their newly adopted home. Many of these new arrivals were attracted to economic policies promoted by the Democratic Party and voted accordingly. Poles were no exception as they adapted to the political environment of this country. They were particularly devoted to New Deal efforts during the years when Franklin Delano Roosevelt was in the White House. The Poles were drawn to the economic and social welfare relief programs that characterized policies that were meant to address the serious problems that dominated the Great Depression [Erdmans 2007]. Their loyalty to Roosevelt's presidency and party lingered long after Roosevelt himself had gone, transferring that allegiance through the Truman presidency and beyond [Brozek 1985], [Bukowczyk 2009], [Greene 1980], [Pienkos A.T. 1978], [Renkiewicz 1973]. As a Catholic, John F. Kennedy received a plurality of the Poles' votes in 1960 after they had selected the popular Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952. As recently arrived immigrants, they usually supported the Democratic Party and the values it represented at the time [Pienkos D.E. 1976].

Beginning in the late 1970s, Polish American voters began to move to a more conservative direction while not necessarily joining the Republican Party, and at times voting for third party candidates as well [Pienkos D.E. 2015]. They chose Ronald Reagan for president in 1984 as well as George H. W. Bush in 1988, but moved to William Jefferson Clinton in 1992 due to his support of Polish NATO membership. George W. Bush then became their choice in 2000 but was followed by Democrat Barack Obama in 2008[1]. However, partially due to the visa issue for Poles traveling to the US, Polish American voters selected Donald Trump in 2016. The final data for election 2020 from a national PIAST study indicate a strong support for Biden in the recent 2020 presidential election [Stecula 2022]. This election result is noteworthy as the reasons for the Biden election are not entirely clear but may be partially related to his Catholic religious preference as was the case for John F. Kennedy in 1960 [Brooks, Manza 1997].[2] One theme in the general trend of Democratic Party presidential voting is that Polish American voters have been influenced by policy issues critically important to them in their unique history, culture, and connection to Poland. A second theme is that Polish Americans have responded to their experiences in the United States, some of which are related to their ethnic identity as Polish immigrants, but others that are related to trends felt by Americans in general.

Several reasons for this shift to the right have been suggested by various scholars. First, as the years passed Polish Americans moved into the middle class as their education levels increased and they were able to secure higher paying jobs. Second,

[1] The PIAST Institute in Hamtramck, Michigan has conducted a number of Polish American studies of political participation over the years [Radzilowski, Stecula 2000], [Stecula, Radzilowski 2014].

[2] As a critical counterpoint to the idea of a distinctive tendency of Catholic voters to support Catholic candidates, see Jelen (2008) and McDermott (2009).

many Polish Americans continue to report Catholic faith. Catholicism is not just an individual devotion but a cultural centerpiece of the Polish American community, with church parishes playing a focal role in forging social connections and enabling mutual aid to this day. Polish Americans, particularly with Catholic identity, may have moved toward the Republican Party when it stressed positions that were of critical importance to them regarding cultural values around gender and sexuality, such as abortion, LGBT rights, and the separation of church life from civic and political life. That said, the centrality of Catholic identity among Polish Americans is a matter of debate. While some scholarly work has asserted that "Non-Catholic Poles in America never made up more than five percent of the total Polish-American population" and that non-Catholics emigrating from Poland to America did not identify as Poles per se [Radzikowski 2009], [Radzikowski 2015], responses to an interesting question in this ongoing nationally representative General Social Survey (GSS) indicate movement in another direction. In this question, respondents are asked to choose one and only one primary ethnic identity. Overall, 63.7% of respondents from 1972-2018 who identified themselves primary as of Polish ethnicity also indicated a Catholic faith (15.0% indicated they were Protestant, 9.4% Jewish, 9.1% no religion, and 2.8% other religion). This overall trend masks significant change: 73.1% of Polish American respondents reported Catholic religious identity in the 1970s, but this share dropped to just 51.1% among GSS respondents in the 2010s. This is not a simple Catholic vs. Protestant identification issue. Declining identification with the Catholic religious community may be one reason why Polish Americans as a voting group began to vote like other Americans, as later generations of Polish immigrants moved away from intimate knowledge and personal attachment to their country and culture of origin and more to typical American views. This area needs future serious scholarly attention as suggested in this study's conclusions which in some respects may be limited due to sampling issues. Some scholars even question whether there is a distinct "Polish vote" today as there was in the twentieth century [Pienkos D.E. 2021]. Detailed discussions of these political linkages are presented in other articles cited in this paper.

STUDY DESIGN

Data for this study has been extracted from the General Social Survey (GSS), administered by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago with principal funding from the National Science Foundation [Smith et al. 2018]. The GSS is a non-panel survey from representative samples of the non-institutionalized population of the United States aged 18 and older; we draw from 32 waves of the survey beginning in 1972 and ending in 2018. More than 64,000 survey responses were gathered during this period, with a subset of 1,489 respondents who reported they most strongly identify with their Polish ancestry. This is a relatively small subset, and as a consequence our findings serve as description of this group and generalizations to all Polish Americans in the United States are limited. However, this is the largest

and most representative survey of Polish American political behavior we are aware of, and we hope that this analysis will generate important future research questions. For this study, these are our research questions:

1. Does the partisan affiliation of Polish Americans change over time from 1972-2018? How does this trend compare to that of the entire American GSS sample?
2. Does the pattern of presidential election voting by Polish Americans change over time from the 1968 election to the 2016 election? How does this trend compare to that of the entire American GSS sample?

The variables we use in our analysis are coded as follows:

• Democratic Party affiliation (0=No, 1=Yes)
• Presidential choice in the previous presidential election among voters (0=Non Democratic Party candidate, 1=Democratic Party candidate)
• Who the respondent would have voted for if they had voted, among non-voters (0=Non-Democratic Party candidate, 1=Democratic Party candidate, 2=Don't know)
• Catholic religious identification (0= No, 1=Yes)
• Years of age
• Years of education
• Income above median income for the year (0= No, 1=Yes)
• Female self-reported sex (0=No, 1=Yes)
• White self-reported race (0=No, 1=Yes
• Size of residential community (in thousands of people)

Using this data, we first generate figures to exhibit the trends in political behavior among Polish Americans across time and compare them to trends among all American respondents regardless of ethnic identification. Next, we employ multivariate logistic regression to consider a broader set of covariates that might affect the association between Polish ethnic identification and political behavior in the United States. Does a unique voting trend for Polish Americans persist when other important factors are accounted for?

RESULTS

1.1 Bivariate Trends

Figure 1 displays trends in party identification over time by GSS year for self-identified Polish Americans, and Figure 2 displays the same trends among all GSS respondents. The trend for Polish Americans contains some similarities to the trend for all GSS respondents, namely a decline in Democratic Party affiliation and an increase in third-party or independent affiliation. However, two important differences are also evident. First, an increase in Republican Party affiliation is evident for Polish Americans across the period, while for all GSS respondents Republican Party affiliation increases for a time but then declines to early-1970s levels. Second, while levels of Democratic Party registration are roughly equal for Polish Americans and all GSS respondents by the late 2010s, they were quite a bit higher for Polish Americans

than for all respondents in the 1970s. Democratic Party affiliation fell further, from a greater height, among Polish Americans. Figure 3 compares trends for a different outcome: voting for Democratic Party presidential candidates. These trends extend backward to 1968 and forward only to 2016 because respondents are asked to describe their most recent presidential voting behavior. Across the years, similarity between self-identified Polish Americans and all Americans is apparent, especially in the mid-1980s and afterward. While from the late 1960s through the 1980 election Polish Americans appear more likely to turn out and vote Democratic in presidential elections, since then the Polish American voting trend, at least as captured by the General Social Survey, roughly resembles the trend for Americans overall.

Figure 1. Party Identification of Self-Identified Polish Americans, 1972-2018

Figure 2. Party Identification, All GSS Respondents, 1972-2018

Figure 3. % of Respondents who Voted Democrat or Didn't Vote, but Would Have Voted Democrat, Presidential Elections 1968-2016
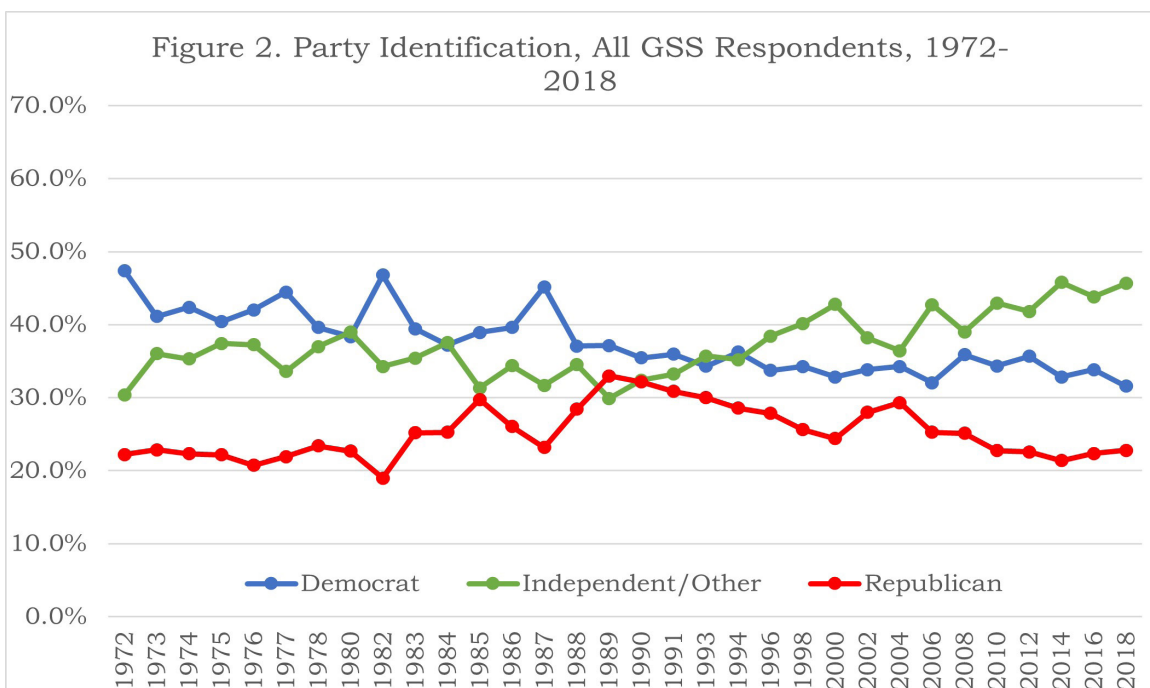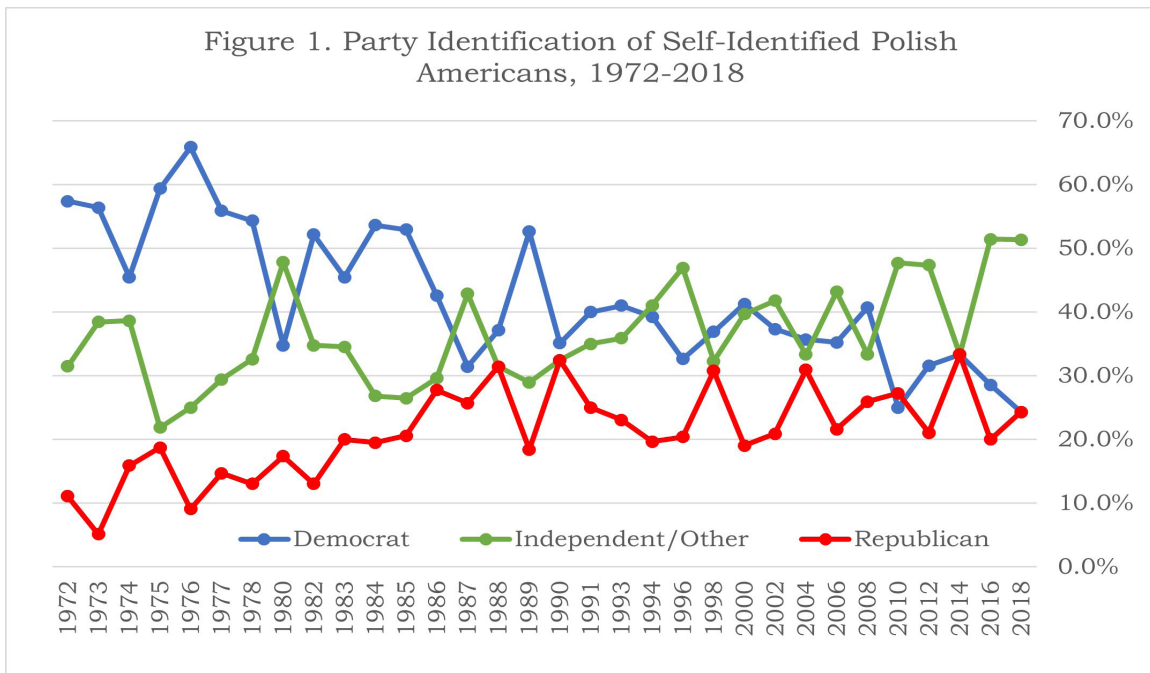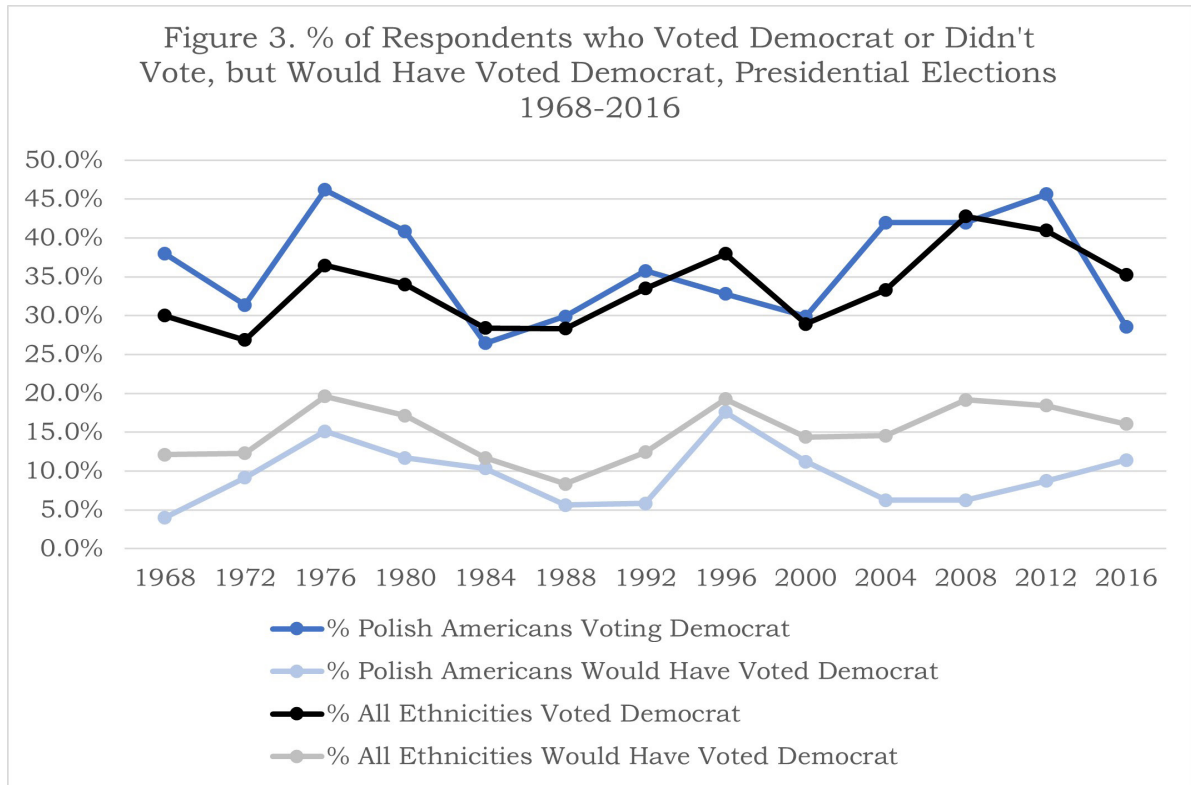
1.2 Multivariate Analysis

Figures in the previous section indicate simple tendencies across time, but there are a number of other factors that impact party affiliation and voting. These factors are controlled for in the multivariate logistic regressions summarized in Table 1 and Table 2. In each table, Model 1 considers only the effect of being Polish American. Model 2 adds Catholicism, high income, education, sex, whiteness, age, and size of residential community as control variables. Model 3 introduces additional variables that track changes across time and also reports any significant interactions between Polish American status and other variables. The effects in Tables 1 and 2 are based on odds ratios, which describe the odds of an event happening given a one-unit increase in some independent variable, divided by the odds of an event happening if there is no increase in that independent variable. For instance, the "+31.5% odds" result for "Female (1=Yes)" in Model 3 of Table 2 indicates that a female's odds of voting for a Democratic Party candidate are 31.5% higher than the odds of a male who is in other respects the same as that female.

Model 1 of Table 1 indicates that when other variables are not controlled for, having a Polish American ethnic identity increases the odds of being a Democrat by 24%. When all other variables are controlled for in Model 3, however, Polish American identity increases the odds of being a Democrat by a much higher 61.6%. Polish ethnic identity nearly cancels out the 69.6% drop in odds of being a Democrat that comes with whiteness in Model 3, suggesting that even controlling for the passage of time, Polish

ethnic identity cannot simply be reduced to another form of American white racial identity. As with all Americans, Polish Americans who live in larger towns, are older, female, have lower income and less education have greater odds of being a Democrat. The 63.7% of Polish Americans who report Catholic religious identity experience an additional 26.4% increase in the odds of being a Democrat; because ethnicity and religion are controlled for, the distinctive effect of Polish ethnic identity cannot simply be reduced to the effect of Catholicism. Finally, while all GSS respondents experience a decline in Democratic Party affiliation from the 1970s to the 2010s, Polish Americans experience a larger drop, confirming the bivariate trend noted above.

Table 1. Effect of Independent Variables on the Odds of Democratic Party Affiliation (1=Yes) Among All Respondents to the General Social Survey, 1972-2018

Independent Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Polish American (1=Yes)	+24.0% odds **	+40.7% odds **	+61.6% odds **
Catholic (1=Yes)		+26.4% odds **	+26.4% odds**
Education (years)		-2.0% odds/year **	-0.6% odds/year **
Income>Median (1=Yes)		-6.7% odds **	-5.3% odds **
Female (1=Yes)		+30.3% odds **	+30.3% odds **
White (1=Yes)		-67.1% odds **	-69.6% odds **
Age (years)		+1.2% odds/year **	+1.3% odds/year **
Size (thousands)		+.007% odds/thousand **	+.006% odds/thousand**
GSS Year from 1987-2002 (1=Yes)			-28.4% odds compared to 1972-1986 **
GSS Year from 2003-2018 (1=Yes)			-40.8% odds compared to 1972-1986 **
Polish American * GSS Year from 1987-2002 (1=Yes)			-20.4% odds for Polish Americans compared to 1972-1986 +
Polish American * GSS Year from 2003-2018 (1=Yes)			-28.1% odds for Polish Americans compared to 1972-1986 *

*Notes: ** p<.01, * p<.05, + p<.10, N= 64142 (672 cases with missing values). Model 3 features includes interactions between Polish ethnic identity and all other independent variables; only significant interactions reported. Removal of non-significant interactions from model does not affect substantive effect or statistical significance of other variables.*

As with partisanship, the odds of voting for a Democratic Party candidate are higher for Polish Americans than for others, and the effect of Polish ethnicity increases when other variables are controlled for. As with all Americans, Polish Americans who live in larger towns, are older, female, and have lower income have greater odds of voting for a Democrat. For all Americans in Model 3, education has no statistically significant impact on odds of vote, but for Polish Americans, higher education drastically lowers the odds of voting for a Democrat for president, cutting the odds by 6.2% for each additional year of education. Catholicism increases the odds of voting for a Democrat, independently of the Polish ethnic effect. Finally, as with partisanship it appears that

the odds of voting for a Democratic presidential candidate have diminished over time compared to the levels of the 1968-1984 elections. However, there is no statistically significant interaction between time period and Polish ethnicity. This implies that the decline in Democratic presidential voting among Polish Americans is of a similar magnitude to the decline among all respondents.

Table 2. Effect of Independent Variables on the Odds of Voting for a Democratic Party Candidate (1=Yes) Among Respondents to the General Social Survey Voting in Presidential Elections from 1968-2016

Independent Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Polish American (1=Yes)	+27.2% odds **	+46.3% odds **	+44.1% odds **
Catholic (1=Yes)		+38.5% odds **	+37.5% odds **
Education (years)		-1.4% odds/year **	-0.2% odds/year
Income>Median (1=Yes)		-20.6% odds **	-19.7% odds **
Female (1=Yes)		+31.0% odds **	+31.5% odds **
White (1=Yes)		-80.6% odds **	-81.5% odds **
Age (years)		+0.6% odds/year **	+0.7% odds/year **
Size (thousands)		+0.01% odds/thousand **	+0.01% odds/thousand **
Presidential Elections from 1988-1996 (1=Yes)			-23.6% odds compared to 1968-1984 elections **
Presidential Elections from 2000-2016 (1=Yes)			-30.8% odds compared to 1968-1984 elections **
Polish American * Education (1=Yes to both conditions)			-6.2% odds/year for Polish Americans **

*Notes: ** p<.01, * p<.05, N= 40096 (303 cases with missing values). Model 3 features includes interactions between Polish ethnic identity and all other independent variables; only significant interactions reported. Removal of non-significant interactions from model does not affect substantive effect or statistical significance of other variables.*

CONCLUSIONS

Our main conclusions from this analysis of the General Social Survey from the University of Chicago (1972-2018) are summarized below. Each finding generates questions for future research.

1. Finding: We reaffirm previous research that Polish Americans distinctly tend toward Democratic identity in affiliation and voting, and we extend this research by finding that this tendency persists even when other factors are accounted for. We conclude this through multivariate analyses that allow us to control for religion, education, income, race, sex, age, time period, and size of place. Independent of all these other factors, being Polish remains a significant predictor of Democratic Party affiliation and presidential voting.

Question: What explains the distinct Polish American political tradition, if it is independent of these factors?

2. Finding: The NORC data analysis in this study reaffirms research that Catholic religion is related to Polish American voter choice during presidential elections. However, the effect of Catholicism for Polish Americans is different in neither direction nor magnitude from the effect of Catholicism for other American ethnicities.

   Question: How does the experience of religion interact with Polish ethnicity for the nearly 2/5 of Polish Americans across the entire period and the nearly 1/2 of Polish Americans in the last decade who report some non-Catholic religious identity?

3. Finding: The distinctive tendency for Polish Americans to identify as members of the Democratic Party and vote for Democratic Party presidential candidates declined from its high point in the 1970s period to its lowest point in the current period. The decline of Democratic Party affiliation occurred even faster for Polish Americans than for all Americans. The decline of Democratic presidential voting occurred at the same pace for Polish Americans and other Americans.

   Question: As the decades since the first large wave of Polish American immigration continue to mount, will Polish American ethnic identity continue to be a salient feature of political decision-making?

4. Finding: Overall, our study reaffirms previous findings regarding Polish American political participation, even though our sample is small compared to the total GSS sample.

   Question: Given the 2020 presidential election results favoring the democratic candidate Biden, will Polish Americans continue to vote Democratic in future elections and/or follow national voter trends in presidential elections [Sand 2022]?

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A POLITICAL DISCOURSE ON NATION AND NATION-BUILDNG IN A POST-COMMUNIST STATE: THE CASE OF GEORGIA UNDER ZVIAD GAMSAKHURDIA

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Abstract

The article considers Zviad Gamsakhurdia's discourse on nationality and nation-building in post-soviet Georgia during the period October 1990 to 6th January 1992. Methodologically, the article is based on the methods of discourse analysis and trace observation. The concepts of Rogers Brubaker's "nationalising state" and Sammy Smooha's 'ethnic democracy' are used as the theoretical framework. The article concludes that a hybrid model of a nation was used by Zviad Gamsakhurdia instead of a pure ethnicity model widespread in relevant literature.

Key Words: *Nation-Building, Nationalising State, Ethnic Democracy, Zviad Gamsakhurdia*

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this article is to clarify the discourse on nationality and nation-building in Georgia from October 1990 to 6th January 1992. This represents the period of the government of Zviad Gamsakhurdia who came to power after the first multiparty elections in Georgia during the final throes of the Soviet Union. As a former prominent dissident and anti-Soviet figure, Gamsakhurdia firstly served as Head of the Supreme Soviet and later as President of the French model. Despite only serving just over one year as head of state and government, his period in power turned out to be decisively interconnected with contemporary Georgia's independent statehood and national sovereignty. For many interpreters, Gamsakhurdia was strongly attached to extreme ethnonationalism which in turn played an enormous role in the origins of ethnonational conflicts in Abkhazia and the former South Ossetia. From our point of view, such an approach requires reconsideration in that the empirical sources are telling a different reality.

We are using a top-down strategy for our research. Discourse analysis and process tracing methods are employed as the principal methods. Based on discourse analysis, Gamsakurdia's official speeches, references and interviews were researched but, at the same time, process tracing methods were also employed as coming to an understanding of Georgia and the general post-soviet period without socio-cultural and historical continuity is complicated. In fact, the path to modernisation for the majority of post-soviet societies was very different in comparison to their western counterparts, so taking into account their historical peculiarities and context would seem to be crucial for gaining insights into this subject.

1. ESSENCE OF THE POST-COMMUNIST 'NATIONALISING STATE" AND "ETHNIC DEMOCRACY"

The interpretation of the proposed case study has been based on Rogers Brubaker's "nationalising state" and Sammy Smooha's "ethnic democratic" approaches. In as far as the above two concepts are often employed to help in gaining an understanding of the nation-building process of post-socialist countries, they seem to match well with our goals.

1.1. Rogers Brubaker and the "nationalising state"

There are plenty of studies in relevant literature which focus on post-soviet nationality/national-building policies, among which the concepts of Rogers Brubaker's "nationalising state" and Sammy Smooha's "ethnic democracy" deserve distinguished places. Unlike Brubaker's approach, Smooha's concept was created in 1989 before the final collapse of socialism as an interpretation of Israeli politics. However, as it focused on gaining an understanding of the ethnic categories in policy-making processes, the approach has been widely used for the interpretation of nation-building processes in the post-communist space as well. Included in these are the cases of

Latvia and Estonia which served as examples where the democratic consolidation process had been intertwined with ethnic/national homogenisation issues.

Both approaches interpret post-communist nation-building policies with a strong presence of ethnic exclusivist colours in the public sphere but, whilst in Brubaker's case such a nation-building process has been understood as the potential hegemony of the majority over the minority, Smooha's model of ethnic democracy has been interpreted as a base for the stability of the political system as far as it recognises the equal rights of all citizens with the majority ethnic group providing an informal lead. Brubaker describes the post-communist countries as "nationalising States", in that those countries present themselves as forming, rather than as formed, nation-states, where the majority implements its ethnonational priorities. According to Brubaker, "nationalising states" are inclined to become ethnically homogenous states, where the dominant elites promote the languages, cultures, demographic situation, economic prosperity and political hegemony of state bearing nominal nations; and where we can find solid, organised and politically excluded national minorities, whose leaders claim territorial autonomies as a bulwark against potential assimilation and discrimination [Rogers Brubaker (1995):113].

Brubaker describes three factors which determine an understanding of post-communist states: Nationalising State, National Minority and External Homeland. According to him: "... national minority not as a fixed entity or a unitary group but rather in terms of the field of differentiated and competitive positions or stances adopted by different organisations, parties, movements, or individual political entrepreneurs, each seeking to "represent" the minority to its own putative members, to the host state, or to the outside world, each seeking to monopolise the legitimate representation of the group" [Rogers Brubaker (1995):109]. For Brubaker, "External Homeland" is a political, not an ethnographic category; homelands are constructed, not given. A state becomes an external national "homeland" for "its" ethnic Diaspora when political or cultural elites define ethno-national kin in other states as members of one and the same nation, claim that they "belong," in some sense, to the state, and assert that their condition must be monitored and their interests protected and promoted by the state. When the state actually does take action in the name of monitoring, promoting, or protecting the interests of its ethnonational kin abroad this supports the creation of this external national "homeland". Homeland politics takes a variety of forms, ranging from immigration and citizenship privileges for ""returning" members of the ethnic Diaspora, through various attempts to influence other states' policies towards its co-ethnics, to irredentist claims on the territory of other state" [Rogers Brubaker (1995):109-1010].

To sum up, it can be said that, for Brubaker, the principal idea of nationalising a state's ethnocultural policy is to clarify the ways in which the ethnic majority are trying to reach the dominant position over minorities that causes the trends of minorities to secede and achieve autonomy. At this moment, "external homelands" are

ready to join with their compatriots for their protection. For Brubaker, this forms the essence of the nationality discourse of post-communist space that cannot be conflict-ual in every case. [Rogers Brubaker (1995): 109].

1.2. Sammy Smooha's model of "ethnic democracy"

Sammy Smooha indicated that the lack of democratic experience in transitional countries may stimulate the rise in dominance of certain ethnic groups, and that this will possibly take the form of the "ethnic state" putting under question the very exis-tence of democracy (Sammy Smooha (2005)). According to Smooha, democracy can be multicultural or ethnic. He views Western democracies as multicultural, but for a description of other types of democracies he prefers to use the term "ethnic democra-cy" instead. Smooha writes that: "It can be called "ethnic democracy", a regime that combines a structured ethnic dominance with democratic rights for all. The identi-fication of this new kind of regime serves the need to expand and refine the types of democracy in order to better describe and understand the growing variegation of democratic and semi democratic systems in a world of states internally divided by ethnicity" [Sammy Smooha. (2005): 7].

It should be mentioned that "ethnic democracies" are different from "ethnocracies." According to Yiftachel: "An ethnocracy is a non-democratic regime which attempts to extend or preserve disproportional ethnic control over a contested multi-ethnic terri-tory. Ethnocracy develops chiefly when control over territory is challenged, and when a dominant group is powerful enough to determine unilaterally the nature of the state. Ethnocracy is thus an unstable regime, with opposite forces of expansionism and resistance in constant conflict" [Sammy Smooha (2005):19].

Smooha wonders how ethnic democracracies are different from civic democracies? According to his answer, "the fundamental deficiency is the lack of civil and political equality because the rights of the minority are inferior to the rights of the majority. The state belongs to the majority and serves it more than the minority. Being identi-fied with the majority, not with its citizens, the state also does not try hard to obtain nor does it actually enjoy the legitimacy, consent and cooperation of all the ethnic groups living in its midst" [Sammy Smooha (2005): 19].

It can be concluded that Smooha's model of "ethnic democracy" does not fully cor-respond to the criteria of civic democracy and has been characterised with more restrictions and a lack of egalitarianism, because of a recognition of the dominance of certain ethnic group over others [Sammy Smooha (2005): 19]. This provides a po-tential source of further instability.

Post-communist realities have fitted with Brubaker's views, but in certain cases it is debatable. For example, according to Taras Kuzio, every Western European state has been "nationalising" on a certain level, because they all have a number of ethno-cul-tural bases. This is why it is not an easy task to differentiate nationalising policies from nation-building [Taras Kuzio (2001): 1935-138]. Smooha also says that "policies

of cultural and ethnic homogenisation [were] the case [for] European liberal-democracies throughout the centuries, that were not really peaceful in many cases, but in last times they changed such approaches and started to build up more multicultural democracies" [Sammy Smooha (2005): 7]. However they were not always successful and welcomed. The dramatic rise of right wing populism in contemporary western democracies is the clear expression of this type of discontent.

It is possible to say the same about Smooha's "ethnic democracy" if we consider insights from the Georgian case. Natalie Sabanadze justly pointed that "the main source of Georgia's instability is the combination of its weak statehood with the regime of ethnic democracy. The model of ethnic democracy as developed by Smooha and others assumes, without making it explicit, the existence of a strong and well-functioning state when discussing the necessary preconditions for the stability, sustainability and efficiency of an ethnodemocratic regime" [Natalie Sabanadze (2005):115].

2. THE NATIONAL DISCOURSE DURING ZVIAD GAMSAKHURDIA'S GEORGIA

2.1. Historical socio-cultural context

Zviad Gamsakhurdia's nation-building policies had not been only his invention and original idea. They must be also understood according to Georgia's heritage and from its historical socio-cultural context. Georgia's post-soviet discourse on nationality has been based on strong past experiences which can be divided in the following way: a) Ancient and Middle Ages narration; b) Independent Republic of 1918-21 and c) Soviet Narration and Practice during 1921-1990.

The Ancient and Middle Ages historical experience can be understood according to Anthony Smith's "ethnic" concept, as the preface of the modern nation and national identity, which had been iconically depicted by the 10th century Georgian Hagiographer Giorgi Merchule: "Georgia consists of lands where Christian liturgy and every preach are exercised in Georgian" [Zviad Abashidze (2005): 384]. Such ideas were based on the conceptualization of political maximas promoted by the Georgian Neoplatonic School: "The First is the chief of others, but among them there does not exist the strong split. As land shares equally the Sun rays, the strength of the first is used by the secular harmonious hierarchy" [Zviad Abashidze(2005): 384].

The period from the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century generated two main approaches to modern national discourse: Liberal-Conservative and Marxist. For national renewal, the Liberal-Conservative discourse promoted the idea of the reconciliation of social stratas and the discouragement of class struggle. "Nation" was declared as a combination of past and present to the future based on long-term historical collective contributions. On the contrary, Georgian Marxists, headed by right-centre wing social-democrats, saw national liberation as a natural result of social emancipation based on class struggle, where the "nation" was mainly understood as an "ethnographic" entity [Noe Zhordania 1991; Stephen Jones. 2001].

The further strong experience of modern national discourse was intertwined with the formation of the first nation-state in Georgia from 1918-1921 which was headed by the above-mentioned right-wing Marxist social-democrats. The Republic's birth was a broader result of the First World War and more notably the dissolution of the Romanov Empire. The Republic existed only until the Bolshevik occupation of February-March of 1921 which turned out to be a fundamental obstacle for the development of a tradition of independent democratic statehood to exist in Georgian reality. The national discourse from this period could be characterised as a hybrid mixture between civic and ethnic models. According to formal-constitutional regulations, the "nation" was recognised as the base and cornerstone of legitimacy and sovereignty within the frames of a unitary-decentralised state. At the same time, in everyday understanding on societal level and practice, "nation" existed more as an ethnic community than as a civic one (Salome Dundua, Tamar Karaia, Zviad Abashidze (2017). The strongest narration and experience became the Soviet experience, where "nation" and "nationality" were broadly accepted concepts which should have been served as 'socialist in content and national in form".

The Soviet Model of State was the newest example of its time as an Empire-State model unlike that of a Nation-State. For instance, we support the idea that the "USSR fits the definition of an empire with a defined core (Moscow and the Russian SFSR) and peripheries. The core contained the imperial state and the ruling elites with the peripheries composed of state administrators. Interaction between the peripheries only took place via the core. Michael Doyle defines an empire as, "a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society."" Such a definition clearly fits the Soviet experience [Taras Kuzio (2002): 2].

Stalin's formula of "nation" described by him in his article on "Marxism and National Question" turned out to form the accepted principle for understanding nation and nationality within the Soviet Union. Stalin did not create any original approaches; he just compiled many other Marxist views according to his goals for power. In his approach, Stalin connected "nation" only with territory, economy, cultural and psychological make-up [Сталин И.Б. (1953): 22] , where the civic-political elements was fully ignored. The concept created „ethnicity" as an organic part of the soviet political project, that later turned out as the basis for later „indigenisation" (коренизация) and „merging" (сближение) policies [Ronald G. Sunny. 2001]. The best example of the manifestation of such policies was the passportisation policy according to which „nationality" (meaning „ethnicity") and „citizenship" were two different codified concepts in a citizen's passport.

Robert Sunny justly pointed out that „instead of a melting pot, Soviet Union became the incubator of new nations" [Ronald G. Sunny (2001): 240]. The same idea was probably implied by Beverly Crawford and Arend Liphart when they point out that the legacy of incomplete nations „is perhaps the most important threat to the project

of economic and political liberalism in Eastern Europe" [Taras Kuzio (2002): 8].

2.2. Zviad Gamsakhurdia in Action

Former dissident and the most prominent Georgian anti-Soviet public figure, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, came to power as a result of the first free and multiparty elections held in Georgia on 28th October 1990. From this date, Gamsakhurdia led the country firstly as head of the Supreme Soviet and secondly as President of the French model until the end of the coup d'état of 6thJanuary 1992.

Despite the short length of his Presidency, Zviad Gamsakhurdia's influence on contemporary Georgian history and politics has been crucial and decisive, that is why his career has not been appreciated unilaterally. We will concentrate our discussion on the essence of his discourse on nation and nation-building which was best expressed in his official interviews, addresses and speeches.

Zviad Gamsakhurdia's official pronouncements are quite numerous, which can be divided in a couple of ways a) Clarification of Gamsakhurdia's personal ideological attachment which demonstrates how to understand his approaches to independentism; b) His approaches to Abkhazians, Osetians and other minorities.

a) Gamsakhurdia's ideological attachment, independentism and concept of "Being Georgian"

As head of the Georgian Helsinki group, when addressing the World League for Peace, Gamsakhurdia said that "Freedom of Nation is the right to self-determination, right over its fate" [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia" #157(177), 07/09/1991]. At the same time, Gamsakhurdia strongly believed in the coercive nature of the Soviet Union, and that was why the West should support the pursuit of independence by the Republics, that was sometimes ignored in those words [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia # 49(69), 13/03/1991].

In one of his TV broadcast addresses, for Gamsakhurdia the achievement of Georgia's economic independence was a long-term process and hard to reach in a short time period. In his words, the achievement of such independence seemed to be a hard task even for Czechoslovakia and the other countries in the Warsaw Pact. "Long standing isolation, created by the Empire was the chief reason...", according to Gamsakhurdia, that Georgia of his times, requires not to reach the, but the restoration of the lost internationally recognised independence of 1918-1921 Republic" [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #1 (21) 01/01/1991].

In one of his interviews, on the question of his faith, he answered, that, "XX century is the period of national liberation. Empires will never come back and the nations who are fighting for independence will achieve it surely [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #249-250(270), 21/12/1991 წელი].

Gamsakhurdia regarded himself as a patriot, it can be possibly discussed that this is his emotional side in his use of this word, but in accordance with established ideolog-

ical platforms he considered himself as a Christian-Democrat [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia # 36 (56), 22/02/1991]. At the same time, Gamsakhurdia fully rejected that he was a Stalinist, though there was a kind of codified attachment to a Georgian identity for many Georgians during the Soviet Union, because of Stalin's Georgian origins. For Gamsakhurdia, to be a Stalinist is only an expression of a low level of education and culture, because of the dictatorship and inhumanism of Stalinism [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia # 36 (56), 22/02 1991].

Gamsakhurdia's Christian-Democratic ideological attachment was well expressed in his pre-election speech before the Supreme Soviet of Georgia. He portrayed religious heritage as an important part of the public sphere, which is why, for him, it was the responsibility of the State to help the Georgian Orthodox Church to regain its deprived property lost during Socialist times. He was standing for recognition of Orthodox Christianity as the official religion along with recognition of the rights of atheists. For Gamsakhurdia society and state should have been based on Christian social ethics and partnership in schooling and other parts of societal spheres [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #114(134) 11/05/1991].

Since Christianity and the fight for religious identity were an organic part of Georgian national history, Gamsakhurdia saw the faith of the ancestors as an indispensable part of Georgia's fight for independence, keeping its cultural identity and self-determination [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia # 84 (104), 01/05/1991].

The same idea was promoted by Gamsakhurdia in his opening words at the European Championship of Water Sports in Georgia in 1991. He expressed "his beliefs for the further celebration of Georgian and othe European nations" [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #162(182), 17 /1991 წელი].

The status of autonomy for the Achara Region was the subject of strong debates at the time, as far as it was regarded as Soviet heritage against the unity and stability of Georgia. The idea that such a political-administrative entity based on religion was deliberately created for the policy Divide et Empera was quite widespread among the Georgian public. For Gamsakhurdia, the referendum on this autonomous territory was the only legitimate way of resolving what to do with the territorial autonomy of Muslim Georgians[1]. At the same time, Gamsakhurdia was seeking the protection of not only the rights of Muslim Georgians, but also those of the Christian population living there as well [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia # 112(132), 07/06/1991].

b) Minorities and integration

In an interview with the Russian newspaper "Komsomolskaya Pravda", Gamsakhrdia admitted that it would have been a totally wrong view if he had accepted the policy of "Georgia for Georgians". He regarded such a view "as rumour against him and his

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[1] Achara region, in South-Western Georgia, after 16th century, mostly was part of the Ottoman Empire until the Berlin Congress of 1878, which resulted in the Islamisation of the local population. Since the Achara Region first formed part of the Russian Empire and later formed part of the Georgian Republic until the present day, it bears the Status of Autonomous Republic (Author's note).

Country disseminated specially by the central (Russian based) newspapers. In his words, ss long as his anti-Soviet agency was intertwined with the best members of Russian society, especially in publishing of most of the literature of "Samizdat" in Tbilisi, Georgia, unacceptance of non-ethnic Georgians in Georgia from his side is just a big false and injustice" [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia # 36 (56), 22/02/1991 წელი].

For Gamsakhurdia, as a continuation of a Soviet type of nationality policy, ethnic minorities on Georgian territory could have been divided into two categories: Indigenous and non-indigenous. For him, being an 'indigenous"' created the basis for further territorial autonomy but being a "non-indigenous" deserved only recognition of collective rights within the scope of non-territorial cultural autonomies instead of territorialisation of ethnicity. He declared a commitment to such an approach in his numerous speeches, interviews and addresses on both a national and international levels.

