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## **Editorial: Mediation and mediatisation of the contemporary warfare**

Being a source of constant anxiety, war is an area of discussions and analysis among researchers representing various scientific disciplines. Fear of war is a widespread phenomenon, regardless of where one lives and what social or professional position one occupies. Nowadays, our knowledge of war is provided by the media, in which invited experts often plot scenarios of possible economic and social consequences of ongoing armed conflicts and their further escalation.

This fear management is one of the tools used to control moods and behavior among people. Media-created narratives about wars shape opinions and attitudes toward the parties to the conflict, as well as contributing to the take-up or cessation of assistance to those experiencing the crisis of war.

Media organize our daily reality. For Friesen and Hug, “Media in this sense profoundly influence the realm of everyday, unstructured understandings and activities [...]. Media, in other words, are seen as gradually systematizing and organizing the relatively unstructured realm of the everyday” (FriesenNorm & Hug, 2009, pp. 64–65). Today’s relevance and influence of the media stems from the fact that they are an integral part of the functioning of various institutions, establishing their interactions. Stig Hjarvard (Hjarvard, 2008) speaks directly about the mediatization of society and culture. Hence, reading works on mediatization allows us to notice more and more signals from researchers about the need to pay attention to the far-reaching consequences of interaction with the medium for the lives of individuals and societies.

Russia’s attack on Ukraine has contributed to a growing sense of the threat of war not only among Poles but also Slovaks, Czechs and Hungarians (Maciejewska-Mieszkowska, 2023, p. 220). The geographic proximity of the war in Ukraine heightens the sense of fear

about the limits of the fighting taking place, as well as the type of weapons used by the Russian military. Poland, which has been the target of propaganda attacks by the Russian Federation for years, is now seeing an intensification of disinformation activities (Serwis Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej, 2024). The spread of false information, facilitated by the architecture of social media platforms, is one of the critical tools of warfare today, as well as a factor in the transformations taking place in the field.

From the perspective of the war in Ukraine, which has been going on for more than two years, the growing armed conflicts around the world, and the accompanying dynamic development of media and digital technologies, the question becomes relevant: What is the nature of current armed conflicts? What changes are taking place in them, and how are these changes affected by the presence of the media? What are or maybe the determinants and consequences of contemporary messages about war?

Contemporary wars and conflicts are mediated. Reports from the front, mobile communication of troopers, combatants and victims, wartime political diplomacy using holograms and artificial intelligence are no longer surprising. However, the importance of online technologies, and still broadcasting media, is not limited to presentation or even media interference through manipulation and propaganda. Increasingly, there is a transformation of war as such, in which old and new media technologies play a key role. The aim of the thematic issue is to undergo an empirical exploration of the mediation and mediatization of contemporary warfare and to identify the potential of this research field along with its key challenges.

In this special issue, we aim to examine themes often overlooked in research on mediation and mediatization of war. We begin with a review of the recent literature to examine the status and condition of the research field. The first article (Katarzyna Kopecka-Piech et al.) shows that the field of mediatization research is very rich, incredibly interdisciplinary and with a broad catalog of paradigms and methods. What sets it apart is the dominance of the qualitative nature of research on these issues. The composition of this issue also confirms that mediation and mediatization of war are most often studied with qualitative methods that seek to answer how, why and with what effect the sphere of media-war relations is being transformed.

Anna Jupowicz-Ginalska & Greta Gober examine how media representations of refugees during the Polish border crises of 2020 (with Belarus) and 2022 (with Ukraine) have become polarized. They observe that refugees at the Belarusian border are depicted through political, social, and religious lenses. Similarly, the crisis at the Ukrainian border also displays polarizing dynamics, focusing mainly on assessing or critiquing the authorities and either addressing or overlooking uncomfortable and problematic issues related to the refugees. Thus, the authors highlight that even situations with humanitarian implications can lead to divided media narratives and portrayals of entire communities.

Carolina Escudero explores the portrayal of mediation in news media narratives both before and during the onset of warfare. She analyzes how “mediation” and “mediator” are understood and depicted in media discourse, examining how journalists frame the concept of war for their audience. The researcher observes that instead of offering clarity, the media often generates confusion. While acknowledging the purported aim of mediation, they highlight a tendency to present it within a simplistic binary framework of conflict, which contradicts the essence of mediation itself. The author suggests the establishment of arenas for educating journalists on culture and peace-building within newsrooms to enhance journalistic coverage of armed conflicts.

Erik Bucy & Claire Seigmund delve into Volodymyr Zelensky’s utilization of social media platforms, particularly honing in on the politician’s Instagram account. Drawing on mediatization theory and Goffman’s notions of self-presentation, the authors observe that Zelensky’s political image has been predominantly shaped by media dynamics rather than traditional political strategies right from the outset. Nevertheless, this media-driven persona has seamlessly translated into political effectiveness over time. Notably, Zelensky’s skillful amalgamation of text and imagery has elevated him to the status of a prominent symbol in the struggle for democratic liberties, significantly bolstering his global recognition.

Valentina Marinescu and colleagues analyze the depiction of nuclear threats in Romanian media coverage amidst the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Employing an inductive methodology, the researchers uncover two emerging narrative frameworks concerning

sensitive topics: one focusing on historical perspectives, and the other on future implications. Additionally, they highlight the prevalence of nuclear rhetoric in media discussions since the onset of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Three Ukrainian papers provide a poignant and insightful perspective on the ongoing conflict. Tetyana Viytovych and Nataliia Bilovska delve into materials sourced from Facebook and Telegram, analyzing them in terms of concept substitution. Their study focuses on the scope and methods of Russian propaganda, particularly through disinformation technologies, employed during the war. Their aim is to elucidate the common tactics, technologies, and tools used in concept substitution and propose strategies to counter their dissemination. Similarly, Nataliia Steblyna examines social media platforms, particularly Telegram, to explore how the Russian invasion has been depicted by both professional and amateur news sources. She contextualizes her research within the unique digital media landscape of wartime, noting a lack of explicit references to news sources in popular amateur media. Furthermore, she finds that the most popular sources for both professional and amateur media are largely the same. In the last study, Halyna Lystvak and colleagues discuss the transformations occurring in the publishing sector due to Russian aggression. They observe shifts such as the relocation of publishing facilities to safer territories, changes in infrastructure, adoption of new publication formats, and exploration of new markets. These changes reflect the adaptation of the publishing industry to the challenges posed by the conflict.

The conclusions that appear in the articles often have a pessimistic social, political and ethical dimension (Viytovych & Bilovska). They point out practices that are inappropriate from a peaceful perspective, the danger of mass hysteria (Marinescu et al.), confusion – including at the journalistic level (Escudero), and high visibility of media polarization (Jupowicz-Ginalska & Gober). They uncover low-quality media content and harmful content of dominant platforms (Steblyna). On the other hand, they uncover unique transformations: the media market (Lystvak et al.) and communication strategies (Bucy & Seigmund).

According to the presented studies the research field of mediation and mediatization of war shows a very high potential, which



activates with the ongoing conflict. Communication innovations and hybrid communication-warfare, unveil new areas of communication practices and their consequences, thus generating the need to study new issues. The articles included in this issue show how history, the present and the future overlap and are inseparable, also pointing to the main frameworks of analysis and interpretation. Similarly, professional and amateur media; traditional and digital; textual and visual as well as audio-visual are confronted. War is presented and analyzed multimodally, which accounts for its great potential.

The researchers used various methods in this issue: textual and visual content analysis, bibliographic and statistical analysis, and rhetorical analysis. They were interested in the broadcast and social layers of communication, as they studied primarily traditional media: news agency reports, newspapers, magazines, and books, and social media: Instagram, Facebook, and Telegram. This opens up questions about further elements of the media nexus: audiences, stakeholders, and achieved communication effects.

The challenges of the research field that is the subject of this special issue are primarily located in methodological order. The issue focuses more on the mediation of war and less on mediatisation, although its content shows how multifaceted this cognitive sphere is. There is still a need for a great deal of methodological rigour and research innovation, coming out of computer-based methods (as Steblyna is already doing in her article) and exploring new avenues of interdisciplinarity. Moreover, contemporary war studied from the outside is confronted with study from the inside – by researchers who stayed close to the front lines and imbued with threats, not only academic but, above all, real, physical ones. Giving them the floor, as it was in the case of this special issue, is giving them a space to form a new discourse, which, by the transformation of media-war nexus in real time, continues to shape and change, requiring us to make further attempts at conceptualisation and verification.

Katarzyna Kopecka-Piech  
Anna Jupowicz-Ginalska  
Dorota Dyksik  
issue editors

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ARTYKUŁY TEMATYCZNE

THEMATIC ARTICLES





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## Mediatization of war. The state of the research field in the period 2018–2022\*

### *Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The mediatization of war represents one of many fields of mediatization research. In the face of numerous military crises and the dynamic development of media and digital technologies, the mediatization of armed conflicts is a key research area. At the same time, the relationship between media and war has been described as highly under-researched and in need of considerable investment in terms of concept development and empirical research. Also, the mediatization of war as a field of study is sometimes criticized. The aim of this research is to determine the state of the mediatization of war studies in the last five years.

**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The questions guiding the research were: 1) What is being specifically researched in the field?; 2) What are the main research questions and objectives of this research? A meta-analysis of publications from 2018–2022 available on Google Scholar was performed.

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Using strict selection criteria, 90 peer-reviewed publications from this period were extracted, coded and analyzed.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The geographical coverage of the examined issues and the places of research were defined. The specifics of research on the mediatization of war and methods used in this research field were determined.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The results indicate that indexed contemporary studies that deal with the mediatization of war are highly interdisciplinary. At the same time, they are focused on specific parts of the world, on a peculiar catalog of problems, and they are dominated by qualitative methodology.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** War is an area in which key sub-processes are diagnosed, both those comprising mediatization in the broadest sense (*included processes*) and those generated by mediatization (*induced processes*). These sub-processes determine the extent and transformative power of the mediatization taking place.

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**KEYWORDS:**

mediatization of war, mediatization of military, mediatization studies, meta-analysis, systematic review

## INTRODUCTION

The study of mediatization encompasses many fields of research: sport, culture, art, daily life, politics, economy, fashion, environment, business (Kopecka-Piech & Bolin, 2023). Conflict, crises and war are also important elements of mediatization (Horbyk, 2023). The modern world, as well as the not-so-distant twentieth-century history, has been fraught with numerous armed conflicts on a global and local scale, as well as civil wars and internal unrest. In the era of the development of the first mass media and then digital and personal media, political, armed and diplomatic events have been subject to their impact (Caspi & Rubinstein, 2018; Pamment, 2014). This has happened on an institutional level (Nohrstedt, 2016), but also on a content level (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2015). Increasingly, it is also happening at the technological level as phones or amateur drones are now viable weapons (Horbyk, 2022).

The media are also being transformed. With wars, media institutions are changing (including some disappearing completely) (Lystvak et al.,

forthcoming). The pages of the press as well as radio and screen time are devoted to war-related news, reports and documentaries. Changes are also being forced at the level of social media platforms (such as protection from inappropriate content). Content and product changes are being generated and, for example, a new category of applications to combat disinformation is emerging (Chang et al., 2022). Thus, mediatization is also becoming a two-sided process in this sphere.

Previous review studies of achievements in the field point to numerous shortcomings and research gaps (McQuail, 2006; Horbyk, 2023). In contrast, an analysis of key publications from the past few years shows that the field is developing rapidly: new conceptualizations are being proposed, and approaches to the role of media and their users in war processes are being revolutionized.

The last five years have also been fraught with numerous armed crises and, in parallel, mediatization research has seen rapid development (Horbyk, 2023). Given the importance of the issues and the number of cognitive and practical challenges, it was decided to examine how the field of war mediatization research has evolved in the last five years. In order to determine the relevance and specificity of this research field, a series of research questions were posed regarding the specificity of the research problems, the objectives and methods, and the results achieved. This was intended to determine the state of the research field: methodological and thematic innovation, scope of issues studied, as well as the cognitive and practical dimensions.

## STATE OF THE ART

The mediatization of war has gradually gained attention from scholars since the intensified development of mediatization theory since the turn of the millennium. In this state-of-the-art review, we conduct a meta-synthesis of two existing literature reviews on mediatization of war by McQuail (2006) and Horbyk (2023), and we examine how scholars have responded to the increased academic needs in the intervening time period.

The first literature review, *On the mediatization of war* by McQuail (2006), includes publications discussing war-media relationships in different contexts. In the review, McQuail outlines that, from World

War II onwards, wars have been of a smaller scale in contrast to the preceding eras of total wars and have been fought under a new order characterized by global ideological antagonisms. McQuail (2006, p. 108) points out that this new order requires “more support in public opinion than past warfare and that the media are the key to obtaining this support”. McQuail (2006, p. 114) argues, however, that research on war-media relationships in the early 2000s largely undertheorized the role of the public, and that “Western ‘communication science’ does not offer any clear framework for collecting and interpreting observations and information about contemporary war situations”.

In response to this need, Cottle (2006) made a groundbreaking effort to develop a theory concerning the role of the media in contemporary warfare. Cottle (2006, p. 9) argues that media do not just communicate and disseminate, i.e., mediate, events of war, but they have an “active performative involvement and constitutive role” in war and conflicts. For that reason, mediatization, according to Cottle, is an overarching framework that is better suited to studying the interdependent relationships among the media, political and military institutions, and the public.

Following Cottle’s argumentation, Hoskins and O’Loughlin (2010, p. 5) state that “the planning, waging and consequences of warfare do not reside outside of the media”, therefore communication should be seen as an inseparable part of contemporary warfare. Hoskins and O’Loughlin (2010, p. 3) suggest that since the turn of the millennium there has been “a new paradigm of war in which (i) the mediatization of war (ii) makes possible more diffuse causal relations between action and effect, (iii) creating greater uncertainty for policymakers in the conduct of war”. They argue that the advent of Web 2.0 and the participatory media ecology have changed the power dynamics between governments, military and public, thus causing a loss of control over dissemination of information about war. A few years later, Hoskins and O’Loughlin (2015) continued to develop their theory by adding yet another paradigm to the mediatization of war. In this phase, starting from 2010s, legacy media “rather than being challenged by mediatization, instead harnesses it for its own ends”, meaning they take back the products of participatory media ecology (Hoskins & O’Loughlin, 2015, p. 1322).



The work of these scholars has predominantly answered McQuail's (2006) call for theorization of war–media relationships. Additionally, there are a number of contextualized studies that have widened the conceptualization and provided empirical evidence on the mediatization of war. For example, Horten (2011) exemplifies how mediatization accelerated over previous decades by comparing media coverage of the Vietnam and Iraq wars. Horten puts forward an argument that the media have become the fourth branch of military operations – alongside the army, navy and air force – and further argues that this transformation is due to the emergence of digital media and global news networks, and the professionalization of military information strategies.

Furthermore, Maltby (2012) studies mediatization of the military in the UK context and concludes that British military engagement with the media is a strategic proactive practice. Maltby (2012, p. 256) argues that the army is clearly mediatized because “the military’s interaction with those in and beyond their own institution increasingly take places through and via the media in a manner that submits to, and is dependent on, the media and their logic”. Also, Crosbie (2015) in the US context writes about military mediatization in relation to the public. Crosbie (2015, p. 102) argues that

the feedback received by militaries and the feedforward produced in response to feedback constitute an important strand of the mediatization of the military and its warfighting.

Other aspects of empirically studied mediatization of war include Mortensen's (2015) research on the eyewitnessing of conflict, which today is mediated by digital technologies. Mortensen argues that eyewitness images are situated in relations between the media and conflicts, therefore conflict deaths have become mediatized. Also, in their study of the mediatization of Gaza and the Palestinian question, Siopera et al. (2015, p. 1316) point out the

a new category of communicators, the witnesses, who are experiencing and communicating the war as it happens...[and] coexist alongside more traditional communicators, including, governments, militaries, activists and media.

As shown above, not just theoretical but also empirical studies have turned their attention to the role of the public (as active agents) in mediatized warfare. A recent literature review, *Mediatization of war and the military* by Horbyk (2023), provides an even more comprehensive view on applied studies in the field, many of which focus on the participatory media ecology. Horbyk's (2023, p. 123) criticism of the existing literature is directed towards the lack of dialogue with other fields of study, lack of conceptual clarity, and a failure to "harness the full potential of mediatization theory". Horbyk (2023, p. 123) continues that many studies are "preoccupied with only one element in the triangle between the military, the media and the audiences". Interestingly, Horbyk's criticism echoes McQuail's writings from 2006, thus conclusively indicating that mediatization of war has been rigidly theorized by a few academics in the past fifteen years, but these efforts have not been as rigidly adopted by all scholars attempting to study mediatized warfare. Still, all the aforementioned scholars have studied media-war relationships and recognize the media's heightened embeddedness in and penetration of contemporary war and conflicts.

## METHODS

### Data collection and selection of the material

In this study, publications published between 2018 and 2022 and indexed in Google Scholar as concerning the mediatization of war were analyzed. The choice of this search engine was motivated by the free access it provides and its inclusiveness of various publishers. Google Scholar search engine's widespread use and accessibility to all accounts for its inclusiveness and potential openness for researchers.

First, a search in Google Scholar publications from 2018–2022 was realized, using the keywords "mediatization of war" and "mediatization of war". This yielded 152 search results (101 for 'mediatization of war, and 51 for 'mediatisation of war'). Erroneous results were then eliminated. These included texts that were not in any way related to mediatization and/or war (but, for example, to sport), texts published in languages other than English (e.g., Arabic, Chinese) and

duplicate publications. This left 105 results in the corpus. 15 of them were non-peer-reviewed papers (e.g. BA theses) that were eliminated from the corpus.

The remaining 90 publications were analyzed based on the titles, abstracts and keywords. In 14 cases, the entire text was analyzed because these publications did not contain an abstract. 76 of the publications were downloadable, hence it was possible to use the entire text to verify the content of the abstract. Those papers that were not open access or accessible through dedicated databases were obtained from their authors.

### Instruments and modes of analysis

Spreadsheets were used to facilitate the analysis and organize the collected material. Work on this part of the study was conducted in May and June 2023. Three researchers coded the material independently, followed by a fourth researcher to proofread and meta-check the coding.

The analysis grid contained the following items: 1) title of the paper, 2) year of the publication, 3) abstract [yes/no + the content], 4) keywords, 5. country of affiliation(s) of the author(s), 6) reviewed [yes/no], 7) type of publication, 8) academic discipline(s), 9) topics and subtopics present in the paper, 10) analyzed media, 11) context of the study, 12) research question(s), 13) research aim(s), 14) research method(s) [ qualitative / quantitative / mixed], 15) used method(s), tool(s) and procedure(s), 16) research result(s), 17) other important information.

The material thus grouped was then analyzed with the aim of answering the following questions: 1) What was being specifically researched in the field in the period 2018–2022?; 2) What were the main research questions and objectives of the research? This made it possible for us to determine the specifics of the mediatization of war field. By answering these questions, we aimed to determine the condition of the research field, namely the methodological and thematic innovation, the scope of issues studied, and the cognitive and practical dimensions.

## RESULTS

### Quantitative analysis

#### *Interdisciplinarity*

Most of the texts analyzed were interdisciplinary, covering more than one scientific discipline, according to the OECD classification (2007). Only 26 of the publications were not interdisciplinary.

The main interdisciplinary research fields dominating in the corpus were war studies, military studies, conflict studies and security studies. Disciplines other than media and communication studies (including journalism studies and media and socio-cultural communication) that dominated in the corpus were social sciences disciplines: political science (including international relations), history, sociology (including gender studies), law, humanities and art studies (including visual arts, film studies, music studies).