In one of his programme speeches in the Georgian Supreme Soviet, Gamsakhurdia declared the acceptance of the political rights of the Abkhazians as an indigenous people, which, in his words, should become the cornerstone of a national set up for future Georgian statehood.[2] At the same time, for him, Abkhazia was an indispensable part of Georgia and equally the homeland for both ethnic Abkhazians and ethnic Georgians. Therefore, Gamsakhurdia recognised the case of Abkhazians' rights for territorial autonomy as a decisive factor for the future Georgian Constitution [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #114(134) 11/05/1991].

The presence of historical context was a crucial factor for using the case of South Ossetia when understanding Gamsakhurdia [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia # 36 (56), 22/02/1991].

Gamsakhurdia considered the South Ossetia's Autonomous Region as a Soviet artificial creature since 1922 against Georgia. Thus, as far as Ossetian's were non-indigenous people, this excluded their historical legitimate rights to territorial autonomy unlike the Abkhazians in his view. At the same time, Gamsakhurdia recognised Ossetian's rights to autonomy only in terms of cultural-self rule within non territorial frames [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #42 (62), 02/03/1991] as long as there was no legitimate geographical term such as "South Ossetia", since it had only been a Soviet invention [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #223-4(244), 14/11/1991].

Gamsakhurdia rejected the presence of a problem for Ossetian people in general, because of their support for Georgia's independence. For him, separatists were only local communist extremists directly linked to the Kremlin. That was his position in

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[2] Regional conflict in Abkhazia and by those times South Osetia started even before Gamsakhurdias come to power. During his presidency the tensions transformed to more problematic forms that led to some armed clashes in South Ossetia. Fully armed conflict in the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic started only in 1992, when Gamsakhurdia was no longer in power, because of a coup d'état. Before the coup, Gamsakhurdia reached a peaceful agreement with ethnic Abkhazian political elites, according to which political posts would have been organised on the basis of ethnic quotas among ethnic Georgians and Abkhazians, as well as other ethnic groups there.

an interview with a Portuguese journalist [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #108(128), 30/04/1991].

Addressing the World League for Peace, as head of the Georgian Helsinki group, Gemsakhurdia was expressing his readiness for the protection of a "national minority's rights to cultural autonomy" [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #157(177), 09/07/1991].

Gamsakhurdia regarded Georgia as a "multinational country", which was going to be a better space for the development of the social and economic rights of minorities and their peaceful coexistence, than had existed during Soviet times [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #171-172(192), 03/09/1991 წელი]. In one of his speeches, he expressed his cordial gratitude to national minorities for their decisive support for Georgia's independence, "even during the strong anti-Georgian campaign among them" [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #114(134) 11/05/1991 წელი]. During his briefing with, by that time, Armenia's President Levon Ter-Petrosian, he expressed once again his readiness for protection of a minority's cultural rights. In his words, some existing problems among the minority communities were due to socio-economic issues and not ethnic ones [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #150(170), 01/07/1991]. Gamsakhurdia was hoping for the results of a referendum on an independence test for securing the future citizenship of the population of Georgia [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #71(91), 11/04/1991]. At the same time, Gamsakhurdia declared that special protective laws for national minorities were in the process of being prepared based on the constitutional heritage of 1921, which would provide a „broader frame for the regulation of minorities' issues", in his words [Newspaper "Republic of Georgia #71(91), 11/04 1991].

CONCLUSION

The concept of the "nationalising state" of Brubaker can be accepted as a productive model for the explanation of post-communist nationality and nation-building policies, but from our point of view, it requires some corrections in parts, with regards to the post-communist nation-building process as a deliberate creation of the new social hierarchy and hegemony based on ethnicity.

Certainly, ethnicity remains as a crucial factor for social interaction and the exchange of symbolic capital in Pierre Bourdieu's sense, because of its strongest roots in the historical socio-cultural context. However, as an analysis of Zviad Gamsakhurdia's policies reveals, such policies could be viewed as a hybrid model more than a pure ethnic practice . The research has demonstrated the importance of civic trends in the transformation of the national discourse that existed at the very beginning of post-communism in Georgia that were expressed in a readiness to grant citizenship and cultural autonomy to minorities, and even the territorial autonomy of certain ethnic group was regarded as historically "indigenous".

At the same time, the strong roots of the ethnicisation of society from the soviet past

should be considered as they became the social norm and even formed the dogma for intercultural and social exchange for many years. For this reason, this is why no political elite was able to ignore such a heritage and demand its radical change. In the case of radical change being proposed, political elites would lose their social legitimacy immediately. The vivid evidence of such a view could be illustrated by the Georgian experience of the exclusion of "national belongings" (that meant ethnicity instead of civic affiliation) from national passports. Much later in 1995 there was huge discontent about this fact and this continues even up to the present day in broader Georgian society. The idea of an ethnic "nation" was equally popular for ethnic Georgians as for ethnic minorities because, according to their beliefs, the existence of such a concept has been the proper tool of their national-cultural "salvation" against possible assimilation.

Not even Smooha's model of "ethnic democracy" fully explains the understanding of the initial post-communist nation-building policy of the Georgian case, because there is no clear evidence of rejection of the acceptance of the important elements of multiculturalism and liberal democracy. The acceptance of a model for non-territorial cultural autonomy for minorities and even the territorial one in certain cases provided clear evidence for this. Estonian and Latvian cases have provided different examples in this regard. For them, keeping ethnic homogeneity became the cornerstone for the creation of democratic and stable political institutions unlike Georgia.

Thus, as the above study shows, the post-communist nation-building or nationality policies shown in the Georgian case from 1990-1992 can be regarded as a model based on a hybrid understanding of "nation" rather, then on pure ethnicity, as is widely accepted in social sciences.

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SOCIAL NETWORKS IN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CASES OF DONALD TRUMP (USA) AND VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY (UKRAINE)

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Abstract:

This research has analysed the application of social networks in electoral campaigns in the USA and in Ukraine. It also has compared the features of the winning campaigns using social networking during the presidential elections of Donald Trump in 2016 in the United States, and Volodymyr Zelensky in 2019 in Ukraine. It is asserted that despite the differences in time between the campaigns, in the countries, in the electorate and in the circumstances under which the campaigns are held, the wide use of Internet communications has become a common basic feature of Trump's and Zelensky's campaigns. It has been moreover proved that the victory of a candidate depends upon a number of aspects. Among them are: the candidate's image, his or her personal qualities, the relevance of their election programme to the demands and expectations of the citizens, the peculiar political or socio-economic situation in the country etc. However, social networks are still considered to be an efficient tool for political racing, interacting with the electorate and amplifying the database of an electoral campaign.

Key words: *social media, social networks, electoral campaign, Ukraine, the USA.*

THE RELEVANCE OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Intensive development of the virtual sphere and electronic communication underpins the transformation of the means of communication in the XXI century. The rapid penetration of information technologies in every sphere of social life (the political sphere, in particular) contributes to the emergence of increasingly sophisticated and effective tools for interaction between the ruling elite and the civil society. Such social networks as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram, WhatsApp, and many others have already penetrated deeply into national and international political reality, and the Internet has become the most dynamic economic, cultural, social, and political phenomenon of our time, shaping new opportunities and realia of communication. There are a number of events that may prove the significant role of social networks as an innovative tool of digital policy, and which have transformed the essence of political activity in the world. Among them are: the victory of Donald Trump in the presidential elections of 2016 in the USA, the triumph of Volodymyr Zelensky in 2019 in Ukraine, Jair Bolsonaro coming to power in Brazil, the victory of "Podemos", a Spanish political party in the elections to the European Parliament, data leakage of Facebook and Cambridge Analytica during the presidential elections of 2016 in the USA, and the US Twitter-campaign in Venezuela etc.

As a result, politics is transforming, and social media technologies are gradually penetrating into separate political processes. Today, one can observe heads of states and political elites featuring in almost every social network. Citizens of many countries have the opportunity to instantly learn about political events and communicate with other citizens, commenting on these events thanks to the use of social media by politicians not only for personal communication but also for professional activity. An analysis of the social networking of the world's leaders makes it possible to single out their strategies for the implementation of social media in electoral campaigns. The campaigns of 2016 in the USA and 2019 in Ukraine can be considered especially indicative. The analysis of the most effective and efficient mechanisms of political engagement through social networks allows us to follow the trends of digital political activity and to adapt public policy to the challenges of the XXI century.

Therefore, it is relevant to research the influence of social networks on the formation and development of political (including electoral) communications due to the increasing role of digital technologies in the modern world. In this case, the point is that established formal political communication channels are ineffective today. Hence, responding to the challenges of the time, most of the ruling elite have implemented social media in their professional activities to increase their effectiveness. This growth in social media use makes it imperative to intensify research activity into social networks as a tool for political communications in general, and for electoral campaigns in particular.

Thus, this study aims to compare the features of social networking during the presidential election campaigns by Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky and to identify

the determinants of successful election strategies by focussing on the example of the activity of the candidates in social media. The accounts of Trump and Zelensky in social networks have been analysed, comparative analysis of the technologies of social networking used by the politicians during the presidential election campaigns has been conducted and the rating of the accounts by the number of subscribers has been compiled.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Due to the dynamics of social networks and their continually updating information content, such activities are gradually reflected in scientific sources. In this case, the key sources of our investigation are the official webpages of the political leaders and the political parties of the USA and Ukraine in such social networks as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Telegram [Donald J. Trump *Twitter*; Hillary Clinton *Twitter*; Volodymyr Zelenskyi *Facebook*; Volodymyr Zelenskyi *Instagram*; Petro Poroshenko *Facebook*; Petro Poroshenko *Twitter*; Sluha Narodu *Facebook*]. The posts contain information published by politicians themselves or by their teams, which could be considered a reliable information resource, and unbiased news by the media campaigns, as they reflect political leaders' points of view and even the official position of the state towards a particular event taking place in the international arena. Furthermore their messages may provoke a reaction of social networks users in the form of comments and re-posts, the number of which provides a way to evaluate the social attitudes of the target audience and the influence of a particular politician or government body.

Separate attention is paid to the research of the conceptual and applied aspects of social media functioning as a component of modern political communication and digital activity; to their role in the election and to the opportunities and the advantages of their usage [Bradshaw, Howard 2017]. According to some scholars, the Internet is said to be the key element of a multifunctional system of political communication. The trends and new forms of network interaction, namely: interactivity, hypertextuality, multimedia, packet communication and synchronicity are considered [Karpov 2013].

There are a growing number of studies examining the cases of implementation of social networks in election campaigns (for example, in Spain, Mexico and Chile) [Cárdenas, Ballesteros, Jara 2017; Samanta, Dubey, Sarkar 2020]. Research has identified similarities and differences in a widespread implementation of the use of diverse and changing digital platforms, as well as a superficial application of the social communication tools. Furthermore, there are studies where the examples of one or another social network usage by some politicians in the US and Ukraine are provided and the impact of this social media upon further political agitation and the transformation of the electoral process under the influence of the Internet technologies is described [Pavliuk 2019; Rosenblatt 2016; Sifry 2011; Svinin 2013; Webley

2010]. Some research papers are devoted to the analysis of the use of social media in election campaigns as a tool for communicating with the voters. The main types of Internet communications which were the most actively used by the staff of Trump, the impact of YouTube during the 2016 presidential election in Brazil, the fundraising and political advertising on the Internet, which influenced the election campaigns, the role of American IT companies which financed the presidential campaign in the USA are explained in the research [Avzalova 2017; Fisher, Taub 2019; Stepanova, Sharikov 2017].

It is necessary to highlight the analytical articles providing the features and peculiarities of the election campaigns and communication in the social networks of Donald Trump [Abdullin 2016; Atasuncev 2016; Green, Issenberg 2016; Trump On Twitter 2016; Vetrov 2016] and Volodymyr Zelensky [10 tsikavykh faktiv pro rezultaty pershoho turu mikroskopom 2019; Pekar 2019; Ridkisni Poiavy Yednaiut 2019; Verstjuk, Berdinskih 2019] in particular. For example, they analyse and identify the distinguishing characteristics of Trump's electoral campaign and the percentage of the votes for Trump and the quantity of his electorate in social networks; explain the means and methods of political propaganda and how the candidates for the post of the US President may use it; take into account the statistical data of the candidates' support in different regions of Ukraine and the US and the issue of the cost of the presidential campaign; investigate the electoral groups of Zelensky and the means of communicating with them; etc.

Taking into account the continuous data and content update of social networks, the use of online statistical platforms to update the study is becoming increasingly common. Such social networks as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube provide the facility to measure the opinion of users as well as the popular support for the world leaders in quantitative terms [Arruda 2016; Fraser, Dutta 2008; Malynka 2019; Number of active users at Facebook over the years 2013]. We used the statistical ranking lists "The Twiplomacy Study 2018" as a comprehensive analysis of the accounts of the world leaders, governments and international organisations in social networks, including Twitter, and an assessment of the impact of their political activity upon the public. The results of the research demonstrate that the implementation of social networks in politics is more beneficial to some countries than to other countries, as the degree of the technological development in some countries determines the impact of social networks on the formation of public opinion both at the national and international level [Twiplomacy Study 2018. Executive Summary 2018].

Thus, a solid theoretical background for this study is the history of the implementation of social networks in election campaigns in the United States and Ukraine; the investigation of social networks as an element of political communication; the research of the role of social networks in electoral processes; the analysis of examples and cases of certain political figures. However, given that the information content of social networks is constantly updated, and the relevant changes are not yet reflected

in research, the official webpages of political leaders on social platforms and statistics of international research institutes and private companies have become the primary basis of our study.

SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESSES

The brightest electoral campaigns that have influenced the further intensive involvement of social networks in election advertising were the election campaigns of Donald Trump [the USA elections, 2016] and Volodymyr Zelensky [Ukraine elections, 2019]. The candidates actively used social networks to communicate with their electorate. Despite some differences in the digital strategies of the candidates, namely: 4 years' distance between the campaigns, different countries, different electorate and the circumstances under which the elections were being held, we can identify a number of common and distinctive features in the techniques used and the ways of interaction with the citizens through the Internet. While researching the activity of candidates in social networks, two categories of comparison have been identified:
• common features of Trump's and Zelensky's activity,
• distinctive features of the two politicians' activity.

COMMON FEATURES OF DONALD TRUMP'S AND VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY'S ACTIVITY IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

The first common feature of the two candidates was the usage of a wide range of Internet resources. Internet communications used by the headquarters of Trump and Zelensky during their electoral campaigns most actively included communication through:
- e-mail;
- websites, blogs and social networks;
- online TV and video channels on YouTube.com.

E-mail. Despite the popularity of social networks, e-mail remains an important means of communication that allows one to create and send e-mails to one or more recipients. This type of Internet communication is available to anyone who uses the Internet, and therefore, e-mail can be called one of the most reliable ways to convey information to the target audience about the political campaign. E-mails may be used to disseminate questionaries which provide an opportunity to collect more detailed socio-demographic data about potential voters, and new programmes allow you to link the data of e-mail owners with the profiles of social networks [Rosenblatt 2016]. It is obvious that as the technology has been developing, the percentage of e-mail usage by the candidates is decreasing. Therefore, it becomes clear that Zelensky, among the two compared candidates, used e-mail technology the least, although its role in the campaign should not be minimised.

Websites, blogs and social networks. Websites are sets of web pages that are on the same server and contain elements of different types: text, images, sound. Social net-

works are Internet resources that provide the organisation and support of network communications. Blogs and microblogs are Internet services, the main content of which are records (in the form of texts, images or multimedia), which allow for public controversy with the author.

Social networks and blogs (microblogs–Twitter) allow sharing information interesting for a potential reader, expressing readers' political positions and attitudes towards current political events, showing political solidarity and uniting in groups "by interests". Twitter's microblogging service and the candidate's personal Facebook account were most actively used to inform the electorate about the election campaign. Trump's campaign arsenal included the social network MySpace, which is popular in the countries of the American continent, as well as the YouTube video channel. Social networking platforms and blogs allow candidates to directly reach the Internet users and increase the number of their followers. The subscribers of the candidates' personal pages on social networks are potential voters, therefore politicians seek to use all types of Internet communications and register on the sites of the most popular social networks.

Despite the use of various Internet resources and the presence of many social networks, each candidate had one main communication channel, and each preferred a different social network: Donald Trump chose Twitter as the main channel for interaction, and Volodymyr Zelensky tried to be closer to his citizens through the social network Instagram. The choice of one or another network could be caused by the emergence of technology and the concentration of the electorate on various social networks.

The most popular social networks in Ukraine are Instagram and Facebook. Given this fact, the candidates for the presidency focused their attention on them, however they chose polar opposite different channels of conveying information to their constituents. Volodymyr Zelenskyi communicated with his constituents through Instagram, while Petro Poroshenko mainly used Facebook. This choice of the candidates might be justified, first of all, by the age difference of the electorate, or by the different level of involvement in political processes and "interest" in politics in general.

The social network Facebook is considered to be a specific platform due to its fairly high age audience by the standards of social networks: most Facebook users are people over 36 years old, the percentage of which is 48%. Another feature of Facebook is the territorial differentiation: this social platform covers almost 80% of the users in western Ukraine and, at the same time, less than 68-69% of the users in the east and south. The picture of Facebook users is a mirror image of the portrait of a voter supporting Petro Poroshenko, in addition given the results shown by the candidate in the first round of elections: the senior audience voted for him, in addition he became the leader in only two western regions – Lviv and Ternopil. The other 19 regions of the country and Kyiv supported Volodymyr Zelensky, who is an active member of another network – Instagram with coverage of the age group 18-24 at 91%, and the age group

25-35 at 54%. Those were the voters who formed the core of Volodymyr Zelensky's electorate.

The chief digital strategist of Zelensky's election campaign, Myhajlo Fedorov, explained the fact why a "bet" was made on the social network Instagram: "Due to the specifics of the social network Instagram, Volodymyr Zelensky has a fairly large number of subscribers. You know, there's a joke: if you want to quarrel, you go to Facebook, if you want to cheer yourself up, you go to Instagram. Facebook has an atmosphere of criticism, thus pushing away young people: on this social platform one positive review has an average of thirty negative ones. Facebook has become a territory of fights between middle-aged citizens of Ukraine. In addition, young people began to use Instagram more and more, where Volodymyr Zelensky and our team communicated with them. Instagram is a social platform that has generated many followers of Zelensky due to the fact that he is a positive person, therefore the choice of a social network was quite logical. Initially, Instagram had less politics. Well, it still contains less politics, in fact. That is why the audience is growing faster there" [Verstjuk, Berdinskih 2019a].

Another feature of Zelensky's presidential campaign was that they used every resource to communicate with their electorate; one of them was Telegram, a messenger service that allows users to share text messages and various files. Zelensky's team created a Telegram channel in early January, and today it has more than 160,000 subscribers. On March 31, on the day of the first round of the presidential elections, with 130,000 subscribers, the coverage of Zelensky team's Telegram channel amounted to 1 million. The team's telegram channel was more like one-way communication, as users received brief messages about Volodymyr Zelensky's meetings, the election programme, and information about his team members. It should be noted that the team did not abandon the database of electronic mailboxes and communicated with citizens on e-mail platforms, but we can conclude that the telegram channel has become an alternative to e-mail on mobile devices.

Fedorov commented on the use of the Telegram channel as a resource to promote the image of Volodymyr Zelensky among Ukrainian citizens: "Telegram is the way of thinking of the socially active young people of intellectual professions. This is a fairly socially active audience. That is why we lay so much emphasis on them in the campaign. We have already had more than 130,000 Telegram subscribers. We are considered to be the fourth information channel in Ukraine" [Verstjuk, Berdinskih 2019a].

However, the promotion strategy with the help of Telegram differed from other social networks as a result of the fact that one of the distinguishing features of the Telegram platform is the absence of any paid advertising channels. To attract the audience, the team held various contests, used the opportunity to comment in Telegram, in addition applied various widgets to do that. At the same time, the advantage of Telegram is the coverage of existing subscribers. For instance, in Facebook or Instagram only from 5 to 20 per cent of people can see the news, whereas in Telegram the news cov-

erage is available for 100 per cent of the audience at once through the phone.

The other common feature of the candidates is the quantitative advantage of the subscribers over the opponent. The Internet and social networks were not new for them. Trump and Zelensky had their accounts in social networks long before the elections, in addition a fairly large audience, which outnumbered the audience of their rivals in the elections, was there. In terms of social media presence and the number of subscribers and posts on the eve of the elections, Donald Trump was ahead of Hillary Clinton, and Volodymyr Zelensky had more subscribers in Instagram and Telegram than Petro Poroshenko (Table 1, Table 2) [Arruda 2016; Donald J. Trump *Twitter*; Hillary Clinton *Twitter*; Malynka 2019; Number of active users at Facebook over the years 2013; Petro Poroshenko *Facebook*; Petro Poroshenko *Twitter*; Sluha Narodu *Facebook*; Volodymyr Zelenskyi *Facebook*; Volodymyr Zelenskyi *Instagram*].

Table 1. The number of subscribers of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in social networks in 2016

The number of subscribers	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Donald Trump	11 678 079	2 200 000	10 600 000
Hillary Clinton	7 419 877	1 800 000	8 100 000

Source: Arruda 2016; Donald J. Trump Twitter*; Hillary Clinton* Twitter*, adapted by the authors.*

Table 2. The number of subscribers of Zelensky and Poroshenko in social networks in 2019

The number of subscribers	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Volodymyr Zelensky	1 023 385	8 400 000	161 589
Petro Poroshenko	2 452 431	314 297	40 511

Source: Malynka 2019; Volodymyr Zelenskyi Facebook*; Volodymyr Zelenskyi* Instagram*; Petro Poroshenko* Facebook*; Petro Poroshenko* Twitter*, adapted by the authors.*

Thus, the advantage of Trump and Zelensky in social networks and blogs, undoubtedly, influenced the result of the political struggle. As for Ukrainian politicians, Poroshenko had more followers in Facebook than Zelensky. Therefore, the digital specialists of the President's team created a strategy to use Instagram and Telegram as the strategic resources of the campaign.

The next feature common to Trump's and Zelensky's activity is positioning themselves as part of the electorate. There were no such statements in their rhetoric as "When I come to power, I promise.....". Their images of candidates created by political technologists made them part of the society.

One more detail to be mentioned is that Trump and Zelensky opposed the current political power of that time. For example, in the main political slogans by Zelensky "Let's defeat them together!" and Trump's "Make America Great Again", the candidates identified themselves with society and that together they would be ready to cooperate to improve the living standards and well-being of the country. Considering

the strategy of Zelensky at the domestic level, it is another feature that distinguished him from his opponents.

The president's team used "child-to-child" communication tactics. The book "Games played by people" by the famous psychologist Eric Bern identifies three "I-states" of personality: Father, Adult and Child [Berne 1973]. The candidates running in the 2019 presidential elections created a political image of mother or father and addressed the voter as a child ("I will provide for you, protect you, take care of you", etc.). Zelensky, unlike others, was the first to address people from the position of a child to a child ("Let's do them together!", "We will write my programme of action together" and other similar slogans), and this turned out to be a new approach in Ukrainian political advertising, distinguishing such a message from others, familiar and boring [Pekar 2019].

Another common feature of Trump's and Zelensky's electoral campaigns is using a "maximum discussion of the candidate" strategy. According to the statistics, the number of positive comments in social networks concerning Obama prevailed over the number of negative comments, unlike his successor Donald Trump. "The more people talk about the candidate, the more they are interested in him", said Trump's digital adviser Brad Parscal. The team of experts did not stop Trump from posting on the social network Twitter to express his opinion, spreading various nonsensical jokes or commenting on various rumours or unreliable data. Therefore, Internet users called Donald Trump a "twittering president" [Baynes 2017]. In contrast to Trump, all the posts of his opponent, Hillary Clinton, were carefully thought over containing the right words and maintaining the interval between their distribution. The manner of communication, personal information and discussion of the country's development with the users of Internet platforms, regardless of the outcome of the election campaign, made Trump at the beginning of the election campaign the owner of a powerful political tool: this data allowed him to address people in different parts of the country motivating them to take political actions [Stern 2008].

At the beginning of the campaign, the experts on Volodymyr Zelensky's team tried to fight against negative news on all possible Internet platforms. Later, this approach was preserved only in the work with the Internet search service Google, where positive articles about Zelensky, his election campaign, his team and future events became extremely popular, whereas negative articles and comments did not win much popularity and, therefore, received fewer positive remarks from Internet users. The strategy of social networking differed and took into account the peculiarities of the social networks themselves. The specificity of Facebook is that the more comments a certain post has, the more users can see it in the news feed, and this attracts even more people to the community. These people, in turn, are allowed to see the next posts. The tactics of generating nearly positive content covered a comparatively small audience, consequently it was changed to "maximum discussion tactics". The official pages of Zelensky's team covered the daily life of the candidate, his team, in-

formation about his meetings and future plans to reform the legislature. In addition, in the comments and on their own pages, people wrote everything they wanted: expressed support or dislike for Zelensky, spoke about Zelensky's unprofessionalism, his populist statements and "public play". The head of digital communications of the candidate Fedorov commented on the use of such tactic in social networks: "As a marketer, I believe that the more we are spoken about, the more we are in the news feed of people both, in positive or negative context. It's still good for us" [Romaniuk 2019]. On the other hand, the users of the networks liked it, because they felt free to express their opinion, criticise the government and everything they did not like. Thus, Zelensky's team created an effect of openness to the citizens.

The next common feature of Zelensky's and Trump's activity is working on the cross-over: on the one hand, it is popularisation of one's own image and, on the other hand, it is discrediting the opponent. The use of Internet communications by Trump's staff was carried out in two directions: they were communicating not only with his potential electorate, but moreover with the electorate of the Trump's rival, Hillary Clinton. Donald Trump's speeches criticising the opponent were supported by evidence posted on his Twitter account, which made them more confident. Marketing against Hillary Clinton voters was a part of the strategy in which, in order to lure Hillary Clinton's potential voters to his side, Trump began to position Hillary Clinton in their eyes as their common enemy to be fought with. Trump's headquarters distributed provocative Internet posts in order to persuade voters to support the opposing candidate. For example, in one of the districts of Miami, which is the cultural centre of the Haitian diaspora in Florida, fake information posted in social media contained the Clinton Foundation's refusal to participate in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, which immediately provoked a strictly negative reaction from the side of the Internet users. Furthermore, in order to discredit the opponent, Trump's team used the so-called "dark posts" on the social network Facebook – paid ads that are not displayed in the general feed, but fall into the news columns of certain groups. For example, Trump's staff constantly appealed for a quote by Hillary Clinton in which, in 1996, she called all Afro-Americans "super predators". The African-American population have published posts containing video material in which Hillary Clinton characterises them in such an incorrect manner [Rassledovanie Das Magazin: kak Big Data i para uchenyh obespechili pobedu Trampu i Brexit 2016].

The situation with Zelensky was the opposite: the candidate did not disseminate any information about the actions of competitors, while opponents launched actions against them in social networks. His opponent, Petro Poroshenko, has launched at least three large-scale Internet campaigns to discredit Zelensky's image:

1. A clown.

Appealing to Zelensky's professional activity as a comedian and actor, Poroshenko's team distributed posts on the Internet. In response, Zelensky launched the #akloun flash-mob, in which he asked Ukrainians to say their names, salaries, scholarships

or pensions, which "make people clowns". Thus, citizens supported the flash-mob and generated more discussions of Zelensky on the Internet.

2. "Zelensky – a drug addict".

In his interview for the TV program "Today. Results with Oleh Paniuta" broadcast on the TV channel "Ukraine", Petro Poroshenko made harsh remarks commenting on Zelensky's candidacy for the presidency of Ukraine: "There is an extremely great threat when the candidate running for the post of the president of Ukraine is suspected of being a drug addict. The candidate's drug addiction is a direct threat to national security and the security of every Ukrainian" [Poroshenko natiaknuv na narkozalezhnist Zelenskoho 2019].

After the first round of elections, Zelensky's team released a video about the reunification of Ukraine. On April 10, the project European Future of Ukraine on the Telegram channel, which Petro Poroshenko had called for the day before, posted an edited video demonstrating a scene in which Zelensky is run over by a huge truck. At the end of the video, there is a "track" of a white substance, similar to cocaine, and an inscription reading "Everyone has his own way". This viral video occasionally appeared as an advertisement before movies or TV series on corresponding sites and video holdings. Allusions to Zelensky's drug addiction were one of three strategic steps by Poroshenko's staff to encourage Ukrainians to vote against him and allow Poroshenko to win the second round [U Poroshenka opublikuvaly video 2019].

3. "Either Me or Russia"

Political technologists of Poroshenko's team launched an agitating advertising on billboards, demonstrating the profiles of Petro Poroshenko and Vladimir Putin with the inscription "April 21 is the day of the ultimate choice". Supporters of Poroshenko spread such photos in social networks suggesting Putin had become the main threat to Ukraine and Ukrainian democracy. Zelensky was therefore treated as a weak candidate for the presidency, the one unable to resist the President of the Russian Federation. In response, a tweet about the country's reunification appeared on Zelensky's Twitter: "Volodymyr Zelensky is the one to unite the country! We do not divide people into "the left" and "the right". We do not divide people into the Ukrainian-speaking or the Russian-speaking ones. We are together: we are speaking a common language - the language of equality!".

Zelensky's supporters reacted to Poroshenko's billboards and photos on the Internet with memes and criticized the advertisement for inciting hostility among Ukrainians and, again, raising Zelensky's rating in social networks [Balachuk 2019].

Another common feature for the candidates was the establishment of their own "rules of the game". Zelensky and Trump used a different tactic. Using personal accounts in social networks, they "dictated" news to the traditional media. Addressing voters via the Internet gave Trump an opportunity to avoid embarrassing questions from journalists. The Republican candidate made bold open statements on controversial topics, in addition TV channels "had no choice but to respond to the Trump-controlled

message", thus ensuring his presence on the central channels. Thus, Trump's skilful use of Internet communications allowed him to simultaneously control the information order of the Internet community, television and printed media [Vetrov 2016].

Following the example of Trump, Zelensky rarely gave interviews to journalists, conducting an active election campaign in social media instead. One of the tools often used by the president was video pieces on the Internet. These videos provided Zelensky with the opportunity to prepare information properly, think over every detail to avoid further undesirable questions. The videos in social networks garnered a record number of views – each of the videos was watched by more than 3 million people. The video, in which Volodymyr Zelensky invited Petro Poroshenko to a debate to take place at the NSC Olimpiysky, was watched by almost 14 million people, which is about 50% of the Ukrainian electorate. Almost 950 thousand of them liked the video, while the average number of likes for Petro Poroshenko's video fluctuates at 14 thousand [Verstjuk, Berdinskih 2019b].

Volodymyr Zelensky did not appear much on the screen, in addition his video interviews were rare. The Head of State explained the chosen strategy of his team as one that aims to unite people together. Having the opportunity to appear on TV screens every day, Zelensky kept on rejecting the invitations to various TV shows, arguing that the constant presence on the screens creates an "addictive effect". With a daily appearance on the TV screen and stories about future plans of action, the population gets used to the "screen candidate". In addition, when there is a really important piece of news to report, the population will not pay due attention to it. Zelensky's team chose the opposite strategy: "I want to be seen. It's like in the old days, back in the Soviet times, when everyone was rushing home to catch up with the series "Seventeen Moments of Spring" or "People's Servant". The series was not being streamed, it was broadcast only once, at the exact time, on the certain channel. In addition everyone knew when and where it could be watched. You could watch it on TV no matter if you have a TV set at home or not. It used to be like that - everybody sat in the yard and started watching together. People should be united" [Ridkisni poiavy yednaiut: Zelenskyi pro komunikatsiiu cherez sotsmerezhi 2019].

Analysing the tactics of Zelensky's team of infrequent interviews, a Ukrainian journalist Valerii Pekar has singled out another unexpected advantage, which he calls a "mirror technology", the lack of clear statements concerning key issues, keeping silence and evading debate, meetings or interviews. Since Zelensky combined different and often incompatible target groups, any clear statement concerning this or that issue, important for identification and differentiation, could easily fend any of them. Silence allows each voter to be sure that the candidate shares his or her values and points of view. Many voters believed that Zelensky was in favour of European integration, while others were certain of his pro-Russian position. Voters saw their own reflection in the candidate as they can see it in the mirror [Pekar 2019].

The next common feature of the two candidates is audience segmentation. Daily,

Trump's team of digital specialists posted around 50,000 times different versions of the same message in social networks checking the way the users react to them depending on the format of the platform and the chosen rhetoric. During the third debate between the candidates, the team posted 175,000 times different variations of messages, and as a result, according to the Republican Advertising Chief of Staff Gary Kobe, at least one would reach its potential addressee. It is not a coincidence that in Florida, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Pennsylvania – those states where the electorate, according to the previous exit polls, hesitated to choose, the majority still supported Donald Trump. Since September 2016 there has been a quantitative advantage of views on YouTube Republican, despite the fact that, on average, according to GoogleTrends, across America, more interest was drown by Hillary Clinton [Atasuncev 2016].

The strategy of Zelensky's team was in many respects very similar to Trump's strategy, especially with regard to audience segmentation. The number of advertising campaigns of Zelensky on Facebook exceeded the number of all the opponents. Zelensky's digital team of experts applied a deep approach to audience segmentation and chose a strategy of narrow targeting. They divided network users according to a large number of criteria: those who subscribed to "ze! Communities" but did not subscribe to other communities; and vice versa, those who subscribed to the opponents, but did not subscribe to the communities of Zelensky's team; the young; the elderly; residents of large cities; residents of small towns and villages; students; people of working professions and representatives of small and medium business.

According to the digital chief at Zelensky's headquarters, Myhajlo Fedorov, the team carefully studied social aspects, such as: what are the regions supporting Zelensky, what is the age of supporters, which representatives of which territory may come to the polls, those who do not come to the polls, those who support the current government and those who do not, and do they like Poroshenko or Tymoshenko or they do not? Fedorov noted that volunteers assisted in developing artificial intelligence software to process all the keywords and, based on the queries, divided people into 32 segments by social roles, social status and needs. For example, lawyers, people willing to help with logistics and mothers on maternity leave, etc. Based on these segments, the experts understood who the most interested stratum was and those having the desire to interact with them the most. Out of the 32 segments, the 7 key ones were identified. Among them were IT specialists, mothers, and people who support certain programme entries. The team managed to send each of these segments a clear message to make the campaign look more personalized and more responsive. Zelensky's election campaign has become the most discussed in the history of Ukraine. According to Fedorov, this happened because the digital team had carefully prepared it, dividing the program into separate categories. In general, about 40 theses were formulated and sent to different target audiences with the intention to appeal to their interests [Sakovska 2019].

The domestic political situation is another factor to be taken into account. A distinguishing characteristic of democracy is the ability to choose. As a result, two opposing political forces entered the second round of Ukraine's presidential elections in 2019. Americans faced the same situation in 2016 witnessing the confrontation between the traditional, sustainable development of the country (Hillary Clinton) and a new policy presupposing radical changes [Donald Trump].

This situation happened in Ukraine before the second round, which included two candidates. The first was Petro Poroshenko, an experienced politician who had been declaring stability for five years, during which he implemented health care reform, a visa-free regime, Tomos, and contributed greatly to the development of the Ukrainian army. The second was Volodymyr Zelensky, called by many citizens "a pig in a poke", a businessman and a showman with no political experience. He positioned himself as a completely new person with fresh views and the intention to remove from power those who had been exercising it for the last 25 years and, thus, give way to the younger generation.

A similar story could be observed in the United States, where the power always belonged to a democratic president who ensured the sustainable development of the country. However satisfied with the rule of Barack Obama, American people still chose another vector of development of the country and a more expressive candidate whose intention was to put a wall between the United States and Mexico, all this under the slogan "Make Great America Again". Returning to the situation in Ukraine, the main desire of voters was to get new faces and radical changes in politics. Ukrainians did not vote for Zelensky, they voted against the current government.

If to speak about the sphere of communications, the elections in Ukraine in 2019 demonstrated that the traditional methods of communication of the candidates do not work anymore. Despite the fact that Zelensky, before the first round of elections, was supported mainly by the channels of "1+1" media group, he managed to win the last round, whereas Poroshenko followed more standard methods of campaigning and received support from many media sources. However, this was not enough to occupy the first place in the rating.

The same story was with Hillary Clinton. She was supported by such high-rated publications as Fox News, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post and The New York Times, however it did not allow her to win the elections. At the same time, Trump used populism and deep targeting on social media, showing each target audience different ads with different messages that brought him success. Hillary Clinton launched advertising on social networks, but her team used simpler methods, without in-depth analysis of the pain points of voters and segmentation of the target audience [Povtorjaetsja li v Ukraine protivostojanie Trampa i Klinton? 2019].

In his election campaign, Zelensky shifted his focus from the traditional methods of communication to social networking using stories on Instagram and Facebook, creative commercials, Challenge and "Ze!", a widget that allowed site owners to display

information about the ZE team's election program on their platforms.

Having announced his running for the post of the president, Zelensky launched his campaign in social networks that offered to subscribe to the newsletter about Zelensky's electoral campaign, sharing one's data in return. The next step was to replace the campaign tents to support the candidate used in the previous years with social media groups for each city.

Poroshenko held an active campaign on Twitter and Facebook. The main problem was a conservative approach to communication, using a language incomprehensible for the younger generation. A person who is simply curious about how the president lives would not read the news about summits and conferences. To regular citizens, such information seems too complicated. Poroshenko's team did not have direct contact and ease of communication with the public. As a result of ill-considered presenting information, all the positive changes in the country have passed "by the ears" of young people [Povtorjaetsja li v Ukraine protivostojanie Trampa i Klinton? 2019].

Both Trump's team and Zelensky's staff used the "short run" technique while temporary planning political agitation. The teams of both candidates were able to clearly plan the election campaign: to divide it into periods, carefully consider the micro-strategy for each stage of the campaign and, as a result, make the candidate extremely popular at the time of the elections. Comparing, for example, the strategy of Zelensky and that of Tymoshenko, we may observe a considerable difference in planning and results. Tymoshenko's early start led to the depletion of rating resources: her staff lacked messages and new groups to be involved. Zelensky's team calculated the start time well, consequently he could become the most discussed candidate at the time of the elections [Pekar 2019].

DESPITE THE COMMON FEATURES OF THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS OF THE TWO CANDIDATES, THEY HAVE CERTAIN DIFFERENCES

It is important to note that in the United States, Internet communications were used to raise funds and replenish the candidate's campaign fund ("Electoral Internet fundraising"). Trump's fundraising was carried out in accordance with the strategy of the "hundred-dollar revolution" (first used in Howard Dean's campaign in 2004) [Sifry 2011], which provides for competition to attract funds not from big business, but from voters who can donate no more than 100 dollars. Sending e-mails to raise funds was used successfully by Trump's staff: in the first two weeks they managed to raise $40 million [Abdullin 2016]. The concept of "small sponsor democracy" is the most effective basis for electoral online fundraising, as in the eyes of voters, a candidate who relies on the support of many supporters willing to make small donations will take greater account of the interests of ordinary citizens. Through Internet communications, Trump's staff managed to raise an additional $250 million, with Facebook being the most successful tool for achieving this goal [Atasuncev 2016]. After the elections, the new US President Donald Trump said that online services had a significant

impact on the outcome of the election race. The social network Facebook, the microblogging service Twitter, the application for sharing photos Instagram all allowed him to spend less money on the election campaign than he might have spent with the use of traditional tools and technologies of the election campaign [Mihajlova 2016].

The difference in Zelensky's campaign was the training of citizens in the election legislation. In addition to promoting the image of the candidate, Zelensky's team disseminated online information about the election, the voting procedure, the rights of the citizens and the responsibilities of the members of the election commission at the polling stations. This strategic step of the team can be justified logically: social network users are young people who probably voted in the presidential elections only once or did not vote at all, therefore the experts tried to involve as many people as possible and informed the young people about the procedure in the language of social networks.

One of the most successful micro-campaigns in the network was the "change of polling station" campaign. At the beginning of the election campaign, Zelensky's team called to change the place of voting reminded those citizens who might be in another settlement on the election day and would not be able to express their will at the place of residence, to list the necessary documents to do so. Moreover, they then announced the final dates when it was possible to change the place of voting and how much time would be left for the citizens to implement the procedure. Thus, Zelensky's team trained citizens in the election law and, therefore, encouraged young people to participate in the elections.

CONCLUSIONS AND FORECASTS

Despite some differences in the digital strategies of the candidates, the 4-year time distance between each of the campaigns, the different countries, electorate and circumstances under which the election campaigns were held, the common feature of Trump and Zelensky was the widespread use of Internet communications.

The features the two candidates had in common were: 1) the use of a wide range of Internet communications: e-mail, websites, blogs and personal accounts in many social networks; 2) more intensive use of a single social network: Trump chose Twitter as the main channel for expressing his own opinion, in addition Zelensky preferred Instagram; 3) quantitative advantage of subscribers over opponents: on the eve of the election, Trump was ahead of Hillary Clinton, Zelensky had more subscribers than Petro Poroshenko; 4) positioning themselves as a part of the electorate: in the rhetoric of Trump and Zelensky there were no such statements as "When I come to power, I promise....", but the politicians called for reforms and state-building together.

Analysing the common features of the strategies of Zelensky and Trump, it is necessary to single out 1) the principle of "maximum discussion of the candidate": at the beginning of the campaigns the principle "the more they talked about the candidate, the more they were interested in him, no matter in what context"; 2) setting their own

"rules of the game": using their personal accounts in social networks, politicians "dictated" news to the traditional media. Addressing voters online provided candidates with an opportunity to avoid embarrassing questions from journalists. The teams of the two candidates moreover considered audience segmentation, singled out several groups by age, social status and interests and addressed a different message to each group; 3) common domestic political situation: in the US elections in 2016 and the Ukrainian elections in 2019, experienced politicians lost to business-engaged candidates having no or lacking political experience, professing completely different views concerning the future development of their countries; 4) clear periodisation of the election campaign: the candidates' headquarters divided it into periods, carefully thought out the micro-strategy for each stage of the campaign and, as a result, made the candidate popular at the time of the elections.

A special feature of the Trump's campaigns was the use of Internet communications to raise funds. The outstanding feature of Zelensky's election campaign was the training of citizens in election legislation. In addition to promoting the image of the candidate, Zelensky's team disseminated informational posts about the election and the voting procedure, in particular, the rights of the citizens and the responsibilities of election commission members at the polling stations.

Of course, a candidate's victory in elections involves many components. Among them are: the personal qualities and the image of the candidate, the compliance of the election programme with the requirements and expectations of the citizens and the socio-economic and foreign policy situation. However, the Internet turns out to be an extremely effective tool for interaction with the electorate. A new type of election campaign is emerging – the electronic election campaign, the main characteristic of which is the use of Internet communications and information technology as the main channel of communication with the voters and the most essential tool for political struggle. Social media communications are firmly entrenched in the set of technologies of modern election campaigns, which may necessitate further research in this area.

For the political elite, activity in social networks during their electoral campaigns allows: the popularising of their personal image, the dissemination of their ideas and points of view, being able to promptly react to the situation, interacting with the public, in addition to being able to observe public sentiment. The electorate, in their turn, may directly address the elite and influence the process of developing a plan of action and making important political decisions. However, the effect of the use of social networks should not be evaluated as completely positive due to the number of threats the government and the citizens of any country may face. Among them are: the use of social networks with the aim of mobilising and inciting the population to ethnic conflicts and terrorist acts by individuals with extremist views; the instantaneous dissemination of fake messages to mislead citizens; the misinterpretation of the messages, which may provoke conflict and manipulating public opinion to exert

pressure upon government entities or to launch riots. Following the example of the US electoral campaign in 2020, we may infer that policy makers will consider both the positive and the negative aspects related to the use of social networks to obtain competitive advantage during future electoral campaigns.

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POLITAINMENT: REFLECTING ON POLITICAL AFFAIRS VIA AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA ENTERTAINMENT

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Abstract:

The study discusses the ways in which current political issues and different aspects of political communication are portrayed in audiovisual media products, specifically in motion pictures and episodic television dramas. As noted by the authors, these types of narratives are often available globally, especially in films and TV shows that are produced in the U.S. and the United Kingdom. However, the principles of polit-

ainment, i.e., a politics-entertainment hybrid that turns serious political discourses into entertaining media stimuli, can be identified in post-Communist countries as well; Slovakia being no exception. Therefore, the article also reflects on how Slovak film producers utilise elements of the modern political history of the country to create highly successful film stories. To elaborate the topic, the authors apply standard procedures of logical reasoning – analysis, synthesis, giving examples, comparison and wider generalisation. Certain elements of narrative and discourse analysis are used as well.

Key words: *politainment, media entertainment, political communication, feature film, episodic drama, audiovisual media*

INTRODUCTION

Today, audiovisual media entertainment may be perceived as a pervasive everyday phenomenon. Entertaining content often ignores the once firm boundaries separating the public and private spheres of human life, constituting a whole new area of social communication – the sphere of entertainment. Given the fact that we are interested in how politics merges with entertainment within the media industries and their audiovisual outcomes, it is necessary to acknowledge that entertainment experience is, in a way, universal, but at the same time always highly individualised. Applying a certain portion of simplification, we may differentiate between hedonic, eudaimonic (i.e., emotionally deeper, more complex, thoughtful) and mixed emotions, experienced on the basis of varied entertainment stimuli [Radošinská 2016: 54]. While discussing political communication and its entertaining variants conveyed by the media, we work with the assumption that this kind of public information dissemination is rarely able to appeal to our rational reasoning, which also means that mediated hybrids merging political communication and entertainment are mostly of a hedonic or mixed nature. In the former case, public appearances of political figures are perceived as media shows that are supposed to entertain the audiences (or, more precisely, the potential voters). On the other hand, mixed entertainment experiences, as we presume, result from watching, hearing or reading about political figures and affairs that, for someone, may seem to be pleasantly amusing, while for other individuals they are disgusting, outrageous, absurd or simply morally and ethically unacceptable. It is rather paradoxical that while experiencing disgust or anger resulting from such media product, its topic or the way it is elaborated, some media audience members keep seeking similar entertainment, as these negative emotions are actually what they want to experience – or rather get rid of symbolically [Vorderer & Halfmann 2019: 79–96].

The prominent status of media entertainment within our everyday life is radically transforming the conditions and strategies of media production. Any discussion on how politics interacts with the media industries and their entertaining products therefore has to involve the rather obvious, yet necessary statement that media entertainment follows its own rules and keeps reacting to ever-changing cultural trends,

including the rise of media-driven narcissism [Bučková 2018: 37–49]. It is not too bold to say that we need media entertainment – even its forms involving political realities – to reduce the otherwise unbearable pressure of the postmodern era or rather emerging hypermodern times [Lipovetsky 2013]. On the other hand, in the case of politics-entertainment hybrids, this welcome escapism often walks hand-in-hand with serious and rather undesirable sociocultural phenomena. To name a few of them, we may talk about the cruel and competition-based political climate, the carnivalisation of politics [Pravdová 2014: 861–868], the ruthless personalisation of public affairs, populism and specifically cultural populism [McGuigan 1993: 40–41], the decreased trust in official authorities [Morley 2007: 30], people cynically judging social institutions and exaggerating their professional misconduct [Habermas 2000: 257–268], a crisis of democracy and civil society [McCoy, Rahman & Somer 2018: 16–42], the media-driven discreditation of political institutions [Macháčková & Tkaczyk 2020: 64–83] or the public appearances of politicians that, more than anything else, look like cabaret performances.

As these communication phenomena are nowadays becoming increasingly prominent, it is hardly surprising that audiovisual and digital media culture is oversaturated by resourceful (real and fictitious alike) stories about political corruption, public authorities failing to fulfil their purposes[1] and arrogance expressed by the rich and powerful. The formal attributes of creating and presenting these stories are so convincing that media audiences sometimes perceive them as more "realistic" and certainly more appealing than any objective facts [Radošinská & Višňovský 2013: 26]. It may be presumed that the given disorientation and anxiety of media recipients have only become more intense since March 2020, when the media started to massively disseminate real as well as specious pieces of news on the COVID-19 global pandemic and outline the disease's social, cultural and political consequences.

As noted above, the study's main objective is to reflect on audiovisual politainment, i.e., to discuss the ways in which political issues and public figures are portrayed in audiovisual media products, specifically in motion pictures and episodic television dramas, predominantly for entertainment purposes. We mostly focus on the products of globalised (U.S.-based) television and film production, but the Slovak media environment is mentioned as well; recently, multiple audiovisual works of this kind have been produced, offering stylised portrayals of Slovakia's modern political history and its key events and personalities. Even though the term "audiovisual media" commonly refers to a wide spectrum of media products and related institutions or even technologies, for the purposes of this study, the expression is used specifically in relation to films and episodic television dramas (media products which are fully fictional or based on real events).

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[1] As noted by Sámelová [2019: 4–15], the Western population imprisons itself in the national-identity (or ethnocentric) media "bubbles" and feels misunderstood by its own state authorities, which often see their people as socially ignorant, illiterate, uneducated and dependent.

1. POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA: PARALLELS AND CONTRASTS

The ways political topics are portrayed in the media are predominantly discussed by authors who base their views on the paradigmatic outlines of critical political economy of media. For example, McChesney [2014: 14] claims that the contemporary issues concerning critical political economy of media include the nature of today's journalism and its relationship to the processes of democratisation; the need to better understand government, commercial and corporate propaganda; the commercialisation of the media and the simultaneous depoliticisation of society; the connections between media commercialisation and militarism; the trends in producing commercial culture; the emergence of "alternative" media institutions or systems and the interconnections between the media, society, politics, and technologies. As audiovisual portrayals of political events or figures engaging in political life are related to several of the above-mentioned problems, we apply the outlines of critical political economy of the media in order to discuss the political and ideological aspects of globalised movie and television production, partly following up on our previous work [Radošinská, Kvetanová & Višňovský 2020: 4–21].

Even a brief look at the political and ideological frameworks of episodic television dramas and films distributed to the global media audiences leaves no doubt that these kinds of audiovisual media production are ideologically based on the imperatives of late capitalism. However, the relationships between internationally distributed audiovisual narratives and society-wide discourses (such as political affairs) are very complex and hard to prove unambiguously. Much has been said about Hollywood and its tendency to reproduce political ideas referring to the progressive left and liberalism. However, most Hollywood celebrities, for understandable reasons, do not openly declare their political views and if so, the vast majority of them support the Democratic Party.[2] Certainly, the political and civil engagement of Hollywood actresses and actors is nothing new. We may mention Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland participating in a public campaign against the Vietnam War, Sidney Poitier and Sammy Davis Jr. supporting civil rights movements and anti-racist advocacy, or Shirley MacLaine and Warren Beatty engaging in George McGovern's unsuccessful presidential campaign in 1972 [Wheeler 2006: 139–140].

Following the same line of thought, Booker [2007: 189] states that all kinds of postmodern media content and most art forms tend to reproduce and promote the ideology of post-capitalism. On the other hand, there are film directors who are unusually inventive and bold enough to naturally portray the cynical, ahistorical and emotionally distorted worldview of late capitalism. However, this does not change the fact that their audiovisual works are capable of achieving international popularity precisely

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[2] It needs to be remarked that the Hollywood actors and directors Sylvester Stallone, Chuck Norris and Clint Eastwood openly articulated their support of the militaristic activities and aggressive foreign policies of the then-ruling Republican Party after the attack on the World Trade Centre on 11th September 2001, commonly referred to as the events of 9/11 [Wheeler 2006: 146–154].

on basis of the economic and ideological processes they criticise so harshly. The often-discussed thesis of Hollywood's cultural imperialism (and of its principles being used by other types of globalised cultural products) tends to point to the processes of creating and establishing universal cultural tastes that allow the producers to accumulate profits on a global scale. Nevertheless, Croteau & Hoynes [2014: 346–347], referring to Barnet and Cavanagh, claim that globalised media production mainly aspires to form lifestyle aspects and taste patterns, leading to, more than anything else, the establishment of a widely shared portfolio of easily accessible products and favoured experience. In other words, even when presenting political topics, internationally distributed audiovisual media production seems to be strangely "apolitical", which means that it often criticises real political affairs (or refers to them through various allegories) not to inspire a change in the status quo, but rather to publicly ridicule politics and politicians, because it is fashionable and thus it is also what their target audiences expect to see.

The given topic is also addressed by Artz [2015: 195–199]. According to the author, globally successful film narratives tend to convincingly simulate their solidarity towards a wide spectrum of social and political conflicts (for example, they depict common problems shared by the majority consisting of blue-collar workers, or appeal to the need to address ethnical, gender and race disparities). Quite understandably, most of these movies cannot convey a complex reflection on the aforementioned social problems. When they achieve commercial success, their popularity only underlines the legitimacy of the thesis that cultural hegemony fulfils its true purpose only in the case it is able to flawlessly pretend to have an interest in common people and their problems. This allows the audience members to identify themselves with fictitious protagonists, who easily overcome life crises these viewers have to face as well, although just on the silver screen (or on television). In the meantime, society-wide problems resulting from misrecognition are only becoming more and more serious [Solík 2014: 203–216].

American mainstream cinema often presents itself (of course, only symbolically and with questionable consequences) as a "guardian" of individual freedoms, human rights and democracy. The same may be said about today's episodic dramas which increasingly compete against feature films and documentaries to attract similar audience segments. Episodic television dramas, and not only those focusing on politically engaged entertainment, tend to use all the tropes and stylish visuals that show business has to offer in order to ambitiously comment on contemporary social and political affairs, effectively marginalising documentary production. For example, Michael Moore, the American documentarist and civil activist, was once able to attract wider audiences to his documentary films such as Bowling for Columbine (2002) and Fahrenheit 9/11 (2004). The former documentary reflects on the absurdly wide availability of firearms in the United States and cases of mass shootings at schools, while the latter movie is largely focused on political issues, commenting on the glob-

al social and political consequences of controversial decisions taken by George W. Bush's administration after the events of 9/11. However, Moore's recent projects have failed to achieve the same amount of international response. Capitalism: A Love Story (2009, about problematic social frameworks established by late capitalism) and the cleverly named documentary Fahrenheit 11/9 (2018, analysing the global political turmoil caused by the communication habits and actions of former American President Donald Trump, who was officially announced as President-elect on 9th November 2016) are both as thoroughly elaborated and thematically interesting as Bowling for Columbine or Fahrenheit 9/11, but much less known and not as successful. On the other hand, the era of Internet-distributed television (in the U.S. called the era of "over-the-top" TV) has offered documentarists reflecting on contemporary political affairs a number of new opportunities [Radošinská, Kvetanová & Rusňáková 2020: 59–60]. Documentary films are prominent especially on Netflix – for example, the acclaimed docudrama The Social Dilemma (2020, directed by Jeff Orlowski) has earned a lot of praise and attention. Besides warning about other problematic aspects of online social networking, the movie also explains how surveillance capitalism[3] works and how conspiracy theories shared online disrupt serious political communication.

The leftist movie director Oliver Stone is another well-known filmmaker specialising in politically engaged audiovisual production. As remarked by Bergan [2008: 369], Stone's hostile attitude towards American foreign policy, especially militarism, is obvious in the case of his war dramas such as Platoon (1986) and Born on the Fourth of July (1989). The director's other successful projects include Wall Street (1987, a satiric portrayal of the American financial services industry) and his highly controversial drama JFK (1991), in which he openly claims that the late American President John Fitzgerald Kennedy's public assassination was organised by prominent industrial and military tycoons. Just like Michael Moore, Oliver Stone has not been able to repeat his earlier remarkable accomplishments; his thriller World Trade Centre (2006) and biopic Snowden (2016, about the globally known whistle-blower uncovering alleged illegal electronic surveillance practices imposed on common citizens) are less popular than his previous works. However, Stone has embraced the changes in the media industry; the filmmaker's leftist and openly propagandistic exploration of the modern history of American politics titled The Untold History of the United States (2012) is available via the online television platform Netflix [Radošinská, Kvetanová & Rusňáková 2020: 60–61].

As the previous discussion suggests, political topics and current (or recent) political affairs entangled within audiovisual entertainment have been present in globally available media production for decades. After all, media fulfil an important role in terms of establishing foreign policies and related decision-making processes [Tököly-

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[3] The topic is also addressed by sociologists, social philosophers and other scholars specialising in social sciences and humanities. This line of thinking is represented by, for example, Bauman and Lyon [2013].

ová & Modrzejewski 2013: 37–47]. Moreover, the social, cultural and political frame-works of the new millennium allow this type of media production to spread further than ever before, mostly thanks to digital media. As it seems, the *portmanteau* term "politainment", which is addressed in the next chapters of the study, may not refer to a whole new strategy of audiovisual media production, but it certainly underlines the fact that in many cases we are no longer able to distinguish between real events (or their selected fragments) and sensation-driven stories that portray them, stirring our emotions.

2. ON THE CONCEPT OF POLITAINMENT

The concept of "politainment" is, just like other *portmanteau* words[4] merging the term "entertainment" with various expressions that refer to current cultural trends, a log-ical result of the aforementioned problems we experience while trying to distinguish between what is serious and what is plainly amusing. We need to acknowledge that politainment is, at least in terms of scholarly reflections, discussed less frequently than, for instance, infotainment or edutainment. Infotainment, the information-enter-tainment hybrid, is probably addressed most often [Edgerly & Vraga 2017: 807–826]. It is no surprise as today's media audiences expect news coverage that is processed in an entertaining manner, especially in the case of television news [Višňovský et al. 2019: 40–60] and social media journalism [Švecová & Kačincová Predmerská 2020: 120–130]. The term "democratainment", coined and widely popularised by Hartley, is mentioned regularly as well. As the author suggests, the era of democratainment allows television and other mass media to seize control over most educational fields; democratainment is thus another hybrid merging official (government) authorities, educational systems and media communication [Hartley 2004: 524–530]. Almost the same can be said about politainment. Media entertainment possesses a remarkable ability to overcome any remaining boundaries separating it from other spheres of media production and social discourse as a whole. After all, that is why political com-munication is changing so immensely, becoming highly personal and competitive. "Politainment refers to the blending of politics and entertainment into a new type of political communication. (…) The term represents the entangling of political actors, topics, and processes with the entertainment culture." Politainment also refers to an increasing mediatisation and professionalisation of politics that is typical for modern democracies [Nieland 2015: 456–457]. Holly sees politainment as a logical conse-quence of the fact that "media increasingly communicate in terms of entertainment, including in areas which were hitherto reserved for information". This tendency is ob-viously associated with media producers' increased orientation towards commercial

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[4] *Portmanteau* is originally a French expression that blends parts, phonetic aspects and meanings of two seemingly unrelated words. The linguistic principle of blending is currently very popular in the contexts of media entertainment and journalistic communication. Its purpose is to diversify already existing ex-pressions or to make them "catchier". In our case the portmanteau expression "politainment" reacts to media entertainment and its pervasiveness, i.e., its ability to influence new forms of once serious com-munication situations related to politics [Bosshart & Hellmueller 2009: 3–19].

goals. However, in case of politainment, the commercial orientation of the media is confronted and strengthened by "convergent interests on the part of political actors" [Holly 2008: 328]. In other words, politainment is driven by multiple actors – the media themselves, their owners, politicians who are in power and would like to remain so, and also political figures who successfully use their communication skills and populistic gestures to gain more public attention.

One of the most thorough elaborations of the term "politainment" can be found in the publication authored by Dörner. According to the author, politainment is a certain form of public, media-disseminated communication which manifests itself in relation to political topics, figures, processes, interpretative formulas, identities and meanings, positioning (media) entertainment as a new political reality. This new reality constitutes an experiential framework, through which politics is accessed by the general public [Dörner 2001: 31]. Nieland remarks that Dörner's basic taxonomy of politainment distinguishes between two different types of this politics-entertainment hybrid – entertaining politics and political entertainment. Firstly, we have to acknowledge the existence (and successfulness) of entertaining politics, which allows "political actors to get media access in order to enhance their public images and to promote political issues" (for example, party conventions accompanying election campaigns or other important political affairs may be staged by movie directors or other media professionals, mimicking the dramaturgy of media events attended by celebrities such as pop concerts). While presenting themselves in an amusing or celebrity-like manner, politicians often expose their personal characteristics and private lives, mostly in order to appeal to potential voters who are, in fact, mostly uninterested in politics [Nieland 2015: 456]. "Thus, entertaining politics serves to acquire and stabilise political power" [Dörner 2001: 31-32].

In Slovakia, this concept is discussed only occasionally [Radošinská 2016: 92], in Czechia as well [Hvížďala 2005]. A similar thematic focus can also be found in Polish scholarly literature [Dobek-Ostrowska 2019]. The most important elaborations of the topic in question include the already mentioned German-written publication by Dörner [2001] and also the works of Haas [2005] and Wagner [2005]. Other important contributions to this discussion were published in English, for instance the texts written by Carpini and Williams [2001: 160–181] or Van Zoonen [2005].

Most of these publications follow Dörner's line of thought. Krause [2004: 92] notes that Dörner's understanding of politainment thoroughly explains a new type of public, media-disseminated communication, which spreads across new political reality, connecting political topics, actors and processes with emphasis on the aspect of entertainment. Using the perspective established by British cultural studies, Dörner sees politainment in a neutral, pragmatic manner. He underlines the fact that thanks to this politics-entertainment hybrid, political communication becomes more visible and political values can be popularised widely. Politainment thus constitutes specific models of political activities, which offer the public many different opportunities

to interact with the political environment more closely. It may even inspire ordinary people to participate in politics and political processes. This phenomenon is, in its nature, ambiguous and hard to understand.

As noted above, this study aims to focus on the second type of politainment, so-called political entertainment that communicates political topics via popular music, cinema or television and "tends to exploit the world of politics with its sometimes-interesting personalities, prestigious figures, and exciting scandals". Political matters are also taken up by television or film producers as raw material for drama or satire plots [Nieland 2015: 456–457]. This appears to be true in the cases of all media narratives discussed in the following chapter; films and episodic dramas alike.

3. POLITAINMENT IN TODAY'S EPISODIC DRAMAS AND FILMS

The moment the long-running episodic drama West Wing (1999–2006) was introduced publicly can be seen as a crucial breaking point foreshadowing a new era of television politainment. The TV show was first aired at a time when just a few episodic dramas were labelled as "quality TV" and almost no Hollywood actresses and actors were willing to participate in creative projects meant for the small screen. However, West Wing achieved its huge success and international response thanks to the strong on-screen presence of acclaimed acting personalities such as Allison Janney, Martin Sheen and Bradley Whitford. The project's thematic outlines reflect on the everyday lives of the White House staffers, uncovering some of the harsh conditions that are associated with "running" the United States and the country's internal affairs and foreign policies. In a way, the TV show's portrayal of American politics (even though the story itself is purely fictional) tells us a lot about how political communication used to work just before the rise of social media.

Similar thematic aspects are also present in the episodic drama Scandal (2011–2018). The TV show's main character, portrayed by Kerry Washington, is partly inspired by the former George H. W. Bush administration's press secretary Judy Smith. As Smith herself participated in the show's production, we may presume that her insight into the depicted environment contributed to this fictitious episodic narrative's persuasiveness, authenticity and complexity. The story focuses on a female professional who specialises in "fixing" potential scandals, effectively covering missteps taken by the rich and powerful. The producers were aware of an emerging revolution in promoting television content, introducing a thorough communication strategy. The TV show's popularity was largely based on its strong social media presence, as the cast members live-tweeted with their fans while new episodes were being aired. This kind of interaction between the producers and their audiences was quite unique back then, outlining the future possibilities of creating institutionalised online fandoms and obtaining authentic feedback.

A different thematic framework was explored by the episodic dramas Homeland (2011 – 2020) and The Americans (2013–2018). Reacting to the paranoid atmosphere follow-

ing the airborne attack targeting the World Trade Centre in September 2001, Homeland offers an immersive insight into the American secret services and the ways they influence foreign affairs, in this case mostly the political situation in the Middle East. The show's key character, Carrie Mathison (Claire Danes), a mentally unstable intelligence agent, establishes an inappropriate intimate relationship with Nicholas Brody (Damian Lewis), a former military officer and family man, who experienced long-term captivity and torture that left him mentally broken. Homeland explores several controversial topics such as one's inability to maintain the boundaries between personal matters and work obligations, religious disparities and explicit aspects of international terrorism. In contrast, the episodic drama The Americans also works with the elements of a conspiracy thriller and a paranoid atmosphere, but it returns to the past to depict the Cold War era. The story emerges around Elizabeth and Philip Jennings (Keri Russell and Matthew Rhys), a couple of Soviet spies pretending to be a "typical" American family with two children. The most interesting thematic element of this fictitious TV show is a convincing portrayal of the Reagan-era Cold War and its key events; some of the characters are clearly inspired by real personalities.

Most of the above-mentioned episodic dramas are centred on strong female characters. Moreover, it can be said that postmillennial television politainment often favours refined portrayals of women in power. Such episodic dramas include Political Animals (2012), Veep (2012–2019) and Madam Secretary (2014–2019).[5] All of them work with the idea of a woman becoming the Vice-President or, eventually, the President of the United States. Thus, we may state that all three narratives were produced well ahead of similar real-life events, two of them probably expecting Hillary Clinton's political ascension. Each of these TV shows, to a certain extent, indirectly refers to Hillary Clinton's personal life and public presence. The drama Political Animals offers a dynamic portrayal of a divorced former First Lady Elaine Barrish (Sigourney Weaver), who now serves as the Secretary of State[6] and intends to run for President. Trying to find a proper balance between her personal affairs and political ambitions, Barrish recruits a surprising ally – a young female journalist (Carla Gugino) who used to criticise her harshly. The motive of a politically powerful woman is also applied in the highly acclaimed political drama Veep. Julia Louis-Dreyfus's skilled and charming Vice-President Selina Meyer soon finds out that her position is less appealing than she expected it to be. The TV show focuses on everyday political conflicts in Washington. In this case, we may say that there is a real-life parallel personalised by Kamala Harris.[7] A fictitious portrayal of a woman actually becoming the American President

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[5] In 2019 titled "Madam President".

[6] In the U.S., there have been three female Secretaries of State so far – Bill Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, George W. Bush's Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Barack Obama's Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Out of them, only Hillary Clinton is a former First Lady. She lost her 2016 presidential run to Donald Trump. Obviously, she is, unlike Weaver's television character Elaine Barrish, still married to her husband, the ex-President.

[7] Kamala Harris, the newly elected first female Vice-President of the United States, used to serve in the U. S. Congress just as the fictional television heroine Selina Meyer, the main protagonist of Veep.

is present in Madam Secretary. The main storyline, once again, unfolds around a female Secretary of State, in this case called Elizabeth McCord (Téa Leoni). Unlike Elaine Barrish from Political Animals and Selina Meyer from Veep, McCord actually bears a physical resemblance to Hillary Clinton, including short blonde hair and a similar dressing style.

Probably the most discussed episodic drama focused on politainment is Netflix's House of Cards (2013–2018). Kevin Spacey's portrayal of Francis Underwood, a vengeful, passively aggressive and overly ambitious congressman, has been highly praised by critics and has been popular with online television audiences since the TV show's initial introduction. It is less known that House of Cards is, in fact, an Americanised remake of a 1990s British television drama of the same name. However, Spacey's methodical, repulsive, manipulative and utterly antiheroic political figure, for years celebrated by the show's loyal viewers, was eventually removed from the narrative due to the actor's personal scandals that permanently damaged his show business career.[8]

The less known, yet remarkable miniseries Show Me a Hero[9] (2015) does not focus on top politics, but rather looks into the everyday problems of a small-town mayor in the 1980s. The show is based on real events, portraying Nick Wasicsko (Oscar Isaac), a young local politician who became a mayor in Yonkers, New York in 1987. The story depicts the rise and fall of Wasicsko in a rarely convincing manner, addressing some of the most searing social and political problems of the 80's – race disparities in relation to education, housing segregation and political corruption. Ultimately, the mayor becomes a tragic example of being too ambitious and unable to accept defeat.

Recently, another notable television project has been introduced – The Politician (since 2019), a bright and comical episodic drama about a teenager who is fascinated by the idea of establishing a career in politics. He plans to build a part of his future public image on the basis of confusing high school "politics", applying for the position of the Student Council Chairman. This clever satire reaches far beyond common high school comedies and their tropes to offer an engaging depiction of a young man losing his illusions associated with a political career.

Postmillennial Hollywood cinema has embraced politainment as well, albeit a little reluctantly and less thoroughly than television production. One of the most notable film stories of this kind, Frost/Nixon (2008), was directed by Ron Howard. The narrative is centred on the political situation in the U.S. after the Watergate scandal and President Richard Nixon's resignation. The audiences perceive this notoriously known political affair through the eyes of David Frost (Michael Sheen), the then aspiring British talk-show host who interviews Nixon (Frank Langella) on television after

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[8] Kevin Spacey's acting contract was dismissed in 2017, in reaction to the (legitimate) allegations posed by the social campaign #MeToo. Spacey was accused of sexually assaulting or harassing multiple colleagues.

[9] The title is based on the famous quote by Francis Scott Fitzgerald, the prominent American novelist: "Show me a hero and I will write you a tragedy" [Ratcliffe 2006: 50].

the former American President's three-year long silence. The most prominent aspect of the movie is the two men's intellectual and value-based struggle in front of the camera. The motion picture communicates the idea that no matter what politicians and media professionals do (or do not do), common people love them only as much as they hate them.[10]

Another collision of the world of politics and journalism is present in the biographical drama The Post (2017), directed by Steven Spielberg. Much like other Spielberg's feature films portraying historical events, whether real (Schindler's List, 1993) or fictional (War Horse, 2011), The Post conveys a clear pacifist message, as the movie's main storyline focuses on an unprecedented conflict between an influential newspaper's staff and American government authorities that is widely known as "the Pentagon Papers". Kay Graham (Meryl Streep), the owner of the daily Washington Post, faces an uneasy decision – whether to back off or stand for the freedom of the press and thus allow Ben Bradlee (Tom Hanks), the paper's editor, to pursue a story about how American authorities lied to the general public regarding the Vietnam War, denying its futility, which would endanger the Washington Post and its journalists.

Nowadays, a quite significant creative line within Hollywood cinema focuses on politainment in relation to political figures operating "behind-the-scenes"[11] or well-informed, yet once ordinary citizens turning into whistle-blowers.[12] These movies are, as a general rule, based on real events. Firstly, we may mention the controversial motion picture The Fifth Estate (2013, directed by Bill Condon). Benedict Cumberbatch's engaging portrayal of Julian Assange, the criminally prosecuted, eccentric and misanthropic founder of WikiLeaks, is unique for several reasons. The movie confronts social and political issues that result from the irreversible changes in journalism caused by social media platforms, unclassifiable data streams and individual initiatives of people who are not (and do not intend to become) professional investigative journalists. The media/politics conflict is present at multiple levels. Assange struggles to acknowledge that he is, in fact, a new type of journalist born in the digital era, seeing himself rather as a civil activist. Moreover, the main protagonist has no choice but to share his data with the editorial office of the British newspaper The Guardian, struggling to achieve public credibility. We may say that Assange's case has changed the world of journalism forever – hence the movie's title "The Fifth Estate", which

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[10] A similar message is also present in George Clooney's 2005 movie Good Night and Good Luck, where David Strathairn plays Edward R. Murrow, the famous radio journalist. The film is based on real events and focuses on Murrow's effort to eliminate the political influence of Joseph McCarthy, the Republican Senator known for viciously attacking his political opponents and loathing real or imaginary Communists. Another "media vs. politics" conflict involving an investigative journalist (Russell Crowe) and an influential politician (Ben Affleck), in this case fully fictional, is present in State of Play (2009, directed by Kevin Macdonald). The movie is inspired by an eponymous British episodic drama aired in 2003.

[11] In French also called éminence grise.

[12] Oliver Stone's 2016 biographical drama Snowden has been mentioned above. The movie portrays the controversial personality of the National Security Agency analyst Edward Snowden (Joseph Gordon-Levitt), who leaked highly classified materials to the press, warning about progressive surveillance techniques applied across all aspects of people's public and private lives.

claims that the Fourth Estate, or professional journalism, is now challenged by blog-gers, online activists, partisan journalists and social media enthusiasts.

The British drama Brexit: The Uncivil War (2019, directed by Toby Haynes) looks back to 2015, when the political strategist Dominic Cummings started to lead an increasingly popular, but highly unethical campaign meant to convince British vot-ers to leave the European Union. Again, played by the established British movie star Benedict Cumberbatch, the main character is a misanthropist and cynical political marketing professional who always favours the purpose fulfilled over the measures applied. The contemporary British political elites, including politicians who are still active or even in power,[13] are portrayed as sly and calculating people. The film's key message is different, however; the narrative repeatedly underlines the importance of social media platforms in terms of politics and shows what happens when old-school argumentation and intelligent discussion are confronted with the possibilities result-ing from data mining, shameless populism and absurd, yet spectacular agitation (for example, the moment when Cummings comes up with the campaign's main slogan, "Take Back Control", while crouching inside a cleaner's storage room).

Returning to the topics that explore controversies of postmillennial American politics, The Report (2019) is directed by Scott Z. Burns and globally distributed by Amazon Prime Video. Just like Stone's movie Snowden, the film failed to achieve a wider au-dience response despite its shocking focal point.[14] The narrative follows Daniel Jones (the rising Hollywood star Adam Driver), a young and rather idealistic staffer, the actions taken by the Senate Intelligence Committee and the key moments when they investigate whether and how the American intelligence services tortured prisoners in the post-9/11 era, elaborating a shattering "torture" report.

Another post-9/11 political issue is reflected on by the British-American docudrama Official Secrets (2019, directed by Gavin Hood). The storyline is loosely based on the life and work of the whistle-blower Katharine Gun (Keira Knightley), who claimed that Western intelligence services were tasked to influence and potentially even blackmail the United Nations diplomats getting ready to vote on a UN resolution agreeing with the 2003 invasion of Iraq. As the case is quite recent and Gun's public engagement is not really over, it is immensely difficult to evaluate the film's credibility and accuracy. As expected, some of the portrayed events are hyperbolised and overly dramatized, but that might have been said about any of the episodic dramas and movies men-tioned above, which are also based on real events.

In Slovakia, audiovisual politainment is mostly conveyed by film documentaries and feature films. We may remark that no such movies were produced in the 2000s and similarly thematised filmmaking became prominent approximately a decade later. It

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[13] In fact, Dominic Cummings, the depicted political strategist, served as a chief adviser to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson until November 2020.

[14] However, we need to point out an important difference between these two films – in the case of The Report, the source documents were made publicly available by official authorities, not leaked by whis-tle-blowers.

is unclear whether this creative shift results from an increasing "public order", or whether the movies mentioned below, in fact, inspired their viewers to follow up more closely on the domestic political situation and Slovak modern political history. As we presume, the truth may lie somewhere in between these seemingly contradictory stances. One way or another, Zuzana Piussi's documentary Od Fica do Fica (2012),[15] which critically reflects on Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico's era that ended relatively recently, is probably the first audiovisual media product to thoroughly criticise Fico's government, referring to the almost folksy quote of one of the Prime Minister's closest associates: "Win the election, and you can do anything." The same line of documentary work was later elaborated by Tereza Nvotová. However, her documentary with the self-explanatory title Mečiar (2017) delves deeper into the political history of Slovakia as an independent state, returning to the 1990s and the then dominant authoritative governing of one of Fico's predecessors, Vladimír Mečiar. The former Prime Minister is depicted as what he truly was, a once charismatic and convincing politician who later compromised himself in the eyes of the general public due to his attitude to both internal affairs and foreign policies. Another return to this before-the-EU period is present in Barbora Berezňáková's 2019 highly emotionally engaged documentary Skutok sa stal (in English literally The Deed Happened). The film reconstructs some of the most shocking circumstances surrounding the death of Robert Remiáš, a former police and intelligence officer. The obvious prevalence of organised crime in 1990s Slovakia is addressed as well. The author combines a refined investigative approach with original aspects of filmmaking, using many authentic materials, including various media reports.

Even though the above-mentioned documentaries are quite well-known and worthy of scholarly attention, lately it has been obvious that some Slovak filmmakers rather intend to build upon the controversies encircling the real political and social events of the recent past predominantly via feature films. First, we would like to mention Únos, or in English Abduction, (2017, directed by Mariana Čengel Solčanská), which dramatically portrays the series of events related to when, how and why Michal Kováč Jr., the son of the then Slovak President Michal Kováč, was publicly abducted and taken abroad against his will. The same director, this time in cooperation with Rudolf Biermann, later created Slovakia's (probably) most successful movie story based on politainment so far, the feature film Sviňa, in English Scumbag, (2020). This thriller looks back at rising political corruption, politically covered organised crime and clientelism, dramatically reproducing some of the events leading to the illegal tracing and eventual violent death of the young investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová. It may be said that this politically-driven crime has changed the Slovak political landscape entirely,[16] which is why the movie has been so

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[15] When translated into English in a literal manner, the movie's title would be "From Fico to Fico". However, a rather looser translation has been used instead – "The Grasp of the State".

[16] Ján Kuciak, a talented investigative journalist and analyst, was murdered by hitmen in 2018 under (yet) not entirely clear circumstances. However, it is quite obvious that Kuciak's violent death is related

successful despite the COVID-19 pandemic which makes it impossible to continue in its theatrical distribution. However, the film is available via Netflix.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The previous chapter of the study suggests that in terms of globally distributed episodic television dramas focusing on politainment, probably the most acclaimed of them used to be House of Cards. However, this was until Kevin Spacey, the irreplaceable "face" of the story, was unveiled as a man praised for his acting abilities, who is also personally despicable, and thus unacceptable in the eyes of the target viewers.

It also seems that American feature films involving politainment tend to draw their inspiration from real events, while episodic television dramas largely favour fictitious narratives. On the other hand, many of them clearly refer to real events that occurred in American or international politics – for example, Téa Leoni's Elizabeth McCord in the episodic drama Madam Secretary may be, in many aspects, seen as an indirect and unacknowledged portrayal of Hillary Clinton.

Some of the discussed media products are thematically oriented towards the administrative and bureaucratic specifics of top politics, using the obvious connections between politically motivated storylines and the general popularity of narratives taking place "in the courtroom" (for example, West Wing or House of Cards).

Reacting to long-term gender disparities in politics and the generally accepted gender stereotype that men are more skilled politicians than women and thus better cope with the burden of leadership, many of the audiovisual works analysed above are centred on remarkable female characters (a mentally unstable and reckless, yet bright-minded intelligence officer in Homeland, a ruthless PR manager and "problem fixer" in Scandal, an ambitious and charismatic Vice-President in Veep, or The Americans' Soviet spy who, along with her "husband", lives in the U.S. as a seemingly harmless suburban family woman). Regarding politainment movies, the most interesting female characters include Meryl Streep's politically engaged owner of the Washington Post in The Post or Keira Knightley's intelligence officer and whistle-blower in Official Secrets.

Undermining the already shattered trust of ordinary people in official authorities and intelligence services even further, some of the movies mentioned above focus on the most controversial situations that have occurred throughout the modern political history of the United States and their ideologically compatible European allies. A brief thematic overview of the individual feature films includes narratives reflecting on internationally discussed political scandals based on true events, often associated with whistle-blowers and their shocking information (Frost/Nixon, The Fifth Estate, Snowden, Official Secrets). The topic of investigative journalism is becoming increas-

to his journalistic pieces. The massive public protests that followed were called "For Decent Slovakia". A partial reconstruction of Robert Fico's government took place shortly thereafter; Fico was replaced by Peter Pellegrini, one of his closest associates. The protests are addressed in scholarly literature as well [Fichnová, Wojciechowski & Szabo 2019: 76–92].

ingly important as well (The Fifth Estate, The Report). In contrast, Brexit: The Uncivil War is special thanks to its sarcastic way of portraying "behind-the-scenes" actions – data mining, clever propaganda – that led the United Kingdom and its people towards Brexit.

Regarding the Slovak media environment, today's audiovisual politainment is marked by the popularity of documentaries and feature films that "return" to the 1990s, drawing attention to the not-so-flattering reality of the country's political situation. These movies include, for example, the documentaries Mečiar and Skutok sa stal (The Deed Happened), or the feature film Únos (Abduction). Our recent social and political history is addressed by the documentary Od Fica do Fica (The Grasp of the State), and also by the movie Sviňa (Scumbag), which is loosely based on real events. On television, this thematic line of production was briefly represented by the satirical TV show Ministri (in English Ministers, 2018 – 2019), which cynically and absurdly referred to recent political affairs in Slovakia. Depictions of the former (pre-1989) political regime are rather scarce – however, we may mention Ladislav Halama's biographical drama Dubček (2018), which focuses on Alexander Dubček, the late progressive socialist politician who personalised the events of the Prague Spring in 1968.

As we have mentioned above, strengthening political power through public appearances of politicians is anything but new; we may even claim that it has always been so. After all, many absolutist rulers (e.g., Louis XIV in France) and later, even seemingly conventional politicians (for instance, the representatives of the German Weimar Republic) used to stylise their public appearances just like performing artists [Haas 2005: 7]. Moreover, the possible and potentially dangerous collision of one's artistic expressions and political preferences cannot be limited to the world of cinema and television. Today, digital games are marked by this tendency as well [Baltezarević et al. 2019: 28 – 46]. Mistrík, Škripcová and Mičuda [2020: 100] identify the same tendency in relation to theatre, namely Houston Stewart Chamberlain, whose fascination with the composer Richard Wagner and pursuit of Romanticism led him towards German monumentalism and, ultimately, celebration of Nazism. However, after WWII, a new, more elegant political style emerged, best represented by John Fitzgerald Kennedy. In turn, the era of social media now sees an unprecedent struggle by politicians to increase their media presence. Many of them have adapted to the unwritten, yet universally established rules of the entertainment industry [Haas 2005: 7].

Politainment (or, alternatively, confrontainment) represents an obvious collision of two formerly distant worlds – politics and entertainment. It is a world filled with multimedia promotion, in which aspiring politicians become media celebrities. As outlined by the expression "confrontainment", mediated appearances of politicians, successful or not, are typically based on sharp, opinionated confrontations and/or personal insults. Public speeches of those holding political power often turn out to be highly expressive, emotional monologues. It is quite common to see politicians enter parliaments or attend public protests dressed in T-shirts with specific slogans,

holding banners or pictures based on Internet memes. Maintaining their social media presence, politicians often share their private photos or purposefully absurd GIF images rather than information on their work obligations or strategic plans. Political affairs and their actors may also be presented as stylised melodramas, almost soap operas or so-called telenovelas [Ponti 2020: 32–45].

This new political communication is practically "born" to inspire political satire, as well as to diversify the otherwise exhausted film tropes and storylines presented in episodic television dramas. Many politically driven quotes and expressions may become a part of folk culture, some of them even constitute the key messages present in audiovisual media entertainment focused on politics, or as we call it, politainment. This approach to publicly presenting politics and its actors is notably audience-centred and versatile in its very nature [Wagner 2005: 61–62]. "Politainment offers political actors effective means for reaching the public and pursuing political goals and, in exchange, provides the entertainment industry with celebrity figures and exciting stories. However, it is criticised for downgrading civil culture and for contributing to political cynicism." [Nieland 2015: 456–457].