Other disciplines present in the sample included social sciences, i.e., psychology and anthropology (including ethnography), economy and business (including management studies), and humanities: philosophy (including rhetorics), literary studies, culture studies. Other established interdisciplinary research fields were represented by feminist studies, fan studies, games studies, and memory studies. Also present were medical sciences in the form of public health, and natural sciences were present in the form of geography (specifically, cartography).

The national contexts in which the studies presented in the publications were located was analyzed. Where this context was given (37 publications), the American (16), British (10), Swedish (6), Ukrainian (6), Russian (5) and Syrian (5) contexts predominated. The majority of countries were analyzed only once. In recent decades, most of the analyzed countries have faced armed conflicts, external or internal, or they are facing them now.

#### *Contexts explored*

The quantitative analysis showed that the majority of authors are affiliated with European universities (77), with fewer from North

America (30) or Asia (10). The fewest authors were affiliated with Australian (6), African (4) and South American (1) universities. In terms of the locations of the universities with which these publications (mostly multi-authored) were affiliated, out of the 30 countries represented, the corpus was dominated by British (21 affiliations), German (13) and American (12) universities. Almost half of the countries (14) could only show one publication.

Table 1. Affiliations of authors (co-authorship occurred)

Europe	77
North America	30
Asia	10
Australia	6
Africa	4
South America	1
UK	21
Germany	13
USA	12
Italy	9
Netherlands	8
Australia	6
Sweden	6
Denmark	4
China	4
France	2
Finland	2
Poland	2
Lithuania	2
France	2
Ukraine	2
Kenya	2
Israel	1
Belgium	1
Canada	1
Israel	1
Turkey	1
Brazil	1
Japan	1
India	1
Pakistan	1
Austria	1
Spain	1
Malaysia	1
Nigeria	1
Uganda	1

Table 2. National context studied (if delivered)

USA	16
UK	10
Sweden	6
Ukraine	6
Russia	5
Syria	5
Iraq	4
Japan	4
China	4
Germany	3
Afghanistan	3
Italy	3
Islamic State	3
Denmark	2
Kenya	2
Israel	2
North Korea	2
Romania	2
Pakistan	2
Nigeria	2
Czech Republic	1
Slovakia	1
Hungary	1
Poland	1
Iran	1
Tunisia	1
Egypt	1
Turkey	1
Libya	1
Bosnia	1
Canada	1
India	1
Vietnam	1
Australia	1
Uganda	1
Caribbean	1
South Korea	1

### *Types of publications and methods used*

The analyzed corpus was dominated by articles (52). Book chapters (21) and books (12) were significantly fewer. Of marginal importance were doctoral dissertations (4) and other publications, specifically a collection of abstracts (1).

Table 3. Types of publication

Journal articles	52
Book chapters	21
Books	12
PhD thesis	4
Other	1

Among the research methods used, qualitative methods (52 publications) dominated over mixed methods (12). None of the analyzed publications indicated a pure quantitative method as being used in the research. No methods were indicated in 26 publications, these being mainly theoretical and conceptual studies.

The qualitative methodology was dominated by content analysis (63 papers), of which four specific types were identified: textual, visual, audiovisual and narrative. In 25 cases, the type of content analyzed was not specified. 13 publications were based on literature review, 7 on interviews, and 6 on ethnographic methods (including netnography).

Table 4. Methods uses

<b>Content analysis</b>	<b>63</b>
- Not specified content analysis	25
- Textual content analysis	16
- Audiovisual analysis	9
- Visual analysis	12
- Narrative analysis	1
<b>Interviews</b>	<b>7</b>
- Focus group interviews	1
<b>Literature review</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Discourse analysis</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Ethnography (including netnography)</b>	<b>6</b>
- Observations	2
<b>Case studies</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Theoretical analysis</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Critical analysis</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Platform analysis</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Games analysis</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Cluster analysis</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Rythm analysis</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Practice-based research</b>	<b>1</b>

Table 5. Types of content analyzed

<b>Analyzed content</b>
Social media content
Correspondence
Literature (including pamphlets)
Movies
News
Maps
Visual content (including book illustrations and photographs)
Satires
Comedies
Press content (newspapers, journals, magazines)
Video games
Posters
Postcards
Radio content
Short Messages (SMS)
Books (including comic books)
Cartoons
TV programmes
Websites content
Brochures
Music (including songs)
Videos
Academic publications

The 22 types of media content shown in the table were analyzed.

## Qualitative analysis

### *Research aims and problems*

In the analysis we found three categories of explored research problems, two categories of research perspectives, and three methodological categories. The research problems included 1) specific issues of war, such as digital warfare; 2) specific historical events (e.g., World War I); and 3) war-related institutions (e.g., NATO). The research perspectives included 1) ideological assumptions (e.g., nationalism) and 2) research context (e.g., biopolitical). The methodological categories

distinguished included 1) the type of communication studied, 2) the type of object/process studied, and 3) the theoretical and conceptual framework used. The scope of each category is shown in the tables below.

Table 6. Categories of research problems

War issues investigated	Analyzed events	Institution studied
digital war	World War I	NATO
terrorism	scandals	US Army
war technologies	Kenyan peace activism	Swedish Armed Forces
		Amnesty International
warfare	Arab Spring	German Armed Forces
armed intervention	cold war	
war press work	the fall of the Berlin wall	
war presentation	Holocaust	
war anticipation	Ukraine-Russian conflict	
humanitarian crisis	Islamic State	
cyberattacks/cyberterrorism	war on terror	
veterans		
trolling		
civil-military relations		
torture		
military service		
PMSC		
public demonstrations		

Table 7. Categories of research perspectives

Context of the research	Ideological assumptions
history	nationalism
environment	socialism (including soviet)
politics (including biopolitics)	colonialism
law	liberalism
psychology	neoliberalism
international relations	democracy
economy	feminism



Table 8. Methodological categories

Research objects and processes analyzed	The theoretical and conceptual framework used	Communication type studied
imagery	actor-network theory	Visual communication
collective memory	mediatization	Mass communication
stereotypes	memorialization	Civil communication
imperial process	media framing	narration
propaganda	media power	representation
disinformation	platformization	online interaction
gender (including gender equity)	branding	conspiracy
information management	public relations	communication strategic
press freedom	constructionism corporate	communication military
performativity	identity	audio-visual communication
feminists	critical discourse	hate speech
masculinity	Schutz theories	fake news
violence	Herman's and Chomsk's theories	
body	media systems	
wellness	militarization	
security	globalization	
safety	mass culture	
censorship (including self-censorship)	Machiavelli theory	
death (including death taboo)		
queer and LGBT		
sexuality		
inclusivity		
trauma		
citizenship		
crowdfunding		

In general, it was possible to divide the research problems present in the surveyed corpus into categories relating strictly to conflict: wars, crises, terrorism, military. A large part of the corpus was devoted to the role of media in wars and crises (causes, course, effects). It was also possible to distinguish particular perspectives on the study of the role of media in war, including legal, social, cultural, ideological, (international) political and economic aspects. A distinction was also made between the importance of specific actors in mediatized war: individuals as well as institutions and organizations. Due to the predominant use of qualitative methods (e.g., content analysis), the corpus was dominated by the presentation of war discourses, representations and imagines.

### *The role of media in war*

The status of media in the mediatization of war studies varied widely. Researchers adopted different definitions and conceptions of media. The varied roles that media play in war were explored and the mediatization complexity was conceptualized in different ways.

The mediatization of war studies examined media in all its variants: new media, mass media, social media, private/mobile media, other digital technologies (e.g., drones). Also, the level and scale of fragmentation of the analyzed media elements varied from media platforms, technologies and content to media elements (e.g., visuals). Hence, the corpus shows that the definition of media is expanding considerably to include, for example, (fiction) literature, art, cinema and songs.

It was possible to distinguish several roles that, in the light of the research, the media play during war. The first division is classical in nature. On one hand, depending on the research perspective, the media perform cultural, social, political, ideological or military functions. On the other hand, from a media effects perspective, it can be said that during conflicts the media can be a *covering transmitter* when they convey content in as neutral and objectified a way as possible, or a *creative constructor*. The creative function of the media can refer to the discursive shaping of the public agenda, including the manipulation of public opinion, the construction of an audience

imaginary, or even participation as a party in the conflict, in which case the media are seen as a warfare tool, or possibly a negotiating actor with peaceful potential. The media, in the light of the research, also have an archiving function (media as *commemorating archive*).

The essential research category in the study of the mediatization of war was, of course, the military. In the corpus, the military was identified as having a special status in research on the mediatization of war, while at the same time being defined in diverse ways, such as a warfare tool, industry, service, political or diplomatic tool or cultural text, object or symbol. The studied corpus included many publications about the image of the military, analyzed from different perspectives such as the images created by the media, the army or media users, or images used by other stakeholders.

### *The specificity of mediatization of war research*

The analyzed corpus allowed us to identify those elements of war that are subject to mediatization in a particular way. These include events (e.g., battles), images (e.g., images of soldiers), processes (e.g., disinformation sharing), relationships (e.g., relations between conflict stakeholders), actions (e.g., peacekeeping activities), and anticipations (predictions of political and war events).

According to the classic division of mediatization into direct and indirect (Hjarvard, 2008), both might be encountered in research on the mediatization of war. When the presence of media (e.g., technology) directly alters war, then what was previously unmediated becomes mediated (e.g., the ability to track and monitor the enemy on national territory). In the second case, the media influence, for example, the course of the war, if only through their coverage by shaping the discourse and transforming the perceptions of the different stakeholders of the situation.

In our corpus, we noted the presence of all the classic paradigms of mediatization research (Bolin, 2016). The institutional paradigm had a dual use. Research was concerned with the instrumental use of media in war (*instrumental use of media*) as well as the creative use of media (*creative force of media*). In the technological paradigm, media as a means of action was of peculiar importance. This is particularly

the case in analyses of mobile or social media. Within the constructivist paradigm, the presentation and shaped representation of war was analyzed in textual, visual, audio or audio-visual terms.

Additionally, in our corpus we could identify subprocesses that acted as key elements of the study of mediatization of war. The first category consists of subprocesses included within mediatization (*included process*), which comprise digitization, platformization, visualization and narrativization. These are the processes on which mediatization is based, and their nature is to intersect with media processes and interweave them. They belong to different levels: content, technological, business and socio-cultural. Some of the *included processes*, such as digitization and platformization, condition contemporary mediatization to a certain extent, giving them a framework and enabling functionalities. Others complement this and construct media structures and content through, for example, visualization and narrativization.

The second category consists of subprocesses induced through mediatization (*induced processes*), such as memorialization, popularization, weaponization, militarization or camouflaging. These are processes that greatly transform the socio-cultural sphere, including the ideological, historical, identity and political-economic sphere. *Induced processes* are involved in the mutual transformation of the media and war, which are interconnected vessels that, through subprocesses, act as a feedback loop. *Induced processes* and *included processes* determine the strength of the media transformation that the armed conflict undergoes, with the media adapting to the circumstances of war, either benefiting from it or becoming victims of it.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the theoretical extensions of the mediatization approach that could be distinguished in the studied corpus. Absorption of the existing concepts or the theories of, for example, Herman, Chomsky, and Machiavelli appeared as something natural in media and communication studies. What particularly drew our attention was the comprehensive extension of concepts, frameworks and approaches. This included not only the combination of multiple scientific disciplines at the level of research methods and theories (e.g., security studies, law), but also the extension of mediatization studies through the use of completely different research perspectives (such as the use of temporal and spatial theories). Finally,

we observed extensions of paradigms which dealt specifically with the adaptation of the arts to the social sciences. In the corpus surveyed, these included visual arts, music, film and literature. Among the publications surveyed, there were also some that proposed completely new concepts (such as post-digital war), thus contributing to the development of the academic media studies discourse in the broadest sense.

## DISCUSSION

We begin the discussion by comparing our findings with Horbyk's recent review on the mediatization of war (2023), in which previous studies were criticized for their lack of discussion with other disciplines and their failure to make use of mediatization theory. Our systematic analysis shows that the majority of the mediatization texts were interdisciplinary and crossed over into war and conflict studies and military and security studies. Also other social sciences and humanities disciplines were present in our corpus. However, in the context of the rapid development of technology in the past five years, more studies using the background of computer science and science in general would have been expected. Furthermore, the lack of dialogue with overlapping fields may be true when viewed from the other direction: as Horbyk (2023) states, other fields of study could be enriched with a better use and understanding of the potential of mediatization theory.

We could also observe that the studies included in our corpus employed mediatization theory to varying degrees. A lack of conceptual clarity and a lack of use of the full potential of mediatization theory, as criticized by Horbyk (2023), were seen in our systematic analysis on mediatization of war studies. In our corpus, researchers adopted different definitions of media, attached different weights to mediatization theory, and conceptualized the complexity of media in relation to individuals, organizations and institutions in different ways. This shows that although mediatization of war theory has been developed over the last decade (e.g., by Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2015), the majority of (empirical) studies do not employ it holistically or critically. These studies often treat mediatization theory in a rather

arbitrary and somewhat instrumental way, without contributing to its development.

Furthermore, when approaching mediatization of war from Horbyk's (2023) triadic perspective, in our analysis we could see that empirical studies on mediatization of war focus on the media and not on the audience or the military as an institution. Hence, a strong media-centric, truncated perspective is found in mediatization of war studies. The studies neither show bilateral transformations of media and war, nor do they complete the perspective of the key contexts of war. In conclusion, the studies generally seem fragmented and unholistic.

Additionally, we observed extensions of existing paradigms. These extensions dealt with the adaptation of the arts to the social sciences. Publications from 2018–2022 indexed in Google Scholar as dealing with the mediatization of war are more firmly oriented towards art. Film, video, photography, literature, music are considered by researchers as media that not only inform about war but also transform it by constructing discourse, history and identity. It is interesting, then, that the subject of war folds into thinking about both the role of art in war, and art as a tool of mediatization. This trend is worth noting and is not necessarily signaled in other fields of mediatization research.

Relating to paradigms, in our analysis we could identify two types of subprocesses that were prevalent in the mediatization of war studies. First, we could see that there were subprocesses *included within* mediatization (theory), such as digitization or platformization. These processes are determining the course of mediatization. Second, we recognized subprocesses that were *induced through* mediatization (theory), such as militarization or memorialization. Both types of processes are involved in the mutual transformation of the media and war: they are the driving force and the structure of the mediatization of war on the one hand and its effect on the other, intertwining and mutually conditioning it. Ultimately, *inclusive and inductive subprocesses* affect the course of mediatization. They are therefore analyzed in each of the available paradigms and in relation to the core question of media studies: what does the media transform and how? From our corpus we could conclude that mediatized war is not only a thoroughly hybrid and convergent

phenomenon but also a dynamically changing one. Therefore, it seems that analysis of subprocesses is a key task also for future mediatization research.

Finally, we would like to critically reflect upon the context of the mediatization of war studies. As our analysis shows, mainly authors affiliated with Western European or Northern American universities publish studies on mediatization of war mainly in the American and European study contexts. It is difficult to give a clear interpretation of this state of affairs. On the one hand, the locations of the ongoing conflicts – their nature, involvement and scale – determine researchers' interest in them. On the other hand, however, the global media studies discourse is dominated by Western researchers, and the global south still only aspires to present research results outside its local academic circuit. The study of the mediatization of war appears to be another field where greater inclusivity of publications from diverse regions should be postulated.

## CONCLUSIONS

Concluding, we reviewed 90 scientific publications indexed as being about mediatization of war. The conducted research provides evidence that war is a highly mediatized phenomenon – it is a multi-dimensional, complex and at the same time dynamically changing environment. The results of the study, on one hand, highlight the importance and scale of the media's influence; on the other hand, they show the growing need to deepen media analysis with new technologies and expand interdisciplinary analysis to science, such as computer science.

The analysis of the collected material made it possible to characterize the interdisciplinarity of the interests of mediatization researchers, which, while fitting into all paradigms of research on the phenomenon, simultaneously incorporate a wide variety of theories and concepts. This wide-ranging multidisciplinary allows one to look at the vast array of paradigms that are related to, for example, the adaptation of art to the social sciences. It also allows us to shed light on new concepts such as post-digital warfare that may influence the development of academic media studies discourse.

The collected data also prompts us to note the clear dominance of qualitative research. There are also many theoretical and conceptual studies. At the same time, it should be noted that researchers examine each of the classic elements of media studies: producer, message and audience. Methodologically, however, content studies dominate, which may indicate a focus on messages and less on institutions and audiences.

Finally, we emphasize that the choice of search engine (Google Scholar) was motivated by its free access model and the fact that it includes various publishers. Taking all this into account, it therefore seems reasonable to try to extend the study to other databases, as well as to earlier time periods, which would consequently show a much wider scope and could potentially extend the obtained results, especially taking into account the dynamism of changes that occur in this area.

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## Mediatization and Mystique. Volodymyr Zelensky's Self-Presentation on Instagram\*

*Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** This study uses mediatization theory and Goffman's concept of self-presentation to explain the inseparable role of social media in the rise of Volodymyr Zelensky in Ukrainian politics and, since the Russian invasion, world consciousness. From the start, his political persona has been governed far more by media logic than political calculation, although the former has translated into the latter.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The analysis explores how Zelensky develops an iconic communication style through visual framing and other mediation techniques. Towards this end, we conduct a visual content analysis of images posted to his official Instagram account across three points in time: his candidacy, presidency before the invasion, and first year of the invasion. 100 images are sampled from each time period and subjected to detailed visual and nonverbal analysis.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** Employing framing theory and Goffman's notion of self-presentation, the study explains the Ukrainian leader's skillful use of visual and nonverbal messaging to project an image of an everyman president and, beginning with the February 2022 invasion, emergent soldier-in-chief. The analysis also shows how specific visual appeals (e.g., facial

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expressions, Ukrainian symbols) and background settings influence Zelensky's presentation over time.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** Results show how the inclusion of more political, and then diplomatic and military, elites in posts during his presidency and year one of the invasion positions Zelensky as a recognized leader while solidifying his status as soldier-in-chief. Indeed, the ubiquity and universality of his soldier persona have become a widely recognized symbol of the fight for democratic freedom.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The study illustrates how Zelensky utilizes social media, Instagram in particular, as a platform for compelling self-presentation while communicating a message of national unity and resolve. His ubiquitous media presence has introduced a new perspective on leadership during wartime.

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**KEYWORDS:**

mediatization, self-presentation, visual framing, Ukraine, Zelensky, Instagram

## INTRODUCTION

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the largest ground war in Europe since WWII, has dominated public discourse in a way few conflicts can. Shaping public perceptions of the war, however, are the key personalities at the heart of the conflict. Volodymyr Zelensky, comedian and actor-turned-politician – turned wartime commander and global defender of Western values – has been the face of the conflict. Zelensky's active advocacy of the Ukrainian cause has been broadcast worldwide through multiple media channels daily, garnering support as he conveys optimism and resolve: "The fight is here; I need ammunition, not a ride" (Associated Press, 2022, para. 2).