Media entertainment and its various hybrids, including politainment, provide us with a wide spectrum of symbols, myths and emotional as well as intellectual stimuli [Pravdová, Hudíková & Panasenko 2020: 68–81]. However, no media entertainment can be seen as a communication space that strives to establish an authentic intercultural dialogue. Politicians, i.e., those who disseminate, inspire or profit from politainment, often utilise so-called alternative means of communication to make their public appearances look modern and dynamic. They also pretend to be in deep conflict with the hated "system" or "establishment", even though this system has created them, and they remain its essential parts and driving forces. The popularity of political entertainment thus lets us know that populism related to politainment strategies will remain a prominent framework of political communication in liberal-democratic and authoritarian countries alike.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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RELIGION AS RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER TOOL IN THE DONBAS SEPARATISM PROCESS

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Abstract

The article is devoted to such a pressing problem as separatism, mainly in Ukraine (Donbas region). Some experts say that separatism is a problem of the past, but the author emphasises that the XXIst century will be the century of an identification factor increase that will influence nationalistic issues. It is emphasised that separatism could be catalysed not only by domestic factors but also by exogenous ones, especially nowadays, when the structure of the world is being changed by influential actors in foreign affairs. The article contains an analysis of the reasons for military conflict that broke out in 2014 in the Donbas region and still goes on. The author analyses the exogenous influence of the Russian Federation on the political situation in Ukraine. The analysis covers Russian influence on politics, economy, culture and religion in Ukraine. Besides, for the first time in the Political Science field, the author presents a separatism revealing formula that can help central governments foresee and prevent possible separatism conflicts in future.

Key words: separatism, Donbas, Ukraine, Russia, religion

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary world is in a state of permanent transformation. It started in the 1980s and has gone at least three stages. The first stage, relatively peaceful, is characterised by a bipolar system collapse. The collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia led not only to the appearance of new states on the geopolitical map, some of which have not succeeded in their political and economic development, but also led to the rise of ethnic clashes, characterised by unprecedented levels of violence and cruelty against civilians. This period lasted from 1989 till 2007m and was characterised by the unilateral power of the USA. It is necessary to point out that the process of the USSR collapse has not yet finished, and it can be seen by the conflicts in Ukraine and Nagorny Karabakh.

The second phase started in 2007 when the Russian president V.Putin alleged at the Munich security conference that it is impossible for one country only to rule the whole planet. It was the end of the unilateral system of international relations after which several states started to increase their influence at a regional level, such as Germany, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Russia, China, Brazil etc. In addition, the new regionalism stimulated the formation of new regional organizations and new forms of organisations such as BRICS.

The third phase, which started in 2011 and has lasted till the present moment, could be entitled *ultraconflictious* and is characterised by radical change of political regimes, borders and the appearance of failed states.

The last decade has been characterised by really serious challenges to regional and world security and such events as the Arab spring, the Ukrainian crisis, the rise of ISIS, and COVID-19 outlined the current global crisis.

This global crisis consists of three aspects: financial, geopolitical and health related. The first type, which is the financial one, shows that there is a huge gap between the richest countries and the poorest ones and this gap keeps on widening. According to the World's richest and poorest countries index, the total GDP of the first five countries is 106 times higher than total GDP of the last five countries from this list [The world's richest and poorest countries. 2021]. It shows the crisis of the current capitalistic system that was emphasised by Klaus Martin Schwab at the Davos Economic Forum in 2021. All the reasons according to which some countries prosper and some fail, have been described in "Why nations fail" by Daron Acemoglu and James A.Robinson [Acemoglu D., Robinson J. 2021].

The second crisis is geopolitical and geoeconomic at the same time. The relations between the USA and Russia are considered to be Cold War 2.0 after the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 and it is really so, because nowadays we could see a deep political crisis between Russia and the collective West at the present time, especially after the US announced some Russian envoys as persona non-grata in May 2021. But Russia is not an enemy for the West because it has no geopolitical priorities to wage a war against the West. The second rival of the USA is China and it could be considered to

be a real geopolitical competitor because it acts in an economic sphere that is much more powerful that its political aspect. Besides, we can see that China has a powerful image in the world because it does not use military power in conquering the world, it uses economic and financial tools and countries which China invests in are really satisfied and are ready to support it. In its Interim National Security Strategy that was published in March 2021, the White House named Russia and China as the major threats to American power in the world [Interim National Security Strategy]. In June 2021, Jens Stoltenberg announced that close cooperation between Russia and China is a real challenge for NATO [Remarks by NATO. 2021]. So we can see that the geoeconomic crisis is deepening amid the really huge humanitarian crisis that is the COVID-19 pandemic.

All the three above-mentioned countries, the USA, Russia and China, try to attract as many satellites as possible.

If the former states use both soft and hard power, the latter one uses mainly soft power, but in the situation with Taiwan there is a high probability that military hostilities could take place. Besides soft and hard power, there is smart power that presupposes usage of both types, but nowadays experts already speak about sharp power which means using propaganda in their international relations. According to the Soft Power Nations Index 2021, the USA holds 6th place, Russia – the 13th, China – the 8th [Soft Power Nations Index 2021. 2021]. So we can see that soft power is used in their foreign policy in addition to hard power.

Nowadays Russia is in the epicentre of events, based on its involvement in the Ukrainian crisis, diplomatic scandals in May 2021, its active policy in the Middle East, Nord Stream – 2 constructions and the spies' scandals.

Post-Soviet space had become an epicentre of ethnic, religious and nationalistic conflicts at the beginning of the Soviet Union collapse process. The republics were struggling for independence and, when they gained it, we could observe the second wave of separatism conflicts when regions in these republics inhabited by ethnic minorities started to rebel to gain more rights, autonomy or independence. By 2000 almost all conflicts had finished or became frozen ones. We could then observe the third wave of ethnic conflicts in the post-Soviet space and they were caused by geopolitical interests. Taking into account that all the former soviet republics are under the geopolitical, economic and humanitarian influence of the Russian federation, there is the desire of influential geopolitical actors to make them less dependent on Russia. They succeeded to some degree and this activity stimulated long-term conflicts. The biggest one is in the Donbas region that has been going on since 2014. People in Russia and Ukraine have been and are still alike because they have a similar history, the same language, religion, customs and traditions. But within the last 15 years much has been done to make people of both countries as different as possible. New religious and historical holidays have been introduced in order to replace those which unite two peoples. In all aspects of society life the Ukrainian language has been im-

posed as the only one, violating the rights of the Russian minority that consists of 8 million people. Religion is a major issue of ethnic differentiation and divisiveness in this region.

Ted Gurr, one of the most brilliant experts on ethnic conflicts, believes that the contemporary world is in the state of the end of the third wave of separatism that gives him the right to say that separatism conflicts based on ethnicity will take place very seldom [Gurr T. 1993: 45]. In the author's opinion the world is in the state of the final stage of international security architecture construction due to which not only each state but also each ethnos must decide which role it wants to play in future international affairs. It can influence the stability of any country because ethnic minorities can have different opinions as regards the priorities of the foreign policy direction of the country. A good example is Ukraine in which the society has been divided for 30 years into two groups, one of them believes that Ukraine should integrate into EU and NATO and the latter considers close cooperation with Russia as the most beneficial foreign policy direction. Ukraine is a good example of a limitroff state. It means that geographically this state is located between Europe and Euroasia, politically it lies between the EU and the Eurasian economic union, it lies military between NATO and CSTO and lies religiously between the Catholic and Orthodox world. This brings a lot of problems to Ukraine because, according to S.Huntington, it is divided civilisationally and will never develop as one united state.

Ukraine has common borders with EU countries and Russia who are two antagonists in the geopolitical world. The West and Russia have always tried to influence Ukraine and use it their own way. Such politics has led to one of the cruel military conflicts of the XXI century. So the main objective of this article is to consider religion as an exogenous influence factor of the Russian Federation on Ukraine in terms of its soft power policy.

This article has become the logical outcome of the author's research of the separatism topic that has been conducted by him for more than 10 years. The second main point about this article is the formula that was developed by the author that could be used in political science to analyse ongoing separatism conflicts and predict future ones. The author uses the method of historical and political analysis that helped him to come to certain conclusions.

1.SEPARATISM FORMULA

It is really important to be familiar with the definitions that describe the processes of disintegration. The most complicated case for politicians who speculate on the topic of separatism is the difference between such phenomena as "separatism" and "secession". As for secession, it should be noted that it is the movement or fight of a certain region for leaving the state. Separatism could mean the same, i.e it is a movement for territorial secession of this or that part of the country with the purpose of forming a new state or gaining a wider range of rights or autonomy.

There are different opinions for the basic reasons for separatism. Katharine Boyle and Pierre Englebert, the authors of the work "The Primacy of Politics in Separatist Dynamics", see separatism as a response to political conditions rather than a manifestation of cultural differences or the exploitation of economic opportunities [Boyle K., Englebert P. 2006]. It is the political component that is considered to be the only area within which it is possible to attract attention, if necessary, even aggressively. It is impossible for an ethnos to attract attention by holding cultural events, and if the cultural identity is politicised, it is possible not only to draw attention to their problems, but also to undertake an opposition campaign against the central government. The authors of this research also note that the younger the country is, the more opportunities there are for separatism movements, as the country is in the stage of development and formation of its nation. This is due to the fact that if a country is not homogeneous in the national sense, there are many opportunities when a particular ethnic group wants to impose on the whole country a model of society development, although, in most cases, the proposed model is not always true. In the case where there are several ethnic groups in the country that believe that their model is correct, or prefer not to accept a situation where their opinion is not considered or, in general, openly become opposed to the state, such an ethnic group that lives in this or that region, is prone to separatism in order to build the country on the model they believe is true. During the formation of the country, the authorities are not able to unite the population living in the country, because each ethnic group has or insists on its own vision of the country's development. Such a striking example is the situation in Ukraine.

In addition, it should be noted that the larger the country is, the greater the chances that the country will be torn apart by separatism tendencies [Boyle K., Englebert P. 2006]. This thesis has a right to exist, because there is no example where a large country would have representatives of only one ethnic group. Considering the fact that the world after the Second World War, namely the territory of Europe, was divided between the victorious countries without regard to the residence of a particular ethnic group, we have a situation where peoples were divided and now live in different countries, which gives them the right to reunite within one country and to provoke the processes of irredentism.

The political regime is also decisive for the degree of activity of separatist currents. Democratic or authoritarian regimes are relatively peaceful, while transitional regimes face separatism much more often.

The process of democratisation and economic transformation leads to the aggravation of ethnic identity. This thesis has a right to exist, because in any democratic society, especially if it was previously totalitarian, there is a process of revival of ethnic identity and, if members of an ethnic group are repressed, they begin to separate from the whole nation and begin to revive different traditions, rites, their language and their interpretation of historical events. This is also due to the fact that in a so-

ciety that is in a state of ideological, political and economic transformation, there are many problems and the ethnic group begins to believe that regardless of the country in which they live, it is possible to solve any problem.

The authors also insist that the poorer the region, the more prone it is to separatism. This is not an axiom, because we know that the more developed Northern Italy prefers independence from the economically backward South. In addition, affluent Catalonia believes that it itself has the ability to resolve issues today.

R.Stavenhagen in his work "Ethnic conflicts and their impact on international society" points out that separatism or ethnic conflicts include conflicts of interest or the struggle for rights: the right to land, education, language use, and political participation, freedom of religion, preservation of ethnic identity, autonomy and self-determination [Stavenhagen R. 1998].

It should be pointed out that secession is the final step on the way to independence, whereas it is preceded by a separatism movement that, in its turn, may contain such processes as regionalism.

In the author's opinion regionalism is a kind of policy that prioritises providing people of a certain region with socio-political, economic, mental, cultural, linguistic and other interests that are endangered by the specifics of historical development. On the one hand regionalism could be considered as positive phenomenon because it helps certain groups of people preserve their customs and traditions, but on the other hand it can work as a catalyst for separatist and secessionist movements.

Furthermore, there is a trend of protecting ethnic identity that creates an additional demand for separatism. Ethnic or regional identity can be capitalised upon by political and business groups for private gain. In this case this type of separatism demands are initiated by a certain regional community that could not be considered to be a separate ethnic group [Basarab M. 2011:278].

This idea is supported by M.Weber who said that any collective regional community can gain the features of an ethnic community. In such a way a micronation can appear [Kara-Murza S. 2016:136]. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, political experts (F.Fukuyama) said that there was no reason for people to fight with each other. But he turned out to be wrong considering the great number of violent conflicts that broke out in the territory of the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, in Africa and Asia. In the author's opinion the basic reason is that ideological wars were replaced by identification wars. Identity is the basic and prime factor that influences people's behaviour. All the wars are held to control natural resources but hostilities could be instigated by identity factors. People kill each other just because they belong to different ethnic, religious and language groups. If people live on some territory that differs somehow from the rest of the country, it can develop a special regional identity even if representatives of various ethnic groups live in this or that region.

This idea can be applied to the situation in the Donbas region. Ukrainian politicians insist that it is not a civil war that is going on in the region because the Donbas region

consists not only of Russians, but also of Ukrainians and they prefer to call it a war between Ukraine and Russia, though neither Ukraine nor Russia have declared a war on each other. However, the fact that the population of Donbas during all the years of Ukraine's independence voted for pro-Russian political parties and presidents we can conclude that we can talk about a certain micronation that has been formed in this region.

A secessionist movement can evolve in the case where existing borders do not coincide with "ideal" ones, by which we understand the territories where different ethnic groups live. It could be observed in the instances when Germans live in the Netherlands or in Poland, Hungarians live in Ukraine and Romania, and Russians live in Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan etc. Ethnic minorities in this situation are likely to strive for close cooperation with the country they consider to be their ethnic Motherland and this can also turn into irredentism.

Separatism is believed to be a purely internal phenomenon. There are endogenous factors that contribute to a strengthening of separatism processes in a particular region. However, while analysing endogenous factors, exogenous factors should also be considered. In this regard, these include the main geopolitical interests of powerful neighbouring states who are interested in a weakening or disintegration of the state to strengthen their position in the region or to increase their state territories by occupying a part of the neighbouring state.

In modern political science the situation when one state provides its ethnically close minority in another country with assistance is called ethnic favouritism or ethnic protectivism.

External processes have an important influence on the internal development of the country. That is the reason and character of conflicts that are connected with the peculiarities of the geopolitical and geosocial system and its dynamics.

 Separatism conflicts occur within one state no matter what kind of territorial structure it has. In some cases they develop without intrusion of a third party, in other cases – with the support of the state that is interested in the development of this conflict.

A Russian expert in politology, V.Tishkov [Tishkov V. 2005] states that separatism would not have become a global problem, if it had not been an instrument of rivalry between states and a means of geopolitical engineering.

If separatist movements in Europe are developing due to endogenous factors (Catalonia, Belgium), in the third world or in the post-Soviet space we could observe the huge influence of exogenous factors. The best examples are observed in Moldova, Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia, the Russia-Chechen Republic conflict and Ukraine (Donbas).

The exogenous factor could be seen in different methods – soft and hard.

The hard one has one expression – military invasion and could be fulfilled in the following way:

– a region is supplied with military support;

– the interference of peacekeeping forces with the purpose of a further solution to the conflict but taking into account the interest either of the rebellious region or the government of the state;

– the conducting of humanitarian intervention that presupposes the participation in hostilities of the side of the rebellious region.

The soft support could be divided into soft active and soft passive. Soft passive support is fulfilled just in the existence of the neighbouring country with an ethnically close population and which strives for uniting ethnic groups of the same ethnos. Soft active support is shown in the following way: economic (financing the fight, financing NGOs), technical (supply of lethal weaponry), humanitarian (making the ties with ethically close people in the sphere of culture, education and science, financing the educational programs, scientific projects, internships), the support of the rebellious region or the authorities by international organisations, the construction of religious objects and informational (demonisation of the rebellious region or the authorities of the state).

It goes without saying that each state that has ethnic minorities should foresee a possible separatism movement and do everything possible to prevent it. It is possible to do this with the help of a formula that was worked out by the author of this article. The formula is the following:

$$P_{ij} = \frac{X - X_{min}}{X_{max} - X_{min}}$$

(P_{ij} – standard assessment, X – factual index of an object, X_{min} = 1. Ranging takes place within 0 and 1, the closer the index is to 1, the higher probability of separatism is).

The following groups of constituent elements are used for calculating the separatism index: 1. General characteristics of a group (language, religion, customs and traditions, ethnic group territorial concentration, historical factors, separatism experience); 2. Level of discrimination (political activity, economic discrimination, language restrictions, presence of minority representatives in authorities, political and cultural dissatisfaction, methods of demanding process, conflict with central government); 3. Exogenous influence (existence of ethnically close groups abroad, assistance to ethnically close groups, political assistance, military assistance, assistance by international organisations, desire of a neighbouring country to annex some territories, politically active ethnic groups abroad); 4. Conflict potential with central government (inter-ethnic conflict in the past, contradictions between ethnic groups in one and the same country and hatred for each other, politicians' statements concerning ethnic groups, protests by ethnic groups, rebellions and riots, civil war, repression by central government).

Having applied this formula to some regions we got the following results: Kosovo 0.74

(being a part of Serbia), Catalonia 0.32, Chechnya 0.67, Donbas 0.81, South Osse-
tia 0.78, Abkhazia 0.70, Iraqi Kurdistan (before the overthrow of S. Hussein) 0.79,
Turkish Kurdistan 0.80, Nagorny Karabakh 0.90, Transcarpathia 0.39, Croatia in
Yugoslavia 0.70, Corsica 0.26, South Nigeria 0.46.

As we see from the analysis, the closer the indicator is to 1, the higher the possibility
of separatism processes in the region is. According to the author, the central govern-
ment should pay attention to the potential separatist region if the figure is more than
0.50.

2. RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE AS A SOFT POWER TOOL

Religion has always played an important role in ruling any country, especially in
the medieval ages. There were several wars in Europe based on religious issues. The
XXth century turned out to be the bloodiest century in modern history, but its first
part was characterised by ideological conflicts and the second by identity conflicts
based on ethnicity, nationality and religion. All these above-mentioned aspects are
the most destructive elements of any conflict. On the other hand, these elements help
some ethnos to preserve their identity. As T.Gurr mentions in his "Minorities at risk",
some groups lose their identities through long-term erosion as individual members
become marginalised or are assimilated by other groups [Gurr T. 1993:89].

Some Ukrainian politicians believe that, since 1991, Russia has tried to use a soft
power factor to keep Ukraine in its sphere of influence. On the one hand, we can can
agree with this viewpoint, because Russia has been selling gas to Ukraine at lower
prices showing that it can invest in the Ukrainian economy and position itself as a
friendly state.

On the other hand, it is very difficult to talk about Russia's planned exogenous influ-
ence on South-Eastern Ukraine as a whole, and in the Donbas region in particular,
since it did not use a soft power factor in its classical sense. How can we explain it?
First of all, if we analyse the first ten years of Russia's independence, it was a really
difficult period for this country because it was in the transformational political and
economic process itself, trying to cope with internal territorial problems and was on
the edge of political, social and territorial collapse. The hostilities in Chechnya have
raised the main question for Russia at that period of time - whether Russia will re-
main within the borders that appeared on the geopolitical map in 1991 or whether
long-term separatist conflicts will spread all over the country forcing federal authori-
ties to subdue the rebellious areas. The second decade has been spent on rebuilding
its potential and strengthening its position in the international arena.

Secondly, it must be acknowledged that the use of soft power by Russia has always
been at a very low level and has not been particularly actively funded in comparison
with Germany, France, the United States, China, the United Kingdom, etc. There
were some political parties in Ukraine that had pro-Russian geopolitical viewpoints,
but they have never won parliamentary elections, proving that the people of the East-

ern regions did not want to secede from Ukraine.

Thirdly, the people of South-Eastern Ukraine have always had a pro-Russian foreign policy opinion, so it was not necessary to spend much money and develop a soft power policy to influence this part of Ukraine.

Nevertheless, we should not deny that Russian exogenous influence really existed and were expressed in economic, cultural, religious issues.

According to S.Huntington, the most obvious split between East and West was manifested in the 1994 presidential election. The president at that time, L.Kravchuk, who, despite close ties with Russian leaders, identified himself as a "national" politician, won in twelve regions of Western Ukraine with an overwhelming majority, having got 90%. His opponent, L.Kuchma, won in thirteen eastern regions. This election, as one US expert noted, "crystallized the split between Europeanized Slavs in Eastern Europe and the Russian-Slavic vision of what Ukraine should turn into. It is not only ethnic polarization, it is the issue of different cultures" [Huntington S. 2006:133].

Following this, the contradiction between the East and the West of Ukraine was observed during all parliamentary and presidential elections and the Russian-speaking people factor has always been used by the Russian Federation to influence the results of the elections.

It goes without saying that after the collapse of the Soviet Union a lot of people who were Russian by nationality remained in other countries and not in Russia. In a speech delivered to the Federal Assembly in April 2005, Vladimir Putin noted that "the collapse of the USSR has become a real tragedy for the Russian people. Tens of millions of our fellow citizens and compatriots found themselves outside Russian territory."

V.Putin's doctrine set the task of "protecting the rights and legitimate interests of Russian citizens and compatriots living abroad. On the basis of international law, it is necessary to consider the Russian diaspora as a partner in expanding and strengthening the space of the Russian language and culture; to promote the consolidation of compatriots' organizations in order to ensure their rights more effectively in their countries of residence, to preserve the ethnocultural identity of the Russian diaspora and its ties with the historical homeland, to create conditions for facilitating the voluntary resettlement of compatriots; to promote the study and spread of the Russian language as an integral part of world culture and an instrument of interethnic communication" [Dergachov O. 2009:9].

The area that has been used by Russia in the context of exogenous influence is religion. According to various opinion polls, the church has always been in the lead in the context of public trust. Thus, the level of trust for religious organisations in 2000 was 63.1% . Then, during the 2000s it fell to 55% in 2004, 55% in 2005, 38% in 2006, 34% in 2007. In 2010, the level of trust rose again to 72.5%, in 2013 - 63.8%; 2014 - 65.8%; 2016 - 58.6%.

Besides, the exogenous influence of Russia was due to the fact that the vast majority

of the population of Ukraine and Donbas in particular are Orthodox and the level of faith is quite high. Thus, it is possible to influence the political preferences of the population by means of the church.

In Ukraine, the church began to be associated with both political forces and geopolitical centres of the world.

The troubles in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church have led to the extreme politisation of the religious environment [Bogachevskya I. 2012:157]. And the split in Orthodoxy has a clear regional character, which has a negative impact on the process of consolidation of Ukrainian society.

Given the regional differences in political preferences, churches and religious issues further exacerbate the split in society.

Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine (supporters of the Moscow patriarchy) even reject the possibility of using the Ukrainian language in the procedures of worship. They substantiate their position by referring, on the one hand, to the sacredness of the Church Slavonic language, on the other to the imperfection of texts in the Ukrainian language which causes, in their opinion, the appearance of significant errors that destroy the foundations of faith.

Table 1. The number of supporters of the Moscow and Kyiv patriarchy constantly change ["Konfessijna ta tzerkovna nezaleznist gromadjan Ukraini " 2020]:

year	Ukrainian church (Moscow patriarchy %)	Ukrainian church (Kyiv patriarchy %)
2000	9.2	12.1
2005	10.6	14
2010	23.6	15.1
2013	19.6	18.3
2014	17.4	22.4
2016	15	25
2018	16.9	33.9

What are these indicators related to? In the author's view, the level of increase of Moscow patriarchy supporters increased 4 times from 2005 to 2010. This is due to the fact that former President V.Yushchenko was in power, who constantly made statements about the need to create a united local church. This thesis was negatively perceived by supporters of the Moscow patriarchy, which increased the number of parishioners of this church. The decrease by 2016 is explained, in my opinion, by the impossibility of conducting a survey in the uncontrolled territories of Donbas, the population of which are overwhelmingly supporters of the Moscow patriarchy. The growth of the Kyiv patriarchy supporters may also be due to political reasons. In terms of political and then the military crisis, many parishioners began to associate themselves with the Kyiv patriarchy. Besides, according to a public opinion poll, 33% say that they support the Orthodox church and do not belong either to the Kyiv or the Moscow patriarchy. This also could be explained by the fact that many people are

afraid to tell the truth, which is why they attend churches that belong to the Moscow patriarchy but do not speak about it.

This thesis is supported by the words of Nicholas Gvozdev, a professor at the College of the US Navy. He believes that the split of the Orthodox Church has long occurred in the CIS and especially in Ukraine. "The creation and split of Orthodox parishes has become one of the factors of tension in relations between Moscow and Kyiv. However, even today the Russian Orthodox Church has a great influence in Ukraine and enjoys considerable authority among a large part of the population – especially in the eastern and southern parts of the country, where believers maintain close ties with the Moscow patriarchy. The Russian Orthodox Church remains an important factor in the russification of this region of Ukraine and the preservation of the idea of Slavonic unity. If you want, a stronghold of Russian influence, including cultural and religious." [Massalskij V. 2013].

Besides a 2020 public opinion poll showed that citizens of Ukraine consider church to be a very influential tool and believe that it should be nation oriented. So it could be a kind of signal to any country that wants to influence Ukrainian citizens, that it is quite easy to do with the help of church.

Georges Corm believes that modern secular European nationalism provoked feelings of religious identity [Corm G. 2003:93]. This could be proved by the example of Ukraine when Ukraine ethnic oriented people try to become parishioners of a new church called the Orthodox Church of Ukraine which was formed under the influence of former president P.Poroschenko in 2018. Religious educational institutions are located mainly in the Western Ukraine which shows the religious deivision in this aspect between Eastern and Western Ukraine.

The author of this article believes that it is necessary to analyse the main directions of the doctrine "The Russian world" in terms of religious influence and highlight the attitude of both Russian and Ukrainian experts to it.

So, first, let us analyse the doctrine of the "Russian world" from the point of view of Russian researchers.

In the 1990s, two "Russian world" concepts emerged in the public consciousness: the internal (the Russian Federation itself) and the external ("Russian world outside" as a relatively new phenomenon). From the situation which developed after 1991, two main directions could be drawn. The first one is to let Russians assimilate with the population of new independent countries or to revive "the Russian world" with the help of the Russian diaspora.

The second point of view, which summarises the disagreement with the results of the geopolitical struggle of the twentieth century, includes a wide range of positions: from the idea of mass repatriation of compatriots to Russia and calling for imperial irredentism and the restoration of "historical Russia" to the 1913 or 1989 years.

Political expert Batanova proposed a more balanced definition of "Russian world": she understands it as a "global cultural and civilisational phenomenon, consisting of

Russia as a mother country and the Russians abroad, uniting people who, regardless of nationality, feel Russian, are Russian speakers, the supporters of Russian culture and spiritually connected with Russia and not indifferent to its policy and destiny.

The green light for these "Russian world" projects was given in 2006, on the eve of the Year of the Russian Language (2007). To promote the Russian language and culture abroad, the Russian World Foundation was established. The Gorchakov Foundation later began working in public diplomacy. The activities of such structures as Russian Cooperation, the International Council of Russian Compatriots, as well as programs of cooperation and assistance to the resettlement of compatriots gradually accumulated an array of positive changes in policy to restore the "Russian world".

The Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Kirill, developed his own concept of the "Russian world" in a few years. He used the doctrine of a "Russian world" to clarify the concept of "Holy Russia", which he considered not only in its metaphysical plan, but also as a projection on specific geographical areas, namely Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Kazakhstan ["Ukraina ta proekt "Russkogo mira." 2014:28].

Speaking at the World Congress of Compatriots in October 2006, Vladimir Putin stated that "this day unites not only the multinational people of Russia, but also millions of compatriots abroad".

"Russian world" turned out to be more competitive because it combines ethical attitudes, cultural views, political goals, and religious apologetics. Russian world emerged in response to the intensification of the disintegration processes that dominated after the collapse of the USSR [Ibid].

The former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation I. Ivanov noted that "Orthodox communities are important for establishing ties with the Russian diaspora, maintaining its spiritual, cultural and social life." In 2004, addressing the participants of the 8th World Russian People's Council, he assessed the cooperation between the church and the state in the international arena as follows: "the gathering of the "Russian world" is the main goal of the Russian state and the Russian Orthodox church."

Thus, we see that it was decided that the concept of "Russian world" will be realised precisely by the use of religious means, because it is easier to unite people on religious grounds than on political ones. Political unification is already the result of religious unity.

On July 27, 2009, Patriarch Kirill paid his first visit to Ukraine. During this visit, he expressed the view that the cause of Ukrainian society's problems is a church split based on political ideas created over the years by political parties, the government or under pressure from the authorities.

We see a rather firm position on the unity and integrity of the Russian Orthodox Church. Kirill does not intend to allow the Russian Orthodox Church to split and will fight for the Ukrainian parishioners. The visit of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in the pro-Russian regions of Ukraine – Donbas and Crimea – in contrast

revealed the differences from when visiting the capital of the country. When he came to the Donbas region and Crimea, he was met by people carrying flags of the Russian Federation.

In 2011, Kirill visited Ukraine seven times. One of the Patriarch's places of visit in Ukraine was Donetsk, during which he emphasised the special importance of Donetsk for the Russian Orthodox Church, naming Donetsk "the diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church".

As I. Zevelev, an analyst at the Carnegie Moscow Center, explains, the reason for creating "Russian world" concept as Russia's foreign policy doctrine was Russia's return to an imperial, great-power model of development and aggravation of relations with the West. "The failure of attempts to become an independent part of the Great West, again forced Russia to think about its place in the world" [Perepelitsja M. 2011: 167]. However, it should be noted that Russia's political forces and political leaders since 2000 have set the goal of reviving Russia's geopolitical influence, and therefore Russia must be the centre of the geopolitical space that will unite around it. It is impossible for Russia to be a leader in the Western world, because there is already a leader there –the United States, the antagonist of Russia.

As for Orthodoxy in Donbas, it should be noted that there were 1,100 churches and 17 monasteries in the region before the conflict. So "Donbass is considered to be stronghold of Orthodoxy in eastern Ukraine. Confessing the Orthodox faith, remaining faithful to the canonical Orthodoxy, people maintained unity with other Slavic peoples". That is, we can conclude that Orthodoxy in Donbas plays a key role in the context of unity with the Slavic peoples, and therefore, it is much easier to trace the possibility of exogenous influence, including political.

In the context of the influence of the "Russian world", we can also talk about a single information space to which Ukraine and Russia belonged until 2014. According to the authors of the work "Ukraine - Russia: the conceptual basis of humanitarian relations", any independent country should control its information space. This need is caused by various factors, which have one thing in common – they all ultimately determine the security of the state.

Thus, it should be emphasised that over the past ten years, Russia has used the soft power factor for the whole south-eastern Ukraine, not just Donbas alone. This policy was carried out in the context of building a "Russian world" which meant the inclusion of countries with a Russian-speaking population in a geopolitical project led by Russia as the centre of unification processes in the post-Soviet space. Taking into account the fact that the population of south-eastern Ukraine and Donbas belong to the Moscow patriarchy, we can conclude that the church and common religion were chosen to influence the inhabitants of the above-mentioned regions. The religious channel also influenced the political preferences of the population of the region, which eventually resulted in fierce confrontation with residents of other regions of the country in the context of the political and military crisis in the country.

3. RUSSIA'S INFLUENCE AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE MILITARY CRISIS IN DONBAS REGION

The situation after the coup d'état that in Ukraine is called the Revolution of Dignity in 2014 has worsened in political, economic, financial and geopolitical spheres for Ukraine. The country turned out to be in a grey geopolitical zone. It has been in this zone since gaining independence and it is explained by the following factors: due to as split in society's opinion concerning geopolitical preferences, Ukraine failed to join any geopolitical union. That is why in geopolitical issue it turned out to be between Europe and Russia; in the military aspect – between NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation; in the economic and financial sphere between the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union. Under the reign of L.Kuchma, Ukraine had a multivectoral foreign policy and it was quite successful. But the current world is on the final stage of forming geopolitical systems and Ukraine has failed to join any of them. On the one hand the European Union and NATO are constantly promising Ukraine to accept it, but Ukraine has a conflict within its borders therefore it cannot apply for membership of the EU or NATO. Having lost its chance of being a part of a European or Eurasian geopolitical construction, Ukraine turned out to be a buffer zone that is now used both by Europe and Russia.

As it is known, Russia supported the rebellious republics of so-called "DPR" (Donetsk People's Republic) and "LPR" (Lugansk People's Republic) and it is understandable that without Russia's support these republics would not have survived. So, let us analyse various aspects of direct Russia's support provided to these rebellious regions:

1. Economic support. There were and there are still problems with the supply of staple commodities, which include food and medical supplies, during military operations in any territory. There are two ways of providing people with these issues: 1) providing humanitarian assistance to the population of the region, but in this case, it would mean "eating policy". If any state wants the economy to function in the region, it must create favorable conditions for it, and this is the second principle 2) economic and trade support for the region.

2. Financial assistance. In 2014-2015, financial transactions were conducted in the national currency of Ukraine, in hryvnas, on the territory of the republics. This was due to the fact that the population of these territories had some savings and received pensions and salary in the national currency. Then, taking into account that the amount of hryvna currency began to end, the authorities of "DPR" and "LPR" decided that it was possible to make financial transactions in rubles, euros and dollars, that is, a multi-currency zone was proclaimed. However, the last two types of currency are not widely spread, and therefore, the ruble has become a local currency. Besides, if in 2014-2015 the hryvna-ruble exchange rate was unprofitable (in "DPR" 1 hryvna was equal to 2 rubles, whereas on the territory of Ukraine the rate was 1 to 4) in 2016-2017 the currency exchange has levelled. Thus, DPR and LPR residents do not need

to travel to the territory of Ukraine for currency exchange.

Lugansk also introduced the ruble as the main currency of the LPR. The LPR Council of Ministers has stated that such a step is necessary to stabilise the financial system in the region, as well as due to the fact that most of the money transactions are made in Russian rubles there. In addition, it should be noted that "DPR" and "LPR" have already entered the banking zone of Russia.

3. Humanitarian assistance. This component is related to the provision of free humanitarian assistance to the inhabitants of these territories. Throughout the period of hostilities, Russia provided humanitarian assistance to "DPR" and "LPR".

Since the start of hostilities in Donbass region, Russia has sent more than 70 humanitarian convoys there with food and building materials. Besides, humanitarian aid contains fuel, seeds and fertilizers, electrical equipment, medicines, school textbooks, newsprint. The goods are selected in accordance with the applications from "DNR" and "LPR".

4. Diplomatic assistance. When one state recognizes the separatist region as an independent state or lobbies its interests on the international arena, it has to provide this region with diplomatic assistance. Russia did not recognize "DPR" and "LPR" officially, but on February 18, 2017, the President of Russia V.Putin signed a decree recognising the documents issued to citizens of Ukraine and persons residing in the territories of certain regions of Donetsk and Lugansk regions (Putin podpisal ukaz, 2018).

The document was ratified "to protect the rights and freedoms of people and citizens, following the generally recognised principles and norms of international humanitarian law." According to the decree and on the basis of the Minsk agreements, "identity documents, documents on education and (or) qualification, birth certificates, change of name, death, vehicle registration certificate, driving license, issued by the relevant authorities (organszations)" are recognized as valid on the territory of the Russian Federation.

5. Educational assistance. All educational institutions have switched to Russian educational programs. Besides, over the past six years, Russia has been providing "DPR" and "LPR" educational institutions with Russian textbooks in terms of humanitarian aid.

Russian universities have launched preferential free of charge admission of graduates of Donetsk and Lugansk schools in August 2014. First of all, it was about young people whose parents remained in the republics, or about those who lost their homes as a result of hostilities. The main expenditures of the universities (these were mainly educational institutions in the Rostov and Belgorod regions) are carried out at the expense of the local budgets.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Russia has established a training and methodological centre in the Rostov region that will assist the "DPR" and "LPR" schools to implement Russian educational programs. Students of higher education institutions

will be able to receive Russian certificates (V schkolah DNR i LNR 2015).

CONCLUSION

It is necessary to conclude that Ukraine always felt Russia's influence from the geo-political and geoeconomic point of view. It was and is now important for Russia to keep Ukraine in the sphere of its geopolitical influence in terms of a tellurocratic and talasocratic geopolitical clash. Ukraine has made one mistake – it did not prioritise any foreign policy directions in the 1990s, trying to stick to a geopolitical balance between the West and the East. But at that period of time it was one of the smart solutions to its foreign policy issues due to its geopolitical location. The second mistake has been made by oligarchs who agreed to split Ukrainian society into those who were eager to join EU/NATO and those who wanted closer cooperation with Russia. Political experts have deepened this split in the 2000s. The third mistake had been made during the political crisis that turned into hostilities in the Donbas region and that was a range of allegations against the population in Donbas region who wanted their civil rights to be observed and protected. Russia has used this situation having spread its military influence on the Crimea and Donbas region. Instead, Ukraine should have used an approached once offered by Karl Deutsch. He explained that in any country it is necessary to use a communicative approach that could prevent society from conflict, and that was proved by the European Union, members of which have never had any military conflict with each other.

Besides, it would be better to use an approach offered by Arend Lijphart (consensus democracies) and it is presupposed that all ethnic groups of the country must have the right to participate in the decision-making process of the country. This concept is fulfilled in Ukraine to some degree, but the civil rights of some ethnic minorities are not fulfilled as it should be in free European country. So, the main objective of the current ruling political party is to involve the whole population in the development of the country and guarantee everyone that their rights will not be violated.

The processes of separatism can develop for a long period of time and can transform into civil wars that can cause genocide or humanitarian intervention from the side by the main actors in international affairs. In the majority of cases separatism is the ethnic phenomenon that could be considered to be a very complex and multi-aspect phenomenon. And based on the fact that each case has its own peculiarities there is no just one solution to all cases of separatism.

To solve their geopolitical tasks influential actors in international affairs use ethnic and/or confessional contradictions in the neighbouring countries and can foster separatism there in order to gain control over those countries. Under the conditions of the transmission of the contemporary world from a bipolar to a multipolar system of international relations, the above-mentioned types of conflict will occur more often and the degree of such conflicts will be more severe.

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THE ART OF FLESH
– EXPLORING POSTHUMAN AESTHETICS
IN *DOOM ETERNAL*

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Abstract

This article examines the aesthetics of the inside of the human body as represented in the video game, Doom Eternal (2020), in the context of other prominent works of art that have the power to establish beauty standards. Through ages artists and spectators of their work have defined certain aesthetics. People agreed upon distinct beauty standards. Settled assumptions usually pointed to renaissance sculptures as a perfect example. Human fascination with beauty revolved around what is outside, visible and pleasant for the eye, neglecting a whole microworld – the inside of the body. It is understandable to perceive the insides as vile, as we are not used to looking directly at them. Nevertheless, the human is a gruesome flesh covered by what is superficial, the skin. Today technology adds another layer to conceal our bodies and, thus appears the need to explore it in detail. The mainstream game from 2020, Doom Eternal, uses the flesh as an artist's material combined with the New Aesthetics. This text, using the intermedial approach, discusses how the unique experience of posthuman aesthetics appeals to a larger audience, and how it reinvents aesthetic standards.

Key words: *Doom, Posthuman Aesthetics, Body, Video Games, Art, Baudrillard, Beauty*

OBJECTIVES/METHODS

Throughout its history humanity has explored the nature of beauty while defining and then redefining certain standards and aesthetics. An obvious tool of perception is the eye; therefore people focus on what is visible. The creation of art that was later established and encountered by human beings, who became critics, has resulted in settled beauty standards. People have trusted their senses, which have led them on a linear, yet curved aesthetic path through history, until today. We have been limited by our perception, which is understandable, because the senses are our only means of communication with the surrounding reality. It has been proven in neuroaesthetic research that "aesthetic appreciation results from the interaction between the object's perceptual features and the perceiver's sensory processing dynamics" [Sarasso, Ronga, Kobau, Bosso, Artusio, Neppi-Modona 2020: 184]. This statement confirms the rather obvious assumption that we assess aesthetic values with the help of our senses, mostly sight. It can be compared to the Aristotelian theory of truth, considering its simplicity. We see something beautiful therefore it is beautiful. Such assessment is only the beginning, a basic explanation. It implies further questions, like why exactly our senses consider one item as beautiful and the other as repulsive? Deeply embedded in the psyche, aesthetic order has formed a certain path as I have already mentioned. This path is marked by concrete examples of human features, surroundings and art being either labelled as aesthetic, beautiful or evil and repulsive. What implications does each label add to the particular object or the whole theme? How are these settled aesthetic traits nourished by every generation, and what consequences does such order have?

In this article I intend to scrutinise more prominent examples from the history of art in order to provide settled aesthetic examples of beauty. This should visualise the path that human beings have demarcated since the ancient times until today. This cultural baggage has a direct influence on our current perception of beauty. Moreover, during the last hundred years, powerful forces, which shift our needs and perception, appeared. The technological advance has taken over our lives and our reality, and it keeps changing it. Further, I want to explore what can be witnessed now, around us, on this aesthetic path. Moreover, I intend to investigate how humanity has perceived the insides of the body - aesthetic elements hidden from plain sight.

One of the largest contemporary media reinventing and shaping our contemporary concept of art are video games. Gilyard writes, that "the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of the classification of video games as art in 2011, and even the French Minister of Culture, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, supported the recognition of video games as an art form in 2006" [Gilyard 2017: 113]. Video games provide possibilities much broader than any other media that have existed before, because they combine multiple forms of art, to create one that is above all interactive. Moreover, the mainstream videogames represent the condensed phenomenon of intertextuality described by Julia Kristeva. They are literally made out of cultural references and notions that

can somehow resonate with the mass receiver. The example of such a game is *Doom Eternal* (2020). In this case the aesthetics of the body intestines, contemporary technology and artistic standards are combined in order to reach the consumer. The result turned out to be a huge success. As the webpage Screen Rant informs "a former employee of id Software reports that Doom Eternal earned $450 million in revenue within only nine months of its release last March" [Nelson 2021]. Therefore I believe that analysing the aesthetics of this game in the context of the previously gathered information shall provide an important insight into the sphere of our own physicality, so much needed in the posthuman times of technological hegemony.