While on-the-ground battles between Ukrainian and Russian forces grind on, perceptions of the war have arguably been conditioned by a key factor operating in the background: mediatization. Mediatization, which Hjarvard (2008) describes as the growing influence of media on key sectors of society, has played a significant role in Zelensky's self-presentation, specifically on social media. As media influence at all levels grows, politicians can no longer ignore their significance and must increasingly adapt to a media logic (Strömbäck,

2008). Since the lead-up to his presidential campaign in 2018, Zelensky has embraced a media logic in his leadership style. Indeed, the aggregation of visual maneuvers found on Zelensky's social media pages, especially Instagram, enable him to fashion a digital persona that has evolved dramatically over time and is unique among world leaders. To examine the self-presentation techniques employed by Zelensky during his mediatized ascent, this study performs a quantitative content analysis of his Instagram photos from his time as a presidential candidate, to president of Ukraine, to wartime leader.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Self-Presentation Style

Goffman (1959) describes the construction of a preferred and desirable image as a process of visual self-presentation. People, referred to as actors in the self-presentation framework, perform both frontstage and backstage behavior. Frontstage behavior is active and conscious, implying that the actor is putting on a performance of their desired image because they are aware of being observed. Featured in the frontstage is the setting, which includes background items that form the scene. In addition to the physical elements that make up the setting, the frontstage also includes a personal front, which includes the other items of expression. The elements that make up the personal front region are closely associated with the performer themselves, so much so that viewers naturally expect these elements when they see the performer (Goffman, 1959).

In contrast, backstage behavior involves the actor without the façade. This presumed private region is not shown to the public and serves as an environment where the actor can privately adjust characteristics and flaws and rehearse performances. The actor knows that the backstage is a space to which audience members have no access, thus guaranteeing that any out-of-character actions that take place in the backstage are not visible (Goffman, 1959).

Although much effort can be put into effectively organizing the front and backstages of individual behavior, another significant consideration in self-presentation is the relationship between the way the

actor expresses themselves and how viewers are impressed by them. The frontstage is a projected image disseminated to target publics through the media, which results in a perceived image in the minds of message recipients (Alberti & De Serio, 2020). In the context of performance, when the audience's perception does not align with an actor's projected image, they are likely to experience a disruption or expectancy violation that could potentially tarnish the performance. Therefore, actors must fine tune their performances in the name of 'saving the show' (Goffman, 1959, p. 212). In the era of digital communications, self-presentation strategies have been developed and refined on social media, resulting in the emergence of accessible personae (Campus, 2010; Mendonça & Caetano, 2021).

### Social Media and the Rediscovery of the Middle Region

While Goffman's (1959) self-presentation concept serves as a useful analytical framework for how political figures organize front and back regions to personally influence how they are perceived, the evolution of mass and now digital media have opened new spaces for political image crafting and performance. Since the rise of television, political figures have used media channels to put themselves under a figurative microscope, revealing seemingly intimate details of their lives. But the distinction between frontstage and backstage portrayals is not always clear cut. When front region portrayals no longer exclusively reside on the public stage and back region depictions no longer exclusively reside behind-the-scenes, a new domain of political depiction opens.

Meyrowitz (1986) describes this as the middle region of politics. In his analysis, electronic media have blurred the lines of once-distinct social roles, which in turn affects the self-presentation styles of leaders. Building on Goffman's (1959) stage analogy, the middle region consists of a side stage view combining elements of both front and back regions. Additionally, the middle region allows the audience to see the performer transition from region to region, which leads to a loss of presentational control (Meyrowitz, 1977) – but could in today's social media era be perceived as more authentic and real.

## Mediatization of Politics and Conflict

The concept of mediatization aids in explaining how burgeoning media influence and individual reliance on communication technology shapes society. According to Hjarvard (2008), mediatization should be examined from two angles: first, news media are an independent institution that other institutions accommodate; and second, media have become an incorporated aspect of other institutions such as politics, entertainment, or religion. The campaign tactics of populist actors, which aim to sidestep mainstream media scrutiny and gate-keeping, have become especially intertwined with the mediatization of politics through alternative and social media channels. According to Mazzoleni (2014), populist actors possess a unique savviness that allows them to gain and keep media attention and an ability “to perfectly understand the imperatives of the media, what is newsworthy and what is not” (p. 52).

Although there are several factors that contribute to the public’s perception of political figures, research indicates that visual communication plays the most significant role in today’s politics (Grabe & Bucy, 2009; Lilleker & Veneti, 2023; Seiter & Weger, 2020). In the context of politics, images often elicit a stronger response from viewers than written or spoken narratives on account of their accessibility and associative qualities. By evoking and forming linkages to relevant concepts, they have the capacity to connect leaders to broader themes. As Lilleker (2019) observes, ‘each image builds a schema around a candidate or leader, the schema may form around strong associations with hope, unity, patriotism, economic stability, strength in foreign policy, protection against internal threats or a myriad other desires or threats citizens have internalized’ (pp. 2–3).

Indeed, social media platforms are now an integral element of mediatization processes, including their growing role in war and conflict (e.g., Zhang, 2021). Social media platforms further the mediatization process in wars and conflicts by creating a joint space where news organizations and news audiences can present and discuss the conflict at hand.

## Visual Framing

A truism now supported with ample empirical evidence, visual messages and the elements within them typically elicit stronger and more lasting cognitive and emotional responses than verbal messages (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011). A visual framing analysis of social media posts addressing the conflict in Eastern Ukraine in 2014 examined how the conflict was framed from pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian perspectives on Vkonakte, a social networking site (Makhortykh & Sydorova, 2017). Classifying the content of the images through visual characteristics such as the presence of civilians and military personnel, military equipment, damage, dead bodies, and the perceived gender of people featured in the image, the study found that pro-Ukrainian online groups framed the conflict in a patriotic manner, namely as ‘the good war,’ while Pro-Russian groups framed the conflict as a destructive humanitarian crisis (Makhortykh & Sydorova, 2017, p. 376).

Research has also investigated levels of personalization found in Instagram content and how these individual touches influence user engagement. A study of the visual content posted by U.S. politicians on the platform found that more personalized depictions, such as scenes of nonpolitical environments, posts of faces, and photographs displaying emotion, correlate with high audience engagement (Peng, 2021). By contrast, political posts that depict traditional, professional, and less-personalized activities generated less engagement, suggesting that social media audiences are more likely to interact with personalized content over portrayals that feel like ‘politics-as-usual’ (Peng, 2021, p. 159).

Considering the capacity of Instagram to serve as a platform for political self-presentation and Zelensky’s robust use of the application, the following multi-part research question is posed:

*RQ1: What are the visual characteristics of Zelensky’s Instagram photos (a) before he was elected president; (b) while in office but before the Russian invasion; and, (c) after the Russian invasion once Ukraine was engulfed in war?*

Interpretations of facts, stories, or people often depend on the way they are framed. According to Chong and Druckman (2007), framing involves “the process by which people develop a particular



conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue" (p. 104). Importantly, frames can manifest through words and images, leading audiences to construct realities around certain issues or events (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011). Through the process of frame emphasis, the way in which developments are presented may influence the way in which they are perceived. In political environments, even the smallest of changes to routine depictions can have an effect on public opinion.

Although text has traditionally been the default option for framing analysis, visuals can have a more potent and lasting effect. As a result, images are now widely acknowledged as central to the framing process in politics and media (Coleman, 2010; Grabe & Bucy, 2011; Parry, 2011). Visual framing refers to the suggestion of meaning emphasis in an image (or stream of images, in the case of video), often involving the emphasis of one view, scene, or angle over others in the image selection process (Coleman, 2010). Further, frames are identified and examined through the use of symbols. Symbols can either be abstract, such as shapes or objects that have meaning or value, or figurative, representing people, places, and things with symbolic value. These visual symbols can effectively construct narratives for audiences more than other types of frames because they are often rooted in culture (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011; Yakin & Totu, 2014).

The self-presentation of political actors can be documented through the identification of visual frames. Grabe and Bucy (2009, 2011) identify two prominent visual frames in news coverage of U.S. presidential elections, the *ideal candidate* and *populist campaigner*, each of which contain two subdimensions. The ideal candidate frame consists of a *statesmanship* dimension, indicated when politicians are shown meeting or hobnobbing with other elected officials, often amid patriotic backdrops and campaign paraphernalia, and *compassion*, which may feature visual linkages to family, children, and religious symbols. The populist campaigner frame, by contrast, consists of a *mass appeal* dimension, evidenced by visual linkages to celebrities or large, approving audiences, and *ordinariness*, including portrayals of political leaders in informal attire, engaging in interactions with ordinary people, or participating in athletic activities.

An analysis by Steffan (2020) examining visual social media posts from the accounts of politicians from seven Western democracies

investigated the role of visual frames in candidate self-presentation. The results suggest that Instagram is the ideal social media platform for self-presentation during campaigns. Additionally, the analysis showed that candidates were more likely to use the ideal candidate frame over other visual frames in their self-presentation on Instagram (Steffan, 2020).

Visual framing analyses can also be applied to images depicting war and conflict. Mediatized images of war carry strategic and symbolic value and, through circulation on social media, have the capacity to influence and motivate audiences globally. Parry (2011) conducted a visual framing analysis of images depicting the 2003 Iraqi invasion from print media in the United Kingdom and found that repetitive portrayals of coalition involvement reinforced humanitarian frames and liberation narratives despite the war's obvious aggressive nature. For the present study, visual frames will be identified by aggregating individual visual elements within Zelensky's Instagram posts into larger visual frames using the framework developed by Grabe and Bucy (2009, 2011).

Considering the capability of Instagram to serve as an effective platform for political self-presentation through visual framing, the following multi-part research question is asked:

*RQ2: What visual frames are featured in Zelensky's Instagram photos (a) before he was elected president; (b) while in office but before the Russian invasion; and, (c) after the Russian invasion once Ukraine was engulfed in war?*

The research questions explore how the application of different visual characteristics and frames shown in Zelensky's Instagram photos evolve from his time as a comedian and television actor to wartime president. However, a finer-grained assessment of Zelensky's self-presentation style could reveal whether part of his visual strategy includes a growing degree of transparency via back region portrayals to convey a sense of heightened authenticity and openness. Such findings could yield useful insights in regard to the mediatization of politics and conflict. Therefore, a third research question is posed:

*RQ3: How does the visual portrayal of Zelensky's front and backstage behaviors on Instagram vary over time as he progresses from presidential candidate to defender of Ukraine against the Russian invasion?*

## METHODOLOGY

### Study Design

To address these research questions, a content analysis was performed. We began by categorizing the population of images into three timeframes, determined by the date the post was made. The first timeframe, Candidate, consists of 171 images posted between May 19, 2018 and May 19, 2019 while Zelensky was campaigning for and elected to office. The second timeframe, President, consists of 497 images posted between May 20, 2019, when Zelensky was sworn in, and February 23, 2022, the day before the invasion. And the third timeframe, Invasion, consists of 823 images posted between February 24, 2022, when Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, to February 24, 2023, a year later.

The sampling periods for both President and Invasion time periods consists of images that were either posted individually or that appeared first in multi-image albums posted to Instagram. This criterion was not applied for images within the Candidate timeframe due to the relatively small number of images compared to the two other timeframes. To assemble the images for analysis, a random (skip interval) sampling technique was employed to randomly select 100 images from each timeframe. Altogether, 300 posts were analyzed.

For purposes of this study, visual characteristics are defined as smaller individual elements depicted within the images, such as people and Ukrainian symbols. Adapting Saussure's approach, the analysis of visual characteristics in this study will focus on both the physical elements shown in the images as well as the concepts they call forth. The analysis also examines the content of Zelensky's posts at two levels: the overall image, and (in the posts where he is visually present) Zelensky's portrayal within it.

### Intercoder Reliability Check

Intercoder reliability was established by coding 10% of the sample across each timeframe. The codebook was developed through a collaborative process of identifying key features of each first image

and assessing for consistency across images. Once the codebook was finalized (in the spring of 2023), each author independently coded 10 images from each of the study's three time periods, or 30 images total: before Zelensky was elected president, during his presidency but before the invasion, and for the first year of the invasion.

A detailed codebook with variable definitions was developed to document the presence or absence of each defined category (available from the authors). Photographic features were documented at two levels of analysis: first, the photograph overall, and second, at the individual level of Zelensky. Variables at the level of the photograph included structural features such as shot length and camera angle, as well as elements within the shot including other people, their roles and estimated ages. Other visuals such as Ukrainian symbols and outcomes of war including ruins, casualties, military equipment and depictions of adversaries were also documented.

Variables unique to Zelensky's portrayals included whether the photo was a selfie and if he appeared alone in the shot, the percentage of the frame his image filled, and basic facial expressions – positive, negative, and neutral. Positive expressions were categorized into natural and posed smiles. We documented who Zelensky was pictured with, including politicians, journalists, supporters, civilians, military, and family members. Coding also assessed his style of dress, grooming, and his level of agency or activity. Gestures were also coded and categorized into agentic and defiant gestures. We also documented the type of activity Zelensky was participating in, including athletic activity, show business, volunteering, and addressing an audience. Lastly, the visual characteristics of each post were assessed in aggregate to determine whether the images could be coded into visual frame categories such as statesmanship, compassion, ordinariness, mass appeal, and a new 'soldier-in-chief' frame.

Intercoder reliability was calculated using Freelon's ReCal2 online tool for two coders. Because the variables coded were nominal, manifest, and non-normally distributed (showing low variability), percent agreement is reported instead of alpha reliability scores (see Feng, 2015). Although percent agreement does not make allowances for chance agreement, it is appropriate for nominally scaled coding under these conditions. Coding of all variables used in the analysis showed a high level of agreement. Across all 59 nominal variables

in the dataset, minor disagreements only arose in five instances, resulting in 96.6% agreement in those cases. For all other nominal variables in the reliability coding, there was perfect agreement. For the single ordinal variable in the dataset (image setting), agreement was also 96.6%.

## FINDINGS

### Visual Characteristics

To begin with, we present screen captures of images from each time period in the analysis. Panel 1 shows the kinds of images Zelensky shared while running for office, Panel 2 shows the ways in which he portrayed himself during the early part of his presidency, and Panel 3 shows the dramatically different visual landscape of the third, war period. Each time period is characterized by a markedly distinct presentational style. As a candidate, Zelensky is more candid and personal, while as president he quickly becomes officious and embraces his (now real) role of servant of the people. By the third period of the Russian invasion, the tenor of the imagery is much darker and destructive, showing a serious Zelensky embracing his new role as soldier-in-chief and defender of the national interest.

*RQ1* asked what visual characteristics were present in Zelensky's Instagram posts before he was elected to office, during his presidency, and during the first year of the Russian invasion. To measure the presence of different visual characteristics across timeframes, frequency and cross-tabulation tests were conducted for each relevant variable. In the interest of providing parsimonious results, we limit our observations here to some longitudinal trends over time. Detailed descriptive results for all variables are provided in an online appendix.

As time progresses, Zelensky is featured in fewer and fewer photos; moreover, his focus transitions from his own activities and likeness to that of other people. In the Invasion timeframe, the conflict with Russia moves to the forefront. Although the frequency of civilians featured on Zelensky's Instagram stays relatively consistent over time, the presence of Zelensky interacting with them does not. As

time evolves, Zelensky is shown with fewer civilians and colleagues from entertainment projects. Instead, the proportion of images of Zelensky shown with political figures and members of the Ukrainian military increases. As shown in Fig. 1, the proportion of images showing Zelensky with political figures and military members is higher in the latter time periods than during the campaign phase.

Panel 1. Zelensky's Instagram photos from the Candidate timeframe



Panel 2. Zelensky's Instagram photos from the President timeframe



Panel 3. Zelensky's Instagram photos from the Soldier timeframe

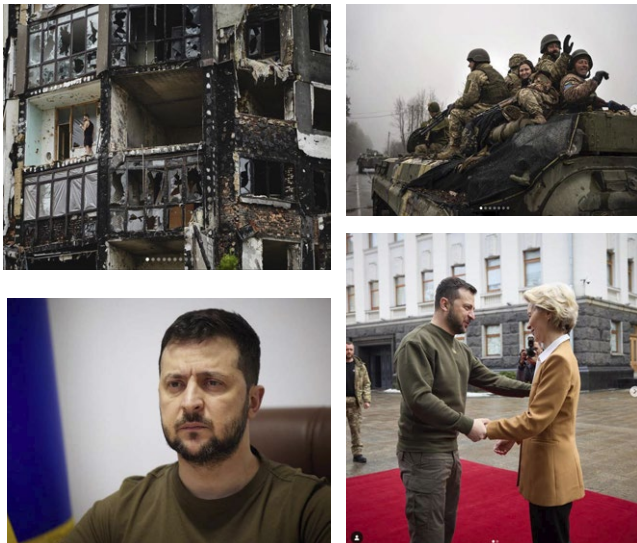
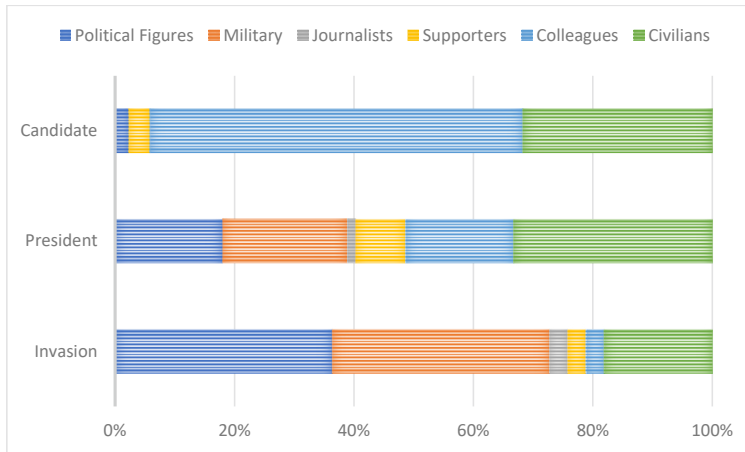


Figure 1. Individuals shown with Zelensky over time

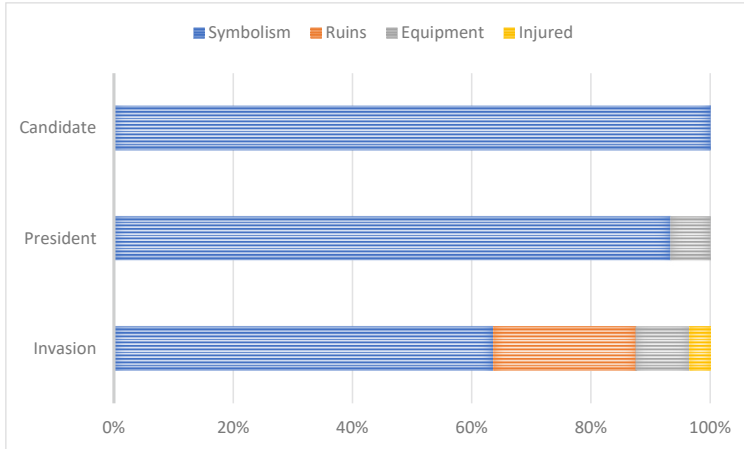


Source: Authors' original analysis.

Reflecting a heightened orientation towards the state, the presence of Ukrainian symbolism increases from 8% in the Candidate timeframe to 56% in both President and Invasion timeframes (see Fig. 2). Regardless of whether Zelensky is in the image, depictions of patriotism increase once he is in office. Interestingly, the proportion of Ukrainian symbolism in images *with* Zelensky increases dramatically from the Candidate to President timeframe and remains higher than in images without Zelensky (see Fig. 4). Injured individuals are only present after the invasion. Although images of bombed-out buildings and ruins are only present in the Invasion timeframe, none of these images feature Zelensky. All images in the President timeframe that show military equipment also feature Zelensky, but in the Invasion timeframe, none of the images with military equipment feature Zelensky. There are no images that feature enemy forces or dead individuals on Zelensky's Instagram, whether he is in the image or not.