RESULTS

It seems reasonable to begin by looking into the past, just like Foucault did in order to research the "aesthetics of the existence" [Besley, Peters 2007: 53]. Foucault studied this Nietzschean trope borrowed from ancient Greeks, who claimed that the man is able to use spiritual exercises to remake oneself [Besley, Peters 2007: 53]. The idea was that the visible human body is a reflection of the spirit. The choices people make have visible consequences in their appearance. It was true in the past, and it is true now, when bodies became commodities. Besley and Peters write that:

> *From the Greek ideal of Venus de Milo to Rubens' The Three Graces in the 17th century to the heroin-chic anorexia of the Milano cat-walk, female body fashions indicated in a plain manner the changing ideals of "beauty" and their enmeshment in the politics of desire and consumerism* [Besley, Peters 2007: 58].

This example refers only to the outside of the human body. Beauty has to be transparent, so it could be influenced by the external power. Here we can observe the scope of female beauty standards that have evolved across the ages. Beauty limits itself to the outside, because the inside is always hidden, unless the body is being opened during elaborate tortures or simply during autopsy. Foucault referred to the insides of the body with the example of "the torture of Damiens the regicide" [Besley, Peters 2007: 57]. The philosopher emphasised this scene in order to advocate the dynamics between the power, body and punishment. The inside of the body is rarely taken into consideration when it comes to beauty standards. And yet, underneath, male and female bodies are similar, as far as the visual aspect is concerned. The internal organs are all covered in blood and other body fluids. Besely and Peters continue with a statement, that:

> *the history of the body and of body criticism indicates a profound shift in an understanding of ourselves, particularly in the West, from the religious and doctrinal visions that pictured human beings as enduring souls able to survive the rotting of the flesh, emphasizing the shift to a situated material and anatomical body that could be modified, healed, exercised and improved* [Besley, Peters 2007: 61].

This quote suggests that today we are closer to our material bodies than ever before. At the same time we have never been further from the physicality. Right now our bodies are shielded from the materiality by contemporary technology, constant consumption and concrete city landscapes. The Greeks did not have such obvious limitations, yet they chose to idealise the human body anyhow, providing humanity with the stereotypical depiction of what is beautiful. They were so close to the body that they chose to get away from it. In opposition to their times, now, when bodies became products, we lust after the physical, and we are unable to fully reach it.

The model representation of beauty created by an artist is classical sculpture – the study of an outside of human body. Greek artists conveyed values like "control, order, serenity" [Spivey 2013: 2] into their art, forming clean and well-shaped depictions of the human body. The physical aspect, what is perceivable and pleasant for the eye, was most valued, because it is simple to cherish what is obviously perfect and clean. The inspiration of the sculptors were human bodies, yet only their part covered by skin. They told stories by depicting muscle movement but seldom were they interested in what is underneath. The classical sculpture displayed certain characteristics that continue to define art and beauty standards even today. These characteristics provide a "psychological assurance which men constantly seek: balance, security, the organization out of the chaos of life of powerful form which have unity and coherence, which induce conviction of certainty and realizable perfection" [Agard 1954: 349]. This passage emphasises the human incapability to deal with the chaos of life as it is. Instead, humans have created a necessary illusion of beauty, which helped them deal with the surrounding reality. For Greeks beautiful equalled good, moral and pure. This assumption formed certain ideal to be followed, at the same time raising a very dangerous notion, that ugliness and chaos was evil. The search for balance, as noble as it might seem, also introduced inevitable limitations.

Ancient Greeks did not know much about human intestines. Ferngren provides an example of Aristotle and many other philosophers of that period, who believed that organ of thought and feeling was the heart [Ferngren 2017: 212]. Their point of view was idealistic, taking into consideration the standards of beauty they had decided to follow. Moreover Ferngern writes that:

> the Greeks had a deep-seated repugnance for the systematic dissection of human corpses, a repugnance that was based on religious and moral sensibilities. They believed that the human corpse polluted any person or object that came into contact with it. They had a dread of the cadaver and particularly of the skin, regarding the latter as inviolable and fearing to cut through it [Ferngren 2017: 212-213].

The quote addresses the ancient Greeks' relation towards the intestines. They considered the intestines as foul, despite having proofs that this foulness was spread under their precious skin. Only the illusion of beauty they had established and nourished in their art must have kept them from self-hatred. Therefore they started the everlasting,

aesthetic division, corelating the intestines with the wrong side.

Moving forward in time we encounter another period marked by artworks that have been regarded as beautiful. The Renaissance is associated with ideal forms, which were possible to flourish only in "an age productive in personalities, many-sided, centralized, complete" [Pater 2011: 35]. The longevity of perfect body aesthetics proved to be real also in renaissance sculpture. According to Stephan Bourgeois "with Michelangelo the sculptural language of Italy became round and sonorous" [Bourgeois 1935: 8]. The author also underlines that other artists of that period spoke "the language of perfection" [Bourgeois 1935: 8]. Even after centuries people tend to return to the settled beauty standards, which prove to be an elusive dream woven by the carefree artist. Such works of art support people's view that only the clean and sonorous form is good.

These two examples refer only to European culture yet Mariagrazia Portera writes that "our species tends to agree on the attractiveness of certain basic futures, which is largely a result of evolutionary constrains on our cognitive or perceptual systems" [Portera 2016: 41]. Humans in general strive for symmetry. Therefore such a need has been explored and exploited to its limits. Another human trait, necessary to push the evolution forward, is curiosity. When the well is empty or simply the taste of water becomes too mundane, a man is urged to venture for the new. The question that is raised is as follows: How can a human being create something new, while having such strong, symmetrical roots embedded in the psyche?

Another visual representation of the human body, paintings, also focused mainly on the outside. The physical blood and insides are often a distortion of a perfect image, and are predominantly reserved for the depiction of hell and demons. Notably, there are plenty of paintings that try to study and present what is under the skin. Artists like Rembrandt with *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (1632) gave people a glance into what is beneath the human skin. In this work of art we can notice a crowd of well-dressed scholars and only a small piece of the inner body of an examined corpse. In the 15th century numerous illustrated anatomy books were published so that the public could see openly for the first time what was concealed inside them [Lee 2010: 103]. Lee claims that "whimsical, surreal and often grotesque, the anatomical images included literary and religious allusions and artistic embellishments" [Lee 2010: 103]. Those pictures may have provided a visible inspiration for artists to expand beauty standards, by offering an insight into the physical inside of the human body. Anatomy is a vital part of an artist's education [Lee 2010: 105]. The inner organs finally revealed to the spectator force a reflection. After all, every movement of the muscles depicted in still marble is only a cover for complicated muscle fibers. However, it does not matter how curious we get, the embedded aesthetic inheritance makes certain traits seem natural, therefore impossible to overcome [Portera 2016: 45]. When an artist is inspired by the inside of the human body, the clash between the familiar, often symmetrical, passed on from generation to generation aesthetics

and the complex, gruesome, hidden aesthetics of the flesh is inevitable.

Through this process of merging and mixing seemingly opposite characteristics the artist finds a niche in the specific theme, already mentioned, presented since the dawn of humanity – the way of depicting hell and demons. It is the answer to a perverted need to glorify the flesh - perverted, because of the pure beauty standards nourished carefully by each generation. Only in hell can the artist place the gory inside of a human body, as blood is identified with suffering. Hieronymus Bosch placed separated human organs in his depiction of hell, in *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1503 – 1515). The right panel of his triptych shows a pair of severed ears, a deformed, cut in half human body, and an unidentified organ placed above its head. Jacobs states that "Bosch's art is profoundly dualistic: his paintings often juxtapose within a single work saints and sinners, heaven and hell, beauty and ugliness" [Jacobs 2000: 1009]. The artist decided to put the dispersed elements of the human body in the right panel, representing the inferno, in contrast to the coherent left panel, the domain of God. The flesh was useful to him in creating a fascinating and beautiful depiction of dread and suffering. Nevertheless, each panel of this triptych immerses the viewer by the density of symbolism and proves that blending hell and insides of human body results in specific aesthetics with its own cultural value.

In the Bible "the imagery of hell is based on the vision of the distorted, dissected, and oversized human body or body-parts" [Czachesz 2014: 21]. This repetitive association has set human perception. At best, the flesh serves as "the source of moral dilemmas" [Czachesz 2014: 48]. It is impossible to find a picture of heaven and angels, which consists of blood and organs. Even in *Doom Eternal* (2020), a contemporary gaming experience, the force working in opposition to demonic hordes is at first deprived of visible flesh.

The correlation between exposed intestines and hell has for centuries remained yet another well-established trait perceived as normal. The artist's intention of depicting bloody insides was most often to shock and scare the audience. As I demonstrated in the last paragraph, the aesthetics evolve and merge with the new discoveries that serve as inspirations. The easier access to the new visual properties creates the possibility for the discussion. The introduction of the human anatomy to artists was a start. It did not shift the settled aesthetics, yet it was a huge change in body depiction, because it has made intestines more familiar. Nevertheless, the insides of the human body remained to be viewed as foul and repulsive. These aesthetics have waited for the next discovery which would again prompt a discussion. The latest influence which is bound to dramatically change the aesthetics is contemporary technology.

Another artistic use of human intestines can be observed in a postmodern work of art, J.G Ballard's *Crash* (1973), about which Jean Baudrillard wrote an essay. In the novel, exploitation of the human body is used to express a clash with technology rather than to evoke hellish visions, although due to our aesthetic roots it often does exactly so. Also, for this reason it might me labelled "*as a piece of atrocious exhibi-*

tionism" [Ruddick 1992: 354]. The narrator in *Crash* (1973) vividly describes human intestines exposed in violent car collisions:

> *Trying to exhaust himself, Vaughan devised an endless almanac of terrifying wounds and insane collisions: The lungs of elderly men punctured by door-handles; the chests of young women impaled on steering-columns; the cheek of handsome youths torn on the chromium latches of quarter-lights. To Vaughan, these wounds formed the key to a new sexuality, born from a perverse technology. The images of these wounds hung in the gallery of his mind, like exhibits in the museum of a slaughterhouse* [Ballard 1973: 11].

A literary work of art does not form direct, visual pictures, yet it has the power to stimulate imagination to evoke such. The characters of *Crash* (1973), like Vaughan, represent an era of technological advance, during which humans have become more and more disembodied. Ruddick quotes Baudrillard's essay advocating that the French philosopher was wrong in saying that in the novel sexuality has been absorbed by the "universe of simulation" [Ruddick 1992: 357]. Following this, the author states that "the sexualization of the automobile for the narrator after his crash surely functions as a metaphor of revelation of the real object of his desire, namely death and reunification with the organic realm" [Ruddick 1992: 357]. This very desire, a drive for something material and therefore real, like disgusting wounds, and body parts covered in blood, has also emerged in our surrounding reality; it discloses as violent news outlets, high demand for post-truths, or more brutal fiction. Jean Baudrillard states in his essay on *Crash* (1973) that "there is no affectivity behind all this: no psychology, no ambivalence or desire, no libido or death-drive" [Baudrillard, Evans 1991: 314] and later he adds that "the nonsensicalness, the brutality, of this mixture of body and technology is totally immanent — it is the reversion of one into other" [Baudrillard, Evans 1991; 314]. While Nicholas Ruddick disagrees with the philosopher, taking the side of the novel's author [Ruddick 1992: 359], I think that both points of view complete each other: caged inside concrete, glass or metal boxes, behind computer screens humans naturally develop real desire for the organic. However, there is neither a chance of fulfilling this desire, nor of escaping from technology and so it is only subdued for a while, by replacement measures, being exactly post-truths, brutal fiction etc. These measures are the touchstones of the hyperreality, our present reality which, as Baudrillard suggests is "a non-symbolic universe but one which, by a kind of reversal of its mass-mediated substance (neon, concrete, cars, mechanical erotism), seems truly saturated with an intense initiatory power" [Baudrillard, Evans 1991: 319]. The initiatory power might just be suppressed, unfulfilled desires, which when faced with an inability to vent, form necessary substitutes, which become hyperreal.

We are living in the hyperreality and one of its signs is the appearance of the New Aesthetics. The desire for the organic has not been fulfilled, while technology has kept on its brutal development, resulting not only in visually pulling out human insides to daylight in a form of art, but also ripping open the technological skin and showing

off the cyber intestines of our world. Dennis Moser writes that "we are in the midst of an emerging aesthetics — the New Aesthetics — unfolding around us at appropriately enough, Internet speed" [Moser 2013: 188]. James Bridle describes the New Aesthetics as follows:

> *One of the core themes of the New Aesthetics has been our collaboration with technology, whether that's bots, digital cameras or satellites (and whether that collaboration is conscious or unconscious), and a useful visual shorthand for that collaboration has been glitchy and pixelated imagery, a way of seeing that seems to reveal a blurring between "the real" and "the digital", the physical and the virtual, the human and the machine* [Bridle 2020].

Humanity ascribed intestines to infernal aesthetics. The works of art like Ballard's *Crash* (1973) provided an alternative point of view, to picture them in a different light, yet people will never have enough time to process and get familiar with the images of body insides, because the flesh has started to be replaced, covered by machines and new, complex technologies. The technological development only reinforced the need for the organic, putting aesthetics of the flesh on the collision course with the New Aesthetics. This movement, one of main representants of which is James Bridle, is an answer to what Bruce Sterling describes in his article as follows:

> *Our hardware is changing our lives far more profoundly than anything that we ever did to ourselves intentionally. We should heed the obvious there, and get used to that situation. We should befriend one another, under that reality. We should try to see what that means* [Sterling 2012].

The New Aesthetics is a form of art that feasts on technological glitches that are depicted against a physical, real background. It is the natural response to technological oppression. Humanity adapts to the new reality. Technology becomes a part of our existence, a next step in human evolution, therefore we transfer our settled beauty standards, our fears and desires onto the virtual canvas.

Although technology smothered the flesh, it also, paradoxically, created a platform to express the need for the organic: virtual realities. In *The Journal of Epsilon Pi Tau* Charles Styron states in the article entitled *Virtual Reality* that "in essence virtual reality calls on a suite of technologies to immerse the user in computer data, and allows him to use his senses to navigate through and interact with that data" [Styron 1992: 3]. That sounds like an ideal niche to explore the forbidden aesthetics of the flesh. The fact that it is "virtual" asserts that the user is always somewhat distanced from it, yet it is also "reality", thus in many aspects real. Creators of videogames construct such seemingly real worlds, thus becoming artists such as Bosch, Rembrandt or Michelangelo.

As the great ones before them, contemporary artists are also shaped by the era they create in. The clash of settled standards of beauty, the aesthetics of the flesh and the New Aesthetics, results in the posthuman aesthetics. According to N. Katharine Hayles; "in posthuman there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations

between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and bio-logical organism, robot teleology and human goals" [Hayles 1999: 3]. Human flesh and technology are becoming mixed beyond recognition. Posthuman aesthetics de-scribes the upcoming stage of human evolution. Even today we are unable to exist without the supporting technology, which, on the other hand, has become a useful tool for the artists. The question that is raised in the context of my article is as fol-lows: how does the artistic expression, the posthuman aesthetics, manifest itself in the eyes of a spectator/participator, in the contemporary mainstream videogame, *Doom Eternal* (2020)?

To find the answer we must look at the videogame series which had begun with *DOOM* in 1993. Dan Pinchbeck claims that in *DOOM* (1993) "the fusion of science fic-tion with supernatural horror was nothing new, of course, but it was certainly a novel applied in gaming" [Pinchbeck 2013: 66]. It is an action first person shooter, which puts the player in the shoes of Doom Marine, an individual stranded on a Mars' moon infested with demonic hordes. The story, as Pinchbeck writes, "can be used to help us accept the world, or diegesis, that the game presents" [Pinchbeck 2013: 66]. Its aim is to immerse the player in the presented virtual reality, the aesthetics of which is simply frightening. The immersion in this case means getting into action-packed levels full of demons to slaughter. The models of the creatures in 1993 were basic, yet sufficient enough to sustain the immersion, and keep the game fun to play. The demons full of pixels fitted the tone of the game, and were the cutting-edge of possi-bilities for the times, as well as was the design of the hellish interiors: "the design of DOOM was creating level architectures the likes of which no one had ever seen, and these were resting on some groundbreaking technological foundations" [Pinchbeck 2013: 34]. The demons' shape can be compared to human body parts. Moreover some of the creatures have mechanical devices attached to their limbs. These are the char-acteristics of the posthuman aesthetics, observed in the FPS game from 1993. Since then the *Doom* series has evolved and the most recent game entitled *Doom Eternal* (2020), a mainstream success, is much richer in details.

The embodiment of what I have written about so far is the Cyberdemon, called the Tyrant, featured in *Doom Eternal* from 2020:

This creature expresses human fear of intestines associated with the infernal aes-thetics, adding posthuman, cyber traits. The contemporary technology, with the use of hyperreal textures, is able to take gruesome elements of Hieronymus Bosch's in-ferno and place them upon the muscular renaissance sculpture-like body, overall to make it look as real as possible. Tyrant's abdominal organs are on display; however its veins are similar to plastic tubes that can as well be placed inside a car engine. Cyberdemon first appeared in the classic *DOOM* from 1993, with the original model being similar to its contemporary version from 2020. The codex entry from the game says that the Tyrants are tasked with overseeing the collection and extraction of sin-branded souls from the mortal world, their role in Hell ordained by the unholy

sigil of the Elder Hell-gods. They are the lower-rank devils and therefore the base of their visuals is a stereotypical look of Satan. In the Christian tradition "lower demons have minds like those of animals" [Russell 1986: 42]. The ugliness of the mind transcribes itself upon the visual representation, resulting in demons with long, curvy horns and sharp fangs. As I have already mentioned Tyrant's intestines are exposed, because the inside of the body is also associated with hell. The artist behind this demon's model uses the opportunity to express the postmodern need for the organic and underlines every physical detail thanks to the hyperreal graphics. The monster's ribs are standing out and the pink skin is wrinkled and sweaty. Moreover, the human body parts are enhanced by the cyber augmentations. Posthuman aesthetics seems to fit into the infernal-intestines artistic representation. People are afraid of the new therefore the mechanic prosthetics become part of what is vile and repulsive. Nonetheless, our mind is constantly influenced by both posthuman aesthetics and aesthetics of the body, from which raises the perverted need to exploit these two areas simultaneously, which is fulfilled in *Doom Eternal* (2020). It corresponds to the mainstream success of the game. In pair with the story, which is only there to provide the context, the heavy metal, industrial soundtrack and the fluent, dynamic gameplay, the visuals complete the journey into the alienated aesthetics of flesh, that the game becomes.
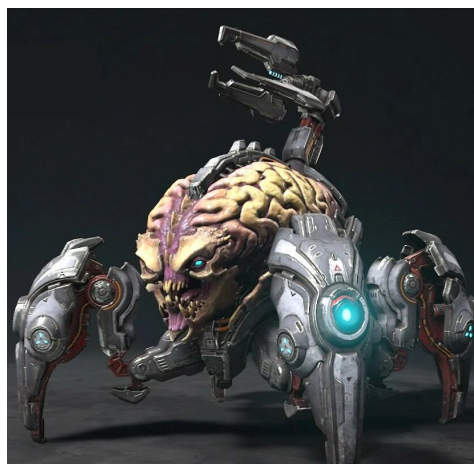
Another interesting example of a demon depicted by an artist with a resulting flesh-demonic-cybernetics mixture is Arachnotron:

Fig.1. Tyrant

Source: Doom Wiki, 2020

Fig. 2. Arachnotron

Source: Doom Wiki, 2020

The visuals of this hellish beast are more complex than these of the previous one. Here we can observe that the brain is exposed. Interestingly, humans tend to associate the mind with something pure, the spirit, yet it is precisely this wrinkled organ where the mind is contained. In-game description says that Arachnotrons are built

with genetic material recovered from the remains of the original Spider Mastermind, bio-engineered for cyber-augmentation. The Spider Mastermind is the final boss of the previous game, *Doom* from 2016. As its name suggests, it is an extremely smart spider. Lars Schmeink writes that "the animal has long been other to the construction of the human" [Schmeink 2016: 82] and later he adds that "life thus simply becomes a mechanical object to be manipulated and changed according to the needs of superior and exceptional man – with all its horrible consequences for an intrinsic ethical value of life" [Schmeink 2016: 82]. The Arachnotron is a hyperbolic expression of fear of such consequences – an animal, insect to be precise, spawn of the mastermind being, combined with a human brain, with a distorted, demonic human face and cyber enhancements. Additionally it also embodies other fears: the fear of the flesh, known for ages, multiplied by the need for the organic, and also the fear of the technology that grows over the physical body. *Doom Eternal* allows the player to confront all these fears in one visible creature shown in the hyperreal graphics of contemporary gaming, but what is more important it lets us literally crash with them. The glory kills that we can watch in the You Tube video [Skull Busters 2020] are different ways of executing the spider-like demon, therefore they serve as a cathartic experience for the mainstream player who dismembers his/her fears as a result of swift, fun gameplay.

Fig. 3. Cyber Mancubus

Source: Doom Wiki, 2020

The picture featured above shows an armoured version of the demon called Mancubus, which is an obese creature with fangs, and metal cannons for arms. Once again the creator of this model exploits posthuman aesthetics and combines them with infernal tropes. The demonic theme provides the creator with an opportunity to use

the uglier side of the human body as a work material. Here the inferior animal features like a monstrous jaw are mixed with what humans find repulsive – obesity and folds of fat hanging from every side. They become visible when what is under the skin, namely fat, grows out of proportion. It is another example of the human fear of intestines. *Doom Eternal* proposes different a version of Mancubus, which is Cyber Mancubus. The demon gets the futuristic armour, which partially covers its ugliness. The new technology serves its purpose yet it also becomes a symbiotic element of the demon's appearance. The cybernetic armour scares the player on another level because it is posthuman. However, when destroyed, the true body horror is revealed, and the player is able to rip the monstrosity apart, at the same time absorbing the bloody festival of carnage with awe. Hence appears the easy pleasure of dealing with obvious fear (gruesome glory kills) that turns out to be a hidden need for the organic – the long-feared and long-forgotten flesh covered not only by skin but also by contemporary technology.

Another powerful force, which is present in *Doom Eternal*, are Maykrs – "a highly advanced ancient race of alien beings" [Doom Wiki 2020]. They are led by the angel-like leader, named Khan Maykr:

Fig.4: Khan Maykr

Source: Doom Wiki, 2020

This creature comes as close to the possible description of a biblical angel because its true form is hidden under the heavy armour. Just like biblical angels', its characteristics remain invisible for most of the game. It is a mysterious being that flies and claims to be superior to the other forms of life. What is interesting is that it does not exist as a moral opposition to demonic hordes. Instead, it exploits the superior

position to use the powers of hell for its own purposes. Buda confirms that in Christianity angels are rather "*incorporeal and invisible*" [Jaritz 2011: 124]. Again the goodness, and so the direct connection with God, is represented by the spirit, therefore Khan Maykr's body is covered by the advanced, cybernetic armor, in a posthuman manner. *Doom Eternal* however advocates the need for the organic, thus even angels must be judged, exposed, and stripped off their spirituality. In result, Khan Maykr becomes the antagonist of the game. During the final fight with the creature, the player denounces the angel's mysticism, while the creature's mask falls of and another demonic face with exposed brain tissue is revealed. Giving the angel, the higher being, demonic properties, and then letting it be destroyed by a mortal warrior, Doom Marine, is a direct statement of the contemporary artist, which expresses the need for the organic. The spirit is only an illusion that distances human beings from their flesh. The violent death of the spiritual that the player enacts exposes what have always been hidden behind beautiful words and faces depicted in marble – the bloody intestines.

The level design in *Doom Eternal* accompanies the design of the demons, although only some of the levels are literally made of flesh. This process of space being covered in meat is a mark of demonic infestation. Places taken over by demons are dripping with blood. The example is Super Gore Nest, one of the first levels in the game:

Fig.5: Super Gore Nest

Source: Doom Wiki, 2020

The organs erupt from the ground and rise into separate structures. The concrete and metal landscape of a city – the human construct which in the last hundred years has become a tight cocoon for the society, which wants to hide from the disappearing wilderness outside, is here brought to justice by the brutal forces of hell. All the skyscrapers are just facades for the ugliness underneath: "rapid urbanization has become responsible for the growth of various 'fringe populations' that undergo poverty and unhealthy living conditions" [Hurt 2019: 26]. To look upon such creations

getting well-deserved punishment is like reading about the biblical Sodom and Go-morrah. We get what we deserve. However, the city is our surrounding reality and punishment from hell is the last thing we want, especially from a mainstream vid-eogame. Therefore the player becomes the posthuman protagonist – nameless Doom Marine, wearing cybernetic armor that covers his face. The technology helps him a great deal in dispersing the threat. In the end, when posthuman technology and pri-mal flesh, the two unfamiliar motifs in question, clash, it is the former that comes out victorious, leading to the creation of the vicious circle.

CONCLUSION

Videogames are artistic creations that have the power to form interactive worlds, and one of their crucial advantages is that they allow the player to experience these worlds from the safe position, from behind the screen. Therefore the mainstream player gets a much needed glance at the organic – lusted, feared, unfamiliar and forgotten elements of his/her own body, only to smash it to bits with a cybernetic arsenal. Paradoxically, only by means of body-smothering technology are we able to explore our intestines, interact with them on a larger, mainstream scale, deal with their existence by destruction.

To conclude, *Doom Eternal*'s mainstream success is the result of deeply embedded aesthetic features that humanity has collected for centuries. The theme of the game gives the artists behind the demon models and level designs an opportunity to ex-press the posthuman aesthetics of flesh, evoked by the need for the organic. The interactive effect of their work provides a cathartic experience for the mainstream player, who is smothered by the overwhelming technology. This process creates a paradox, where the only way to reach the organic is to use the virtual. Therefore human nature once again proves to be dualistic. Man desires the organic but never directly, never to actually touch it, always from safe distance. The awareness that it exists somewhere is perfectly sufficient. Then, perhaps, the posthuman aesthet-ics are an inevitable next step in how we perceive beauty and ugliness. After all, it has already found its representation in the form of a worldwide phenomenon, *Doom*, mainstream videogame series.

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POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REALITIES IN A PANDEMIC

COVID-19 PANDEMIC AS AN EXTREME EVENT: EFFECTS, REACTIONS, CONSEQUENCES

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Abstract

Based on an interdisciplinary approach, the article comprehends the manifestations, deployments, and current consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic through the prism of society's reactions and responses to the effects caused by the pandemic. The spread of the pandemic led to the formation of a new reality that manifests itself on the personal-existential and social levels of human existence. The pandemic causes constitutive signs of the extraordinary state of society, which is illustrated by the economic crisis, reduced efficiency of social institutions, changes in value and regulatory structures, restrictions on the citizens' rights and freedoms. The coronavirus crisis is accompanied by a significant number of deaths and injuries, psychological and somatic risks, disproportionate security resources distribution, social inequality exacerbation, financial and reputational losses. At the same time, the pandemic is a generator of the development of means to combat coronavirus infection, which is manifested in the invention of vaccines and drugs.

Key words: *pandemic, event, society, crisis, transformation, challenge, counteraction*

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has been an extreme event on a global scale, becoming one of the main factors influencing the course of social processes in most countries. On March 11, the World Health Organization (the WHO) announced a coronavirus pandemic, which resulted in severe quarantine. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the world community to reconsider not only short-term development forecasts, economic and social policies, but also long-term priorities. Unprecedented restrictive measures, despite the periodic easing of bans, have led to significant changes in the lives of mankind. Therefore, the urgent scientific task is the need to understand the phenomenon of the COVID-19 pandemic, to identify its impact on a life of an individual and the functioning of the society.

Researchers agree that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused profound changes in many spheres of society, led to the transformation of social communications, led to the formation of the new rules of social and biological safety in the world [Stepanenko 2021]. The various dimensions of the pandemic – biological, economic, political, social, cultural, informational – have already become the subject of meticulous attention of scientists.

Thus, the additional issue of the "European Journal of Transformation Studies" for 2020 (Volume 8) is devoted to the study of various aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors' focus, in particular, on the global and national dimensions of the pandemic in the sphere of human rights [Bodnar 2020], the economic, psychological and, social consequences of the pandemic [Furmańczyk 2020]. Researchers focus on the impact of the pandemic on the development of culture, media, art projects and, artistic creativity [Golovei et al. 2020]. The authors emphasize the consequences of the coronavirus crisis in the field of international relations [Knutsen 2020], the need for international solidarity to protect and implement the right to health [Widłak 2020]. Analyzing the peculiarities of the coronavirus crisis in Ukraine, scientists from the point of view of sociological approaches articulate some aspects of social issues in the context of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic [Stepanenko 2021]. Scientists elucidate problems of socio-structural dynamics, social inequality through the prism of the current consequences of the pandemic [Makeiev 2020]. Researchers comprehend the position of religious organizations in the conditions of quarantine measures, the experience of their adaptation to new conditions of functioning, predict the consequences of the introduction –of quarantine restrictions, and the degree of their impact on the transformation of the religious practice [Kraliuk et al. 2020].

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic determines a new state of the society, characterized by unusual living conditions and circumstances of the lives of individuals and communities. Extracurricular phenomena, the main feature of which is the unknown in advance duration, method of deployment, and consequences, are commonly referred to as "an event". However, in the context of our study, an event should be distinguished from a case, situation, incident, adventure that have a different meaning.

A. N. Uajthed considers the event as a "living organism" that is in a state of constant formation in various manifestations. [Uajthed 1990: 47]. At the heart of being, according to the researcher, are the principles of immanence, structure, causal independence. In the process of self-realization of the event, its structure is revealed, which requires a duration due to a certain value of simultaneity. In M. Hajdegger's concept, an event refers to a duration beyond space and time. Not being the object of perception, the event does not correspond to any active figure, but acts as a sphere of mutual belonging of a man and being, in the way of existence of being [Hajdegger 1993: 269].

According to J. Delyoz, if we do not equate the event with its spatio-temporal realization, the event can be defined as a meaning that does not exist outside the sentence that expresses it and does not merge with it [Delyoz 1998: 199]. Under the concept of "discursive event" introduced into scientific circulation, M. Foucault understands the set of connections and relations between utterances as single events [Fuko 2003]. In the context of the study of the COVID-19 pandemic as determinants of unusual states and situations arising in modern societies, S. Žižek's approach to the event as an innovation that has a transcendent or ingrained origin and leads to the transformation of habitual lifestyle is important. [Zizek 2014]. An important role is played by the position of A. Badiou, according to which being is the basis for the occurrence of an event that radically breaks ties with everyday life [Badiou 1988].

Relevant for our study is the conclusion of N. N. Taleb, who substantiates the reasons for the emergence of the "black swan" – a seemingly unintentional event, which is due to a set of mistakes in the economic sphere. Such an event is characterized by unpredictability, anomaly, high impact, retrospective predictability, ie explanation of the event after its implementation [Taleb 2009: 10].

As we can see, scientists consider the phenomenon of the event, based on different methodological positions and based on their preferences and scientific preferences. Thinkers differently formulate answers to questions due to the need to explain reality, so demonstrate different understandings of the phenomenon of the event. As a breaking point and the starting point of an extraordinary event, which includes a set of effects and reactions to them by the society, reveals the constitutive signs of the extraordinary state of the society [Boreiko 2018: 42]. Therefore, the elucidation of the manifestations and consequences of the spread of coronavirus requires an analysis of the social transformations caused by the pandemic as an extreme event.

According to scientists, studies of different states of the society have certain terminological limitations, as science has developed a register of dichotomous concepts such as "statics-dynamics", "order-chaos", "stability-turbulence", etc. [Stan synhuliarnosti 2017: 21]. Recently, scientists tend to describe the state of affairs in modern society as dubious, unreliable, shaky, risky [Standing 2011]. In this context, the state of the society in almost all countries of the world can be described by the concept of "singularity", generated by a combination of crisis, emergencies and exclusivity.

Singularity means, on the one hand, deviation, originality, unusualness, on the other – integrity and inertia, can gain positive changes or preserve the current state. If the crisis means the state of the economy, "emergency" fixes the extraordinariness in the value-normative sphere, the state of exclusion concerns politics and public administration. In this case, the category of "state" is interpreted as something modified, re-emerged, in contrast to the event as something that changes, modifies [Stan synhuliarnosti 2017: 21].

Based on the findings of scientists, we will try to describe the coronavirus pandemic as an extreme event that significantly affected the lives of individuals and communities. Thus, the article aims to study the manifestations, deployment, and current consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic through the prism of reactions to the effects caused by the pandemic.

1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Given the need for a comprehensive analysis of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which are manifested at the personal-existential and social levels of human existence, the application of a systems approach is considered productive. The use of a systematic approach is quite justified given the need for conceptual and theoretical justification of the coronavirus pandemic as an extreme event, to identify interactions and relationships of the studied phenomenon and its relationship with the external environment. Focus on a systems approach allows us to study the phenomenon of the pandemic as a phenomenon that occurs in the society, demonstrates a certain dynamics of development, determines the relationship of conditions and factors, leads to the formation of a new social reality.

The heuristic potential of the socio-cultural approach makes it possible to reveal the systemic characteristics of modern society as a cultural and value complex, taking into account the peculiarities of adaptation of members of the society to new living conditions. Focusing on the socio-cultural approach allows us to determine the consequences of the pandemic in the context of national and cultural specifics, as well as strategic goals of modern society.

To trace the formation of new orderly structures as a result of the reaction of individuals and communities to the manifestations of the pandemic contributes to a synergetic approach, which involves the study of self-organization in the systems of different nature, the vision of the society. The subject field of the synergetic approach includes the mechanisms of spontaneous formation and preservation of the society, which is in a state of stable imbalance, crisis, bifurcation, which involve the multiple nature of the vectors of further development.

The cognitive possibilities of the information approach in the context of this study are the possibility of studying the pandemic phenomenon in terms of numerous manifestations of information. The methodological advantage of the information approach is that the studied processes and phenomena are informative, as they are related to the

production, accumulation, exchange, interpretation, and use of information about the event for social communication, manipulation, etc.

The multifaceted nature of the research topic requires the application of an interdisciplinary approach, which ensures, on the one hand, the avoidance of the subject framework of a particular field of science, on the other – expanding the methodological capabilities of different conceptual approaches focused on studying the problems. The authors take into account the theoretical guidelines of representatives of social philosophy, philosophical anthropology, ontology, epistemology.

Analysis of theoretical approaches and factual data, as well as the formulation of conclusions and generalizations of the article, is carried out using general scientific research methods and principles of cognition. Characterization of pandemic-induced changes at the individual and societal levels of human existence requires the use of structural-functional analysis. Illustration of the quantitative values of the dynamics of the spread of coronavirus infection, the rate of vaccination, the effects of the pandemic, in particular, in the economic sphere requires the use of statistical analysis.

2. EVENT AS A DETERMINANT OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

To achieve the goal of the study, it is necessary to analyze the basic concepts by which it is possible to articulate the manifestations and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Conceptualization of the event in the context of transformation of the society caused by the coronavirus crisis allows, on the one hand, to represent the work of scientists in this problem area, on the other – to characterize the challenges of the pandemic and understand ways to neutralize them.

Like any extreme event, a pandemic has significantly affected the functioning of societies, leading to the transformation of everyday life, habitual rules of conduct and communication, economical consumption, and so on. Society perceives this state as a set of unusual individual and collective situations that require externally conditioned reactions expressed in everyday practices. These situations involve habituation, adaptation, adjustment, cause attempts to approach the imaginary norm, contribute to the final removal of carefreeness beyond everyday experience. In other words, there is an objectification of the "special, unusual spatio-temporal, event-procedural nature of the society" [Stan synhuliarnosti 2017: 27, 29].

As a new structure capable of modifying the social spatio-temporal structure, the event causes a division into what happened and what became. At the same time, the event marks an action that can not only destroy, but also create, decompose orders and structures, as well as collect elements of the society, creating a new balance between stability and turbulence. The action unfolds in certain cycles, reaches a maximum, and fades, remaining in the consequences. By producing consequences and thus attracting attention, the event forces societies to spend resources to compensate for its effects [Stan synhuliarnosti 2017: 17].

Social structures are vulnerable to the appearance of gaps, folds, which mostly disap-

pear, but have certain consequences. Folds can exist in an open form, which produces tension in society and tests social institutions for the degree of capacity. According to J. Deleuze, folds have a certain shape, simple or complex character. Folds are characterized by heterogeneity, as they are formed from numerous elements that act as other folds. In particular, the individual's perception of reality, point of view, and perspective of vision appear in the form of socialized stable modes of feeling, thinking, evaluation, expressed in affects, beliefs, assessments of the situation [Delyoz 1997: 25–47].

Thus, events materialize in certain deformations – folds, boundaries, margins, gaps, thickenings, which indicates the beginning of an indefinite period during which a new texture of social matter will be reproduced – a set of heterogeneous associations of individuals with many their preferences, orientations, interests, practices. New formations of social structure exist, are recognized, and fixed in public life.

Thus, the social fold of suffering caused by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic includes victims of the disease, as well as the families of those who died of coronavirus. The fold of suffering is manifested in the fact that in quarantine the activities of social institutions and organizations are disrupted, people are shocked by the new reality, dissatisfied with the restrictions, oppressed by isolation, violation of established habits and patterns of behavior that causes emotional imbalance. The new circumstances of life are not affected by the old norms, rules, qualifications, experience, which also cause some social tension.

Events transform the traditional mechanisms of folding through the intervention of social institutions and organizations, various inventions, etc. It is as if the social system is being cut and stitched together, thanks to which social structures are being enriched [Stan synhuliarnosti 2017: 43]. Social folds are not removed from public life, but are in the care of the state, which directs them to political, ideological, and financial resources.

It is noteworthy that a global event, which is both a generator and context of smaller-scale events, structures situations at different levels of the society, manifesting itself in many effects and reactions to them at the personal and social levels. By modifying social relations, the event becomes a constitutive sign of the state of affairs in the society, which can be seen as a combination of crisis, "emergency" and exclusion. In most scientific studies, the crisis is interpreted as a sharp break, acute shortage, inconsistency, difficult transition, the extreme point of decline and has pronounced connotations in the economy, meaning stagnation of production, declining welfare, declining social programs, reducing spending on culture, education, science, etc. Any attempt to implement significant changes in the society, which would relate to the changes in state, public and everyday life, often face intentions, habits, stereotypes that are conservative in nature.

Although the category of "crisis" is more relevant for application in the economic context, this concept is widely used in the meaning of the crisis of society as a whole,

characterized by disruption of social relationships, sustainable interactions in the functioning of social institutions. Researchers analyze the crisis as a state of the society, which not only means decline, uncertainty, lack of vision of the direction of development, but also the possibility of changing the fallen by the new [Bauman 2014]. According to scientists, the crisis expresses discord in all spheres of society, which hinders the establishment of a system of state and commercial organizations [Walby 2015].

The definition of "emergency" includes a state of systemic turbulence, characterized by the transformation of social norms, lifestyle changes, accompanied by pronounced uncertainty in the society. C. Žižek uses the concept of "emergency" to express the state of emergency as isolation from everything unacceptable and declaring new priorities for social development [Zizek 2014]. Thus, the state of "emergency" necessitates adaptation to new conditions, while providing, on the one hand, counteraction to negative phenomena in all available ways, on the other – avoidance of interaction with them. The latter is implemented, for example, in the form of individual or collective participation in anticipation of partial or significant changes to prevent unwanted deformations and transformations.

In other words, the state of "emergency" encourages the production of actions that are perceived as a way to reduce uncertainty, an obstacle to potential deterioration, or indicate a departure from real conditions and focus on personal problems. A certain set of uncertainties, layered in the state of "emergency", cause the presence of a variety of events, things, subjects [Kostenko 2016]. Under such conditions, social structures, criteria, standards are modified, various expectations and experiences are updated.

The state of exclusion means the gap between codified social norms and actual political life, when it becomes the norm to restrict the rights and freedoms of citizens [Agamben]. In addition to the combination of crisis phenomena in economic life, extremes in values and meanings, the state of exclusion demonstrates the weakness and instability of democracy, social institutions, the party system. In some cases, the state of exclusion involves restrictions on fundamental rights and freedoms, corruption, and so on [Stan synhuliarnosti 2017: 21–36]. In the state of exclusion, social matter is non-standardly formatted, and relevant in the usual conditions definitions, distinctions, differentiations have a low level of recognition. For example, the gap between established norms and real politics is caused by decrees and orders that respond to armed conflicts, terrorist acts, migration crises, and so on. According to J. Agamben, against the background of the constant challenges of modernity, the state of exclusion in politics is increasingly becoming a dominant paradigm of power [Agamben 2005: 2].

As we can see, the event symbolizes the day of changes or lost criteria, standards, the end of a certain era without the certainty of another. Unexpectedly gaining significant scale, the event causes significant trauma at the individual and community levels of

the society. For this reason, large-scale events that cause disorder, unrest, distortion of public life, and have unpredictable consequences, are marked by scientists with capital letters ("Ereignis" in M. Hajdegger's).

3. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AS A GLOBAL EVENT

Based on the indicated methodological guidelines and the considered concepts that reflect the transformation of spheres of public life, we will try to trace the specifics of changes in the functioning of the society caused by the pandemic COVID-19. Without a detailed analysis of the situation in a particular country, we will focus on identifying general trends in confrontation with the pandemic.

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant changes in the life of society in almost all countries of the world, one of the most important effects of which is the production of significant inequalities in social development. These are pandemic-related difficulties, risks, and costs that are unevenly distributed and layered on traditional issues. This is manifested in a significant number of deaths and casualties from the coronavirus disease, as well as in financial, reputational, qualification losses. In this situation, the security resource has a pronounced disproportionate distribution between countries and segments of the population.