Figure 2. Objects, symbols, and injured shown in images over time



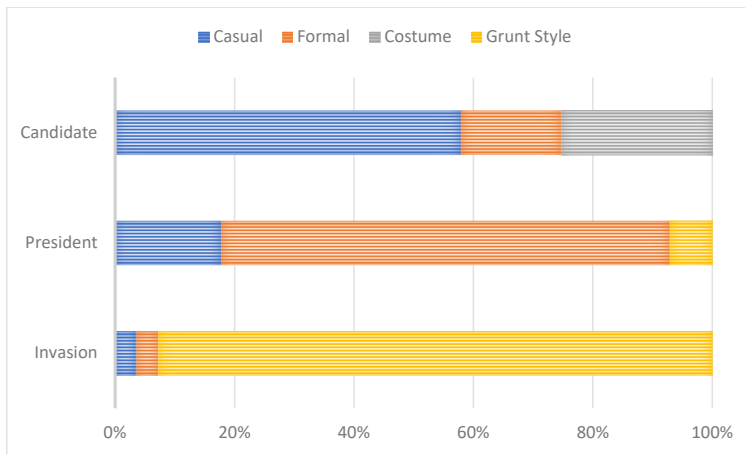
Source: Authors' original analysis.

The evolution of setting, activity, and physical appearance in Zelensky's Instagram photos is another factor to consider when evaluating his self-presentation on the platform. Of the 93 images in the Candidate timeframe that feature Zelensky, 43.01% depict a showbusiness setting and 50.54% show him acting or performing in front of an audience or participating in promotional activities for entertainment projects. Similarly, 11.82% show Zelensky in a gym and 13.98% depict him participating in some sort of athletic activity. As shown in Fig. 3, Zelensky's style of dress is mostly casual or involves costumes related to entertainment projects. His grooming style is neat, and nearly half of the images with Zelensky depict agentic behavior, suggesting an active presence and dynamism (see online appendix). Zelensky's larger projected image in the Candidate timeframe revolves around his position as a comedic television actor, assisted by portrayals of ordinariness and normalcy.

Zelensky's casualness and everyday portrayals of ordinariness transition to more diplomatic and traditional portrayals as he takes office. Of the 84 images in the President timeframe that feature Zelensky, approximately one-fourth feature scenes from government buildings. He is also depicted outdoors, both in the streets and out in nature. Zelensky begins to volunteer with civilians and military

personnel and delivers speeches in front of audiences more frequently in this timeframe. Zelensky shows agency in 41.67% of these images, further projecting that he operates with an active presence. Additionally, he is mostly shown in formal attire; depictions of him in casual outfits constitute just 17.86% of his images during this timeframe. Consistent with this formal style, his grooming is almost always neat (see Fig. 5).

Figure 3. Variations in Zelensky's clothing style over time



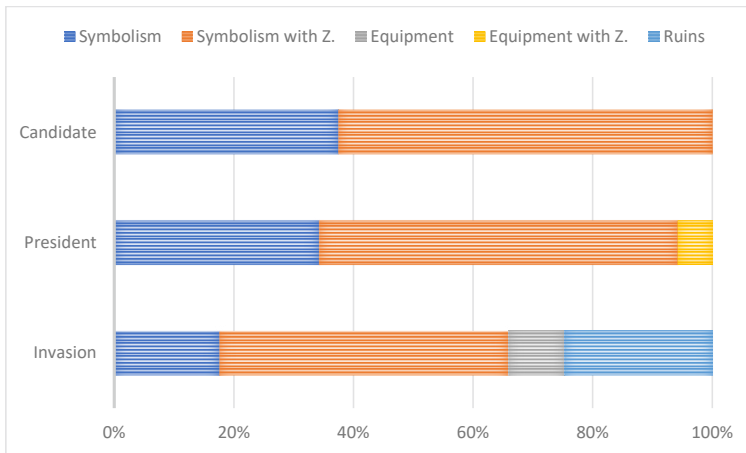
Source: Authors' original analysis.

Once Russia invaded Ukraine in February of 2022, Zelensky seemingly transformed from president to 'soldier-in-chief,' growing a beard and wearing his signature camouflage green t-shirt or sweatshirt, or plain button-down shirt. Of the 57 images in the Invasion timeframe that feature Zelensky, nearly half depict him in his office. The soldier-in-chief role is not a unidimensional field marshal depiction. Rather, Zelensky is often shown sitting at his desk or calmly interacting with others; in other words, modeling a sense of normalcy. Zelensky is depicted delivering speeches in 12.28% of images and volunteering with injured or displaced civilians or members of the Ukrainian military in 8.77%. Zelensky manages to display dynamism in many (40.35%) of these images, depicting agency even if he is in the office. His attire transforms from civilian casual (e.g., entertainment costumes, gym attire) and presidential formality to fatigues and his

now iconic military-style dress (see Fig. 3). As detailed below, his hair and beard are worn longer, and his facial expressions are almost always neutral or negative.

Of the 100 total images analyzed from the Candidate timeframe, Zelensky is featured in almost all ( $n = 93$ ). Zelensky is typically surrounded by people and is shown alone in just 25.81% of these images. In over half (57%) of these posts, he is shown interacting with colleagues, followed by civilians (29.03%). A much smaller percentage of posts portray Zelensky with family members, supporters, political figures or influentials, and journalists. There were no posts depicting Zelensky interacting with members of the Ukrainian military in the Candidate timeframe; however, 5.37% do feature Zelensky with some form of Ukrainian symbolism. None of the images depict ruins, military equipment, enemy forces, or injured or dead individuals (see Fig. 4).

Figure 4. Visual features in images with and without Zelensky over time

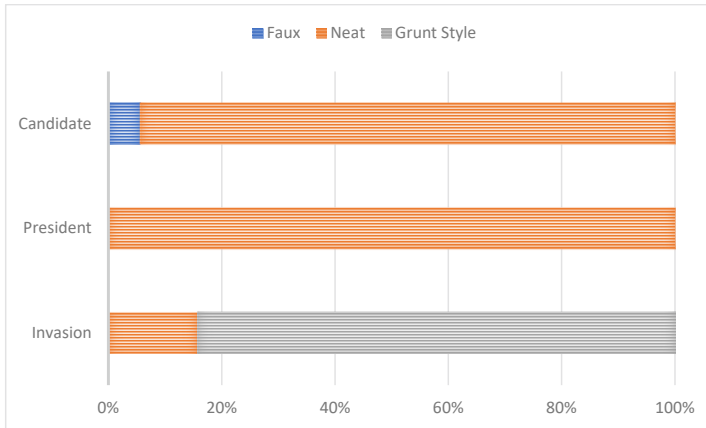


Source: Authors' original analysis.

Of the images in the Candidate timeframe that feature Zelensky, 43.01% depict him in a showbusiness setting, 18.23% outside or in nature, 17.20% on a street in an urban setting, 11.83% in a gym, and 5.38% in an office. A smaller percentage showed Zelensky at an indoor reception, at home, or on some form of transportation. No images belonging to the Candidate timeframe that feature Zelensky in

them took place in a hospital, government building, sites of rubble or destruction, war environment, or sporting event.

Figure 5. Changes in Zelensky's grooming style over time

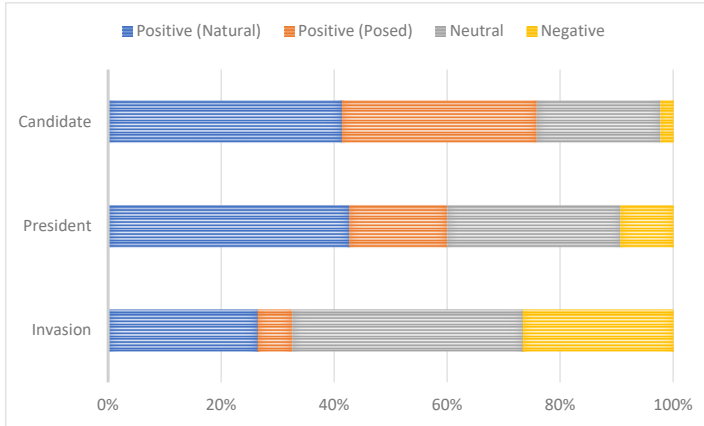


Source: Authors' original analysis.

The vast majority of images, 94.44%, in the Candidate timeframe that feature Zelensky show him with a neat grooming style, and 5.30% feature Zelensky wearing faux facial hair as part of a costume. None show Zelensky with his now characteristic 'grunt style,' a less formal, bearded look usually observed after political figures leave office. Grunt style, which is now also a brand of casual action wear, disregards the niceties of civilian life during peacetime and communicates a muscular posture of defensive readiness. Zelensky only dons it with the Invasion (see Fig. 5).

Of the images in the Candidate timeframe in which Zelensky appears and his facial expression is visible, 41.38% show him with a positive, natural smile, 34.48% with a positive, posed smile, 21.84% with a neutral expression, and just 2.30% with a negative expression (see Fig. 6).

Figure 6. Zelensky’s facial expressions over time



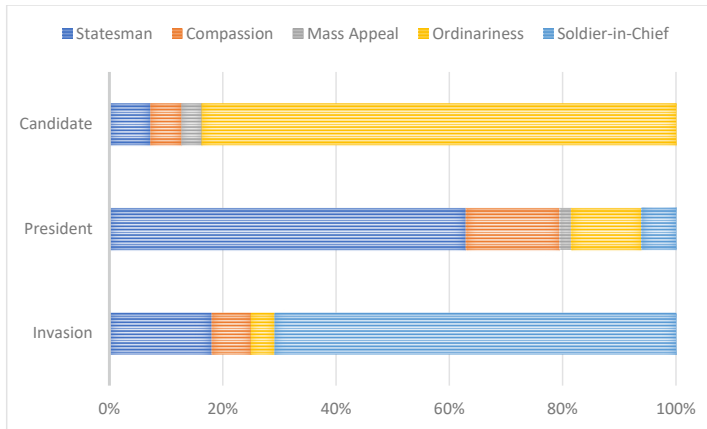
Source: Authors’ original analysis.

### Visual Frames

RQ2a asked what visual frames were present in Zelensky’s still image posts on Instagram before and after he was elected to office. To measure the presence of different visual frames in the Candidate timeframe, cross-tabulations were run for each relevant frame variable. The frequency of certain visual frames differed before Zelensky was officially elected to office. For images containing Zelensky that fall into the Candidate timeframe, 49.46% align with the ordinary dimension of the populist campaigner (see Fig. 7). No other frames rival this mode of self-presentation and none of the images with Zelensky within the Candidate timeframe fit the soldier-in-chief frame.

RQ2b asked what visual frames were present in Zelensky’s image posts on Instagram once elected to office but before the start of the Russian invasion. To measure the presence of visual frames in the President timeframe, a cross-tabulation was again conducted for each relevant variable. The frequency of visual frames here suggests a more official political presentation of Zelensky, with the statesman subdimension appearing most prominently (73.81%), followed by compassion (20.24%), ordinariness (15.48%), soldier-in-chief (8.33%), and mass appeal (3.57%). Fig. 7 shows the distribution of visual frames over time.

Figure 7. Visual framing of Zelensky over time



Source: Authors' original analysis.

RQ2c asked what visual frames were present in Zelensky's image posts following the Russian invasion. To measure the presence of visual frames in images in the Invasion timeframe, a cross-tabulation was conducted for each relevant variable. In this timeframe the soldier-in-chief frame becomes most evident, with just over half of all photos featuring Zelensky aligning with it, followed by statesmanship, compassion, and ordinariness.

### Zelensky's Self-Presentation

RQ3 asked how Zelensky's presentation of front and back region behaviors on Instagram evolved from the presidential campaign phase to the Russian invasion. To operationalize self-presentation in images featuring Zelensky, frequency and cross-tabulation tests were conducted for the presence of front and backstage behavior. In the Candidate timeframe, 60.22% of the images depict front region behavior, while 39.78% depict back region behavior. As shown in Panel 1, a majority of the images depicted front region behavior such as performing or acting on the set of his television show. Interestingly, more images (54.76%) depicted Zelensky engaging in back region activities than front region behavior (45.24%). This is represented in

Panel 2, with a combination of images depicting different activities such as Zelensky working in his office or delivering speeches. In the Invasion timeframe, a third of the images (33.33%) depicted Zelensky participating in front region behavior, while two-thirds, 66.67%, depicted him participating in back region activities. Panel 3 highlights this increase in back region behavior by including images of Zelensky working alone at his desk or meeting with other political figures.

## DISCUSSION

### Visual Characteristics and Visual Frames

Overall, the results suggest an evolution of certain visual characteristics on Zelensky's Instagram page. The visual presence of other elected officials and political elites increases after Zelensky is elected to office, and the proportions of images showing him with political figures and soldiers are at their highest after the Russian invasion. Ukrainian symbolism in images with Zelensky increases from the Candidate to Invasion timeframe, suggesting that direct visual linkages to Zelensky's own patriotism become more prominent with time. Of the images in the President timeframe that feature Zelensky, approximately a quarter take place in a government building, but he is also shown outside and in nature. The increased depictions of Zelensky outdoors or in the streets during the President timeframe reinforce his physical presence, further strengthening his embodiment of the Ukrainian determination to represent and defend the homeland. He now volunteers with civilians and soldiers and delivers speeches in front of audiences more frequently. He is mostly shown in formal attire and his grooming style is neat, yet neutral facial expressions become more prominent than in the Candidate timeframe.

With the invasion, nearly half of his posts show Zelensky in his office while the other half depict government settings. Meanwhile, his attire transforms into fatigues and military-style dress. As he cultivates a 'grunt style' of appearance, his hair and beard are worn longer and his facial expressions are typically neutral or negative. These visual characteristics contribute to the formation of visual

frames over time. During his presidential campaign, Zelensky's self-depictions are marked by their appeals to ordinariness, a sub-dimension of the populist campaigner frame, while once elected he embraces the visual hallmarks of statesmanship. With the invasion, he then pivots again to take on the role of soldier-in-chief, which is when he becomes iconic (albeit, more for his heroism than look, but Zelensky's self-presentation is integral to his iconicity).

### Zelensky's Self-Presentation

When considering Zelensky's self-presentation style over the course of the three time periods analyzed here, the results indicate an increased presence of backstage behavior over time, which gives him a more authentic appearance on the surface (Goffman, 1959, p. 113). The presence of images showing Zelensky working in his office, volunteering on what seems to be the front lines, and participating in conversations with other politicians depict activities that aren't always seen by the public. Zelensky, in this case, can be thought of as the curator of the middle region. He is organizing and posting content that contains visual appeals to craft a projected image. In turn, the audience constructs a perceived image of him based on what's shown (Alberti & De Serio, 2020).

### CONCLUSION

The results of this analysis contribute to the body of literature surrounding political self-presentation, visual framing, and image formation. It also suggests new implications for political communication research, specifically regarding the mediatization of politics and conflict. In terms of self-presentation, the longitudinal aspect of the study shows marked changes to Zelensky's image over time, with new versions of the Ukrainian leader emerging in each time window. The inclusion of more political, and then diplomatic and military, elites in posts during the last two timeframes illustrates how Zelensky positioned himself as a recognized leader while solidifying his signature soldier-in-chief look, which ironically gave him more of an



everyman appearance. Indeed, like the widely reproduced colors of the Ukrainian flag, the ubiquity and universality of his soldier persona has itself become a kind of symbol of the fight for democratic freedom, advancing the cause by means of soft power projection. The cumulation of these visual characteristics further contributes to Zelensky's particular mystique as a mediatized leader.

In this regard, Zelensky's emergence on the world stage seems highly interconnected with the iconic personal style he has carefully cultivated throughout his rise from entertainer to political leader facing down the much larger Russian military. Consistent with his background as a performer, Zelensky has seamlessly transitioned from an ordinary style of presentation (servant of the people) during his presidential campaign, to embracing the role of statesman before the invasion, to his signature soldier-in-chief style during the war. Thus, the nature of his mystique, or special value as a leader, is built at least in part on his ability to convincingly perform these distinct roles through the visual associations and nonverbal displays documented here but also on his capacity to effortlessly transition from one role to another. This skill of adapting so adroitly to the moment is rare among leaders.

As with any empirical analysis, there are a few limitations to the study design and interpretation worth noting. To begin with, the sample consists only of still images found on Zelensky's Instagram page, excluding video, all the other photographs in his albums, and imagery from other social media and news platforms that could aid in the analysis of self-presentation and projection of soft power. The findings here may not generalize to other media contexts. In addition, we did not consider the content of Zelensky's captions and written text comments, which could influence impressions by giving the images a suggested meaning. Thus, we've only considered the visual dimension of his multimodal communication. Finally, this analysis examines Zelensky's visual messaging through a Western lens. As such, the interpretations elaborated in this study may primarily apply to and resonate with those with a similar cultural orientation. Even within a Western lens, however, additional analysis could further examine the symbolism evident in Zelensky's posts and look, such as subtle patriotic cues or references to popular culture brandished by the soldiers and citizens who appear in his posts.

Despite these limitations, the current study serves as a systematic view of Zelensky's self-presentation, rising from his time as an unlikely presidential candidate to become the face of democratic promise against authoritarian aggression. As a mass-self communicator, Zelensky has adeptly adjusted to the demands of the moment, allowing the world to see the war through his eyes. His construction of political leadership for external audiences has been a highly personalized and mediated affair, consistent with the approach of other successful Western leaders (Campus, 2010). Although more research is needed to further investigate the nuances of Zelensky's visual framing and soft power efforts, as well as the outreach and reception of these efforts, this study establishes a baseline of change over time that allows scholars to understand his role as a mediated wartime leader. His presence on social media, specifically Instagram, has provided a curated view of his personal and political life, visually documented diplomatic efforts on behalf of the Ukrainian people, and allowed him to cultivate a wartime persona that is now iconic.

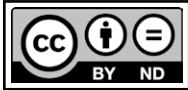
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## Media representations of nuclear threats during the Russian invasion of Ukraine\*

### *Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** This article continues the scholarly tradition of uncovering the rhetorical practices that influence audiences' perceptions, beliefs, and behaviours towards nuclear actors and issues and examines how the Romanian mass media reports on nuclear threats against the backdrop of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** This article conducts a detailed examination of how media coverage of nuclear-related topics influences public perceptions, generating a feeling of urgency and potentially leading to mass panic and hysteria. The study employed a quantitative methodology, conducting content analysis on a selection of 190 online news articles from the primary Romanian press agencies (Mediafax and Agerpress) published between February 24, 2022, and February 24, 2023. Employing an inductive

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approach, our analysis was guided by frames identified during the examination of the sample material.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** Nuclear threats and other related issues were frequently reported in the media in the post-World War 2 period. Given the history of media coverage of this topic, it is perhaps not surprising that a return to reporting nuclear threats has dominated the media discourse since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The results of our study reveal two main frames used to report issues related to nuclear threats during the war in Ukraine: a historical reference frame and a forward-looking frame.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** This study introduces a fresh research direction for potential investigations into the origins and progression of nuclear threats as a unique area of focus in the analysis of Eastern European media reporting during times of conflict.

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**KEYWORDS:**

nuclear threats, media coverage, framing nuclear issues,  
war in Ukraine, Romanian mass media

## INTRODUCTION

The media is considered a vital source of information about politics and inter-state conflicts; it has significant influence over audiences' perceptions, opinions and behaviour through its power to appraise what stories and events are more important than others (Vladisavljević, 2015). The media interest in covering nuclear threats and other related issues is cyclical and is well-documented in the extremely rich literature on the topic published before 1989. Historically, media coverage of nuclear-related topics falls under two main categories: the first presents nuclear issues associated with the production of electricity for various industries and households; the second relates to the production of nuclear weapons for potential nuclear attacks. After the end of the cold war, media interest in the use of nuclear weapons became rather episodic, with articles focusing mostly on the threat posed by the nuclear programs of states such as Iran or North Korea (Dai & Hyun, 2010; Hatzir et al., 2021). The invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022 triggered a surge of media

attention on nuclear threats. This served as a stark reminder of this ever-present danger, reigniting public anxieties about the possibility of nuclear war.