In response to the spread of the pandemic, the governments of many countries have declared a state of emergency in certain areas, regions, or the country as a whole. Compulsory observance of sanitary and epidemiological measures was introduced, which meant declaring quarantine zones, checking body temperature, canceling mass events, closing educational and cultural and entertainment events, restricting travels, and moving around the country, restricting labor activity, strengthening the role of public administration in emergency conditions, the introduction of remote forms of work and education.

In other words, because of the threat of a COVID-19 pandemic, most countries have imposed restrictions that prevent crowds. The severity of quarantine measures is determined by several factors, including the number of patients, the rate of spread of the virus, political regime, the experience of other countries, the WHO recommendations. Undoubtedly, the introduced quarantine measures demonstrate a response to an extreme event in some countries at the beginning of the coronavirus epidemic. Thus, on March 10, 2020, at a meeting of the Polish government, it was decided to cancel indefinitely all mass events, including sports competitions, concerts at stadiums, but the ban did not apply to theatrical performances and concerts at the Philharmonic. It has now been decided not to introduce the abolition of classes in educational institutions. The day before, the introduction of sanitary control at the borders was announced, which should apply to all border crossing points. Wider restrictions applied only to the city of Poznan, where local authorities decided to close schools, kindergartens, nurseries, cultural and sports facilities for two weeks [Drachuk 2020].

To counter the pandemic, the German federal government and the federal states in March 2020 agreed to limit social contacts. Restrictions apply to the movement of groups of more than two people, except those who live together, most shops have closed, as well as schools, universities, sports clubs, libraries, etc [Obmezhuvalni zakhody 2021].

In Ukraine, the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 211 of March 11, 2020 "On prevention of the spread of acute respiratory disease COVID-19 caused by coronavirus SARS-CoV-2" in Ukraine has been repeatedly amended and supplemented. Authorities imposed nationwide quarantine, which was to last until April 3, but was extended until April 24. This included closing borders for foreigners for up to two weeks, temporarily banning church services and ceremonies. The state of exclusion means the gap between codified social norms and actual political life, when it becomes the norm to restrict the rights and freedoms of citizens.

From April 6, the new restrictive measures meant a ban on visiting parks and recreation areas, the mandatory wearing of masks in public places, it is recommended to stay at home over 60 years [Koronavirus v Ukraini 2020]. However, in May public transport was allowed to operate, as well as children were allowed to attend kindergartens. On June 5, 2020, quarantine was once again relaxed in some regions, as a result of which, in compliance with anti-epidemic measures, cafes were opened, services were held in temples, and domestic flights of airlines were carried out. The new outbreaks were influenced by contempt for the virus, which was observed on public transport, on beaches, summer cafes, etc. As a result, part of the society in Ukraine, after three months of restrictions, perceived quarantine as easing as its end.

Like any extreme event, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused unexpected and unusual changes that have a significant impact on human society. During the pandemic, humanity is experiencing permanent lockdowns, the need to wear masks in public places, take PCR tests when the appropriate symptoms appear. At the same time, the pandemic shows that the social experience of physical distancing exacerbates the problems of social responsibility. Quarantine tests civil society for the ability to solidarity, social assistance to vulnerable categories of the population. On the other hand, quarantine is an experience of confronting the threats of social distancing, manifested in xenophobia, aggression, finding the culprits, stigmatizing the infected. Thus, the reason for the protests in the village of Novi Sanzhary in the Poltava region in February 2020 against the temporary isolation of citizens evacuated from China was the natural anxiety of people for their own lives and safety, fear of unknown and new virus at the time [Stepanenko 2021: 37].

The suffering and despair caused by the coronavirus pandemic is are vividly illustrated by daily reports of new cases and victims. In particular, coronavirus infection was first diagnosed in Ukraine on March 3, 2020, and the first fatal case was registered on March 13. According to statistics, the number of victims of coronavirus in the world at the end of September 2020 was over one million. Half of the death toll came

from four countries: the United States, where the death toll was more than 20% of the total death toll, Brazil – more than 14%, India – almost 10%, Mexico – almost 8% [Kilkist zhertv 2021].

Restrictive measures led to a crisis in the economy, which was accompanied by a fall in the gross domestic product in the Eurozone by 3, 6% in the first quarter of 2020. Educational institutions have been relocated remotely, and a state of emergency has been introduced in several regions. An even worse situation was observed in the second quarter of 2020, when compared to the corresponding period of 2019, the decline in GDP in Germany was 11, 7%, Spain –22, 1%, France – 19, 3%, Austria – 12, 8 %. According to the US Department of Commerce, the country's economy in the second quarter of 2020 fell by 32, 9% in annual terms [Ukraina: vplyv 2020: 4–7]. The easing of quarantine restrictions since May has helped reduce the depth of the decline in most economic activities and the gradual resumption of business activity.

The pandemic has exacerbated the problems of social inequality, which can manifest itself in varying levels of access to quality health care, treatment, and vaccination. The socio-economic opportunities of citizens to ensure a proper existence during quarantine restrictions should also be taken into account. It is important to remember that the poor and the rich, both individuals and countries, have varying degrees of vulnerability to the effects of the pandemic. In particular, one of the manifestations of social inequality is the challenge of digital inequality. In particular, one of the manifestations of social inequality is the challenge of digital inequality [Stepanenko, 2021: 35].

Against the background of concern about reports of new strains of coronavirus, the question of who is to blame for the appearance of coronavirus is periodically raised. Because the chain of causes of an event is often not clearly visible, it is difficult to establish the preconditions for the occurrence of the event. That is, in almost all cases there is some doubt about the sufficient level of persuasiveness of certain causes of the event. After two years of the pandemic, there is still no answer as to where SARS-CoV-2 comes from, although according to the official version, the virus passed to humans from one species of bats. However, there are several other versions, including the bat infection of another animal that transmitted the infection to humans; on the transmission of the coronavirus through the food chain; on the accidental or deliberate spread of infection from a laboratory where scientists have studied or modified the virus [Bevza 2021].

The US government is constantly trying to find out the causes of coronavirus and trace the origins of the outbreak to prevent the recurrence of such cases. It is speculated that the virus most likely appeared in China in November 2019 and was not developed as a biological weapon. President Joe Biden said the source of the pandemic was in China, but despite the growing number of pandemic victims, government officials rejected calls for transparency, preventing international researchers from searching for the origins of the global tragedy. China is required to comply with sci-

entific norms and standards, which provide for the exchange of information and data from the first days of the pandemic, as well as protocols on biosafety, information on animal populations [Baiden perekonanyi 2021].

During 2021, five variants of the coronavirus were circulating, which from the end of May, according to the WHO, began to be called the letters of the Greek alphabet. In particular, the "British" strain is called Alpha, the "South African" – Beta, the "Brazilian" – Gamma, the "Indian" – Delta, another "South African" – Omicron. Each subsequent strain spreads faster, causing a more severe course of the disease, more resistant to available vaccines. The rate of spread of coronavirus is evidenced by data as of December 21, 2021, according to which for the entire pandemic it was recorded 275,815,930 cases of infection, resulting in 5,377,168 deaths [Kilkist vypadkiv 2021]. It should be noted that the fourth wave of the coronavirus pandemic has been going on since December 2021, caused by a new strain of Omicron, which was discovered in November in South Africa.

It is obvious that subjects and communities react to shocks, ruptures, and related problems in different ways. The interpretation of the event is accompanied by a special aggravation, which changes its modality depending on the attitudes of the observer or commentator [Boreiko 2020a: 6]. Due to communication technologies, extreme events cause the spread of inaccurate information. Not surprisingly, a huge number of experts offer a retrospective look at the causes of the event or express their own vision of the future development of the event. It is clear that a significant number of different forecasts are accompanied by mixed public sentiments.

Numerous scientific attempts to explain the dynamics of the pandemic, in particular, based on mathematical modeling, attract attention. Thus, in Ukraine, using world experience, consultations with experts on basic medical parameters, with the involvement of open data, scientists analyzed possible scenarios for the spread of the pandemic. The mathematical model, according to scientists, provides certain levels of complexity of the disease for patients with symptoms, allows you to calculate the number of patients in hospitals, takes into account the presence of asymptomatic patients [Prohnoz rozvytku 2020].

Already in the middle of 2021, the World Bank predicted that the fastest post-crisis recovery since World War II will take place by the end of the year. According to this forecast, the peculiarity of economic recovery will be its uneven nature. From 2022, 90% of developed countries and only 30% of developing countries will recover per capita income from the beginning of the pandemic. As a result, the pandemic offsets the previous economic achievements of poor countries. Instead, according to the results of 2021, the leaders of economic growth should be China, where GDP will increase by 8, 5%, India – 8, 3%, USA – 6, 5%, Argentina – 6, 3%, Turkey – 5%, Mexico – 5%. During 2022, according to forecasts, the world economy will recover at a slightly slower pace – at 4, 3% of global GDP, lagging behind 2% of 2019 [Masnyi 2021].

At the same time, the WHO Director-General T. Ghebreyesus compared the effects

of the pandemic to the post-war devastation, predicting the bleak prospects of the post-pandemic world. According to the head of the WHO, humanity is experiencing hunger, poverty, inequality, etc., so it is necessary to fully promote economic growth, which is based on human health and well-being. The world must renounce ruthless exploitation of production and consumption, as well as policies that cause discord, further fueling the pandemic [Hordiienko 2021].

Restrictions on being in a team, a group that provides new safety rules in a pandemic, deprive the opportunity to meet, communicate, attend joint events. Various social connections are maintained through virtual communication with the help of the latest technologies, which, however, cannot replace live contacts between people, filled with emotional meanings. It should be borne in mind that the observance of the quarantine rules, which is expressed in physical exclusion, wearing masks - not only a way to show concern for loved ones, but also evidence of social responsibility for strangers. Compliance with quarantine rules is an indicator of public health [Stepanenko 2021: 38].

Against the background of the economic consequences of quarantine restrictions, which dominate in public discourse, the socio-psychological aspect of the pandemic is of derivative importance. It should be recognized that quarantine rules create a basis for stress, especially for the elderly and those with health problems. Scientists believe that forced social isolation causes loneliness, is characterized by significant psychological and somatic risks, which are manifested in mental disorders, depression, aggression, decreased immunity, high blood pressure [Etzioni 2020].

As a sign of protest against the quarantine restrictions imposed by the authorities, protests are constantly taking place, which escalates into mass riots with clashes with the police. In particular, new restrictions in the Netherlands were introduced in mid-November 2021 due to the growing incidence of the disease. Several cities are in a state of emergency, which provides greater freedom of action for law enforcement, including blocking streets and banning gatherings [U kilkokh mistakh 2021]. Implemented measures mean that shops and restaurants must be closed earlier, sports competitions will be held without spectators, on New Year the use of fireworks is prohibited. Protesters have expressed dissatisfaction with restrictions on mandatory coviders for those who have been vaccinated against or recovered from the coronavirus. As we can see, quarantine restrictions in the pandemic have exacerbated the problem of finding a balance between rights, freedoms, and security, which is expressed in many countries in protests aimed at removing restrictions, protection of civil rights and freedoms, freedom of enterprise.

4. VACCINATION AS A TOOL AND A CHALLENGE

The main task of mankind at the present stage is seen not only in trying to curb the rapid spread of the coronavirus, but also in further adaptation to new realities. With this in mind, at the end of 2020, the world's attention was focused on the start of the

immunization campaign. In just a few months, vaccination has started in 82 countries, led by Israel, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Instead, the beginning of 2021 is marked by a shortage of vaccines, so in almost all countries it was decided to vaccinate people at risk – doctors, the elderly, people with severe chronic diseases, patients with immunodeficiency. After the increase in vaccine production, vaccination has become available to anyone, the age limit for vaccination has been reduced to 12 years, and it is recommended to receive a booster dose of the vaccine.

The vaccine shortage has highlighted the problem of social inequality, which is manifesting itself nationally and globally. There is a noticeable polarization in access to vaccines between rich developed countries and poor, mostly developing ones. Nationally, this problem is reproduced through various vaccination opportunities and access to quality vaccines, which was especially evident at the beginning of immunization [Stepanenko 2021: 36].

In Ukraine, the immunization campaign against COVID-19 began on February 24, 2021, almost three months later than in the countries named above. The pandemic demonstrated the exclusion of the central government in Ukraine from its responsibilities, which manifested itself in institutional dysfunctions (inability to purchase vaccines), the presence of general and local areas of arbitrariness (refusal of quarantine at places). The opposition and the public accused the leadership of the Ministry of Health of trying to use corruption schemes in the procurement of drugs to combat COVID-19, which led to delays in the purchase of vaccines, immunization rates, and distrust of much of the society to vaccination.

This is a fold of legislative and executive power of various levels formed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which expresses the social structure of power. This fold is heterogeneous in terms of political preferences and attitudes, characterized by an unstable configuration of interests of parties and groups that have unequal access to power, material, and financial resources. Under the influence of extraordinary events, the government faces problems that are incredibly difficult to solve, so the need to reform not only central, but also regional government structures is urgent. Insufficient mastery of events and situations leads to increased attention to the actions of the authorities by opponents and the public [Stan synhuliarnosti 2017: 44–45].

Extraordinary events not only determine the formation of social structure through the formation of folds, but also lead to a reduction in pleasure, entertainment, and recreation. Against the background of the fight against the coronavirus, there is a significant proportion of people who do not believe in the existence of the pandemic, considering it a conspiracy of global financial players, Freemasons, pharmaceutical companies, or the World Health Organization. Conspiracy theories are spreading through social networks that the coronavirus does not exist, but there is an intention to chip humanity. For example, protests against quarantine are taking place in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, where similar conspiracies are also

spreading. According to protesters, behind the coronavirus outbreak are secret organizations. With this in mind, the WHO has launched a website to disprove unsubstantiated opinions about the spread of coronavirus, provide recommendations for the prevention and cure of the disease [Rekomendatsii 2020].

Another challenge for the governments of many countries has been the attitude towards vaccination and the organization and course of immunization processes. In the second half of April 2021, at the initiative of the WHO, World Immunization Week was held to draw public attention to the need for vaccination as a preventive measure against infectious diseases. However, distrust of COVID-19 vaccination has divided societies in many countries, fueled by the spread of manipulative information about the coronavirus, 92% of which experts say comes from the Russian Federation and China. Among these narratives, the most common are conspiracy theories - global conspiracy, chipping, secret laboratories, substandard vaccines, mutations as a result of vaccination, and so on [Holovnym vyklykom 2021].

It is noteworthy that distrust of vaccines against COVID-19 and mass refusal of immunization are combined with simultaneous meticulous attention to the course of vaccination and are accompanied by strong misinformation. In addition to these narratives, there are fakes about the risk of coronavirus infection due to vaccination, the American Red Cross's ban on donating blood to vaccinated individuals, Pfizer vaccination disorders and menstrual infertility in women, and impotence in men. The consequences of vaccination include multiple sclerosis, increased risk of blood clots, death of vaccinated persons within two years due to antibody-dependent increase in infection [Naiposhyrenishi feiky 2021].

Apparently, information from unverified sources is one of the factors that influenced the results of a sociological survey conducted by the Razumkov Center in Ukraine in May 2021. The survey found that 43% of respondents do not believe in being vaccinated against coronavirus, 19% have already or intend to be vaccinated shortly, 19% are going to be vaccinated later, 15% will be vaccinated when a formal need arises (eg, a trip abroad). Respondents who do not intend to be vaccinated often justify their decision by the ineffectiveness of vaccines used in Ukraine, while other vaccines are ready to vaccinate [Stavlennia hromadian 2021].

It is noteworthy that the disharmonious rhythm of social life, characterized by the ability to permanent perturbation, produces new structures that, demonstrating topicality, modify the social environment. Attracting the attention of the society, these phenomena push to the background elements inherent in the previous functioning mode of the society. In these circumstances, as a result of the termination of several laws, the government is strengthened, which undermines the legislative protection of citizens, opening the way to violence by the state [Boreiko 2020b: 5]. This means that the state begins to manage the lives of citizens, and the possibility of individual or collective opposition to the state mechanism is nullified.

In particular, on the example of Ukraine, we can observe similar actions of the au-

thorities regarding the situation with the spread of coronavirus infection and immu-nization of citizens. To increase the level of vaccination, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the procedure for dismissal of unvaccinated workers and civil ser-vants from November 8, 2021, if they refuse or evade vaccination from COVID-19 in accordance with the List of professions, industries, and organizations whose employ-ees are subject to mandatory vaccination. Exceptions are persons who have contra-indications to such vaccinations and have provided a medical opinion from a health care institution.

Undoubtedly, together with the educational activities of the authorities, these actions have become an important factor in improving the vaccination situation. Thus, as of December 24, 2021, the number of fully vaccinated people in Ukraine was 13,374,911 people, which is more than 40% of the adult population [Aktualna statystyka 2021]. The first coronavirus vaccines began to appear in late 2020. At the beginning of 2021, the markets reacted positively to the appearance of the first effective vaccines, which was the impetus for the recovery of the world economy. At the end of 2021, we are talking about the first medicine from COVID-19, the manufacturers of which receive state certificates. In countries with low levels of vaccination, the use of these med-icines will not reduce the incidence, but will reduce the number of hospitalizations and deaths. The WHO has suggested that the pandemic could end in 2022 if the world manages to minimize the spread of coronavirus. Thus, despite the rapid spread of the "Omicron" strain, the pandemic can be stopped primarily through the emer-gence of new vaccines and innovations [Shevchenko 2021].

In addition to vaccines, scientists are developing medicine to fight the coronavirus, which can stop the virus before symptoms appear or help cure the seriously ill. Lead-ing pharmacological companies such as Pfizer, Merck & Co, Ridgeback Biotherapeu-tics, etc. are working on the production of these medicines. Experts note that the emergence of medicine against coronavirus has an indirect effect on the spread of infection, but can relieve medical systems and reduce the number of hard lockdowns. Available medicines prevent severe coronavirus disease, but do not affect mutations in the virus, so the spread of the disease will depend on the level of vaccination [Shevchenko 2021].

As the new medicines do not reduce the number of patients, but only improve their condition, it is not yet a question of turning COVID-19 into a seasonal disease such as influenza. At the same time, on December 14, 2021, the American pharmaceutical company Pfizer announced the effectiveness of anticoronavirus pills by almost 90% in preventing hospitalization and death of high-risk patients [Pfizer zaiavyla 2021]. However, vaccination in the presence of at least 70% of the immunized adult pop-ulation will obviously help to stop the pandemic, which will allow the formation of collective immunity.

Thus, from the beginning of the pandemic, awareness of the need for adaptive prac-tices is accompanied by hopes of inventing an effective remedy against the coronavi-

rus. The development of vaccines against COVID-19 is considered not only the only effective way to overcome the pandemic, but also the most pressing challenge today.

CONCLUSIONS

For two years, the focus of research has been on social processes and phenomena caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The causes, manifestations, consequences, experience, and lessons of the coronavirus crisis are studied by scientists through the prism of various fields of knowledge and research. As an extreme event that expresses the unexpected manifestation of heterogeneous forces, emotions, interests, and aspirations, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected almost all countries of the world. A pandemic is a factor that produces deformations in society at the personal and social levels of human existence.

The state of modern societies affected by the COVID-19 pandemic is characterized by significant changes that do not meet the established standards. Deviations in the development of society are reflected in the effects and formats of individual and group worldviews, determine human behavioral reactions. Quarantine measures have led to the transformation of the usual rules of communication and behavior, the recession in the economy, changes in policy and public administration. Therefore, it is appropriate to identify with emergency changes in values, meanings, assessments observed in all areas of modern societies. The crisis is expressed in a recession in the economy, which is accompanied by a decline in production, falling living standards, lowering standards of welfare and consumption. The state of exclusion means the weakening of basic social institutions, the unconvincing nature of government action in extreme conditions, restrictions on the rights and freedoms of citizens, unequal access to security resources.

The global consequences of the pandemic lead to changes in societal values and regulations, including freedom, security, equality, trust, responsibility, and solidarity. Against this background, the role of the authorities in the fight against the pandemic is growing, as evidenced by not only quarantine restrictions, but also several other measures - from fines to dismissal of unvaccinated workers. If coronavirus infection is accompanied by numerous human losses and a significant number of victims of illness and death of loved ones, quarantine restrictions, especially social isolation, distancing have led to deteriorating physical and mental health, exacerbation of social inequality, economic and financial losses.

From today's point of view, it is difficult to assess the next changes and predict the likelihood of new waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, the dynamics of the economic recession, the behavior of people in the post-war period. Despite fears of significant changes in human social behavior, models of economic development, and public administration, there are clear signs of future overcoming of the coronavirus crisis, as evidenced by advances in vaccination and the search for alternative medicines.

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TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE EU HEALTH POLICY? THE EUROPEANISATION OF THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19 AND REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST YEAR OF THE PANDEMIC

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Abstract

In winter 2020 it was roughly one year since the first cases of Covid-19 disease were reported in China and soon the virus spread all over the world. The main aim of this article is to analyse the response of the EU which was hit by the virus in early 2020 and quickly responded to the pandemic. This response may be best analysed in the context of the Europeanisation concept which offers a suitable analytical framework allowing a systematic analysis of the impact on EU policy, politics and polity. The application of the concept will explore EU activities and contribute to both: a better understanding of the response of the EU and verification of the usability of the concept. How might the response of the EU be interpreted in the context of Europeanisation? And what were the key differences in the Europeanisation between the first and second wave?

Key words: *Pandemic, Covid-19, Health Policy, Europeanisation, Response*

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic changed the World and penetrated the life of billions of citizens. All states were forced to adopt restrictive measures and so did international organisations, transnational companies and other non-state actors. This article focuses on the reaction of the European union which is undergoing a process of significant transformation: at the end of 2019 EU institutions were still under pressure over the migration crisis, Brexit negotiations were stuck leaving future ties uncertain, Russia continued its hybrid warfare in order to destabilize EU countries and its neighbours and some countries in the EU (mainly Poland and Hungary) adopted more illiberal policies. It seems that the Covid-19 pandemic of Covid-19 hit the European union at a bad time and soon overshadowed other challenges. Despite the plans of the newly formed Commission led by Ursula von der Leyen, it became a key agenda of the EU which quickly materialised in the form of new programmes, new tools and new institutional settings. In this sense Covid-19 brought to the EU and its institutions a new content which may be best analysed in the context of Europeanisation.

This article deals with the response of the EU towards the spread of Covid-19. Because the response was very complex and is related to all areas including the single market, this article will focus mainly on health policy measures without considering the economic dimension of the crisis. Issues such as Brexit, the Multiannual Financial Framework, the Recovery Fund, EU help to third countries or other topics – and their response to Covid are not assessed in this article. The article focuses on the EU's internal response which is analysed in the context of the Europeanisation concept in all three domains including *polity, politics* and *policy*. It analyses roughly the period of the first year starting with the initial reaction of the EU on the new situation (approximately since January 2020) until the end of 2020. Europeanisation provides an analytical framework which will be used to analyse all of the three above mentioned domains where politics might be considered as an independent variable which led to the policy changes. Polity – is understood mainly as a legal and institutional setting – stands for a stable environment in which politics influences policy outcomes. The above understanding of the variables' interaction suggests that the article is mainly oriented towards policy analysis. However, because policy outcomes are fully dependent on the remaining two domains equal space is dedicated to all three domains.

There are two principal research questions: 1) *How the response of the EU in the area of health and healthcare might be interpreted in the context of Europeanisation?* 2) *What were the key differences in Europeanisation in the area of health and healthcare between the first and second wave?* To answer these principal questions the following analysis will focus on placing changes at the EU level within the context of Europeanisation. Research will help to provide a complex picture about legal margins for the competences of the EU in the area of health, put the fight against Covid-19 in the context of existing policy measures and provide an overview on the activities of the

EU institutions regarding this issue, including policy proposals.

The research design also determined the structure of the article which is divided into four parts. The first part introduces the Europeanisation concept. Due to the great variability of the concept and limited space in this article only the most important parts and usable concepts which are later applied are introduced. The second part is dedicated to the domain of politics where special emphasis will be put on the role of European Council and European Commission. The third part will deal with policy outcomes at the EU level and the individual fourth part will focus on polity – changes in the legal and institutional aspects of the EU.

The literature on EU activities over Covid-19 is not rich, as the topic is novel. However, it might be expected that new articles will appear soon, using various perspectives employing various theories (notably the application of the new institutionalism, constructivist approaches, liberal intergovernmentalism or even post-modernist approaches might be very fruitful). The article uses the concept of Europeanisation which has been well known in EU studies for more than two decades. Hopefully, this article will contribute to a better understanding of the EU, its reactions and development, and will also highlight the usability and functionality of the Europeanisation concept which is increasingly popular among scholars. Moreover, this study, with its exploratory character, may provide a certain correction of the EUs image, which is increasingly depicted as too bureaucratic, passive, "ossified" or even "evildoing" from the populist and illiberal positions.

THE CONCEPT OF EUROPEANISATION

Europeanisation is a well-established concept within European studies. For this reason this part is not dedicated to a full exploration of the concept but rather to the introduction of basic parts of the concepts which will be later used as a framework for analysis. However those who are interested in other aspects of the concepts are advised to read the "classical works" by people who greatly contributed to the development of Europeanisation within European studies [Ladrech 2004: 69; Bulmer & Burch 1998: 602; Börzel 1999: 574; Buller & Gamble 2002: 17; Risse & Cowles & Caparoso 2001: 3; Radaelli 2004: 5; Ladrech 2010: 2; and many others]. After almost three decades of usage of the term Europeanisation in the areas of European studies there are probably hundreds of significantly varying definitions. Despite that there is no universally acknowledged definition they all have one aspect in common as they all deal with the process of change which leads to the involvement or inclusion of some European element. The process of change implies that there are at least two states: the original state with no or a lesser degree of Europeanisation and subsequent state where a stronger European element is present. The EU or Europe is playing some part in this change as it might be the actor or a subject. However, the logics behind Europeanisation vary.

It was Johan P. Olsen who distinguished between five types of different logic. The

first, Europeanisation might be understood as an ongoing process of EU enlargement and change in the external boundaries of the EU. Second, a different understanding of the logic is to view Europeanisation as the development of institutions at the EU level. This logic is also useful for this article as, from the perspective of social institutionalism, a policy development to fight Covid-19 fits in. Third, Europeanisation might be considered as an opposite process when the EU agenda penetrates national and sub-national levels of governance and, as a result, the EU norm becomes part of the national legal order. This understanding is also applicable for this article as decision-making at the EU level regarding Covid-19 may have further implications for member states when adopting some policy measures. The fourth logic mentioned by Olsen is export of the EU norms and forms of political organisation beyond EU borders. Thus, it is very similar to the "EU enlargement logic" but focuses on softer tools than employed in direct accession talks and adaptation to *Acquis Communautaire*. Lastly, Olsen mentions Europeanisation as the synonymous construction of the EU unification project [Olsen 2002: 923-924]. As mentioned above, this article understands Europeanisation predominantly as the second and third type of logic summarized by Olsen which is to a certain degree limiting.

These limits lie in restricting Europeanisation on two levels: between a state level and the level of the EU, without relation to the external dimension of the EU (the first and fourth logic) or the more general context (the fifth logic). However, to understand Europeanisation as a development of institutions (Including policies) at the EU level or the penetration of the EU agenda (including processes and values) is not mutually exclusive as cooperation between states may lead to the development of the EU level and then subsequently have implications for member states. In this sense Europeanisation may be understood as an interactive two-way process. This approach is summarised in the definition of Claudio Radaelli as follows: "Europeanisation consists of processes of a) construction, b) diffusion and c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, "ways of doing things" and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and sub-national) discourse, political structures and public policies" [Radaelli 2004: 5]. This is also the case of the fight against Covid-19 where cooperation resulted in policy measures adapted by EU institutions with subsequent implications for the member states. The following chapters will explore and analyse this process. Moreover, there are other theoretical tools which might improve the framework.

Simon Bulmer in his chapter developed Europeanisation in the context of institutionalism which might enrich this concept with new aspects [Bulmer 2008: 51]. For example rational choice institutionalism may highlight an emphasis on decision-making and the role of rationality as the main driver for Europeanisation. Similarly, historical institutionalism offers a focus on time, timing and tempo. With the employment of historical institutionalism the rationale of Europeanisation may be explained in rela-

tion to a historical context, the issue of timing and factors resulting in a different tempo. This is also very applicable in the case of Covid-19. The unprecedented and fast development of measures within health policy would not have been possible without the pandemic and the urgent nature of the crisis. Lastly, sociological institutionalism allows us to analyse Europeanisation in the context of culture, ideas and attitudes and switch from the logic of consequences (rational institutionalism) to the logic of appropriateness, which is also close to social constructivism.

Europeanisation led to the changes in politics, policy and polity as it influences the interests and behaviour of political actors and the results of the policy-making process which ought to be implemented and which have implications for legal and institutional settings in which the processes took place. All three domains were influenced by the agenda of the pandemic and will be explored in further parts by employing the framework designed above.

EUROPEANISATION OF POLITY

The Lisbon treaty placed protection and the improvement of human health among supporting competences (Article 6 TFEU) where "the EU can only intervene to support, coordinate or complement the action of EU countries. Legally binding EU acts must not require the harmonisation of EU countries' laws or regulations". However, common safety concerns in public health matters for the aspects defined in the TFEU may fall also under shared competences under Article 4(k). The above short demarcation of competences has been further limited within title XIV of the SFEU which is fully dedicated to public health. The limits might be visible in three domains: 1) the areas of competence; 2) actors and procedural practices; and 3) restrictions on implementation.

The TFEU stresses that the Union shall direct its complementary activities towards the improvement of public health, preventing physical and mental illness and diseases, and obviating sources of danger to physical and mental health. Notably such actions shall cover the fight against the major health scourges, by promoting research into their causes, their transmission and their prevention, including health information and education, and monitoring, early warning and combating serious cross-border threats to health (see article 168(1)). The reference to cross-border threats to health is applicable also to Covid-19 disease. Moreover, the Union shall also explicitly complement member states in reducing drugs-related health damage, including information and prevention.

Regarding procedural practices, the TFEU limits the outputs of EU activities at "informing", "educating", "monitoring" and "early warning" while harder competence – "fighting" or "encourage competence" is directed in the area of cross-border cooperation in order to improve the quality of services. The TFEU also stresses the obligation for member states activities and policies in the above-mentioned areas and that the EU shall act in improving coordination among member states. This coordination

support may involve the establishment of guidelines and indicators, the -exchange of best practices and the establishment of mechanisms for long-term monitoring and evaluation. The TFEU clearly states that in these areas the European Parliament and Council acts in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure involving obligatory consultation of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions. There are also limits in the area of implementation where several "checks" demonstrate the sovereignty of member states in the area of health. For example, paragraph 7 of the article 168 stresses that: "Union action shall respect the responsibilities of the Member States for the definition of their health policy and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. The responsibilities of the Member States shall include the management of health services and medical care and the allocation of the resources assigned to them." In other words, the management of health services and medical care are fully in the hands of member states. Moreover, article 168(7) should be put into context together with article 114 SFEU. It provides that when a Member state raises a specific problem in the area of public health which was previously the subject of prior harmonisation, then it shall be brought to the attention of the Commission which shall immediately examine whether to propose appropriate measures to the Council. This provision might be interpreted as a defensive stance of the European Commission, which is in any case required to act in a sense to ensure a high level of human health protection in defining EU policies and activities – which is a binding principle for all actors (see 168(1)).

Due to the legal status of health policy the pre-pandemic activities of the EU were mainly aimed at setting standards for health products or services or funding various health projects improving healthcare infrastructure. The EU also promoted research and conducted a project to improve public health, prevent diseases or address threats to health, mainly associated with lifestyle. The EU does not have an official health policy despite activities in many areas directly touching on health such as pharmaceuticals, consumer safety, regulation of chemicals or endocrine disruptors, cross-border healthcare (e. g. European insurance card), food safety, worker's protection etc. Due to its lack of competence in this area, the EU focused on soft tools including various programmes[1], plans[2] and strategies[3]. These "soft tools" are mainly in the forms of Communications, Green Papers (e.g. Green Paper on Mental Health), White papers (e. g. Together for Health) or Recommendations from the Commission, Commission Reports, Council Conclusions or Council Resolutions. Rarely does the

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[1] For example: Information programmes of the Community Tobacco Fund (2002); Programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003-2008); Second programme of Community action in the field of health (2008-2013); Health for Growth: EU health programme (2014-20).

[2] For example: Environment and Health Action Plan 2004-2010 or Action plan on Organ Donation and Transplantation (2009-2015).

[3] For example: New Community health strategy (2000); Community strategy against antimicrobial resistance (2001); Environment and health strategy (2003); EU Drugs strategy (2000-2004); A new strategic approach to health for the EU (2008-2013); Economic crisis and healthcare: European health strategy; Nutrition, overweight and obesity – EU strategy, EU alcohol strategy and others.

Commission adopt decisions or other legally binding acts.[4] This is. for example. the case for security and safety standards, e. g. in the areas of blood, tissues and organs where standards are set for blood establishments or human tissues and cells for transplantation.[5]

As expected the majority of measures are not legally binding and thus voluntary. However, legally binding measures are present in the areas requiring risk regulation and risk assessment, especially in the areas of technical norms and minimal standards aimed at occupational safety where the legitimacy of legally binding measures (e. g. directives and decisions) might be derived from the necessity to regulate the common market and ensure safe conditions for workers. Despite a lack of official EU health policy, various strategies and plans support the view of the EU being a very influential normative actor. Nonetheless, EU institutions also play a very real role in health as there are at least two EU agencies in the area of health policy which are supportive to member states on health issues and significantly intervenes in the health policy of the member states due to its expert capacity or regulatory powers.

Both agencies – the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the European Centre for Disease prevention & Control (ECDC) – played an important role in the fight against Covid-19 and might be considered as important agents of Europeanisation. The EMA almost immediately adopted several measures aimed at fighting disease. Regarding a noticeable institutional adaptation is the establishment of the EMA pandemic Task Force aimed at quick and coordinated action on the development, authorisation and safety monitoring of the treatments and vaccines intended to treat and prevent Covid-19 [European Medicines Agency 2020a]. The EMA also established a Covid-19 Steering Group aimed at rapid response to evolving scientific and regulatory challenges [European Medicines Agency 2020b]. The ECDC supplied the member states and institutions with data regarding risk assessment on Covid-19, situation updates and weekly maps in support of the Council Recommendation on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the Covid-19 pandemic [European Commission 2020a]. Apart from the agencies, the Joint European Research Centre (JRC) also contributed to the management of the crisis by the development of the new control material which helped to prevent coronavirus test failures [European Commission 2020b]. In other words, the JRC provided the benchmark for analytical laboratories to deliver accurate results ensuring that the methods used are able to

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[4] A good example might be acts establishing EU agencies or directives focusing on worker's protection such as Directive 2012/11/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 April 2012 amending Directive 2004/40/EC on minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (electromagnetic fields) (18th individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) or Council Directive 2013/59/Euratom of 5 December 2013 laying down basic safety standards for protection against the dangers arising from exposure to ionising radiation, and repealing Directives 89/618/Euratom, 90/641/Euratom, 96/29/Euratom, 97/43/Euratom and 2003/122/Euratom.

[5] Directive 2004/23/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on setting standards of quality and safety for the donation, procurement, testing, processing, preservation, storage and distribution of human tissues and cells.

detect the virus. In this sense the European Commission also published guidelines to ensure reliable testing, which were part of the European Roadmap towards lifting coronavirus containment measures. By providing testing methodologies the European Commission contributed to the sharing of a best practice [European Commission 2020c].

The pandemic also influenced the approach of the citizens. Approximately 69 % of EU citizens agree that the EU should have more competences to deal with crisis such as the Coronavirus pandemic. However, the rates significantly vary from big supporters to that idea in Portugal (87 %), Ireland (81 %), Romania (79 %), Bulgaria (78 %), Italy (77 %), Greece (77 %) and Spain (76 %) to countries with the lowest support such as the Czech Republic (43 %), Sweden (48 %), Croatia (51 %) or Austria (55 %) [European Parliament 2020a: 4-15]. Despite clear answers it is questionable whether people know about the scope of the EU competences and whether they rely on truthful information, despite the majority (74 %) having answered that they have heard, seen or read about measures or actions taken by the EU. Despite the interest of citizens, it seems that Covid-19 has not led to significant changes in the EU competences, institutional or legal setting of the EU, except a minor strengthening of the mandate for the EMA and ECDC which will be discussed below. As expected, the pandemic entered the agenda of all institutions which became platforms for the management of the crisis.

EUROPEANISATION OF POLITICS
The first case of confirmed Covid-19 infection in Europe was on 24th of January 2020 in France. However, EU institutions had already reacted before that date. At the beginning of January the European Commission (Directorate General for Health and Safety – DG SANTE) opened an alert notification on the Early Warning Response System (EWRS) where some of the members states already shared information about the spread of the disease. On 17th of January – a week before the first case in the EU, there was the first meeting of the Health Security Committee (HSC) which met four times by the end of the month [European Commission 2020d]. Soon the HSC became an important meeting platform bringing together representatives of member states and important agencies or organisations including the EMA, ECDC or WHO which debated first policy responses, which are analysed in the following section.

The spread of coronavirus was dealt with by all EU institutions and was the most important issue on the political agenda. In 2020 there were 68 ministerial meetings in all 10 configurations of the Council of Ministers, whilst in addition since March, Ministers of Health were in daily contact. However, the main input was provided by the European Council. In 2020 13 meetings of the European Council took place within 21 days, including 8 video conferences and two regular meetings between 15th and 16th of October and 10th and 11th December. The Covid agenda was dealt with at 10 meetings of the European Council which took place from March 2020. Next to this

intergovernmental institution, Covid was also dealt with at 9 international summits (e.g. EU-Western Balkans, EU-Japan, EU-China), 2 ministerial meetings of the European Economic Area and 9 meetings of the Eurogroup. It is out of the scope of this article to provide the detailed positions of the countries. Nonetheless, it is possible to reveal the interaction between the European Council and the European Commission whose president Ursula von der Leyen participated in all sessions.

The first extraordinary meeting of the European Council in February was still dominated by the EU Multiannual Financial Framework for the years 2021-2027 which would be the normal priority. However, Covid-19 soon entered the agenda and, at the March meeting, the crisis was addressed. The meeting had high level participation including the President of the Commission, and the High Representative, the meeting was accompanied by the president of the European Central Bank and President of the Eurogroup. States agreed that health ministers should be in contact to discuss issues on a daily basis. Charles Michel summarised the priorities of the Council including 1) to develop measures to limit the spread of virus, 2) ensuring medical equipment, 3) stimulate research support aimed at the development of a vaccine and 4) dealing with the socio-economic effects of the virus. The European Commission was entrusted to conduct an analysis of needs and submit proposals for how to avoid a shortage of medical equipment [European Council 2020a]. However, in some regards the European Commission envisaged the intentions of the Member States and acted in advance. Tasks given to the Commission are summarised in Table 1 which provides an insight into the scope of activities requested. It is very interesting to compare policy initiatives by the European Commission which might help to understand the degree by which the European Commission acted alone and the degree by which the Commission reacted to the requests of the member states.

Table 1: Commission Activities Requested or Supported by the European Council

Date	Activities Requested or Supported
10.3.2020 Video Conference	Stressed the need for a joint European approach and a close coordination with the EC. EC will closely monitor economic developments in the EU and take all necessary initiatives.
17. 3. 2020 Video Conference	Endorsed guidelines proposed by the EC on border management. Welcomed the decision taken by the EC to adopt a prior authorisation for the export of medical equipment. Supported the EC effort to (1) engage with the industry; (2) to run joint public procurements that had been recently launched and those which were to be shortly finalised to provide sufficient protective equipment; (3) and the purchase of protective equipment through the Civil Protection Framework. Supported the various initiatives taken by the EC in the areas of the Single Market, such as the adaptation of the State Aid rules, and the use of the flexibilities provided for in the Stability and Growth Pact and the recourse to the EU budget.

26. 3. 2020 Video Conference	Leaders called on the EC to continue and accelerate its efforts to help in this respect (fight against Covid-19). Leaders asked the EC to explore ways to speed up procedures concerning joint procurement initiatives for personal protective equipment, ventilators and testing supplies. The EC will increase the initial budget for the strategic rescEU stockpile of medical equipment, including for intensive care, and vaccines and therapeutics. Leaders welcomed the initiatives taken by the EC, the European Innovation Council and the European Investment Bank (EIB) Group to provide financial support for the clinical and public health response to the Covid-19 disease. The EC Temporary Framework for state aid measures to support the economy in the current Covid-19 outbreak constitutes a major step forward. Leaders welcomed the EC guidelines on the screening of foreign direct investment. The EC will put forward an addendum to the border management guidelines to facilitate transit arrangements for repatriated EU citizens.
23. 4. 2020 Video Conference	We have therefore tasked the Commission to analyse the exact needs and to urgently come up with a proposal that is commensurate with the challenge we are facing (unprecedented economic crisis). The EC proposal should clarify the link with the MFF, which in any event will need to be adjusted to deal with the current crisis and its aftermath.
19. 6. Video Conference	Debates with the EC on MFF and Recovery Fund.
17.-21. 7. 2020 Special Meeting	Approval of Next Generation EU, Recovery Fund and MFF.
15.-16. 10. 2020 Regular Meeting	It calls on the Council, the EC and the Member States to continue the overall coordination effort based on the best available science, notably regarding quarantine regulations, cross-border contact tracing, testing strategies, the joint assessment of testing methods, the mutual recognition of tests, and the temporary restriction on non-essential travel into the EU.
29. 10. 2020 Video Conference	Leaders will work on the basis of the EC recommendation on testing strategies presented on 28 October. On tracing, EU leaders discussed the initiative on interoperability between apps tabled by the EC and work on a common passenger locator form, which would likewise facilitate tracing.

19. 11. 2020 Video Conference	We welcome that Member States and the EC have already finalised several Advance Purchase Agreements.
10.-11.12. 2020 Regular Meeting	The European Council welcomes the recent positive announcements on the development of effective vaccines against Covid-19 and the conclusion of advance purchase agreements by the EC. Invites the EC to present a proposal for a Council recommendation on a common framework for rapid antigen tests and for the mutual recognition of test results.

Source: Author, based on Council Conclusions and Remarks by President Charles Michel

From Table 1 it is evident that the Commission received a broad political mandate to manage the Covid-19 crisis. Already on 10th March 2020 there was a mandate to "take all necessary initiatives". In the following months, the Commission functioned as the implementor of the will of the European Council, utilised its expert role (with the great contribution of advisory experts) and acted as "the engine of integration". The efforts of the Commission were directed by "invitations" to submit proposals which might be associated with the will of member states to delegate responsibility over solutions to the Commission and utilisation of its expert potential. Nonetheless, the Commission used an inclusive approach to enhance an objective attitude and also consulted external experts.

At the beginning of March Ursula von der Leyen established at the political level a "Coronavirus Response Team" with the aim of covering various areas (or dimensions) of the pandemic, including medical, economic, transport etc. The new Coronavirus Response Team was based on three pillars: the first medical pillar (areas of prevention, procurement, foresight and relief information); the second pillar based on mobility involving transport and Schengen-related issues; and the third pillar – aimed at the economy with reference to tourism, transport, trade etc. Ursula von der Leyen put individual Commissioners in charge including Janez Lenarčič (in charge of crisis management), Stella Kyriakides (health issues), Ylva Johansson (border issues), Adina Vălean (mobility) and Paolo Gentiloni (macroeconomic aspects) [European Commission 2020e]. It is important to note that the European Commission was seeking advice for its political steps including new legislation.

On 17th March 2020, a new group of experts was established to advise the European Commission. The so called "Commission's Advisory Panel on Covid-19" had quite a broad mandate to cover Covid-19 related issues and to complement and capitalise on the work of the ECDC. The group was composed of 12 experts: 9 national experts[6] type A (Individual expert appointed in his/her capacity) and 3 type E observing experts (Other public entity) representing the Emergency Response Coordination Centre, the ECDC and the EMA. National experts were recognised authorities, mainly professors with research experience, some also with political experience. Among them there were 3 epidemiologists, 3 virologists, 1 specialist on microbiology, a vet

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[6] Representing France, Germany, Spain, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Hungary and Belgium.

doctor and a former Minister of Health. The expert group met on average ever three weeks with varying intensity. For example, there were six meetings in March, but no meetings in June, August or September, which probably reflects the development of the intensity of the pandemics. In mid-November 2020 there was the first meeting of the Covid-19 national scientific advice platform, whose aim was to ensure and facilitate more co-ordinated scientific advice on health measures in the EU. It was a platform for peer exchange and coordination among scientific advisors to national governors which also complemented the President's Covid-19 advisory panel and the work of the ECDC. Moreover, it also complemented the advisory panel created by the European Commission in March 2020. By the end of 2020, there were three meetings (13th November, 20th November and 3rd December) [European Commission 2020f].

On many occasions the European Commission acted in its own capacity including drafts of the new legislation or amending existing ones. For example, at the beginning of April the European Commission proposed to activate the Emergency Support Instrument which basically meant providing direct help to the healthcare sector from the EU budget. Within 12 days, on 14th April 2020, the Council approved a Euro 2,7 billion Instrument. Via the Instrument, the European Commission funded the purchase of 10 million protective masks with the first batch (1,5 million) arriving at the beginning of May and distributed in 17 member states [European Commission 2020g]. States were invited to apply for funding transport operations via the Emergency Support Instrument to transport goods, medical teams or patients. One of the pilot operations was the delivery of over half a million protective masks to Bulgaria [European Commission 2020h]. Later in 2020 the instrument was used to finance the purchase of 20 million rapid antigen tests from Abbott and Roche companies, which will be available from early 2021 to all member states [European Commission 2020i]. At the end of April the European Parliament and the Council adopted amendments to the Medical Devices Regulation guaranteeing patient health and safety and the availability of medical devices.[7] However, directives and decisions were rarely used as management tools. The European Commission frequently relied on guidelines (issued as communications) and recommendations: they contributed to the sharing of good practice and provided strategies. For example on 16th of June the European Commission published an EU vaccines strategy, to stimulate the development, manufacture and deployment of vaccines across the EU. It is interesting that the Commission talked about a timeframe between 12 and 18 months to develop safe and available vaccines [European Commission 2020j]. Retrospectively, the frame was very precise and matched reality as an effective vaccine was approved at the end of 2020 and distributed in December 2020. In July, the Commission presented immediate short-term measures for strengthening EU health preparedness in the case of future Covid-19 outbreaks where derived "lessons learned" were presented, including a plan

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[7] Regulation (EU) 2020/561 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2020 amending Regulation (EU) 2017/745 on medical devices, as regards the dates of application of certain of its provisions (Text with EEA relevance)

of actions to be taken [European Commission 2020k.] In mid-October, it published another communication aimed at national vaccination strategies including recommendations to consider for priority groups and assured states that the vaccine would be available for all states at the same time [European Commission 2020l]. When the situation worsened the Commission presented additional actions aimed at prevention and an effective response, especially in the areas of testing, contact tracing and preparation for vaccination campaigns [European Commission 2020o]. One of the recommendations issued was aimed at the use of antigen tests [European Commission 2020p]. Antigen tests were also the subject of harmonisation as the Commission adopted a proposal establishing a common framework for the use, validation and mutual recognition of rapid antigen tests [European Commission 2020q]. Before Christmas, the Commission adopted a strategy for the sustainable management of the pandemic during the winter period and announced that further guidance would follow [European Commission 2020r].

During the crisis, the Commission used its politico-administrative hybridity and this active approach was soon transferred into an ambitious plan. On 11th November, the European Commission published a proposal to create a "European Health Union". It was primarily a set of actions to enhance the health security framework, to enhance EU crisis preparedness and the response role of the relevant EU agencies. The Commission proposed to declare emergency situations at an EU level, take risk management decisions at an EU level, harmonise EU, national and regional preparedness plans, conduct regular audit and stress-tests preparedness plans and to monitor supply of medicine and mitigate shortages. In relation to these aims the ECDC and EMA received a stronger mandate "to monitor" or "to coordinate" the relevant activities ensuring the required outputs. Moreover, the Commission opened a debate to create a new authority which would work on EU health emergency preparedness and response – an authority which would support the capacity to respond to cross-border chemical, biological and nuclear threats, epidemics, emerging diseases and pandemic influenza. It is important to note that both proposals[8] had a legal basis consistent with the existing regulations (Article 168 TFEU), they were in line with subsidiarity, proportionality and did not supersede competences of member states, despite being developed in the area of non-exclusive competences. To sum up, despite the ambitious term "European Health Union" the content of the notion is of a functional and relatively specific nature, rather than a political project with ill-defined contours. However, as expected, the European Commission used the crisis to improve the specification of competences and extend the supranational level of the EU governance, which was fully in line with the nature of the threat. The following section explores the development of measures introduced in all policy areas relevant to healthcare.

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[8] Proposal for a Regulation of The European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 establishing a European Centre for disease prevention and control and Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a reinforced role for the European Medicines Agency in crisis preparedness and management for medicinal products and medical devices.

EUROPEANISATION OF POLICY

During the pandemic there were two categories of policy measures. First, there were instant short-term measures at the beginning of the pandemic (such as the activation of the EU Civil Protection mechanism to repatriate EU citizens and provide consular support to EU citizens in Wuhan) [European Commission 2020s]. Activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism allowed the sending of EU medical teams to areas. Doctors and nurses from Romania and Norway were working in Milan and Bergamo to reduce pressures on Italian hospitals. The mechanism was often used for the transfer of aid. For example, when the situation in Italy was severe [La Foresta 2020, 73], Austria sent 3 thousand litres of disinfectant and Slovakia provided gloves [European Commission 2020t]. The mechanism was coordinated and co-financed by the European Commission. The EU Civil Protection mechanism was linked to material aid. In the second half of March the Commission decided to create a RescEU stockpile – a strategic stockpile of medical equipment including ventilators, protective masks and later this included vaccines, therapeutics and laboratory supplies. RescEU was put under the authority of the Emergency Response Coordination Centre while supplies would be hosted by member states with 90 % financial coverage by the European Commission [European Commission 2020u]. Among the first countries to host RescEU equipment were Germany and Romania. Four other member states soon followed: Denmark, Hungary, Greece and Sweden. In May, 330 thousand FFP2 masks from the RescEU reserves were transferred to Italy, Spain and Croatia [European Commission 2020v]. Later aid was also delivered to Montenegro and North Macedonia European Commission 2020w]. In October 30 RescEU ventilators arrived in Czechia [European Commission 2020x].

Second, there were long-term policy measures which had an impact over a longer time horizon. Among many, on 31st January the EU mobilised the first 10 million Euro for the area of research and innovation under the Horizon 2020 scheme to support research of the novel coronavirus. As a result, the Commission launched an emergency call to stimulate new projects in this area [Single Electronic Data Exchange Area 2020]. It is important to note that Research was one of the key policy outcomes during Covid-19 with increasing significance over time. That is why by March the European Commission had scaled up the emergency call. At the end of March there were 18 funded projects worth Euro 48,5 million from Horizon 2020 which employed 140 research teams [European Commission 2020y]. However, it is important to mention that the European Commission also financially supported individual companies. For example, during March the EC offered up to Euro 80 million to CureVac – a German vaccine developer [European Commission 2020z]. As of July, a Euro 75 million loan agreement was signed to stimulate development.

Later, during May 2020, in total 8 large scale research projects (5 focusing on diagnostics and 3 on treatment) were selected for further funding via Innovative Medicines Initiative (a public-private partnership). Moreover, a new call for expression of inter-

est was opened up and Horizon 2020 was boosted by an additional Euro 122 million [European Commission 2020i]. Research was also boosted in June when another 166 million were provided to 36 companies via the European Innovation Council Accelerator Pilot and to another 36 companies via Horizon 2020 [European Commission 2020aa]. However, in many cases the companies were cross financed from various public and private resources. For example, an immunotherapy company BioNTech Se received Euro 100 billion funding via the European Investment Bank, backed by Horizon2020, InnovFin and the European Fund for Strategic Investments [European Commission 2020ab]. Another boost came in August, when the Commission supported another 23 research projects including 347 research teams with Euro 128 million under Horizon 2020. Research was one of the most important pillars of the EU response: next to the finance of the projects and their own contribution through the Joint Research Centre, the European Commission supported science in information exchange. In mid-April 2020 the European Commission launched the European Covid-19 Data Platform to support research, networking and the sharing of available data [Covid-19 Data Portal 2020]. At the end of 2020 there were over 260 thousand publications, 174 000 records on viral sequences, 5 400 records on host sequences, 2700 records on biochemistry regarding Covid-19 pathways, interactions, complexes, targets or compounds and a lot of other data.

However, the most important pillar was the support of the economy. Already on 10th March 2020 the Commission received a mandate from the health ministers to strengthen its response to the Coronavirus. As a result the "Corona Investment Initiative" was launched. The initiative was worth Euro 60 billion of unused money dedicated to the cohesion policy. The sum was aimed at helping the health care systems, small and medium size enterprises, labour markets and other parts of the economy [European Commission 2020ac]. Later on, almost all economic tools including structural funds, the multiannual financial framework and other measures including the Recovery Fund were targeted in the fight against Covid-19. It is out of the scope of this article to deal with the economic dimension which is related to EU trade policy, the common market and its regulatory aspects or for support for individual economic areas including agriculture, tourism, transport, small and medium sized enterprises etc.

For example, when states started to apply restrictive measures on their borders the European Commission started to worry about free movement. That is why guidelines for member states were published to ensure free movement of goods, services and persons. Guidelines distinguished between border control checks and health checks and promoted the rule that entry of the ill should not be refused but access to healthcare should be provided [European Commission 2020ad]. In late March 2020, the European Commission published guidelines to ensure free movement of workers in critical occupations including heath and associate professionals, child and elderly care workers, scientists in health-related industries or technicians able to in-

stall medical devices [European Commission 2020ae]. The approach of the European Commission resulted at the beginning of April in the issuing of practical guidelines to support cross-border healthcare cooperation with the aim of transferring patients from overburdened hospitals or qualified personnel across borders [European Commission 2020af].

To ensure sufficient numbers of personal protective equipment, at the best price, the EU Commission initiated joint procurements. Producers of protective equipment were asked to make offers. Within three weeks producers had to submit offers covering the needs of the EU. Moreover, in mid-March 2020, the European Commission also adopted restrictive measures and exporters of personal protective equipment had to ask for export authorisation approved by member states [Official Journal of the European Union 2020]. While exports were restricted, imports of medical equipment was eased when the Commission temporarily waived custom duties and VAT [European Commission 2020ag]. When the situation developed and medical companies were close to successfully passing all of the requirements for introducing a vaccine, the Commission also decided to exempt the vaccine from VAT.

A very important element was the stimulation of the development and production of new medical supplies and their placement on the European market while ensuring high safety standards. For that reason, the European Committee for Standardisation and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation made standards freely available to all interested parties. As a result in total 11 standards (e. g. respiratory protective devices, medical face masks, personal eye-protection, protective and surgical clothing and medical gloves) were provided and producers were not required to purchase those standards and use them in accordance with intellectual property rights [European Commission 2020ah].

Along with protective equipment, the Commission also worried about the availability of medicines. For that purpose it issued guidelines for member states how to optimize supply and ensure the availability of medicines [European Commission 2020ai]. Some medicines got special attention. For example at the end of July the Commission signed a contract with the company Gilead to gain treatment doses of Remdesivir (Veklury). It was the first medicine authorised at EU level for the treatment of Covid-19, and the European Commission secured deliveries starting from early August [European Commission 2020aj]. Medication and treatment was of immediate importance, however, from a longer perspective, it was necessary to focus on a vaccine.

The European Commission was in negotiation with several companies to ensure sufficient quantity of vaccine. One of the first negotiations took place with Sanofi-GSK to buy 300 million doses on behalf of all EU Member states [European Commission 2020aj]. Positive talks were also conducted with companies Johnson & Johnson, Moderna, CureVac and AstraZeneca to buy potential vaccine. On 27 August, the European Commission concluded its first contract with AstraZeneca to buy 300

million doses of vaccine available to the member states, distributed on a population based pro-rata basis. The sixth company which concluded exploratory talks with the Commission was BioNTech-Pfizer. On 18th September, 3 weeks after the contact with AstraZeneca, the European Commission signed a second contract to buy 300 million doses of the Sanofi-GSK vaccine [European Commission 2020al]. In about another three weeks, on 8th October 2020 the European Commission concluded its third contract for 200 million doses of vaccine with Janssen Pharmaceutica NV – a company from the Johnson & Johnson family [European Commission 2020am]. The fourth contract for 200 million doses was approved on 11th November with companies BioNTech and Pfizer [European Commission 2020an]. The fifth contract was concluded on 17th November with the CureVac company for 225 million doses [European Commission 2020ao]. The Commission signed the sixth contract on 25th December with the Moderna company for an initial purchase of 80 million doses [European Commission 2020ap]. After all six contracts were signed, the European Commission opened new talks with a seventh potential company – Novavax – and envisaged a contract to purchase another 100 million doses [European Commission 2020aq]. However, the virtual race for vaccine was won three days before Christmas by BioNTech and Pfizer, who succeeded in getting authorisation for conditional marketing.

The European Commission also joined the Covid-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility (COVAX) with the aim to ensure equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines for all who need them and pledged a contribution of Euro 400 million in guarantees [European Commission 2020ar]. The Commission was also active in collaboration with WHO. In September, the first High Level Facilitation Council took place composed of governmental and non-governmental actors (BMGF and Welcome Trust) which served as a political umbrella for roughly 200 vaccine candidates, 1700 clinical trials and 80 diagnostics. During November 2020, the EU's contribution to the COVAX Facility was increased by Euro 100 million [European Commission 2020as].

Some of the policy measures had an impact on third countries. For example at the beginning of February, EU member states mobilised and delivered in total 12 tons of protective equipment to China. The response of the states were coordinated via the EU's Emergency Response Coordination Centre [European Commission 2020at]. As of the end of February, the number of protective devices sent to China doubled [European Commission 2020au]. However, soon after the first deliveries to China the European Commission announced a new aid package to boost global preparedness, prevention and containment of the coronavirus. The package was worth Euro 232 million. Half of the sum was allocated to the WHO and another 90 million into the Innovative Initiative – a partnership initiative involving the pharmaceutical industry. However, the remaining 15 million were sent to provide help in Africa and 3 million for the repatriation of EU citizens [European Commission 2020av]. Special emphasis was put on the Eastern dimension of the EU: the European Commission relocated Euro 140 million for the Eastern Neighbourhood countries to cover immediate needs

and another 38 million to cover the health emergency in the Western Balkans [European Commission 2020aw]. Later at the end of April 2020 the EU announced it was providing financial support of Euro 3,3 billion to the Western Balkans as a part of special package [European Commission 2020ax]. Support of Euro 105,5 million was provided to the Horn of Africa [European Commission 2020i]. As well as aid to other regions (for example considerable help also went to ASEAN), help was also pledged to initiatives. For example, in June the European Commission pledged Euro 300 million to the Gavi – Vaccination Alliance which will, in the period 2021 and 2025, help with the vaccination of over 300 million children around the world [European Commission 2020ay].

Another noteworthy activity was the launch of the Coronavirus Global Response to help all around the World and a "pledging summit" organised by the European Commission which succeeded in generating Euro 6,15 billion to ensure access to tests, treatments and vaccines. All together the EU raised almost Euro 16 billion where the majority was provided by the member states, the Commission and the European Investment Bank [European Union 2020]. The Commission also established a humanitarian air-bridge to transfer humanitarian workers and emergency supplies all around the world (e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Haiti, Congo, Sudan, Central African Republic, Sao Tomé e Príncipe, Venezuela, Peru and many others) [European Commission 2020az]. The above-mentioned activities may be considered as the contribution by the EU to a relatively rare global solidarism [see Widłak 2020]. The above-mentioned response is a summary of the main EU activities which might be supported by a variety of others – less material or "soft" measures. For example, the Commission recommended steps and measures to develop mobile applications which might be used to deal with the pandemic [European Commission 2020aaa]. Such applications might include ones informing their users that they were in contact with a person who tested positive for Covid-19. A special emphasis was put on personal data protection which was the subject of the individual guidelines [European Commission 2020aab]. In October, the first results were delivered, and the EU wide system "Gateway" was put into operation integrating national applications including the German Corona-Warn-App, the Irish "Covid tracker" and the Italian "Immuni" [European Commission 2020ak]. Considerable activities were continuing online. The Coronavirus became a valuable topic for disinformation and hostile foreign propaganda, which in many cases switched from migration related conspiracies to the Covid-19 [Ižák 2020, 93]. The 2020 EUvsDisinfo database (a flagship of the European External Action Service's East StratCom Task Force) recorded 693 instances of disinformation regarding coronavirus, most with clear anti-western and pro-Russian narrative [EUvsDisinfo 2020]. Disinformation slowly turned from blaming the West (USA, NATO) for the creation of the virus to supporting opposition against vaccination in the West and glorifying the Russian Sputnik V vaccine with the aim to alienate the western population against their governments and the EU. As pointed out by Ark-

adiusz Modrzejewski, the Covid-19 crisis is providing a unique opportunity to look at the value of truth "without any adjectives" [Modrzejewski 2020, 236], which has important implications for public life. Moreover, it is a unique opportunity to improve public policies.[9]

CONCLUSION

This article has considered the response of the EU towards the spread of Covid-19 in the context of Europeanisation. The main aim of the article was to discover what the EU response was in relation to the EU *polity, politics* and *policy*. After the introduction of the Europeanisation concept and the broader political and legal context, further analysis was aimed at providing answers to the two principal research questions: 1) *How the response of the EU in the area of health and healthcare might be interpreted in the context of Europeanisation?* 2) *What were the key differences in Europeanisation in the area of health and healthcare between the first and second wave?*

The response of the EU in the area of health and healthcare reflects its competences as defined in article 6 TFEU. However, due to the inter-sectoral nature of the pandemic the response of the EU varied. In the area of the single market the Commission acted more authoritatively, though nonetheless in line with the needs and expectations of member states which instructed the Commission via the European Council and various intergovernmental bodies including the Council of Ministers. The above analysis showed that most of the measures were in the form of recommendations and guidelines. Moreover, in many aspects, member states invited the Commission to prepare proposals and offer solutions. This might be put in the context of the Commission's expert nature. In this regard some sort of top down Europeanisation might be observed.

The Covid crisis also resulted in a bottom-up Europeanisation, or some sort of Europeanisation development at the EU level without a transfer of competences. In the case of strengthening the mandate of the European Medicines Agency and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the Commission used the existing legal basis to clarify and extend the tasks of the agencies without intervening with the powers of member states. Similarly, the Commission used various expert advisory bodies, which were created for the purpose. Overall, the Commission utilised its role as a "politico-administrative" hybrid and motor of integration with proposing initiatives filling the gaps. This might be the case for RescEU or various measures aimed at better crisis management. Similarly to other crisis situations (economic or migration), the EU reacted with the development of institutions, tools and policies to deal with the crisis and fill the gaps by utilising a supranational form of cooperation. This cooperation became vital as it would hardly have been possible to secure best practices and ensure the availability of sufficient number of vaccines without the

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[9] A very interesting debate is present in Dyomkin, D. (2021), Pandemic Lessons for Democracies: High Time To Provide Journalism as Essential Service with a Final Lifeline. In European Studies – The Review of European Law, Economics and Politics, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2021.

help of the Commission. Despite the fact that daily management was carried out by the member states, EU institutions supplied leaders and decision- makers with the best information available.

There are several differences between the first and second wave or between the first and second half of the year with a hardly recognisable transition period. During the first period most of the activities focused on short term measures and immediate help in order to secure the return of citizens from abroad, provision of help via the activated EU Civil Protection Mechanism and providing initial funds to cover immediate costs caused by the outbreak of the pandemic. The EU worked to ensure the free movement of persons necessary for fighting the pandemic and avoid unnecessary restrictions introduced by member states, worked to secure protection devices by offering commercial stimulus (VAT and import reductions, export restriction, providing standards) and capacity development (RescEU).

In the long-term perspective the EU succeeded in stimulating research funding and later negotiated with prospective medical companies to ensure enough doses of vaccine were available at a reasonable price. In line with this progress, the EU provided guidelines and strategic recommendations for member states to prepare vaccination and ensure the availability of medicines. Because of the multi-sectoral impact of the pandemic, it was necessary to adopt a Next Generation EU package, Recovery fund and adapt the Multiannual Financial Framework. In the following years billions of Euros will be invested into the economies of member states to deal with the subsequent economic crisis caused by the virus. Due to the clear transboundary and multi-dimensional nature of the pandemics, the EU provided added value to national approaches by giving expert guidance, resources and the maximization of opportunities. However, despite the multi-dimensional impact of Covid-19, the agenda within health policy is just one segment. Treatment of heart attacks, strokes, cancer, obesity, the effects of tobacco and alcohol consumption, mental health and many other relevant policy areas were somehow lagging. On the other side, the fight against the Covid-19 pandemics clearly uncovered the potential and possibilities for deeper cooperation regarding medical supplies, vaccination strategies, cross-border care, health related research, emergency response and capacity building which might in the future lead to a comprehensive EU health policy. On 28 May 2020, the European Commission presented a new proposal for reinforcing the EU health programme for the period 2021-2027 called the "EU4Heath Programme" [European Council 2020b]. It is expected that this new strengthened programme will result in a considerable fourfold increase in funding) and will strengthen the role of the EU to complement and support the health policy of the member states. It is no doubt that this strengthening would not happen without the common experience of Covid-19.

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GENERATION COVID-19: ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL?

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Abstract

The outbreak of a global pandemic related to Sars-Cov-2 also known as Coronavirus or COVID-19 since late 2019 and early 2020 has caused significant turnover in the everyday health, political, economic and social situation and behaviour of individuals as well as society. Despite the adoption of immediate measures from states and 21st Century medicine the pandemic shows the vulnerability of individuals and particular groups of society. That said, the consequences will be broad; not only those who suffer from direct disease consequences but we anticipate the associated difficulties following the post-pandemic development and impacts. In this paper we focus specifically on the political and social consequences of a pandemic towards youth policy, youth unemployment and education limits in promoting youth well-being.

Key words: *youth, COVID-19, youth unemployment, well-being*

INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of a COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed social and other standards of population as a whole including specific phenomena associated with pandemic management and crisis measures. The adoption of restrictions limiting citizens´ rights and freedoms anticipating the need to protect global health have had, and will have long term consequences, specifically in a negative way. While there is an urgent need to save lives, protect economies and take care of elderly people since they constitute a vulnerable and fragile part of population, the same should be applied towards children and youth as drivers of future developments. Several studies have devoted their research to study the situation of children [6-12 years], adolescents [13-17 years] and young adults [18-24 years] as groups of population directly or indirectly affected by Coronavirus disease [CDC 2021; Leavey et al. 2020; OECD 2020]. Most of the research results include findings related to health issues, youth labour market consequences as well as their access to education and training. Young people, especially Generation Z and Generation Alpha but also including Generation Y, also known as Millenials, are facing unprecedented situations. Thus said, it is known that children and young people born between 1990 and 2005 have already faced another global shock during the economic crisis which escalated after 2008; now they are facing another crisis coupled by direct health risk exposure related to COVID-19 [OECD 2020]. Researchers and scholars are aware that such direct shocks and exposures to vulnerable groups of the population will have long-term consequences for their education [Molnárová, Rošteková 2020], career development as well as mental well-being. An important part of coping with these critical scenarios is the position of national and supranational governments to secure the future of children and young people to be able to cope with the transitions from post-pandemic developments and trajectories. Studies have already pointed to a very adverse impact, e.g. in the field of formal education, especially for children and young people. For example, in the case of the Slovak Republic, UNESCO states that government pandemic measures and restrictions have negatively affected 988,103 children and young people with approximately two-thirds of those affected in primary and secondary education [UNESCO 2020]. Thus said, almost one-fifth of the Slovak population has directly undergone the effects of the transition from the traditional form of education to distance learning which bring negative impacts on the development of children and youth, not only in basic literacy, socialisation or autonomy, but also in broader economic and social contexts including their positive trajectory towards active citizenship.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the pandemic and post-pandemic developments in the youth social, economic, political and health situation in relation to trends of youth policy making and their well-being. Since the category of youth constitute a vital part of each state population and the generation that will take part in political, economic and social leadership in the future, it is essential to assess and evaluate the impacts of a pandemic towards their well-being. We argue that the current position

of youth in the political, economic and social reality is not only an assumption of the current state of the pandemic situation of an individual, on the contrary, impacts of the pandemic and, especially after it, open a critical set of concerns about their future, access to education, job prospectives, health impacts and disruptions in everyday social interactions. This is what constitutes the major concerns in relation to children, adolescents and youth well-being. Again, as we stress, it is rather important to listen to this particular proportion of the global population, since direct interventions and actions aimed at children and youth will be essential to diminish the negative effects of a pandemic and to propose safeguards to guarantee better future scenarios for post-pandemic youth development.

1. GENERATION COVID-19[1]

Current evidence shows that young people aged 12-24 are one of the groups most affected by the pandemic measures, resulting in economic and social impacts especially in terms of labour market and mental health outcomes [Leavay, Eastaugh, Kane 2020]. The authors declare that COVID-19 measures require many people to cope with a completely different way of life while struggling with the pandemic and its ensuing economic crisis. As a result of the ongoing measures needed to protect health, young people especially face persistent economic and social challenges that threaten their long-term health and well-being which ultimately impacts their foundations for adulthood transitions [Leavay, Eastaugh, Kane 2020].

The COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally changed political [in terms of civic] and social standards and some phenomena associated with crisis measures and state management for society as a whole that will have major critical impacts even after the pandemic is over. Crisis outcomes cause critical scenarios not only in education, and health, but also in political socialisation, trust in political institutions or political leaders, also a wave of social awareness in the context of political communication and some conspiracy theories have a major impact on the value orientation of not only young people in relation to the democratic exercise of power. By way of illustration, the transition to distance forms of education has contributed to a deepening of inequalities in the education of children and young people while some of them had no or limited access to education. A Slovak study by the Institute for Educational Policy proves that more than 44% of children aged 6 to 11 live in overcrowded households and do not have the physical space to learn; an estimated 32,000 primary school pupils are without an internet connection, 40% of Roma children do not have internet access at all [Bednárik et al. 2020]. Overall, 7.5% of high school students were not involved in distance education and 18.5% were not educated online [Ostertágová, Čokyna 2020]. The findings of research conducted in Slovakia correlate with the conclusions presented in several available studies assessing the impact on education

systems and the educated generation worldwide. For example, the effects of limited access to education on the overall mental state of youth are reported in a 2020 OECD study; a 2020 UNFPA study; and a 2020 ILO study dealing with the interconnection of the mental balance of young people [surviving anxiety and depression due to social isolation] with their civic activism in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which only confirms one of the starting points of the present research, namely that COVID-19 will have formative impacts on youth.

The above problems represent only a narrow set of complexities of the problem, the consequences of which will gradually manifest themselves over time. Many studies confirm the causal relationship between the level and quality of education toward the promotion of democracy: from democratic institutions and democratic processes through the preferences of democratically minded political parties [Gadarian, Goodman, Pepinsky 2020] to the overall level of confidence in the economy and society [Claasen 2019]. Failure in the educational process can thus lead to a chain reaction that will result in the strengthening of illiberal and authoritarian tendencies in society, an increase in populism and support for anti-system parties [Bol, Giani, Blais, Loewen 2020]. The lowering of the education level of the population will be reflected in the possible decline of political culture followed by a decline in political trust including political institutions, which will result in distrust in public policy and its individual sectors. The findings of this prior research create space for monitoring the consequences of a pandemic on specific groups of the population. An important factor influencing the value settings of contemporary youth is the level of their media literacy. It is a fact that young people spend the vast majority of their free time on social networks, which have become their main source of information. The problem in this case seems to be the inability to identify the relevant source of information, which makes them prone to trust the conspiracies and misinformation that often undermine the basic pillars of democracy.

According to a survey by the Focus agency for the Youth Council of Slovakia, only 16% of young people aged 15-24 verify the sources and up to a third of them incline to alternative websites that often spread hoaxes and misinformation. Such websites or social networking sites have long undermined young people's confidence in traditional media. It is alarming that, according to the survey, up to 83% of young people receive information from social media contributions [Youth Council of Slovakia 2019]. Facebook and Instagram thus significantly co-create the reality of young people and shape their value orientations. The COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to fear of an uncertain future, is causing an enormous increase in mistrust and conspiracies against which young people, due to a lack of media literacy are not sufficiently immune. This raises the question of whether hoaxes and misinformation have an impact on the support of democracy and its basic pillars by young people. As can be seen from the available studies, all of the above can be considered a trend that is as relevant in other countries around the world. Individual expert studies and research carried

out so far, in terms of identifying and examining the change that has taken place in all areas of each society affected by this epidemic, focus on partial issues depending on the scientific field. They identify areas where, after the end of the first lockdown, deterioration in young people's lives has been identified, in particular in areas such as the emotional state of young people in terms of impaired ability to concentrate and carry out daily activities, and identify key themes, namely mental health, housing, work, social relationships, creating and perceiving your future [Deckman, McDonald, Rouse, Kromer 2020]. From the perspective of the surveyed youth, studies have shown the complex and overlapping nature of the problems faced by young people, many of which were pre-pandemic [Generations X, Y, Z and Alpha] and were exacerbated by the crisis.

We believe that young people, as an extremely current and especially future political and civic constant of any political system, now require increased attention. The impact has also been observed at the territorial, political and governance dimensions of the crisis [Dodds et al. 2020]. The period between 15 and 24 years is a crucial period for building and maintaining relationships with family, friends and the wider community. Here, the results of recent studies have shown how important technologies are for them to build and maintain relationships during the lockdown and how much uncertainty they have about the future of society and their role in it [UK Youth 2020; Leavay, Eastaugh, Kane 2020; Polakovic 2020].

2. YOUTH POLICY AT ITS BEST?

Youth in general represents a specific category of the world's population which bears specific social and demographic characteristics. Youth can be understood as an age cohort ranging within 15-30 years of life. It is therefore the age at which individuals begin to accept themselves as full citizens [for example, obtaining an identity card], become young adults and formally activate their civil and political rights. At the same time, a youth is a person who is trying to access and obtain secondary and tertiary education, inclusion in the work life cycle and is considering establishing their own family. Macháček considers youth to be a sociological term "that allows a certain part of young people to be understood as an age-social group" [Macháček 2015: 36]. In addition to the above, young people represent a certain sociological group, age and socio-political cohort of young people, who are characterised by general, but especially specific biological-psychological, socio-economic and civic-political characteristics [Macháček 2015: 36-37]. It is important to distinguish that the youth category does not represent an aggregated mass; whether from an ideological, value, economic or social point of view. On the contrary, young people represent heterogeneous attitudes, preferences, diverse interests and forms of involvement in social and political life. However, age distinction alone does not stand up to the comparative perspective of nation states and international organisations. The United Nations [UN], for example, states that for statistical purposes it defines young people as persons between

the ages of 15 and 24, in compliance with the applicable national legislation [Secretary-General's Report to the General Assembly 1981; 1985]. Therefore, the age range of youth usually oscillates between 15 to 30 years of age.

Youth policy belongs to one of the key sectoral policies of the supranational, national, regional and local levels of government in the European perspective. Youth represents a specific category of the population, an internationally standardised age and socio-demographic category of the population aged 15-30. We assume that the future of Europe depends on its youth. At the same time, research to date indicates that young people's opportunities to meet their living standards and well-being perspectives through their own work [with regard to education] are alarming in today's Europe [Mihálik 2019]. The previous *EU Youth Strategy 2010-18* set two overall objectives:

- *Investing in youth* by providing more and balanced opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market;
- *Empowering young people* by encouraging their active participation in society in a variety of ways.

To put this briefly, in terms of investing in youth a number of measures have been identified that can help to expand skills, experience and education, employment opportunities in the form of an employment relationship and self-employment to strengthen human capital [Kovacheva 2014] and include issues relating to health and the quality of life of young people [Bello 2020]. The EU Youth Strategy recognized the continuous gap between young people and the institutional system and urges policy-makers to address the following issues through action:

- Promoting dialogue with young people and promoting participation in national and European policy-making;
- Supporting youth organisations and national or local youth councils;
- Promoting the participation of under-represented groups;
- Encouraging the principle of participation from an early age;
- Promoting e-democracy, which can help disorganised young people [EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018].

The new EU Youth Strategy, which runs from 2019 to 2027, aims to solve the current and potential problems that young people in Europe face. It establishes a system of goals, values, priorities, priority areas, and measures for all relevant stakeholders to collaborate on youth policy, with a focus on engaging, bringing together, and inspiring young people. Young people need a strong role model. Young people must be involved in the development, implementation, and assessment of policies that impact them, such as the EU Youth Strategy and National Youth Strategies. It's important to be as inclusive as possible, to respond to current and future challenges, and to look at new and different ways of participating in public life. Young people go through a variety of traditional changes in their personal lives and environments, including transitioning from school to work, living on their own, forming relationships, and

beginning a family. As a result of globalisation and climate change, technological change, demographic and socioeconomic trends, populism, bigotry, social isolation, and fake news, many people are concerned about their future [EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027]. Empowering young people allows them to take control of their lives and gives them a distinct advantage in determining the trajectories that influence the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Then, it is essential to provide them with a healthy atmosphere in which they can build trust, gain education, resources, and informal ways to achieve these goals. As a result, youth policy is vital to achieving a European vision in which young people can seize opportunities which correspond to European values [EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027].

Current evidence and situational analysis of young people in Europe provides some critical social, economic and political challenges regarding youth:

• Some groups of young people have difficulties in accessing and obtaining education;
• Poverty and social exclusion still affect a high proportion of the youth population;
• The electoral turnout of young Europeans is constantly falling;
• Youth in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe faces incomparably greater challenges in education, employment and inclusion;
• The share of children and young people in the EU is constantly declining and this decline is also expected in the future [Situation of young people in the European Union 2018; Mihálik 2019].

On the contrary, compared to the post global financial crisis development [2008] there are also some positive milestones:

• Young people are educated to an increasingly higher level;
• More young people are finding employment;
• There has been some improvement in the social inclusion of young Europeans;
• Young people appear less prone to risky health behaviours;
• Young Europeans are demonstrating an increasing interest in politics and are taking advantage of the new methods of participation offered by modern technology;
• Participation in voluntary activities shows an exceptional expansion [Situation of young people in the European Union 2018].

An illustration of the critical situation which will deepen the current state of generational challenges is shown in Chart 1. The share of children and young population in the EU under the age 15 years between 1970 – 2018 is constantly declining, from 24.7% in 1970 to 15.5% in 2018.

Our previous research has confirmed some trends in youth policy such as a higher level of education and social status are related to higher participation in elections and youth unemployment reduces the likelihood of participation in elections [Mihálik 2015; Mihálik 2019]. Other studies have identified that young people in Europe show low interest in voting in a system of representative democracy. However, they tend to participate in other forms of political engagement, such as participation in demon

Chart 1: Share of young population in the EU under 15 years [% of population, 1970 – 2018]
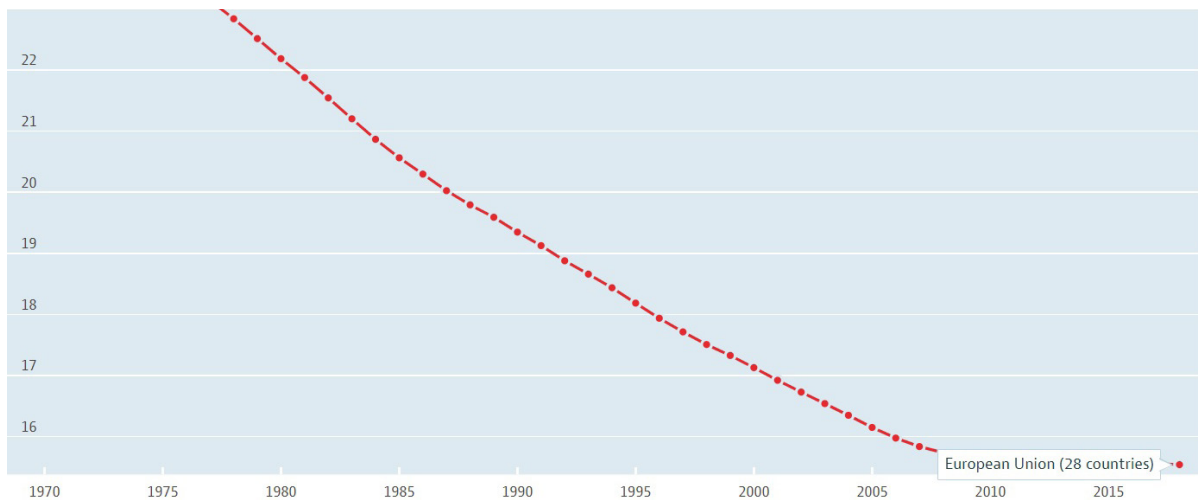
strations, petitions, consumer boycotts and access to online political forums [Rossi 2009]. The political activity of young people thus changes compared to the older generation, not only in relation to turnout. Compared to the older generation, young people are beginning to look for new forms of political engagement based on their individual attitudes. These forms are much less stable, have a horizontal structure and offer flexible forms of interventions [Sloam 2013]. Despite long-term youth work programmes, the current value orientation of youth is unsatisfactory, in addition young people's political preferences often oscillate between democratic standards and European values of democracy. It is therefore important to continue the quality training of young people in the field of education as well as to monitor trends and requirements at the level of labour relations in the context of the young generation. In the implementation of any youth research or any youth discourse we must necessarily reflect the interest in this category of population, as we assume that the European Union and the Member States are genuinely dependent on their youth, their future, their quality of life and their satisfaction with the environment in which they operate. The political values and preferences of young people are also created depending on the setting of social and political discourse towards this category of citizenship [The National Democratic Institute 2018]. Unfortunately, the very declarative view that young people are detached from the context of participatory democracy does not stand at present. It is therefore necessary to initiate the mentioned agendas, create a public discourse on the position and role of youth, permanently increase the possibilities for their involvement in decision-making processes and require the so-called *voice of youth.* Despite the relatively widespread platforms for youth work and the elimination of social stereotypes of intergenerational conflict, there is still a gap, especially in the form of a significant regional conflict in the approach to ensuring quality of life,

personal well-being, educational opportunities and the inclusion of young people in public policy. There is no systematic and comprehensive quality work with children during their pre-school preparation, formal education and non-formal educational activities which should also be critically assessed.

The literature review characterising the political values of the young generation focuses mainly on the so-called democratic paradox [Pattie 2004]; for the contradiction between a relatively stable belief in democratic values and ideas and a low level of participation in the institutions of representative democracy [Cammaerts 2014]. The departure from a formal policy for young people generates other social and economic phenomena of contemporary youth. Empirical studies have confirmed that the young generation perceives democracy as a fair and healthy tool for the organisation of society and takes a positive view of traditional concepts of democracy, choice and the creation of the will of the people [Norris 2003; Mihálik 2015].

The issues of employment, housing and the environment have become the areas of greatest interest. Communication tools such as television, the Internet and social networks are the most important sources of information that young people use to obtain information on politics and public affairs. However, these media can also serve as a space for young people to participate.