This study follows the line of research established by Kenneth Burke and Erving Goffman. Their work examined how communication shapes audiences' views and behaviours regarding nuclear powers and nuclear issues (Taylor & Kinsella, 2007). This article specifically analyses how Romanian media covered nuclear threats during the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Similarly to other research (e.g., de Vreese, 2005), this article uses an inductive approach. This means that instead of starting from predetermined frames, the analysis identifies frames of meaning that are present in the media coverage.

The Ukrainian War started on February 24, 2022, when Russia launched an extensive invasion of Ukraine. This invasion followed continuous tensions between Russia and Ukraine after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the ongoing conflict around the border city of Donbass that started in 2014 (Dijkstra et al., 2022). Since the start of the Russian invasion, one in four Ukrainians have been displaced. In 2022, four million people fled from Ukraine into neighbouring European countries (Stepanova, 2022; Javanbakht, 2022), and on 9 June 2023 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees acknowledged that 8,255,288 refugees from Ukraine were scattered across Europe (UNHCR, 2023).

Our analysis of the media's role in reporting the war in Ukraine began with two key assumptions. First, we aligned ourselves with Galtung and Ruge's (1965) thesis, which suggests war journalism leans on technical military language and prioritizes war's immediate visible effects, such as casualties and destruction. Second, inspired by Garcia-Perdomo et al. (2022), we anticipated that during conflict mass media might favour elite sources and present a simplified narrative that lacks historical context or critical analysis.

The media's coverage of the war in Ukraine has been marked by a constant undercurrent of nuclear tension. This focus was evident from the very outset. Just three days into the conflict, on February 27th, 2022, President Putin heightened global anxieties by placing Russia's nuclear deterrent forces on high alert (Horovitz & Wachs, 2022).

The media plays a powerful role in shaping public opinion, especially on charged topics like nuclear threats. These threats inherently

evoke fear of mass destruction, loss of life, and a disregard for humanity's future. This article delves into media coverage of nuclear threats during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It examines how media discourse can influence public perception, potentially leading to a sense of urgency, panic, or even mass hysteria.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Taylor & Kinsella (2007), there are four main approaches to exploring the relationship between nuclear weapons and communication:

1. **The Dramatic Tradition:** This approach, influenced by Kenneth Burke and Erving Goffman, examines how communication shapes audience perceptions and behaviours regarding nuclear actors and issues.
2. **Modernist Critical Theory:** Stemming from the Frankfurt School, this tradition focuses on citizen participation and deliberation in nuclear policy and news coverage. Here, scholars analyse how power structures influence public understanding of nuclear issues.
3. **Argumentation Theory and Analysis:** This approach investigates how nuclear discourse impacts public comprehension and discussion of nuclear topics. Scholars associated with this tradition analyse arguments and rhetoric surrounding nuclear weapons.
4. **Semiotics, Post-Structuralism, and Dialogic Analysis:** This combined approach focuses on the practical aspects of nuclear communication and how audiences interpret its meaning. These scholars are interested in "decoding" the truth within nuclear communication, considering the power dynamics and potential biases within the language used.

This article aligns itself with the "dramatic tradition" outlined by Taylor & Kinsella (2007), which delves into how communication shapes audience perspectives on nuclear actors and issues. By analysing Romanian media coverage of nuclear threats during the Ukraine invasion, we aim to uncover the rhetorical practices that have influenced public attitudes, opinions, and actions regarding this critical issue.



In this context, this study utilizes media framing theory as its primary analytical tool (Atanesyan, 2020; Roman, Wanta & Buniak, 2017). This theory explores how information is presented in a way that highlights certain aspects and downplays others, ultimately influencing how audiences understand the given issue. Essentially, media frames act like lenses that shape public opinion, guiding it in specific directions (Chong & Druckman, 2007). According to Entman (1993, p. 52), framing means

to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.

Frames influence which events are reported and how; they are defined as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). In the news media context, a frame entails the “journalistic intentions, news values, discursive structures, and content formats” that are reflected and projected textually and visually in a news story (D’Angelo, 2002, p. 881). News frames have been categorized according to various typologies, the most prominent of which is issue-specific frames, which deal with particular subjects or matters; there are also generic frames, which “transcend thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different topics, some even over time and in different cultural frames” (de Vreese, 2005, p. 54).

The present study expands our understanding of media coverage during the Ukraine war. While prior studies have identified frames focusing on the political situation in Ukraine and international tensions (Lichtenstein et al., 2019), this analysis delves deeper. We explore media coverage within the unique national context of Romania, aiming to identify new generic frames used by Romanian media to understand the conflict.

There is a significant research gap regarding Eastern European media coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian war. While numerous studies have analysed media portrayals in the United States (Alzahrani et al., 2018; Fengler et al., 2020; Lichtenstein et al., 2019; Ojala, Pantti & Kangas, 2017; Roman, Wanta & Buniak, 2017; Tsygankov, 2016),

the perspectives of Eastern European media outlets remain unexplored. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how the war is covered within this unique regional context. In fact, the number of scholarly articles dedicated to media coverage of the war in Ukraine is extremely limited. While initial research on media coverage of the Ukraine war has begun to emerge (Pedro-Carañana, 2022; Chernov, 2023; Udris et al., 2023; Papanikos, 2022), there is a need for more in-depth analysis, particularly regarding under-explored regions. Existing studies have primarily focused on framing in the war's early stages, journalists' source selection, and coverage variations across different countries. This study contributes by offering a deeper examination of media coverage within a specific Eastern European context, analysing how Romanian media has framed the conflict throughout its development, not just the initial months. In addition, with the exception of a few overarching geopolitical analyses (Horovitz & Wachs, 2022; Yüksel, 2023), nuclear threats have not been the focus of any academic studies related to the war in Ukraine. Therefore, we consider that an exploration of the media frames used to present nuclear threats in the context of the Ukrainian war is a topic of interest that will enrich the scholarly literature on media coverage during wartime.

## METHODOLOGY

Similarly to existing studies that explore media coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian war using content analysis and framing theory (Vrba, 2022), this study is the result of quantitative content analysis carried out on a sample of 190 online news articles published by the main Romanian press agencies (Mediafax and Agerpress) between 24 February 2022 and 24 February 2023. Our empirical inquiry was guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1: *What are the main nuclear-related issues reported by Romanian media since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine (between February 2022 and February 2023)?*
- RQ2: *What is the frequency, editorial style (approach and arguments used by journalists) and tone of the articles on nuclear threats linked to the war in Ukraine in Romanian mass-media?*

The unit of analysis was online news articles. The Mediafax and Agerpress websites were used to retrieve all articles published between February 2022 and February 2023. Search terms like 'Nuclear threat' and 'Atomic threat' were used to retrieve articles about nuclear-related issues during the war in Ukraine. Only published articles having the nuclear issue as the main topic were selected and included in our analysis. Articles that only tangentially mentioned this topic were excluded. From the total sample of articles selected for this study, two thirds (66.3%) were published by Agerpress and only one third (33.7%) by Mediafax.

We developed a coding book consisting of 39 questions. Due to the novelty of the theme, we did not have a model to start from for the coding book. To identify the categories included in the coding book, we reviewed the articles included in the sample and created a set of open codes that were refined during the analysis process. The final version of the open codes formed the basis of the coding book. We pretested the coding book on a sample of 30 articles and made any necessary adjustments. The final coding book included both ordinal and nominal variables.

The coding scheme analysed the following aspects of the articles:

- Sources: Who is cited? Individuals, institutions, or documents?
- COVID-19 Connection: Is there any mention of a link between the pandemic and the war?
- Nuclear Events: Which specific nuclear event(s) are referenced? (e.g., historical events, specific weapons)
- Actors: Which countries and individuals are involved in the discussion of nuclear threats?
- Framing: How is the nuclear issue presented? (e.g., threat level, potential consequences)
- Context: To what current event(s) is the nuclear issue connected?
- Consequences: How are the potential impacts of a nuclear attack described?
- Humanity's Future: What portrayal of humanity's future is given in relation to nuclear threats?
- Arguments: What arguments are used to frame the nuclear issue?

Journalist Tone: Is the reporting style negative, positive, or neutral?

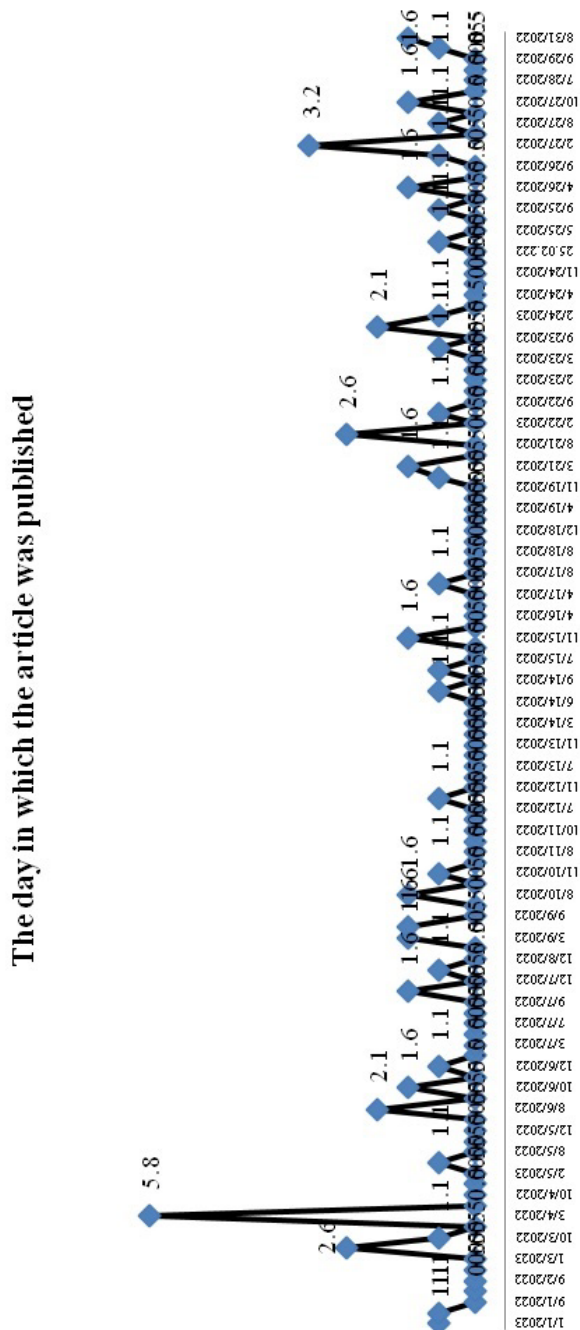
We used a set of quantitative methods in the analysis (frequencies, crosstabs and correlations) of the data set, and we further employed a series of yes/no questions to categorize the articles:

- Imagery: Does the article include photos?
- Origin: Was the article published by a Romanian source?
- Historical Context: Does the article discuss the history of nuclear threats?
- Triggering Events: Is the mention of nuclear threats linked to a current event? (e.g., fighting near a nuclear power plant).
- Specific types of nuclear threats: Is the article about dirty bombs? Is it about an explosion at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant? Is it about the launch of nuclear warheads? Is it about radioactivity? Is it about nuclear winter?
- Consequences: Does the article describe the potential consequences of a nuclear attack?
- Countermeasures: Does the article explore any potential ways to prevent or mitigate a nuclear attack?
- Humanity's Future: Does the article address the future of humanity in a post-nuclear attack scenario?
- Argument Tone: Do the arguments presented in the article lean more towards a rational or an emotional approach?

## THE RESULTS

Throughout the examined timeframe, the number of articles published each day varied, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The dynamics of the publication of articles related to nuclear threats



The days with the greatest quantity of published articles occurred when military operations took place near or at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (as observed in March 2022 or July 2022), or when leaders from international and/or regional institutions and organizations, as well as the parties engaged in the conflict, explicitly discussed the potential for a nuclear attack or the utilization of nuclear weapons (such as from August to September 2022).

All articles included one or more photos, drawings, or videos. Of the media included in articles, 80.7% were war photos, 14.1% were videos, 4.8% were drawings and only 0.4% were graphics.

Only a small percentage of articles (3.2%) mentioned no source of information; the vast majority (96.8%) indicated the source. Regarding the type of source indicated in the articles, the vast majority (95.2%) used a foreign source, and only a few (4.8%) were based on information from Romanian sources. The most important external agencies mentioned as a source in the analysed articles were the France Press Agency (11.03%), Reuters (7.7%), and EFE (3.7%).

In the articles analysed, frequent quotations from individuals (42.8%), followed by documents and institutions (20.5%) and persons and institutions (18.4%) were used to support the story. Quotations from institutions alone (3.2%) and those from official documents (4.2%) were the least used in the articles included in the sample.

Most people interviewed and featured in the analysed articles were Russians (27%); others were from Ukraine (17.9%), the USA (13.8%), the European Union (9.7%), and Romania (4.3%). Presidents of countries were the most cited in the sample (28.5%), followed by prime ministers (7.6%), defence ministers (6%) and foreign ministers (5.8%). Ambassadors (4.8%), experts in geostrategic affairs or/and military actions (4.5%), directors of (national and international) atomic agencies (3.8%) and experts in physics and atomic energy (3.5%) were also mentioned in the articles included in our sample. In addition, the institutions referred to most often were from Ukraine (19.4%) and the USA (17.2%). Institutions from Russia (11.7%) and the European Union (7.8%) were placed third in the hierarchy of institutions mentioned in relation to nuclear threats, with most documents cited being issued by world organizations (24.7%), Russia (20.6%), the USA (16.5%) and Ukraine (11.3%).

Only 2.6% of the articles within the total sample referred to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the same articles (2.6%) drawing connections between the pandemic and nuclear-related matters. These connections were highlighted in articles discussing various topics, including the conflict in Ukraine (1 article), the emergence of a multipolar world (1 article), the historical relations between the Soviet Union and the United States pre-1980 (1 article), the new solar cycle (1 article), and the joint US-South Korea military exercises from 2020 to 2021 and North Korea's reaction (1 article).

In our analysis, two-thirds of the articles examined (67.4%) connected nuclear threats and associated topics (such as the use of dirty bombs, an explosion at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the launching of nuclear warheads, radioactivity, and nuclear winter) to multiple countries and individuals, exceeding two in each case. In 11.6% of the articles analysed, nuclear threats were exclusively linked to a specific number of countries (more than two), with the same articles (11.6%) associating atomic threats with only two countries: Russia (27%) and Ukraine (23.4%). Noteworthy proportions of the article sample (22.7%) also referenced the USA (14%) and the European Union (8.7%) in connection with potential nuclear threats. The individuals most frequently mentioned in relation to nuclear-related issues were Vladimir Putin, the President of the Russian Federation (14.2%), and Volodymyr Zelensky, the President of Ukraine (8.1%). Other individuals cited in the sample included Rafael Grossi, the Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (4.7%), Dmitri Medvedev, the Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia (4.5%), and Joe Biden, the President of the USA (4.2%).

The history of nuclear threats was discussed in 36% of the articles included in our sample, with clear references to the development of nuclear weapons in North Korea and/or Iran (27.8%), followed by the Cold War (22.7 %) and the Chernobyl accident (17.5%). The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the Second World War (9.3%), the Cuban missile crisis (8.2%) and the Second World War (72%) were events mentioned in the media coverage of nuclear threats. Nonetheless, 97.6% of the articles examined nuclear-related topics in the context of a current event. The most frequently mentioned event (41.3% of the articles) concerning nuclear threats was the war in Ukraine, followed at a considerable margin by discussions

on unorthodox military tactics and strategies (including those in Ukraine) (19.7%), the potential for accidents and/or the shutdown of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (14.3%), and the nuclear weapons programs in Iran and/or North Korea (9.6%).

Around two-thirds of the articles (64.7%) discussed the consequences of a nuclear attack/explosion. The consequences of a possible nuclear attack that were mentioned in the analysed articles were related to the war in Ukraine (46.6%) and people's health and the state of the global economy (34.5%). In addition, 64.7% of articles made recommendations and referred to actions that could reduce the effects of a potential nuclear attack. These measures are primarily directed towards geopolitical interventions (14.7%) and the prevention of nuclear attacks utilizing conventional weapons (14.7%); subsequent actions focusing on monitoring human health following a potential nuclear attack (13.2%) and addressing a combination of various adverse effects (medical, environmental, economic, etc.) also received an equal share of mentions (12.5%). Additionally, potential effects of a nuclear attack on societal aspects (11.8%), environmental conditions (8.8%), and economic repercussions (6.6%) were discussed as strategies to counteract a potential future nuclear attack.

Merely 27.9% of all articles addressed the prospects for humanity after a nuclear attack or nuclear war. Within these discussions, the future of humanity following such events was portrayed negatively in 90.6% of the articles, with only 9.4% adopting a slightly positive or hopeful perspective on the subject.

When addressing the nuclear issue, the predominant arguments utilized military and geopolitical terminology (36.3%), with references to changes in the world's geopolitical landscape also featuring prominently (33.8%). Other argumentative approaches employed in discussing this topic included social aspects, encompassing individuals and/or social groups impacted by a potential nuclear attack (13.6%), followed by economic arguments affecting the broader economy or specific sectors such as agriculture and industry (13.2%).

In over half of the articles examined (56.3%), journalists adopted a neutral tone when presenting the main topics, whereas a negative tone was employed in 38.9% of the articles. The majority of articles relied on rational arguments to address nuclear-related topics (66.3%), with only 33.7% of articles incorporating an emotional tone in their writing.



Table 1. The interdependence between journalistic style and media coverage of nuclear threats and atomic history

	The article talks about the nuclear problem in the past	The nuclear issue is linked to the war in Ukraine	The ongoing event which nuclear issue is linked to	The article talks about the consequences of a nuclear attack	The article talks about actions to counteract the nuclear problem	The article talks about the future of humanity after a nuclear attack is presented in a negative manner	The dominant tone is negative	The argument is rational
Pearson Correlation	-,083	-,380(***)	-,043	,233(***)	,228(***)	-,022	,141	-,046
Sig. (2-tailed)	,259	,000	,557	,001	,002	,875	,054	,530
N	189	185	186	189	189	53	189	189
Pearson Correlation				-,054	,053	-,064	,005	-,048
Sig. (2-tailed)				,458	,472	,649	,951	,514
N				190	190	53	190	190
Pearson Correlation				,109	,101	,286(**)	,163(**)	-,142
Sig. (2-tailed)				,138	,169	,042	,026	,053
N				186	186	51	186	186

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.

As shown in Table 1, the values of the correlation coefficients are positive between the variable that indicates that the event to which the nuclear issue is linked is the war in Ukraine, on the one hand, and the variables that indicate that *'the article presents consequences of a nuclear attack'*, *'the article presents actions to counteract the nuclear problem'*, *'the article presents the future of humanity after a nuclear attack'* and *'the use of a negative tone by the journalist in discussing nuclear issues in the article'*. Positive values of the correlation coefficient indicate a direct dependency relationship between the variables. However, the scenario changes when considering the variable linking the ongoing event of the war in Ukraine with the nuclear issue, and the variable representing the predominant use of rational arguments in the article. The negative correlation coefficient value between these two variables suggests an inverse relationship. Consequently, it can be inferred that the utilization of emotional arguments by journalists may directly correlate with coverage of the connection between the nuclear issue and the war in Ukraine within a given article.