At the same time, they do not emphasise the alternative possibilities of participation in the functioning of society, while public and civic institutions [schools, family and others] do not sufficiently prepare them for active citizenship. The reluctance to enter the process of creating and building basic democratic values leads to the young generation being disillusioned with the real implementation of politics [Torcal, Montero 2006]. Julia Weiss gives another contradiction to the participatory status of the young generation in contemporary Europe: young adults are prone to vote in national elections, there is a drop of youth membership in political parties and generally a low level interest in politics and new forms of political participation that are more appealing to youth are on rise [Weiss 2020].

The crisis of the current youth policy and value orientation of young people is thus caused by the real picture of social, economic, political life, the youth migration and emigration followed by the escape of young people for better living conditions. However, this fact does not apply exclusively to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe; on the contrary, this phenomenon is also measurable in relation to the countries of Western Europe. The current value orientation of youth is therefore a truly evolutionary concept, a response to many political and social failures and an underestimation of the concept of youth work in a modern democratic pluralistic society. Young people must be part of the decision-making process, a measure of the quality of democracy, the future of the nation and of European society. It is therefore necessary to approach the evolutionary strategy of youth work responsibly, longitudinally and by adopting a pan-European perspective [Mihálik 2019].

3. GFC, COVID-19 AND YOUTH: IMPACTS OF THE TWO CRISES

Besides our aim to identify current trends in youth policy implementation in the framework of the European strategy for youth, we aim to confront new challenges that have emerged from the two crises that have had direct influence and long-term impacts towards the young generation [15-30].

The Global Financial Crisis [GFC] which occurred as a sequence of events between 2007 and 2008 and has continued over the following years has proven to be the worst economic depression and global economic disaster since the Stock Market Crash in 1929 and World War II. A lot of economic and social sciences researchers pointed their attention to unemployment rates and drops in the labour market [Čajka, Abrhám 2019] but lesser attention was paid to the very vulnerable category of youth unemployment. However, those who studied the economic recession from the youth perspective argued that GFC followed by the global economic depression has struck young people much harder than any other category of population [Choudhry, Marelli, Signorelli 2010]. Since its beginning, the social status of many young people in the EU has been deteriorating and youth have been affected by direct unemployment rates that have changed the situation over labour markets in Europe. Statistically speaking, almost 5.6 million young Europeans were unemployed in 2013 within the EU [Tschekassin 2014]. In their other later research, Choudhry, Marelli and Signorelli argue that the impact of the GFC on youth unemployment shows greater negative outcomes compared to the general, natural and continuous level of unemployment [Choudhry, Marelli, Signorelli 2012]. We may also state that research on youth unemployment prior to GFC was generally an underestimated topic in social and economic sciences research. On the contrary, these topics include critical variables such as the crisis of the education system from a local and national perspective, unemployment of young people that generates other associated phenomena such as poverty and homelessness and also situations related to regional [under]development – a lack of job opportunities for young people following migration and the emigration of young people to foreign labour markets or seeking education abroad.

Young people in Europe belong to the endangered generation in light of existing global challenges. Some authors already refer to the GFC and COVID-19 youth as a lost generation [Tamesberger, Bacher 2020]. While having a pessimist attitude towards their development, we can also perceive them as a very influential group in creating basic models of behaviour and value orientation. Their values, norms and attitudes are considered feasible and important inputs into the political and economic system. Youth values and prisms are the determinants that will affect society for the future, including youth well-being. We can perceive them sociologically through the prism of intergenerational continuity, as well as politologically with a connection to the creation of political culture. Our long-term goal in the field of youth is to identify the causes, offer solutions towards applied practice with the ambition to create policies and enter into a participatory discourse with the young generation. We believe that

for these ambitious goals, values are at the centre of attention and are an integral part of the construction of generations, or are at the core of the crystallisation of political culture, economic balance and a modern, dynamic pluralistic society. If unemployment brings problems in society, we should not ignore the changes that are necessary for the value system of those looking to engage in a society, economic life and education [Grigoryeva 2012]. The authors Chabanet and Giugni [2013] point out that labour market protection can have a negative impact and that multilateral and diverse solutions need to be applied. However, within the conditions of Central and Eastern Europe, labour market flexibility significantly increases youth unemployment, which contradicts the findings of Chabanet and Giugni. According to Furlong [2013], the phenomenon of NEETs [Not in Education, Employment or Training] has become a more complex factor [Panzaru 2013], an indicator of the young generation that does imply more than youth unemployment. The research of the OECD panel data analysis shows that growth, inflation and savings are parameters that affect youth unemployment negatively so these are among the key determinants of youth unemployment [Baylak, Tatli 2018].

While there have been improvements made in the position of the labour market and the share of youth NEETs has been slowly declining, Chart 2 below illustrates the dramatically different positions of youth NEETs in the European perspective. In 2016, for the first time since the GFC, the share of NEETs was lower than the share of inactive young people. The share of young Europeans in material need has also decreased since 2012 and 2010 [Mihálik 2019]. On the other hand, the authors Lahusen, Schulz and Graziano [2013] state that despite the EU's efforts to overcome and combat the crisis and youth unemployment, this effort has remained a severely limited and minimalist protection policy, which works more in favour of the self-employed.

In order to reduce the level of youth unemployment, we can apply several measures, especially those at the local and regional level. There are also other features that directly imply the solutions towards youth unemployment. In this context, we have to bear in mind the ongoing wave of Industrial Revolution [4.0], which, in addition to the benefits of new technologies, robotics and digitisation, uncompromisingly brings social risks including those that directly affect young people.

Offering new forms of employment for young people may oscillate on the verge of abuse. There is very limited legislation to protect adolescents and young people in the labour market, as well as limited options for starting new entrepreneurship and achieving more significant economic results. On the other hand, there is a question of how to guarantee the social securities of young employees? The search for the optimal degree of scope and nature of the legal regulation of individual categories of employees is always a compromise between the employer and the employees, but also between the capital and the individual forms of work performed. Here we mention the flexicurity of youth employment. The flexibility carries the pitfalls of having an employee always available. Previous studies have proven that flexicurity policies often

Chart 2: Youth not in employment, education or training [NEET] 15-19 year-old men / 15-19 year-old women / 20-24 year-old men / 20-24 year-old women, % in same age group, 2019
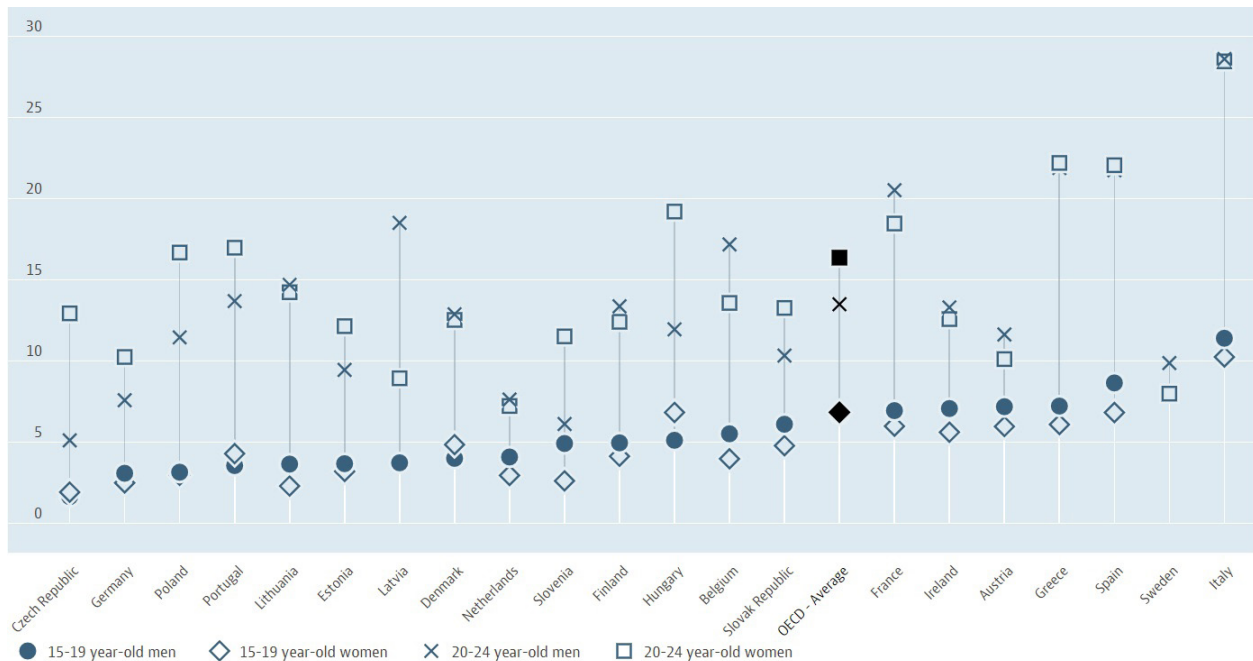
Source: Education at a glance: Transition from school to work. OECD [2021], Youth not in employment, education or training [NEET] [indicator]. doi: 10.1787/72d1033a-en [Accessed on 17 March 2021]

have a disproportionate impact on young people, specifically in the form of reducing their job security [Madsen et al. 2013 in Smith, Villa 2016]. This blurs the distinction between the work and private spheres. Any tools and means by which flexibility in employment relationships can be achieved can only be used as long as they do not violate the right to human dignity. Eamets et al. [2015] state that an effective balance of labour flexibility and security is essential although there are always blind spots [Smith, Villa 2016].

The GFC and also the COVID-19 crises have pointed at a different way of looking at the current form of industry and services and the emergence of the digital society, but also at the legal regulation of social relations, as it affects other areas of life, especially the labour market and the position of employees [young people] in the labour market and in the social and working environment.

A study by the International Labour Organisation surveyed more than 12 000 young people aged 18-29 from 112 countries in April-May 2020. Thus said, the research took place over 2 months during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic which, according to recent data, has not reached the peak of pandemic itself related to the number of deaths, health deterioration and other direct or indirect impacts on people and their social, economic or political status. The survey results have pointed and highlighted that at least three-quarters of studying youth experienced school closure while not all of them were able to join the distance and alternative learning methods [ILO 2020]. About 13% of young people were left alone without any access to edu-

cation, particularly youth from lower-income countries but this may be also true for regional disparities in well developed EU countries. The digitalisation of educational systems varies across states and show visible gaps in the already accute situation. For example, in the case of Slovakia, where schools were closed for the majority of 2020 and the first months of 2021, an absolute majority of children and young students had to undertake courses online although the systemic digital transformation of schools has been a repeated political goal since 2010. Similar results can be found in the field of employment status, which also refers back to some dimensions of GFC affecting the youth labour market. In 2020, more than 17% percent of youth were unemployed, specifically those employed as clerks, in services, sales and other related trades [ILO 2020]. Since the pandemic has been ongoing and on the rise since the early months of 2020, it is expected that these negative trends in youth unemployment will also rise. It is now mostly visible in the proportion of young people in part-time jobs where this is the category of employment that falls rapidly and also the job offers in part-time are mostly limited. The COVID-19 pandemic has also brought about the fact that following direct infection health-related diseases, the other main determinant of the crisis is employment status.

Chart 3: Youth unemployment rates: January 2008 – January 2021
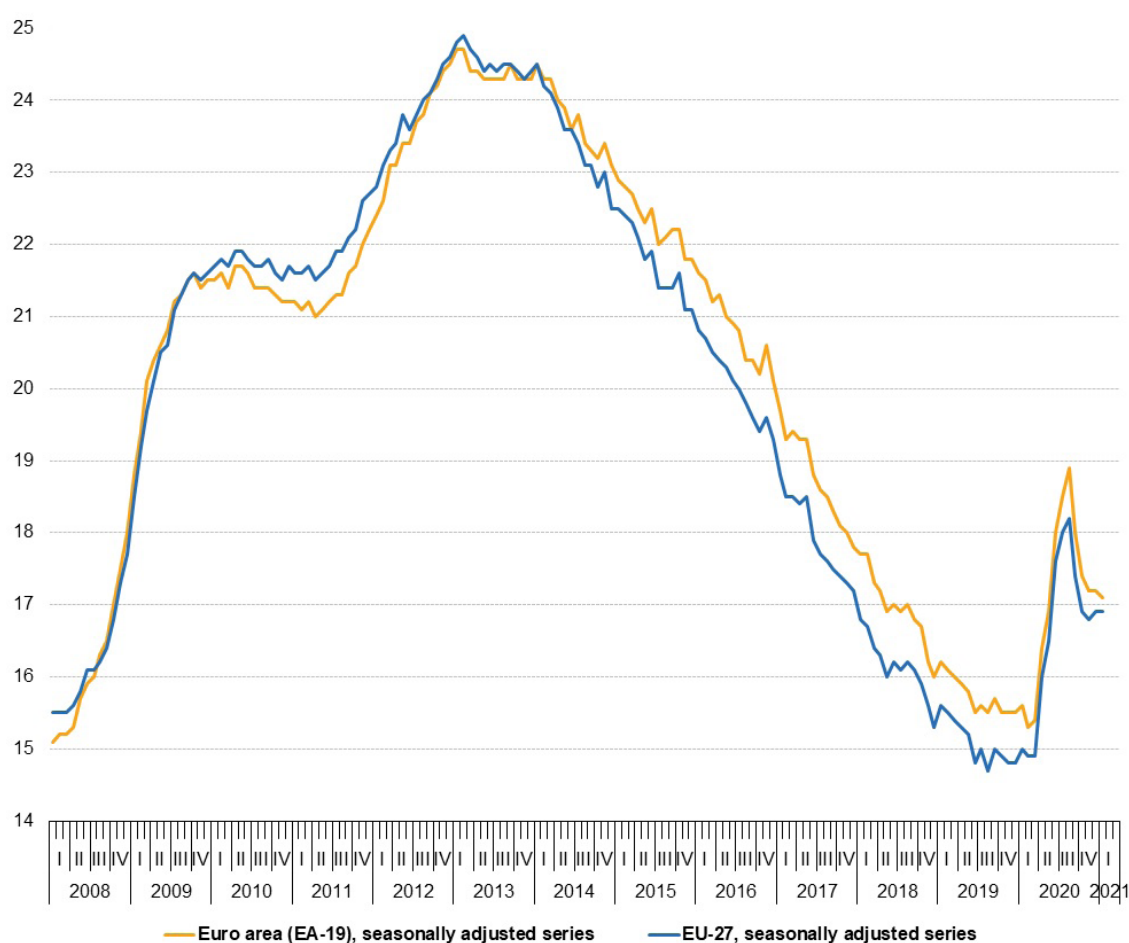
Source: Eurostat, 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/une_rt_m/default/table?lang=en

Note: The unemployment rate is considered to be a lagging indicator. *When there is an economic downturn, it usually takes several months before the unemployment rate begins to rise. Once the economy starts to pick up again, employers usually remain cautious about hiring new staff and it may take several months before unemployment rates start to fall [Eurostat 2021].*

As identified in the UNICEF report, COVID-19 is aggravating a youth [un]employment crisis, especially for those categories of people graduating from secondary schools or universities [UNICEF 2020]. More than 267 million young people were considered NEETs even before the pandemic, so how has this gap been stretched during the on-going crisis? We know for sure that the labour market has direct influence over the situation in the youth labour market: dedicated work-places are non-existent, there is a reduction in earnings from dependent work contracts, there is risk of job losses and young people are experiencing more obstacles to find work that would satisfy their expectations or be relative to their acquired education. Subsequently, illegal work and child abuse is on rise for the first time in 20 years [UNICEF 2020].

CONCLUSION

We have already discussed that the category of youth constitutes a vital part of each state population. It is very important to note that young people aged 15-24 will soon take important steps in political, economic and social leadership in the future. From these reasons it is rather inevitable to assess and evaluate the impacts of a pandemic towards future youth policies development. After more than a year of the COVID-19 outbreak, it is now possible to measure the social, economic and mental situation of youth during the ongoing pandemic situations including restrictions as adopted by particular governments. We argue that, for example, mental health is not only an assumption of the current state of mental situation of an individual. On the contrary, they are affected by the mental impact of the pandemic and especially after it opens a critical set of worries about youth future, access to education, job prospectivity, health impacts and disruptions in everyday social interactions. This is what constitutes the major concerns in relation to children, adolescent and youth mental well-being. Again, as we stress, it is rather important to listen to this particular proportion of the global population, since direct interventions and actions aimed at children and youth will be essential to diminish the negative effects of a pandemic and to propose safeguards to guarantee better scenarios in the future for post-pandemic youth development.

We are aware that the situation of young people on the labour market had been already complicated prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. The studies found that young people aged 15-24 were approximately three times more likely to become unemployed compared to the major adult population [ILO 2020]. The pandemic scenario only worsened this situation and has meant that more attention should be paid on how to diminish the current issues faced by young people in the labour market. There are still risks for young job applicants since the number of vacant labour positions are limited and the successfull transition from school to a career working cycle is more

than endangered. Young people are thus exposed to negative trends of productivity already at the beginning. On the other hand, there may be many current students unable to finish their studies on time which also brings about their worsened position to provide efficiency in their working habits, ultimately resulting in economic recession as well as a reduced state in their mental well-being. Such young people may be prone to risk behavior which is then a very negative aspect towards their and general youth well-being.

The problem is that state governments´ measures often lag behind the urgent needs of immediate interventions, which means that the impacts of the pandemic towards youth in the labour markets are more likely to escalate even when the pandemic itself is over. Similarly, distance learning methods, even though considered to be easily handled especially by young people, are inappropriate, they vary from school to school and provide for digital division between states, regions and cities. In the available data sets, many young people reported that continuation of their studies is in danger and they state that they have learnt much less compared to the standard situation. This is in line with the findings from the UN report [2020] that the impacts of COVID-19 are expected to significantly affect youth mental health, well-being and state of depression and that they will also need subsequent interventions to prevent such negative aspects. Many young people report that their future expectations are, to a large extent, impacted by the pandemic development: „the constant fear, worry and stressors in the population during the COVID-19 crisis could [will] have long-term, detrimental consequences for youth, including for example a deterioration in social networks" [Decent Jobs for Youth 2020]. From these reasons, measuring youth well-being and quality of life, which has intensified over recent years also from the academic perspective. can give some responses to the growing need to know which factors truly affect youth lives, environments and conditions where they occur. From the academic perspective we believe that positive youth well-being development ensures the intellectual and cognitive progress of society as a whole.

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THE ROLE OF DIPLOMACY IN THE TIMES OF THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

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Abstract:

The author's objective is to highlight the role of diplomacy during the COVID-19 pandemic. We discuss selected dimensions of diplomacy (health, economic...) and analyse how they have been adapted to new challenges resulting from the disease outbreak. The paper is concluded by a series of recommendations aimed at increasing the efficacy of diplomatic efforts. Despite its horrific impacts, the pandemic can be regarded as an opportunity to revitalise certain areas such as national economies, to make them more innovative and environmentally friendly. For diplomacy in the future, we expect the prevalence of digital use and a focus on health, science, and environmental diplomacy.

INTRODUCTION

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the world as we know it has been subject to rapid change as all areas of human existence have been influenced by the pandemic. Many political, cultural, social and economic issues were intensified as a result of the pandemic (Golovei, Stoliarchuk, Prigoda 2020). The pandemic has also accentuated several areas of law, such as over employment and its forms [Rak 2020], and significantly altered education [Štefančík, Stradiotová 2021], which includes the training of future diplomats, too. As a consequence, economic systems and labour markets, businesses, education and health services and tourism and hospitality sectors are all currently facing challenges at an unprecedented scale. Similarly, this concerns diplomacy and its dimensions.

We use the term "dimensions" to refer to branches of the overall diplomacy concept, whereby each dimension of diplomacy is engaged in a specific topic and follows different objectives. Clearly, there is a frequent overlap regarding the goals of the individual dimensions of diplomacy. Among Slovak authors, analyses of the various dimensions of diplomacy and their respective actors can be frequently found in papers by Erik Pajtinka, who distinguishes European, economic, or cultural dimensions of diplomacy [Pajtinka 2007], based on their respective objectives. This list, however, is not exhaustive. Furthermore, the nomenclature is still evolving, as different authors tend to use various names to refer to certain diplomatic activities, or even suggest their own names. These names often mirror current developments in society, such as the notion of pandemic diplomacy.

In a way, diplomacy can be seen as a tool for conflict prevention, management and problem solving, hence its role in these challenging times is indisputable.

In the present paper, we attempt to address the issue of the mutual relationship between the coronavirus pandemic and diplomacy. In other words, we intend to outline the most critical areas impacted by the coronavirus and to illuminate how diplomacy and its individual dimensions have been reacting to them.

The hypothesis we operate with is as follows: "Countries have reorientated their foreign policy and diplomacy objectives as a reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, hence also distinct dimensions of diplomacy have come to the foreground."

The outcome of the research is a series of recommendations targeted at policy makers as well as diplomacy practitioners to make the respective types of diplomacy more effective and reactive when dealing with the issues linked to the ongoing pandemic and similar future challenges.

The research is of a theoretical, qualitative nature, applying methods of descriptive analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, supported by a review of relevant literature, i.e. qualitative desk research. We refer to both domestic and foreign scientific papers and other sources, such as institutional websites, and to a limited extent media articles or press releases. We describe and comment on the impact of the pandemic on countries, as well as policy responses.

It needs to be emphasised that the research presented herein is still a work in progress, an overview of what has happened in the field of diplomacy and international relations since the coronavirus emerged at the end of 2019. As the crisis is not over yet, some of the responses of countries to current problems are still being shaped. Therefore, let us consider this contribution as an introduction into the topic with which we are planning to engage more closely in our future scientific inquiry. Long-lasting changes in the diplomacy and foreign policy objectives of countries will be able to be properly evaluated after the definite end of the pandemic.

1. THE INFLUENCE OF THE PANDEMIC ON SELECTED DIMENSIONS OF DIPLOMACY

The global pandemic caused by the coronavirus has been challenging experience concerning all areas of our lives. Suddenly, new solutions to complex problems have to be found, with many of them requiring international participation. In spite of the obviously indispensable cooperation of nation states, the initial reaction to the pandemic was in many cases undertaken on national levels. An example are the European Union Member States which first acted separately, since the EU's response was delayed [Harakaľová 2020: 245]. In the next phase, the EU even cooperated with the Western Balkans as a geo-strategic priority, for instance by providing a financial aid package [Chlebcová 2020: 254, 256].

Despite the fact that the virus first appeared in December 2019, a number of studies have already been published, ranging from health-related topics, through the economic consequences of the pandemic to foreign policy and diplomatic responses. Additionally, the topic has received extraordinary media coverage.

Most of the papers published so far include at least a marginal reference to China as a country from which the virus spread into the world. China has made an enormous step forward regarding its economy in recent years, attempting to become a key player on the international scene. This is mainly visible in its relations with the United States of America, a great-power competition, as Gill [2020] refers to it, describing the mutual blaming of the countries for the pandemic outbreak. Since China is considered responsible for the crisis by most people, it is trying to stop such a portrayal. As Verma (2020a) states, the country has concentrated on changing this narrative, because of confidence and fear. "It is trying to save face internationally," [Verma 2020a: 205], questioning the origin of the disease, pointing at countries that have been less successful in fighting the virus, and emphasising the country´s assistance and expertise sharing in the crisis [Verma 2020b]. China's activities abroad have indeed been noticed. As for Slovakia, for instance, the most visible actors of public diplomacy are China, the European Union and the WHO. In contrast to that, the United States as a country questioning the virus in the initial stages of the pandemic, has not been perceived as such [Čiefová, Szabó, Janubová 2021: 297]. Moreover, some countries such as the US focused more on their internal struggle against the pandemic rather

than joining the efforts of the international community [Javed, Chattu 2020].

In relation to China´s activities, the author refers to so called *mask diplomacy* [Verma 2020a; Verma 2020b], although we consider the term figurative, relating mostly to activities falling under health diplomacy, which is described in the next section. Dodds et al. [2020] use similar notions, namely *facemask diplomacy* or *pandemic diplomacy* conducted by China and Russia; Kelly [2020] even describes China´s actions as *Covid-diplomacy*. Another expression applied also in negative contexts is *vaccine diplomacy*.

At the time of finalising this paper, there have already been several vaccines developed by pharmaceutical companies. Furthermore, countries have initiated their vaccination strategies and managed to provide a substantial percentage of their population with the needed dose. However, many countries are still lagging behind in the process. In this context, some authors emphasise the problem of vaccine inequality and accentuate the necessity of international collaboration and the task of health diplomacy to secure access to vaccination for everybody [Javed, Chattu 2020; Su et al. 2021].

As for its negative connotations, vaccine diplomacy has for instance been used to describe Russia's attempts to strengthen its position internationally by offering Sputnik – Russian vaccine, despite its lack of use for the country's own citizens and a practically non-existing domestic vaccination plan [Sobotovičová 2021: 4]. In conjunction with vaccines, the country-of-origin effect seems to be present [Čiefová 2021], as in the case of availability of several vaccines, some citizens take into account not only their expected effectiveness, but also where they were manufactured. This may (in)directly reflect their geopolitical orientation and preferences.

The pandemic has also been accompanied by violent encounters, racism xenophobia, and anti-Chinese sentiment. Attacks have been targeted both on Chinese citizens and those with similar appearance, as well as on foreigners in China who may be regarded as virus-carriers [Verma 2020b]. Kelly [2020] emphasises the possibility of regional conflicts triggered by negative circumstances concerning economic and healthcare systems. In case these problems escalate, it can represent a serious matter of safety. On the other hand, the contemporary situation has illuminated numerous acts of solidarity towards the most vulnerable ones, such as unaccompanied children, migrants, asylum seekers and victims of domestic violence [Dodds et al. 2020]. This can be perceived as evidence of a feeling of shared responsibility towards others; the simple realisation that people have to help each other.

In some countries, protests demonstrating dissatisfaction with the anti-pandemic measures or the overall political arena have been organised, frequently even despite strict prohibitions concerning the gatherings of larger groups of people. In contrast to that, many people have volunteered with determination to help those in need, for instance providing grocery shopping for the elderly. These positive as well as negative attitudes and actions can be observed, for example, in Slovakia.

In future investigations, it could be interesting to observe whether the emerging notions listed above (e.g. facemask diplomacy or pandemic diplomacy) will become fully incorporated into scientific discourse or not and in specific cases replace the general term health diplomacy. Nevertheless, several already established dimensions of diplomacy occur rather frequently in papers dealing with the current pandemic. These are primarily health diplomacy, science diplomacy, environmental diplomacy, and economic diplomacy. Due to their being the subject of many relevant papers and their obvious role in the pandemic, we have decided to focus on them and examine them in the following parts of the paper.

1.1 Health and science diplomacy

For an individual, COVID-19 represents predominantly a health threat. This is true also on a regional, national and international level, since the number of casualties is growing continuously. As of 16th February 2021, there were above 109.9 million coronavirus cases worldwide, resulting in more than 2.42 million deaths. By the 4th August 2021, there were already more than 200.6 million cases of infection and more than 4.2 million casualties. As of 23rd November 2021, the number of cases exceeded 258 million; there were more than 5.1 million deaths and more than 233 million recoveries [Worldometer 2021].

Many countries were not ready to tackle a pandemic of such a scale. Developing countries often lack basic health facilities and educated labour; they are struggling with other diseases and their systems of health care are collapsing. The pandemic thus represents another burden that may equal a tipping point, and therefore may not be bearable anymore. In addition to what is happening in developing and the least developed countries, health care systems in some developed countries are also failing, demonstrating the unreadiness of these countries to manage the pandemic effectively and without assistance from abroad. Augustín [2020: 24] asserts, when considering public health system readiness, that countries were barely prepared for this, no matter what their political regime was.

As a response to this issue, countries have mobilised to provide face masks, respirators, or financial resources. In academic literature, such actions fall under health diplomacy – a term which often occurs in papers examining health issues related to COVID-19, even though it is already a well-established concept.

Many developing as well as developed countries have become recipients of international aid due to the spread of coronavirus. In February 2021, Portugal, for instance, was struggling to beat the virus. As its domestic capacities were exhausted, France and Luxembourg decided to send medical personnel to the country; Germany had done so even earlier [TASR 2021a]. Simultaneously, the situation in Slovakia has been critical with the country appearing at the top of the global ranking concerning deaths per one million inhabitants [TASR 2021b]. The seriousness of the situation had even reached such a level that a few patients were transferred to Germany or

Poland within the compass of European solidarity aid. Additionally, Slovakia has received international aid from Romanian medical personnel [TASR 2021c]. According to Chattu and Chami [2020], countries have reoriented their political and economic priorities in favour of health issues due to the disease outbreak, as the COVID-19 pandemic "has crippled and stagnated the economy and global supply chain systems," [Chattu, Chami 2020: 2].

As Katz et al. [2011] argue, the notion *global health diplomacy* has become mainstream. Health diplomacy actors are expected to demonstrate interdisciplinary skills, i.e. knowledge of law, technical and diplomatic expertise. The authors further state, the concept has several meanings, usually divided into three categories. These are as follows:

• core diplomacy referring to negotiations between or among nation states;
• multistakeholder diplomacy including various actors, organisations, initiatives;
• informal diplomacy engaging public health actors, the public, etc. [Katz et al. 2011: 506].

What we consider especially important here is the involvement of state and non-state actors, as well as the public, since it seems to be often forgotten that diplomacy is not necessarily limited to official representatives of a nation state, no matter what the dimension of diplomacy (cultural, environmental…). Based on the division above, we regard health diplomacy as a field with the possibility – and even the necessity - of wide participation.

Concerning the nomenclature of the term health diplomacy, synonymous expressions found in both academic and media articles include *medical diplomacy* or even *disease diplomacy,* such as in Chauhan [2020], who further reminds us that the world has faced pandemics before. As countries tried to protect both the health of their citizens as well as trade, various agreements and measures were implemented in the past, including the use of quarantine. The practice of quarantine is no new phenomenon; it originates in the 14th century. In the current crisis, the World Health Organization (WHO) plays a crucial role, as multilateral cooperation is needed, even though the agency´s actions have been criticised [Chauhan 2020].

Health diplomacy is closely connected with another dimension of diplomacy, namely science diplomacy. The disease has resulted in a new position for this branch of diplomacy, which is understandable as scientific advancement is closely related to health issues and environmental problems as well as to economic phenomena. As Pisupati [2020: 10] asserts, "The mere collaboration of scientists across the globe to fight the pandemic has turned the discourse on multilateralism and diplomacy to unprecedented levels." The author goes further to claim that medical professionals and scientists have been receiving probably even more media attention than athletes, politicians, or people from the entertaining industry. Furthermore, the contemporary scientific progress and development triggered by COVID-19 is significantly faster than under normal circumstances [Pisupati 2020]. Colglazier´s [2020] research indicates

that the response of the global scientific community to the current circumstances was appropriate, with knowledge and information sharing and substantial collaboration. According to the author, science diplomacy is now indeed more important than ever, and it is the obligation of countries with an advanced level of scientific and technological development to assist less developed countries with capacity building. Due to the fact that the fight against coronavirus, as well as the problems brought by its global scale, demonstrate how critical a joint approach, knowledge sharing and related spill-over effects are, we agree with the above cited scholar and support the view that the scientific dimension of diplomacy will gradually become one of the most prominent areas of foreign policy. This standpoint is also supported by Augustín [2020: 25] who says that knowledge and science based policy is crucial in times of global health crises, i.e. at the moment, too.

1.2 Environmental and economic diplomacy

The next area of diplomacy impacted by the coronavirus outbreak is environmental diplomacy, or climate diplomacy. Climate change and other environmental problems require urgent solutions, regardless of COVID-19. For the year 2020, several conferences and forums had been scheduled, however, the pandemic hindered their taking place and thus the adoption of new commitments to fight climate change (Emerald Insight 2020). Since the pandemic has affected all areas of human existence, including transport and industrial production, the virus and its impacts are often debated through the lens of the environment. Some of the papers discussing environmental issues in the context of the coronavirus adopt a (partly) regional approach, such as Yazdi (2020), who focusses on Iran. Regarding the global environmental effects of the pandemic, the author points out the two opposing perspectives – the optimistic belief that the pandemic will help ecosystems recover; and the pessimistic opinion that positive consequences of the situation on the environment are only short-term. The narrative is that after the crisis, the countries will attempt to restore their pre-pandemic economic growth. Nevertheless, the author talks about a reduction in environmental diplomacy [Yazdi 2020: 5]. A discussion about the positive and negative impacts of the pandemic on the environment is to be found in other works, too. Furmańczyk and Kaźmierczyk [2020], for instance, claim that once people's lives return to normal, this will leave its mark on the environment. Additionally, the authors stress the waste caused by medical and personal protection equipment, such as face masks.

The pandemic has intensified the necessity to promptly respond to the issues concerning the changing climate. Recent research indicates that the phenomenon of climate change may be one of the triggers of pandemics, as animals such as bats tend to migrate to areas out of their original habitat. What is more, urban development and cities' extension bring people closer to wild animals. Hence in the end, there are two factors responsible for the potential contact of the human population with wild animals, who might possibly be the virus carriers. This, of course, is not limited to

SARS-CoV-2 which might have been triggered by climate change but can occur also in connection to the origin of similar viruses [Beyer, Manica, Mora 2021].

The premise that the outbreak of the pandemic and climate change are interlinked is supported also by Manzanedo and Manning [2020], who have compiled a list of the differences and similarities between these two phenomena, as well as the lessons to be learnt. As they emphasise, the list of lessons for the climate emergency is not comprehensive, but includes the following points:

• high momentum trends;
• irreversible changes;
• social and spatial inequality;
• weakening of international solidarity;
• less costly to prevent than to cure.

On the other hand, members of the European Parliament perceive the pandemic as an opportunity for modernisation and innovation in certain sectors of the economy (such as tourism and hospitality). It is believed that now there is a chance to make those fields more socially responsible and – last but not least - more environmentally friendly [European Parliament 2020]. Chlebcová [2020: 259] agrees and adds, COVID-19 is slowing down physical globalisation, although accelerating and supporting its online, digital form. The author continues by saying that only those economies capable of adapting to digitalisation will eventually be successful at fighting the pandemic and subsequent revitalisation. We can further elaborate on this premise by putting an emphasis on knowledge- and best-practice sharing among countries.

As for economies, tourism is one of the sectors that have been negatively influenced the most by the pandemic [European Parliament, 2020]. The World Tourism Organisation publishes data concerning tourism decline across the regions of the world. Based on data for January – October 2020, international arrivals in the Americas and Europe experienced a decline of 68%; Africa 69%; the Middle East 73%; and Asia and the Pacific 82% [UNWTO 2020]. According to Stuchlíková [2020: 645], it may take from two to three years to revive tourism in its pre-pandemic state. Many travellers decided to spend their 2020 summer vacation in their homeland, or to avoid travelling at all as a precaution. In Slovakia, for instance, some people were worried about the pandemic and potential exposure to the disease and subsequent quarantine; others were determined to help domestic tourism, and the situation in summer 2021 seems similar. Some help was also provided by the state in the form of financial contributions for recipients such as hotels, restaurants, aquaparks, zoos, museums, travel agencies and similar entities [Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic, 2021].

Certainly, it is also the objective of business owners and policy makers to promote domestic tourism and thus to literally save hundreds of small and medium enterprises and jobs. One way to do so is by the application of public or cultural diplomacy, and appropriately selected place branding and marketing. By doing so, both domestic as

well as foreign visitors can be supported, unless foreigners are restricted access to the country [Čiefová 2020]. In our opinion, the pandemic also offers room for countries to revisit their country or nation branding strategies and recreate them in an innovative, mindful, and attractive way. According to some authors, systematic nation brand creation possesses social and economic importance, as well as a significant role in foreign policy [Čiefová, Goda 2019]. The same applies for cultural diplomacy, the aim of which is to present a country´s culture and traditions to the outside world. Now, as tourism in many countries is severely threatened, attractive cultural diplomacy may help kickstart the sector once the pandemic ends and travel restrictions are re-moved. Indeed, cultural as well as public diplomacy and attractive nation branding can promote tourism for a country in these difficult times by presenting the country as a destination worth exploring [Čiefová 2021]. Targeted actions could subsequently boost not only tourism, but also the field of creative industries, as this sector is one of the sectors most negatively affected by the ongoing situation [Baculáková 2020: 36]. Surely, countries can do so individually, or cooperate on a regional level. The inter-section between economic and cultural diplomacy in this context is obvious.

On the European level, the Commission´s objective is to present Europe as a safe and attractive destination, supporting Europe-wide communication campaigns. Moreover, the aim is to facilitate the sustainability of the European tourism, to conduct its digital transformation, while adhering to the principles of the protection of the envi-ronment. These ambitions will require intense cooperation among the Member States [European Commission 2020], which may pose further challenges for European dip-lomats.

Certainly, tourism is not the sole sector of the economy impacted by the crisis. To cite Buckley [2020], the virus has caused a supply and demand shock to the global econ-omy. This is with no doubt true, as whole economies are struggling with the economic consequences of the virus that are visible both on a macroeconomic as well as on a microeconomic level. As for the macroeconomic determinants, Barua [2020] enu-merates the following ones: "demand, supply, supply chain, trade, investment, price level, exchange rates, and financial stability and risk, economic growth, and interna-tional cooperation." Some countries, such as Japan, intend to provide loans to their companies located in China to relocate, either to Japan or to third countries [Buckley 2020]. Such actions can eventually lead to a reshuffle of countries´ positions in the global economy. With economies not being closed systems but dynamic "organisms," these complex problems will often require a joint approach, with economic diplomats playing a crucial role.

The pandemic also raises questions regarding the future of the Belt and Road Initia-tive (BRI), a project of enormous scale with regards to the number of countries in-volved as well as its costs. Verma [2020b] describes the project as ambitious, aimed at providing loans, financial assistance and building infrastructure, with more than 100 countries included in the plan. Moreover, one of China´s objectives, citing the

author, is to "become a rule maker rather than a rule taker," [Verma 2020b: 254]. Countries with fewer economic resources and an underdeveloped infrastructure and poorer countries are likely to suffer more from the COVID-19 pandemic in the long run. Economic recovery is expected to be much slower compared to developed countries. Consequently, economic inequalities between or among countries may even deepen (Manzanedo, Manning 2020), constituting another problem to be solved on the international level, also by means of economic diplomacy.

CONCLUSION

We can see that in crises like this, several subdisciplines of diplomacy are being practiced simultaneously as some of their objectives tend to overlap. For example, cooperation in the area of health and science diplomacy is crucial. Except for the coordination of actions among individual diplomacy dimensions, the involvement of various stakeholders (diplomacy practitioners, academics, scientists, NGOs…) is necessary. The interconnectedness of various sectors, and thus also of these diplomacy dimensions, should be recognised.

Indeed, it is obvious that a crisis of such a scale requires engagement of national governments, international organisations and even multinational corporations, and individuals. Nowadays, the cooperation of countries on a global level is more critical than ever. Developed countries should mobilise to assist developing countries which commonly lack the necessary resources. Besides, these countries are often in humanitarian crises, hence they are especially vulnerable, experiencing displacement, violence, further diseases or incompetent governance [Poole et al. 2020]. Such environment does significantly complicate the struggle with coronavirus. Moreover, the COVID-19 experience has highlighted the importance of prompt reaction from the actors involved. Dealing with unknown viruses and other threats should not be postponed or avoided.

As already emphasised, the current pandemic may be considered an opportunity to modernise, revitalise and digitalise various sectors, for instance the economy, whereby the solutions should reflect the need for measures protecting the environment. It is obvious that industries, governments, and diplomacy as well, are facing changes and developments that require responses and action. The state in which the world is right now, what had preceded before and what has been done should serve as a set of guidelines on what to do and what not to do in case another crisis emerges. Diplomacy is reacting to these special circumstances, too, trying to find the most appropriate solutions. What is proven right and effective can serve as a tutorial for possible future actions. Once the crisis is over, an in-depth analysis of its progress, taken measures and their impacts, as well as an assessment of the overall crisis management should be conducted to form the basis of detailed guidelines and crisis management plans for the future. Taking into consideration the above cited research on the relationship between climate change and the pandemic, the ongoing pandemic may not necessar-

ily be the last one to come. Intensive dialogue between policy makers and scientists will be necessary in the future to address the challenges the globe will be facing.

It is likely that future research on diplomacy and diplomatic practice, will be dominated by the health and science aspect, with the objective to articulate ways of how to deal with possible comparable crises in the future. Furthermore, the transformation of diplomacy into digital diplomacy (or eDiplomacy) and related innovations such as investigated by Mattoš [2015] are, in our opinion, likely to be accelerated by the latest developments in the world. As Mattoš [2015] asserts, the development of information and communication technologies and their application in diplomacy can eventually make some of its operations even more effective.

Our hypothesis that countries have re-defined their foreign policy objectives due to the pandemic has been proven. What we perceive as the main shift in diplomacy is this reorientation towards objectives that seemed not to be that fully articulated before, such as global health. Due to the pandemic, scientific advancement and a constructive dialogue between scientists and policy makers have been given exceptional significance. The linkage between the pandemic and its environmental implications is also important, as well as the relationship between public health and economic development. Hence, we can conclude, new approaches to diplomacy and the dominance of other dimensions may be observed.

In the current era of globalisation, no country has all the necessary means and expertise to fight the pandemic "solo"; isolation within your own borders is not possible [Javed, Chattu 2020]. On the contrary, countries need to demonstrate solidarity and resolve issues in a peaceful manner [Taghizade et al. 2021]. The paper can be concluded by the words of Chauhan [2020], that "no country no matter how hard it tries can protect itself alone, the fate of the world is going to be collective, the world may sail or drown but it will do so as one entity. Hence multilateralism and cooperation is the need of the hour."

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