Our analysis, detailed in Table 2, found very weak relationships between several key variables. Articles directly mentioning the link between the nuclear issue and the war in Ukraine showed almost no connection to articles that discuss the consequences of nuclear attacks, the future of humanity after such an event, the journalist's tone (negative or positive), or the use of primarily rational arguments. Similarly, there was very little correlation between articles that portray the future of humanity following a nuclear attack negatively and those that discuss the consequences of such an attack, potential actions to address the nuclear threat, or the connection between the nuclear issue and the war in Ukraine.

## Media representations of nuclear threats during the Russian invasion

Table 2. The interdependence between media coverage of nuclear issues pertaining to the war in Ukraine and the variables exploring the aftermath of a nuclear attack and journalistic style

		The article talks about the consequences of a nuclear attack	The article talks about counteracting the nuclear problem	The nuclear issue is related to the war in Ukraine	The article talks about the future of humanity after a nuclear attack	The future of humanity after a nuclear attack is presented in a negative manner	The journalist's tone is negative	The dominant arguments in the article are rational
The article talks about the consequences of a nuclear attack/	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	<b>,298(**)</b> ,000 190	-,054 ,458 190	<b>,317(**)</b> ,000 190	,088 ,529 53	<b>,254(**)</b> ,000 190	<b>-,184(*)</b> ,011 190	
The article talks about actions to counteract the nuclear problem	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N		,053 ,472 190	<b>,523(**)</b> ,000 190	-,034 ,809 53	<b>,374(**)</b> ,000 190	<b>-,197(**)</b> ,007 190	
The nuclear issue is related to the war in Ukraine	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N			-,044 ,543 190	-,064 ,649 53	,005 ,951 190	-,048 ,514 190	
The article talks about the future of humanity after a nuclear attack	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N				(a) ,000 53	<b>,467(**)</b> ,000 190	<b>-,302(**)</b> ,000 190	
The future of humanity after a nuclear attack is presented in a negative manner	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N					<b>,375(**)</b> ,006 53	<b>-,238</b> ,086 53	
The journalist's tone is negative	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N						<b>-,674(**)</b> ,000 190	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.

## DISCUSSION

Our examination of the media's role in covering the war in Ukraine began with a premise in line with Galtung and Ruge's theory (1965), which suggests that war journalism often employs technical military

terminology that is difficult to comprehend and tends to highlight the visible consequences of conflict, such as human casualties, violence, and destruction. As expected, our research findings supported this assumption. In the articles analysed, journalists frequently used technical military jargon when discussing possible nuclear attacks and threats from various nuclear-capable nations. The media narrative also dwelled on the loss of human life, the potential collapse of civilization, and the broader environmental repercussions. Key nuclear-related topics highlighted by the media between February 2022 and February 2023 included discussions on nuclear attacks and their societal impact, threats related to Russia, nuclear stockpiles and weaponry, and the possibility of incidents involving the Ukrainian nuclear facility at Chernobyl.

Nevertheless, media coverage of nuclear threats and potential attacks lacks depth. Our analysis revealed that media coverage fails to adequately illustrate the true ramifications of a nuclear attack, instead displaying a superficial concern for civilian welfare. The journalistic focus was predominantly on exploring various scenarios, dissecting the political ramifications, and examining the international and global impacts of a potential nuclear strike. Furthermore, our study highlights journalists' efforts to personalize these narratives by associating potential nuclear threats with specific political figures. While the articles examined in our research portrayed nuclear threats as a clash of statements between Volodymyr Zelensky and Vladimir Putin, the broader global implications of this conflict were often overlooked. This observation aligns with Garcia-Perdomo, Harlow, and Brown (2022), who argue that mainstream media tend to rely on elite sources and present a shallow narrative devoid of critical historical context. However, our findings diverge from Garcia-Perdomo, Harlow, and Brown's (2022) conclusions, as the media coverage of nuclear threats did not exhibit a direct causal link to historical or contextual assessments.

Romanian news coverage of potential nuclear threats surged between February 2022 and 2023 (post-Ukraine war), with 190 articles on the topic published by major press agencies (Mediafax and Agerpress) in this period alone. However, the reporting style was generally neutral, focusing on presenting the issues and potential consequences without sensationalizing. Romanian journalists aimed for a balanced approach using verified sources and representing all sides involved. Despite increased coverage, there was a lack of emphasis on public

preparedness for a potential nuclear attack. Stories focused on informing the public but did not attempt to educate or prepare them for such a scenario. Additionally, there was no mention of potential solutions to the Ukraine conflict or ways to prevent a nuclear attack. While the intent seemed to be serious and informative, the analysis suggests a sensationalist undertone in the focus of these stories.

Unlike previous research that relied on pre-determined frames/themes, our analysis used an inductive approach to uncover new framing patterns within the data. Inspired by similar studies (Ojala & Pantti, 2017; Lichtenstein et al., 2019) and grounded in Goffman's (1986) frame analysis, we identified two key frames used to report nuclear threats:

- **Historical Reference Frame:** This frame emphasizes the historical and political context surrounding the nuclear threat discussed in this article. Articles in this category explored potential responses and counteractions, often using emotional arguments with a strong focus on the horrific consequences of the potential use of a nuclear weapon.

**Forward-Looking Frame:** This frame prioritizes the potential consequences of a nuclear attack and the future of humanity. Journalists here primarily used a mix of a negative journalistic tone and rational arguments often intended to evoke fear.

## CONCLUSION

This article explores Romanian media coverage of nuclear threats during the Russian invasion of Ukraine (February 2022 to February 2023). The article reveals that there is a lack of studies exploring media coverage of nuclear threats in an Eastern European context and signposts a new niche research topic that could be further developed by scholars in subsequent studies. In addition, this article puts forward two new frames identified in the media coverage of nuclear threats during the Ukrainian conflict, adding to the list of frames identified by previous studies (e.g., Ojala & Pantti, 2017; Lichtenstein et al., 2019).

However, it is important to acknowledge some limitations of this study. Firstly, the sample size of analysed articles was relatively small. Additionally, the focus was solely on articles published by press

agencies, which may not capture the full range of media coverage. Finally, the study specifically examined nuclear threats, excluding other relevant topics like nuclear deterrence and arsenal reduction.

Future research should expand the scope of our project by analysing other nuclear-related issues and taking a comparative perspective when exploring media coverage of nuclear threats during the war in Ukraine.

Beyond the inherent limitations and shortcomings of this study, due largely to the innovative nature of the topic analysed, we believe that our study opens the way to possible future inquiries regarding the emergence and development of new topics of interest in the study of Eastern European media coverage during wartime.

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## Media Coverage of Mediation: Before and During the Russian–Ukrainian War\*

### *Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** This study's objective is to examine how mediation is presented in the news media stories before and during the outbreak of war.

**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The research problem is an attempt to answer the question if in stories, whereas their headlines introduce the word “mediation” or “mediator,” respond to the concepts of mediation, peace, or war journalism. This documentary research analyzes 100 news published in Spanish, where we examine how the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is presented to the readers. In addition, three experts in culture of peace (from Spain, Mexico, and Colombia) were interviewed regarding the media portrayals of war and mediation.

**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** This investigation begins with a recapitulation of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine; before and after the outbreak of the war, different personalities offered intervention as a possible mediation. Despite the intentions to mediate, the war broke out, and the international community continued to search for a mediator. Thus, the influence of the media using specific words like “mediation” deserves to be explored.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The study's findings reveal that 85% of the analyzed media used a vocabulary whose style responds to war journalism and contradicts the idea of mediation in the bodies of the news stories. As a result, four categories emerge: self-proposed mediators, requested/expected mediators, mediating countries, and mediation experts.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** This research demonstrates that the sense of mediation in media does not provide clarity but rather confusion. Even if the intention of mediation is covered, mostly, it is accompanied by a binary perspective of the conflict, which is the opposite of what mediation implies. The findings indicate a need to create spaces for training on culture and peace-building in the newsrooms to improve journalistic practices about armed conflicts.

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**KEYWORDS:**

mediation, media, war, Russia, Ukraine

## INTRODUCTION

After months of tensions and unsuccessful negotiations, on 24 February 2022, war broke out between Russia and Ukraine, and at the time of the production of this study continues. This armed conflict has become Europe's worst security crisis since the end of the Second World War (European Parliament, 2022). Faced with this, the search to put an end to the war has led to an intense search for mediators that have been disseminated through the media at a global level. Not only have readers been able to follow the conflict, and the escalation of violence reported in the news, but they have also become witnesses of the mediations proposed in this war scenario.

In this sense, the feeling that society develops – toward or against the idea of war – turns out to be a key variable, which can be synthesized as two main subjects regarding how the audience reacts and how the feeling of getting information sent 24-hours a day is fed. The media have a preponderant role when it comes to the social development of attitudes towards a conflict (Fisas, 1998): aggressive behaviours, justifying war-related actions, stereotyping, and picturing the enemy and its demonization. Tortosa (2003) examined the media's influence on war propaganda. Several investigations focused on Rwanda's genocide and how the role of 'hate speech' and 'hate media' exposed the ability the media have when it comes

to influencing the audience in violent times (Frère, 2007; Thompson, 2007). During a conflict, the media play an active and relevant role, acting as “sources of information, combatants, weapons, objectives, and battlefield” (Hackett, 2007, p. 48). According to Seethaler (2013) the relationship between war, media, and public could meet a delicate balance between freedom of opinion and patriotic needs, for Chaudhary et al. (2022) the interaction between media and conflict is complex and diverse; because media can be not only the adversary of conflict, but also the initiator, facilitator, mediator, organizer and escalation environment of conflict (Budka & Brauchler, 2020). In that sense, reporting (and developing) conflicts determined by the media, on the one hand, contributes to social development and the establishment of a new consensus model; on the other hand, may also cause serious consequences to society (Лабуш & Пью, 2019; cited in Vartanova et al., 2022). For some authors, by representing conflict in media could intensify (Hart et al., 2020) or reduce the social polarization at multiple levels (Barbera, 2014). However, several studies present different components related to the media coverage of conflicts related to geopolitical implications. Siraj’s (2008) study, a content analysis of the *New York Times* and *The Washington Post*’s coverage of the Kashmir conflict, concluded that geopolitical implications were also important when framing stories in terms of war and peace, as these U.S. newspapers often portrayed Pakistan as the enemy. Fahmy and Eakin’s (2014) research based on the 2010 Israeli-Palestinian incident of Mavi Marmara concluded that the Israelian newspaper (*Haaretz*) used more war journalism narratives than the two non-Israeli papers (*The Guardian* and *The New York Times*).

Other studies demonstrate the presence of peace journalism framed in media coverage, such as the Sri Lanka and Philippines internal conflicts, which encouraged peace journalism in 2001 during the ceasefire agreement (Lee et al., 2006). In that sense, Zesatti-Ávila (2017) notes that

peace journalism is not, as many believe, the reporting of good news, but a follow-up of our past and current reality from another perspective, with another perspective and with different motivations (p. 28)

Given that our selection of analyzed news comes from Spanish-language media published in Spain and Latin America, it can be seen

that in these geographical points, different mediation experiences were implemented in the face of conflicts, among which the following stand out: Argentina and England on the Malvinas/Falklands in 1982 mediated by Alexander Haig (Youssef & Jalil Al-Harbieh, 2021); Argentina and Chile conflict on Beagle Channel mediated by the Vatican (Garrett, 1985); Colombia and FARCS mediated by Cuba and Norway during 2010-2016 (Rocha, 2021); Spanish government and ETA mediated by different leaders (Jiménez-Yáñez & Ricardo-María, 2022). For this study, based on the media portrayals of mediation during and after the war between Ukraine and Russia, our aim is to answer the following research questions:

*RQ1: Do the news with the word mediation or mediator in the headline address the concept of mediation?*

*RQ2: Do the news that have the word mediation or mediator in the headline respond to what is known as peace or war journalism?*

## METHODOLOGY

To determine how the role of alleged mediators – before and during the outbreak of war between Russia and Ukraine – has been presented and reported, we analyzed news stories published in Spanish-language media. Following D’Angelo and Kuypers’s (2010) method, we utilized news framing – one of the most used theories in communication – for the process of headline selection, exclusion, elaboration, and emphasis that organizes information according to some salient principles that convey a specific story angle to create meaning and convey a specific version of reality (Entman, 1993). The search was the headline, focusing on the war between Russia and Ukraine; the period of examination was from November 27, 2021, to December 2022. This period is significant because the need for mediators is considered and exposed by the media months before the war outbreak – to prevent a conflict escalation – and almost one year before its start.

As a result, 100 news stories published in global press outlets were obtained using Google’s search engine containing the word “mediation” or “mediator” in their headlines were chosen. The news content was manually analyzed under the basis of content analyses

operationalizing Galtung's (1958, 2000) classifications' on mediation, peace, and war journalism. To gain better insight, in-depth interviews were also carried out with three culture of peace experts from Colombia, México and Spain.

The sampling unit corresponds to news published in Spanish-language media whose registration units respond to the news. This sampling is intentional and systematic since the news stories titled with the word "mediation" or "mediator" are chosen to analyze their content and systematize it. This allows us to establish mixed categories that respond to previously established categories and have been expanded with the advancement of research. An example of an expanded category is the "Self-Proposed Mediators" (SPM) that emerged from different news stories as stated in corpus-driven methodologies (Biber, 2009) and is detailed in the results report.

This selection of categories finds its justification in that the details of the events and violence

conform as signs of a discursive universe that acts as a mediator with the events and adds a new impact to the information that will be offered in the media (Veres-Cortés, 2021, p. 11).

Content analysis was used to investigate how mediation is portrayed following the recommendations of Taylor and Bogdan (1990) to work at three levels: *discovery* (if the mediation was also present in the story), *codification* (how the mediation is personified by a leader, country), and *relativization* (how the idea of mediation is sustained if the news responds to war or peace journalism). To analyze the new stories and in-depth interviews, Ratcliff (2002) recommends working "from codes, categories, and subcategories: these should be checked and linked to the topics as progress is made in the research" (cited in: Scribano, 2007, p. 138).

Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with three experts who were chosen for their technical and professional experience in the field of culture of peace from sectors such as non-governmental organizations that operate in areas of conflict, teachers and journalists trained in the culture of peace and academics. The interviews were carried out through a closed pattern of questions regarding the role of mediators in the media, based on categories elaborated from

the analysis of the news. The approach for analyzing the three interviews' transcriptions followed the grounded and inductive methods proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1994).

## CONFLICT AND MEDIATION IN THE NEWS

The theoretical approach presented in this study – related to conflict as a concept – is based on Galtung's (1958) conflict theory as follows:

(...) a social system of actors with incompatibility between their goal-states. In the process, it happens that they stand in each other's way, or so they may believe, and this is where the system becomes a conflict system (p. 35).

It is noted that the actors in a conflict do not always come together in two closed sides, that is, in a war. Thus, the intensification of social polarization is a key risk factor, and intensifies conflicts, including professional journalism practices and journalists' working methods in conflict environments, as well as their challenges and risks (Jamil, 2021; Jamil & Sohal, 2021).

In terms of journalists' practices, "peace journalism," as it is known today, was coined in the 1970s by Johan Galtung (Galtung & Ruge, 1973). Galtung emphasizes how the conflict is reported and formulates an alternative to what he presents as "peace journalism," as opposed to war journalism. Regarding mediated conflict, Galtung (2000) describes an inability [among journalists] to distinguish between conflict and violence – if they have this incapacity, they will not detect the conflict that causes this violence because they do not have the conceptual tools.

From the journalistic side, experienced war correspondents established the Reporting the World network and stated: peace journalism is a new form of journalism that analyzes how journalists can be part of the solution and not part of the problem (McGoldrick and Lynch, 2000); following Lynch (1998, 2002, 2003), journalists are presented as observers-participants in war zones where the news plays a role in the sequence of cause and effect since the people involved in the stories adjust their actions based on estimates of the possible effects of media coverage.

## MEDIATION

Mediation refers to

a process by which a third party helps two or more parties – with their consent – to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict by helping them reach mutually acceptable agreements (United Nations, 2012, p. 2).

More precisely, the *United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation* (2012) specifies that mediation is based on the premise that, in the right environment for the parties under conflict, their relations can be improved towards cooperation.

In order to move towards a mediation process between states, certain guidelines must be taken into account such as:

preparation; consent; impartiality; inclusivity; national ownership; international law and regulatory frameworks; coherence, coordination and complementarity of mediation effort; and quality peace agreements (United Nations, 2012, p. 3).

In turn, there are four consolidated mediation models or approaches: *Transformative* mediation focuses on empowering the parties to make their own decisions by improving communication and understanding between them; *Facilitative* mediation focuses on helping the parties identify their common interests and work towards solutions that meet everyone's needs; *Narrative* mediation's goal is to get the parties to detach themselves from the conflict; *Evaluative* mediation involves a mediator who offers opinions or suggestions based on their expertise in law or other relevant fields (Foster, 2003).

Several scholars addressed the issue of media and mediation. Gilboa's (2005) study examines the role of journalists as mediators and their involvement in international conflict resolution. Wallenstein and Svensson (2014) analyze international mediation in armed conflicts on mediation frequency, strategies, bias, and coordination as well as on trends in defining success where they include the media. Pauli's (2007) study confirms that the conflict gives news stories an important plot element and as a result reporters and editors tend to emphasize extreme voices and combative themes and those news stories escalate a conflict more than to pacify it. Vaughan's (2023)

research explores the communication strategies that can be employed by mediators and concludes: “Mediators need to learn to use news media more effectively” (p. 4). On the other hand, Beer and Steyn analyze different models of mediation on the news in South Africa to understand if the media are the mediators or generators of a conflict. In terms of digital media and mediation, Aggestam and Hedling’s (2023) contributions present the roles and impact of technologies, tools and social media platforms and analyze the digitalization of peace mediation.

Regarding the mediator’s role, Galtung (1958) notes that the task of the mediator consists of each actor developing a process based on two steps: the first is that he can conceive reality devoid of his theses, and in this way, his perception of the contradiction of the enemy’s theses with the world disappears or is reduced; the second step begins when the compatibility of objectives of one and the other is sought, or the transformation of the original objectives by new ones, that are compatible with each other and that respond to reality/world. Galtung refers to this process as transcendence because the initial objectives (theses) have gone beyond; that is, they have been transcended. In this way, the initial objectives cease to be starting hypotheses – in its mathematical sense – as parts of the reality that the actors had to address the resolution of the conflict. Thus, Galtung (1958) proposes as the transcendence of contradictions what peace studies have been identifying as part of the keys to resolving or transforming conflicts.

## WAR & PEACE JOURNALISM

War journalism focuses on the field of conflict, understood as a confrontation of the sides. It usually starts from a binary view where there are winners and losers. Since both opponents want victory, they will fight for their goals until the end, even if this is death. Galtung (2000) notes similarities between war journalism and sports journalism, as both are governed by a zero sum principle, where winning is everything for both sides, but victory is only possible for one. His proposal postulates that conflict journalism should adopt features of health journalism, which means that, even though illnesses are discussed, the probability of death as victory or defeat of the patient is



not emphasized. In this sense, the author promotes the idea of being able to elaborate on the disease (conflict), detailing its causes, arguing the capacity for prevention, and giving rise to possible remedies.

Within what is considered war journalism, the actors in the conflict are presented through the news under prejudices. They reproduce stereotypes sustained by a binary perspective: the good and the bad, victims and perpetrators. More precisely, the components that are accentuated in this style of journalism is the use of the story to dehumanize the enemy by presenting it as ruthless, cruel, insensitive, evil, and monstrous. In addition, it is emphasized that their weapons are not only dangerously destructive but that their way of acting is violent, unjustified and attacks innocents, which leads to the conclusion: that they must be killed with total urgency for the good of all due to their dangerousness and for being the guilty/responsible for this armed conflict. Along this lines, Adams (2014) concluded that "the mass media are compatible with the culture of war because they perpetuate the myth of war as an inevitable event" (p. 179).

According to Benedicto-Escajedo (2015), the side that is presented as "ours" is endowed with noble and understandable feelings since they are humans who have families and risk everything to defend their country and fellow citizens; they speak of defense, heroism and not from attacking another human because, after all, the enemy is the others. Thus, it is the other side's fault. By dehumanizing one of the sides or a person, everything that is done against them becomes justified.

On the other side, the term "peace journalism" was introduced in the 1970s by Galtung; emerges as a sort of corrective to the journalism that traditionally works in conflicts that have inherited practices that deserve to be re-evaluated (Galtung & Ruge, 1973). One of the most significant aspects of peace journalism is that it presents the conflict as the problem; it does not need to look for arguments to accuse one of the parties as its cause. This look allows to move, as far as possible, towards a resolution or transformation of the conflict, as Galtung proposes. Tehranian (2002) notes that peace journalism acquires the format of the ten commandments; more precisely, a decalogue that summarizes the type of language, and the contents of the model from its practical and interpretative dimension, among other issues; for Irvan (2006), "a normative theory that establishes that the media

should play a positive role in promoting peace” (p. 34), where the transition to new types of coverage of the conflict seems to be imminent.

## RESULTS

Four modalities of mediation presentation arise from the 100 headlines selected for this analysis. (1) the Self-Proposed Mediators (SPM) and how the media echo this proposal – even if the tone of the news does not always respond to the objectives that mediation sets itself. (2) the Requested/Expected Mediators (R/EM) are those who are mentioned in the news either because of their role in other conflicts or their credibility and interference in international agendas. (3), the presence of the Mediator Countries (MC), where the role of a mediator is not reduced to the recognition of a leader, but rather the historical role of a nation in conflict mediation is discussed. (4), the Expert Mediators (EM), who are interviewed and consulted by the media about mediation between the two nations.

After applying these categories, the selected pieces of news ended up classified as 54% in SPM, 26% in R/EM, 15% in MC, and 5% in EM. In the following pages, several examples from each category are presented. In addition, while examining the 100 stories, it is verified that four articles present chronological or descriptive stories where the term “mediation” occupies a secondary place in the story. The rest (96) correspond to stories, chronicles, or reports in which mediation proposals are presented, the scope of the offers are commented on, or processes of direct requests from one of the parties are detailed to encourage the participation of a mediator. Moreover, it has been quantified that 75% of the chosen headlines include the keyword “war,” and 23% include “conflict.”

An interesting aspect is that the high-level Ukrainian authorities, embodied in the figure of its president, Volodimir Zelenski, have chosen to make mediation requests public being in that study presented as Requested/Expected Mediators (R/EM):

“Ukraine is testing Israel as a mediator in the conflict with Russia,” noting that: “The Government of Ukraine has raised the possibility of Israel that he tries to act as a mediator with Russia to stop the intense offensive unleashed on Thursday” (Europapress, 2022).

On the same day, *RTVE* (Radio Televisión Española) published on its news portal that: “Turkey maintains good relations with Russia and Ukraine. That is why it has emerged as a clear mediator in the war. The Turkish president, who has called for an immediate ceasefire, is the only one who has managed to get the Ukrainian and Russian foreign ministers to sit face to face, although so far without results” (RTVE, 2022). In that story, it can be observed that peace journalism, when referring to the search for a solution, demonstrates that the leader can visit both countries and talk with both presidents. In reference to China and its SPM, it deserves special attention because both Ukraine and Russia reacted positively to the proposal posed by Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the country, during a press conference. “China offers itself as a ‘mediator’ in the war against Ukraine” (El Día & El Mundo, 2022). The SPM of China, then presented by Ukraine and supported by Russia, was portrayed by the media: “China and Russia, both permanent members of the UN Security Council, we are (...) very important strategic partners for each other,” (DW, 2022). However, in this triangle of interests was published: “The three faces of China in Ukraine’s chess game: A necessary mediator, an ally of Putin and a power that is waiting for its moment” (20 Minutos, 2022) where the nation’s positions and advances responded to war journalism.

As noted earlier, the personalities proposed to officiate as mediators in the conflict have varied. On March 7, the *ABC newspaper* specified that the Vatican offered itself as a mediator (SPM): “They travel with a spiritual mission, but it is undoubtedly a diplomatic gesture with the signature of Pope Francis. The pontiff has sent two cardinals from the Vatican Curia to Ukraine as a gesture of closeness” (Martínez-Brocal, 2022).

Following this line, other types of mediators have come from the political arena, such as French President Emmanuel Macron, who has maintained contacts with both.

The French leader is the only one of the major Western countries that has decided to keep a communication channel open with Putin, although, at the same time, he supports tougher sanctions against Russia for its intervention in Ukraine. In his speech last night, he accused Putin of “betting on war” out of a “spirit of revenge,” although he pointed out that “as long as possible, as long as it is necessary,”

he will maintain contact with the Russian leader “to convince him to renounce to the weapons (*Europapress*, 2022a).

Macron’s attitude does not correspond to a mediator figure, according to E3 “since he has made accusations against one of the parties we can’t talk about a possible mediation”. Following the international political arena, a noteworthy mention is the role given to U.S. President Joseph Biden, presented as SPM. Reference is made to peace, but the term is used to highlight the benefits, skills, and personality of the U.S. president: “I am concerned,” and reiterated his support for the “territorial integrity” of Ukraine. He also assured that in “all probability,” a dialogue will begin with Russian President Vladimir Putin, despite the quarrels that exist between them (*Heraldo USA*, 2021).

It is also observed that, although the headlines of the news appeal to mediation, predominant vocabulary was detected : military actions (28 stories), war equipment (26 stories), number of soldiers (18 stories) where the difference between the two opposing sides is reinforced. In that sense, second expert (E2) interviewed for this research argue:

This war has been covered from a binary perspective that we know all too well. Unfortunately, the big media have not shown interest in modifying their journalistic practices in relation to war conflicts up to now. (Personal communication, 2022).

Two issues could explain this contradiction. First, the contradiction between the news headline that contains the word “mediation” while in the development of the text is rather allusive to a position of war journalism. The latter could be explained as part of the inheritance of news production routines concerning an armed conflict. As the second expert (E1) interviewed in this study comments:

There is still a lot of work to be done in the heart of the media; learning in the culture of peace could provide better perspectives to journalists and media (Personal communication, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

Through the news analysis, it is observed that both the media and journalists play a fundamental role in interpreting and characterizing the facts, in this case, disseminating a possible mediation to stop an armed conflict between two nations. In many news items, although the headline emphasizes mediation throughout the text, the idea of conflict is reinforced.

Based on the findings, it is confirmed that the news stories containing the word mediation or mediator in the headline does not address the concept of mediation in the story (RQ1) and that news they respond to in most of the cases are based on the vocabulary and journalistic style of war journalism (RQ2). The four categories presented through this study: Self-Proposed Mediators, Requested/Expected Mediators, Mediator Countries, and Expert Mediators highlights the initiatives of people/nations for a solution. Likewise, the scarce presence of experts in mediation is observed, one of the categories with the lowest representation in the media. We also highlight that the repetition of words such as *military actions*, *war equipment* only deepen the differences and place mediation toward peace in an increasingly distant and intangible space.

These results allow us to conclude that it is necessary to promote spaces for dialogue and training with journalists who cover armed conflicts and wars so that they can broaden their gaze and understand the impact of the vocabulary used in the news stories and its scope for resolution or deepening of the conflict. The procession of mediation throughout this armed conflict deserves to be examined more broadly since this study presents two clear limitations: first, it covers a specific period, but the conflict continues to escalate; the second is that it has focused on news published in Spanish.

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## The digital media environment in wartime. Russian invasion coverage in Ukrainian professional and amateur news media\*

### *Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The aim of this paper is to compare professional and amateur news media (Telegram) coverage of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and to determine the quality of this coverage.

**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The popularity of Telegram has been growing since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. To describe the digital media environment in wartime, it is important to observe the activity of both professional and amateur media. Webpages containing news texts were exported with Python programs, and news sources were processed using regular expressions.

**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** At the beginning of the digital platform era there were hopes of a symbiotic relationship between professional media and amateur digital platforms, where the latter would provide more diverse content, thus helping some ignored groups to be heard by the media. As for Telegram, it has a growing number of users and channels, but there are almost no restrictions regarding content. Thus, together with some "alternative" and "ignored" voices, production of harmful content on Telegram is observed

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around the world: hate speech, extremism, racism, conspiracy theories and propaganda. In Ukraine, Telegram is the most popular source of information during the full-scale Russian invasion and Ukrainians trust it, therefore its contribution to informing people should be analysed.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The conducted analysis has demonstrated that popular amateur news media mostly fail to provide clear references to news sources in the war period (in March to October 2022, only every third to fifth post contained a clear reference to a news source). On the other hand, the most popular mass media and amateur mass media sources are mostly the same: media resources connected with the president and the government, verified military sources, etc.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The scarcity of news sources given in Telegram posts confirms previous observations about the low quality of content on Telegram. However, in some cases Telegram channels use reliable official or professional media news sources. Thus, some additional steps are needed to improve the situation: legislative changes for Telegram channels, ownership transparency, further monitoring of content quality, and media literacy campaigns for channels' audiences.

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**KEYWORDS:**

Telegram, amateur news media, Ukraine, war journalism, news sources

## INTRODUCTION

Quality journalism is vital during war. People are desperate to know the targets of missile strikes, safe evacuation routes, as well as locations of "points of invincibility" where they can charge their electronic devices during blackouts. However, a professional journalist needs some time to verify information and see the complete picture, etc. This is why some people give preference to amateur news media outlets which report news almost immediately. In the case of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a lot of anonymous news was spread via Telegram channels.

Before the invasion, the Institute of Mass Information, a Ukrainian professional media organization, analyzed the ten most popular Telegram channels. The results were as follows: none of them was affiliated with a real mass media outlet; 8 channels were anonymous, 1 channel was verified by Telegram; the total audience of these 10 channels accounted for 284.5 million views per month (IMI, 2021a).

Additionally, in 2021 the Institute of Mass Information issued several reports stating that Telegram channels such as ASupersharif and Legitimny had published Russian propaganda before the full-scale invasion: some channels republished manipulative content from Russian federal TV channels (IMI, 2021b); some disseminated pro-Kremlin narratives, such as “Ukraine is a failed state”, “the West provokes Russia”, “Zelensky is a Western puppet” (Ilyuk, 2021); some quoted Russian politicians and celebrities, including hate speech about Ukraine (Steblyna, 2022).

The popularity of Telegram channels has been growing since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. According to a USAID-Internews survey, 74% of Ukrainians consume news from social networks, of which Telegram has been the most popular during the war (60% in 2022, compared to 20% in 2021). In 2022, Telegram overtook Facebook, which was the most popular in 2021 (43% compared to 25% in 2022) (Internews, 2022). Thus, Telegram leads in the Ukrainian digital media environment, despite its users’ amateur approach to news reporting.

As a rule, academics have two opposite points of view on amateur mass media and citizen journalism. According to the first opinion, amateur media outlets do not follow professional standards and print mostly gossip and unverified information (Puente et al., 2011; Akifah, 2014; Carpenter, 2009). However, according to the second argument, such media sources may play an important role in times of crisis, spreading information about protests and political movements (Salsabila & Adi, 2022), catastrophes, natural disasters, pandemics, etc. (Sheen et al., 2021). Additionally, amateur mass media may be useful in representing some social groups (Carmichael, et al., 2019). Thus, it is important to observe the activity of both professional and amateur media outlets because the contributions of the most popular news sources should not be disregarded.

The aim of this paper is to compare coverage of the Russian invasion by professional and amateur news media outlets and to determine the quality of this coverage. News sources will be analyzed: number of sources per item, most popular sources for each mass media outlet, and the number of sources per text depending on the phase of war (Russian offensive, Ukrainian counteroffensive, positional warfare).

The paper consists of the following sections: in the literature review, the author defines several challenges for professional journalism in the modern digital environment and observes the specifics of news production on Telegram. In the methodology section, ways of identifying news sources for journalism studies and computer sciences are determined, and a method of processing news sources with computer-assisted analysis is proposed. In the results section, data from professional and amateur media is compared. Lastly, in the conclusion and discussion sections, the reality of the modern digital environment, where both professional and amateur media compete for the public's attention, is described.

## NEWS SOURCES ANALYSIS

Identification of news sources is extremely important for evaluating the quality of news because sources of information must be verified by journalists before publication. This is especially true for crisis events (pandemics, natural disasters, catastrophes and, of course, wars), when some actors may spread fake news to misinform and manipulate public opinion (Meirik & Franklyn, 2022, p. 3379; Lopez-Garcia & Benites, 2022, p. 7).

As for the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, massive disinformation campaigns were launched by Russia to provoke panic, weaken Ukrainian resistance, discredit the Ukrainian government and Armed Forces, hide or distort information about war crimes, intimidate journalists etc. (see reports of Ukrainian professional media organizations: #DisinfoCronicle (Detector Media, 2023); War crimes of Russia against Media and Journalists in Ukraine (IMI, 2023)). Ukrainian researchers found that 88 pro-Russian Telegram channels were created in the first days of the full-scale war that were used "as official sources of the occupiers" or "mimicked the media's behavior, i.e., published regional information overflowing with propaganda and misinformation" (Ilyuk et al., 2022). Ukrainian popular media outlets were used to spread Russian propaganda on social networks about "biolabs" in Ukraine, "Ukrainian Nazis" who place military equipment near schools and theatres, and reports about "smuggling" of western weapons by

Ukraine etc. (Kalashlynska, 2022; Izbirkom, 2022; The Center for Content Analysis, 2022).

Thus, analysis of news sources could show what sources were mentioned by different media outlets and establish the reliability or unreliability of used references and whether the usage of media sources changed depending on the phase of the war. It is important to design representative research tools for such analysis and process enough news texts to be able to see the whole picture.

## DIGITAL MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

When it comes to hybrid media systems (Chadwik, 2017), numerous communication platforms compete with each other for audience (Sumiala et al., 2016). News is consumed in and is produced for “echo-chambers”/“filter bubbles” (Kitchens, Johnson & Gray, 2020). According to Entman & Usher’s (2018) model, currently in the digital media environment there are plenty of audiences that consume news from several media outlets.

In such an environment, professional mass media outlets are losing their audiences and the number of people who consume news has fallen “from 63% in 2017 to 51% in 2022” (data collected before Russian invasion) (Reuters Institute, 2022). Meanwhile, social networks’ audience share is growing, thus attracting increased advertising revenue. Nowadays, 4.9 billion people use these digital platforms, and researchers expect this number to grow further to 5.85 billion users by 2027 (Wong, 2023).

There are some other challenges for professional journalism. A modern-day journalist should know both professional standards and modern multimedia instruments; however, for this journalists need to be properly trained and should do more work in less time (Lopez-Garcia, Rodriguez-Vazquez & Pereira-Farina, 2017).

To sum up, “less diversity, and the reinforcement of prejudices” are observed (Newman et al., 2013) within the “new news ecology”, where “the Fourth power” (the press) and “the Fifth power” (the internet and social networks) compete for readers’ attention.

## NEWS PRODUCTION ON TELEGRAM

Telegram, as a digital platform, is available for everyone who wants to produce any type of content, and users may publish or discuss “whatever they want without any restrictions” (Júnior et al., 2022). “Transparency and accountability” seem to be unimportant for the platform as well (Wijermars & Lokot, 2022, p. 129). Strict moderation of users is also absent on Telegram (Willaert, Peeters, Seijbel & Van Raemdonck, 2022), where professional mass media outlets have to compete with unprofessional or anonymous channels which do not follow professional standards.

As a rule, the production of harmful content is the most popular topic of Telegram research. On this platform, scholars are concerned with dissemination of hate speech and extremism (Walther & McCoy, 2021, p. 114), “racist and violent ideology” (Baumgartner et al., 2020), conspiracy theories (such as QAnon) (Hoseini et al., 2021) and COVID conspiracies (Walther & McCoy, 2021, p. 113). Far-right actors who have been banned for serious violations of rules on Twitter or Facebook can freely share their manipulations on Telegram and “gain prominence in the network, thus casting doubt on the effectiveness of deplatforming for curbing the influence of far-right and other extremist actors” (Urman & Katz, 2020). More than 600 channels and groups that popularize IS ideology were detected on Telegram in 2019 (Clifford & Powell, 2019, p. 3).

One more approach to researching Telegram is its role in some authoritarian countries, where news on Telegram may be an important source of information as it is uncensored by the government. This is why Telegram is also called an instrument for “digital resistance” (Urman et al., 2020). For example, Telegram channels were also used to spread information about election fraud during the 2020 protests in Belarus (Wijermars & Lokot, 2022, p. 140). It was also popular among the Hong Kong protesters (Baumgartner et al., 2020).

However, news production for mass audiences on Telegram has not been studied so deeply. Scholars have analyzed such content, but only on far-right channels (Walther & McCoy, 2021), channels for the protesters in Hong-Kong (Urman et al., 2020; Ng & Loke, 2020; Baumgartner et al., 2020), or “junk news channels” (Knuutila et al., 2020). Thus, this study analyzes popular Telegram news channels



to understand the quality of news and compare it with professional mass media outlets.

## NEWS SOURCES AND AMATEUR MEDIA DEFINITIONS

There is some confusion with the term “news sources” as it may be used in several senses. Firstly, in the computer sciences, where some instruments to process news texts are proposed, the term “news source” is understood as a media outlet which delivers information to people (Edelson et al., 2021; Mu & Aletras, 2020). Secondly, in journalism studies, a news source is a person or another resource that is cited in a news text. In this context, researchers study various areas: “voices” that dominate in the news (government mostly) (Sigal, 1973, p. 36). For example, D. Berkowitz found out that “officials in some capacity” are quoted more often in news than other sources (1987). There are also discoveries about usage of sources for covering different topics, such as the environment (Williams, 2015) or finance (Manning, 2013). Additionally, news sources are identified manually in such studies: several researchers use special guidelines to look for a source in a news text (see, for instance (POID, 2023; Chabanenko, 2017)). However, in this study a computer algorithm is proposed.

Thus, these approaches (computer sciences and journalism studies) are combined in this research: algorithms using regular expressions were utilized to process more than 110 thousand texts in order to identify news sources, understood as a person or organization that is cited in a text.

One more term which should be defined is ‘amateur news media’. The two most popular ways of describing the contributions of non-journalists are ‘citizen journalism’ and ‘alternative mass media’. However, both terms seem to be inappropriate in the case of Ukrainian Telegram channels. As for citizen journalism, it is usually defined as “the spontaneous actions of ordinary people, caught up in extraordinary events, who felt compelled to adopt the role of a news reporter” (Allan & Thorsen, 2009). In Ukraine news production is an everyday activity for Telegram channels, where official information, pieces of citizen journalism, gossip, blogs, and memes are collected

and published. Alternative media is understood as non-mainstream media, where ignored voices may be heard: “working people, sexual minorities, trade unions, protest groups, people of low status in terms of their relationship to elite groups of owners, managers and senior professionals can make their own news, whether by appearing in it as significant actors or by creating news relevant to their situation” (Atton, 2002, p. 11). However, Telegram news channels do not produce alternative content for “alternative” people. These channels mostly cover the same topics as the professional mass media and their audience is extremely wide. Thus, term “amateur” news media is used in this research. Here, Keen’s conception of “the cult of amateur”, where free UGC replaces professionals – in particular journalists and editors – as gatekeepers, is used (Keen, 2007, p. 16). Amateur news journalism is understood as non-professional, free, specialized activity within some field (news reporting), with minimal knowledge of the sphere or its objectives and no responsibility to society, professional standards, ethics, functions of journalism etc. Amateur media is a platform for this content (in this research it is Telegram).

## MATERIAL

Two professional mass media resources and two Telegram channels were used for this research:

- Ukrayinska Pravda (<https://www.pravda.com.ua/>). UP is the oldest Ukrainian online media resource, founded by famous Ukrainian journalist Georgiy Gongadze in 2000. Now it is ranked 4th in the category “News and Mass Media” with 57.7M views per month, according to SimilarWeb data (SimilarWeb, 2023).
- Dzerkalo Tyzhnia (<https://zn.ua/>). DT is one of the oldest Ukrainian newspapers, founded in 1994. It was founded by the US entrepreneur Yuri Orlykov and Ukrainian journalists Valerii Mostovyi and Yulia Mostova. It holds 59th position in the “News and Mass Media” category, with 3.4M views per month (SimilarWeb, 2023).

The above-mentioned mass media were chosen for the following reasons:

- they publish high-quality content with more than 96% level of compliance with the professional standards of journalism (according to the White list (a list of the highest-quality media), compiled by the Institute of Mass Information, a Ukrainian professional media organization (IMI, 2022));
- they are considered respectful and influential (MediaSapiens, 2020; Bratuschak, 2020; Dzyuba, Zhukovsky & Zheleznyak, 2007);
- they have full news archives that are available for download.

As for telegram channels, the two most popular were chosen:

- Trukha is the most popular Telegram channel in the news and media category, with 2.7M subscribers. The channel is unverified by Telegram and was founded in October 2019; the founder is not specified.
- Ukraina Seychas, US is the 2nd-most popular channel, with 1.7M subscribers. The channel is verified by Telegram. It was founded in October 2018; the founder is not specified.

Thus, these media outlets should be compared to understand the specifics of Russian invasion coverage in the digital environment of Ukraine.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As the aim of this paper is to compare coverage of the Russian invasion by professional and amateur news media outlets and to determine the quality of this coverage, there are several research questions:

What is the difference in news quality (the average number of news sources used per text in particular) between professional and amateur media outlets during the war?

What types of news sources are most popular in professional and amateur media outlets: official for professional, alternative for amateur? Do amateur media outlets quote official Russian sources more often?

## METHOD

Webpages with news texts from professional mass media websites and Telegram channels were exported with module requests (total 48,153 items for professional, 70,364 for amateur). Thereafter, the texts were processed with the bs4 module (to remove html tags), and news sources were processed with the re module (regular expressions) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Examples of regular expressions (punctuation and word order – for Ukrainian and Russian language)

Regular expression	Reference and translation	Result
[>""],\s[-] .*?([А-ЯІЇЄЗГА-Z]\w+)[.,]	", – De Croo said.	Croo
, пише   повідомляє   заявляє .*?([А-ЯІЇЄЗГА-Z]\w+)\.	, Zelensky writes / reports / claims	Zelensky
Про це .*? ([А-ЯІЇЄЗГА-Z]\w+) [вуйзп]	This was stated by Dmytro Kuleba during the briefing	Kuleba
За даними .*?([А-ЯІЇЄЗГА-Z]\w+)	According to information / data / words of the Washington Post	Post
\w+ ([А-ЯІЇЄЗГА-Z]\w+) говор\w+, що	Joe Biden said that	Biden

Using regular expressions made it possible to consider the most typical forms of references for every media outlet, but not every source. Minimal corrections were made for all news outlets (for instance, Telegram channels mostly do not use quotation marks, so this was considered as well). This procedure of news text analysis has previously been tested and shows nearly 90% correct identification of sources (Steblyna, 2021, p. 31).

## HYPOTHESES

In view of previous research on amateur mass media, it can be supposed that popular Ukrainian Telegram channels publish low-quality content. Obviously, professional mass media follow the professional standards of journalism (accuracy, objectivity, completeness etc). In the case of news sources, this means that:

- H1) Professional mass media outlets have significantly more references to news sources than amateur ones. The average

number of references remains stable and does not depend on the phase of the war because professional mass media follows the standards of journalism. As for amateur news media, the average number of references is unstable and depends on the phase of war: less references during hot stages, especially, in the first stage of the Russian invasion; more references in more calm periods (positional warfare).

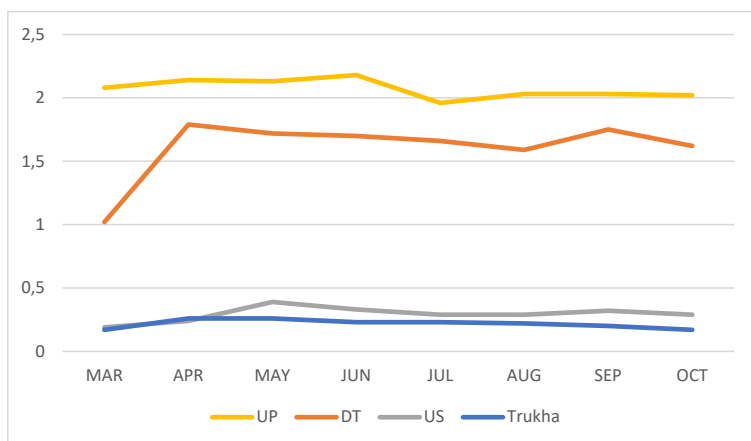
The types of news sources differ significantly between professional and amateur media:

- H2) Professional mass media outlets tend to more frequently use sources that are connected with the president, his office, and the government, especially during hot phases, whereas amateur media use both official sources connected with the president, his office and the government, and alternative ones (bloggers, activists).
- H3) Professional mass media outlets rely on official military sources, whereas amateur mass media quote particular units and military bloggers;
- H4) Professional mass media outlets use a variety of sources (national, regional, and international) with a preference for national ones during hot stages of warfare. Amateur mass media give preference to national sources as they are more recognizable to the audience.
- H5) Russian sources are more popular for amateur mass media.

## RESULTS

The following figure shows the average number of news sources per text. All sources were identified with the help of the regular expressions in order to obtain this data; the number of coincidences was divided by the number of texts (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. News source dynamics in professional and amateur news media



H1 was partially confirmed: professional mass media outlets have a significantly higher percentage of references per text: 1.6–2.07 for DT and UP; 0.21–0.29 for Trukha and US. This means that there is at least one source per news text for professional online mass media; however, only every third to fifth amateur media post contains a clear reference to a news source.

As for dynamics, there were less references for professional DT and Telegram channels in the first month after the invasion, while some indicators fell insignificantly for the professional mass media in summer 2022. There are almost no changes for professional mass media during different phases of the war (there is lower result for DT only in March 2022). As for the amateur mass media, there is also only a small difference in the number of news sources per text (just an insignificant increase for US in March–April 2022, from 0.19 to 0.24).

For instance, Trukha and US include posts which do not contain references at all. Several posts contain indications of attempts to subsequently verify information, such as “preliminary information” or “information is being updated”. As a rule, anonymous amateur videos or photos are published as evidence. And for the professional mass media, it is of course important to use a reliable news source.

Now, let us examine the most popular news sources (Fig. 2).

Figure 2. Top-10 the most popular news sources

Media	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	
<b>UP</b>	Zelensky General Staff State Emergency Service UP Podolyak Kuleba Danilov Reuters Kim Vereshchuk	Zelensky General Staff Haidai Podolyak Vereshchuk Regional State Administration Danilov Sinogubov Mass Media Peskov	Zelensky Haidai Regional State Administration General Staff Reuters Security Service of Ukraine UP Andriushchenko Ukrainian Armed Forces Podolyak	Zelensky Haidai Regional State Administration General Staff Ukrainian Armed Forces Podolyak Reznikov	Zelensky Haidai Regional State Administration General Staff Ukrainian Armed Forces Podolyak Reznikov	Zelensky General Staff Regional State Administration Security Service of Ukraine State Emergency Service Haidai Kyrylenko Danilov UP Podolyak	Zelensky General Staff Regional State Administration Fedorov Security Service of Ukraine Podolyak Mass Media Ukrainian Armed Forces Haidai Reznikov	Zelensky General Staff Security Service of Ukraine Regional State Administration Sinogubov Mass Media Fedorov Haidai Putin Ukrainian Armed Forces	Zelensky General Staff Regional State Administration Putin Security Service of Ukraine Mass Media Kuleba Air Force Haidai Klychko
<b>DT</b>	Zelensky Podolyak Ukrainian Armed Forces Reuters Arestovych Kuleba Times Mass Media CNN Putin	Zelensky Ukrainian Armed Forces Chaik Podolyak Haidai Arestovych Peskov Putin Times Regional State Administration	Zelensky Ukrainian Armed Forces Regional State Administration Reuters Haidai General Staff Bratshuk Danilov Malyar	Zelensky Ukrainian Armed Forces Regional State Administration Haidai Reuters Kuleba Zaluzhnyi Biden Guardian General Staff	Zelensky Ukrainian Armed Forces Regional State Administration Haidai Reuters Kuleba Haidai Mass Media General Staff Putin	Zelensky Reznikov Zelensky Ukrainian Armed Forces Regional State Administration Kuleba Haidai Mass Media General Staff Putin	Reuters Ukrainian Armed Forces Regional State Administration General Staff Zelensky Reznikov Bloomberg Post Mass Media Podolyak	Reuters General Staff Ukrainian Armed Forces Regional State Administration Putin CNN Mass Media Biden UN	Zelensky Regional State Administration Reuters General Staff Ukrainian Armed Forces Times Reznikov Budanov Haidai Mass Media
<b>US</b>	Zelensky Ukrainian Armed Forces Mass Media Haidai Times Scholz Biden Regional State Administration Pentagon Putin Johnson Kim Podolyak Fedorov	Zelensky Arestovych Haidai Podolyak Times Pentagon Mass Media Ukrainian Armed forces Regional State Administration CNN Macron President's office	Zelensky Mass Media Arestovych Haidai Podolyak UN Putin Scholz Andriushchenko Kim Regional State Administration Feygin	Zelensky Mass Media Podolyak Arestovych Akhetov State Emergency Service Biden Ukrainian Armed Forces Haidai Marchenko Monastyrskyi Regional State Administration Scholz	Zelensky Mass Media Bratshuk Vucic Danilov Yermak Kadrov Podolyak Terekhov	Zelensky Mass Media Times Aksonov Vereshchuk General Staff Scholz	Zelensky Mass Media Times Yermak Mass Media	Zelensky Scholz Yermak Mass Media	Zelensky Regional State Administration DTEK Starukh
<b>Trukha</b>	Zelensky Podolyak Arestovych Kim Ukrainian Armed Forces Terekhov Herashchenko Mass Media Kuleba Putin	Zelensky Arestovych Mass Media Haidai Kim Podolyak UN Aзов Peskov	Zelensky General Staff Azov Arestovych Ukrainian Armed Forces Mass Media Andriushchenko Haidai Reuters Kim	Zelensky General Staff Arestovych Ukrainian Armed Forces Bloomberg Reuters Haidai Mass Media NATO Regional State Administration	General Staff Zelensky Arestovych Reuters Bloomberg MASS MEDIA Bratshuk Forbes Johnson	General Staff Arestovych Reuters Mass Media Zelensky Bloomberg Defence Intelligence Ukrainian Armed Forces Ukrainian Armed Forces CNN Kim	Arestovych Zelensky General Staff Defence Intelligence of Ukraine ISW Reuters Ukrainian Armed Forces IAEA NATO Regional State Administration Mass Media	Arestovych Zelensky Mass Media General Staff DTEK Reuters Security Service of Ukraine Viklul Ukrainian Armed Forces Herashchenko Defence Intelligence of Ukraine Kyiv Local State Administration UN Starukh	

H2 was not confirmed. There is no significant difference between professional and amateur media. All the studied mass media outlets used mostly official sources and relied on media resources that are connected with the president and his office, especially during the initial phase of the invasion. Certainly, the number of quotes provided by professional media is much higher, and sources connected with the president and his office are among the most popular for the professional mass media as well. Professional media outlets quote ministers more often (Reznikov, Vereschuk, Kuleba), whereas Zelensky's advisers are more preferred by amateur media. There are only

a few news figures who are not mentioned by professional media outlets but are mentioned by amateur ones. For US, it is Ukrainian businessman Akhmetov, who is promoted by the channel (this channel often posts advertisements about this businessman, his fund, and his aid to Ukrainian IDPs), and Feygin, who is a Russian blogger.

H3 was partially confirmed. General Staff is the most popular military source for the studied outlets, but US does not reference it very often. The Azov Brigade was the most popular military source in April 2022 for Trukha, while it was the third most popular after Zelensky and General Staff in May.

Finally, H4 was partially confirmed. Professional mass media outlets mostly used national and regional news sources. UP showed reliance on presidential media resources during the first phase of the war. Regional sources (regional administrations, mayors) were mostly popular during the so-called “battle for Donbas”, i.e., the Russian offensive on Lysychansk, Sievierodonetsk, and Bakhmut (May – August 2022). The situation is mostly the same for DT. Except for DT, interest in international sources is minimal.

Amateur media outlets use regional sources as well, but these sources are not so popular and are situated at the end of the list the TOP-10 sources.

As for Russian sources, H5 was confirmed only for US. Trukha uses a low number of Russian sources.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In the new digital environment, professional journalism must solve several problems: a fragmented audience (Entman & Usher, 2018), which mostly prefers to obtain news from social networks; falling trust in traditional printed mass media (Reuters Institute, 2022); there are also some organizational, financial, and political factors. All these difficulties may be aggravated by the war and its consequences: shelling, blackouts, poor internet connection, threats to psychological and physical well-being etc. In such cases, social networks, where anyone can create media and spread useful content, may be able to help. There are some cases of citizen journalism where common people managed to broaden social representation of several social



groups (Carmichael, Adamson, Sitter & Whitley, 2019), give a voice to unnoticed people (Salsabila & Adi, 2022), or help protesters in authoritarian countries. However, when speaking about professional dissemination of information on an everyday basis, some amateur mass media outlets may fail to do this properly (Puente, Saavedra & Grassau, 2011; Akifah, 2014; Carpenter, 2009).

At the beginning of the digital platform era, there were hopes of symbiotic relationship between professional media and amateur digital platforms, where the latter would provide more diverse content and would help some ignored groups to be heard. However, for some platforms, such as Telegram, there may be too many difficulties to overcome. It has almost no restrictions on content publishing, which is why it is studied as a platform that contains harmful content (Júnior et al., 2022; Wijermars & Lokot, 2022; Willaert et al., 2022). However, in Ukraine, which is fighting for freedom and democracy, Telegram not only provides harmful content about extremism, violence, conspiracies etc., but it is also the most popular social network for news, and Ukrainians trust it (Internews, 2022). Therefore, it was important to compare the news quality of the most popular Telegram channels against the professional media.

The conducted analysis has demonstrated that extremely popular amateur news media outlets have mostly failed to give clear references to news sources during the war, therefore so-called “unreliable references” prevail. Thus, the low numbers of news sources per text (compared to professional media) confirm previous observations about low-quality content on Telegram (Knuutila et al., 2020; Walther & McCoy, 2021). Of course, such content may create several problems for Ukraine as a country at war: defenselessness before the enemy’s information operations; propaganda and fake news; the possibility of important data leaks; adjustment of enemy fire with the help of amateur photos and videos; the so-called “effect of stolen thunder”, i.e., when unreliable information is published first, spreads rapidly, and verified information follows but does not attract many views.

On the other hand, it is not right to say that amateur mass media outlets publish only low-quality content or propaganda and disseminate hate speech, extremism, racist ideology and conspiracy theories (Walther & McCoy, 2021; Hoseini et al., 2021; Baumgartner,

et al., 2020). The Ukrainian case demonstrates that Telegram channels also disseminate reliable information. According to our analysis, the most popular sources for mass media and amateur mass media are mostly the same. There is a reliance on media resources connected with the president and his office, and verified military sources. Both mass and amateur news media outlets use verified national, regional, and international references. Thus, Telegram channels' reliance on alternative sources does not mean some kind of alternative reality (bloggers, activists etc.). As for Russian sources, they were popular only with one media outlet, so the conducted analysis shows a need to broaden current representations of Telegram as a platform for Russian propaganda.

Thus, it seems that these two types of content (amateur and professional) will coexist in the reality of a "hybrid" media system (Chadwik, 2017). Amateur news media outlets undermine the traditions of professional mass media, and their influence on public opinion seems to be considerable. Thus, political actors in modern Ukraine should deal with the reality of a new digital environment where professional and amateur media outlets compete for the public's attention and trust.

## LIMITATIONS

The conducted computer-assisted analysis does not make it possible to identify all the news sources in a given news text, but the use of regular expressions helps to determine the most common expressions and identify the most popular sources quoted in a text. Thus, this margin of error should be considered. Previous research has shown that this method helps to correctly identify 86–90% of sources used in the professional media.

Additionally, these regular expressions have to be adjusted for every media outlet as the formats used for references differ. Thus, the proposed news source analysis algorithm must not be used without the required adjustments.

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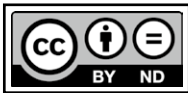
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## Polish borders: media polarization and representation of the refugee crises at the borders with Belarus (2021) and Ukraine (2022)\*

### *Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** This paper examines how specific media outlets (*Polityka*, *Sieci*) have portrayed the crises on Poland's borders with Belarus and Ukraine. It focuses on refugees during the period of border crossings by capturing reactions, emotions, and decisions highlighted in the media during that period. Utilizing media polarization theory, the authors analyse similarities and differences in selected media outlets' coverage of the crises.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The following research questions were asked: What is the media portrayal of the refugees on the Belarus and the Ukrainian borders? Does the structural level of MP (media polarization) impact the behavioural level? The authors conducted qualitative media content analysis, following Pisarek's (1983) research process and Mayring's (2014) Inductive Category.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The theory of media polarization is presented, followed by an analysis of the literature examining this phenomenon in the context of the refugee crises at Poland's borders with Belarus and Poland. Qualitative content analysis of over 100 articles published in two

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strategically selected structurally polarized weeklies was carried out using the nVIVO software.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The structural level of media polarization is reflected in the behavioural one. This study reveals that the main thematic focus is the refugees at the Belarusian border, who are described via political, social, and religious themes. The crisis at the Ukrainian border also exhibits polarizing elements, primarily centring on evaluating or criticizing the authorities and addressing or ignoring uncomfortable and problematic issues that emerge in connection to these refugees

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION:** This study constitutes a significant contribution to the theory of media polarization, addressing it also in relation to issues of diversity, tolerance, inclusivity, and humanitarianism.

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**KEYWORDS:**

media polarization, border, refugees, Belarus, Ukraine

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Poland's borders, as part of NATO and the EU, have drawn media attention twice: first, at the Belarus border in 2021, and then at the Ukraine border in 2022. Both situations involved humanitarian crises related to people seeking refuge in Poland, and they continue to generate social, political, and media interest. However, the similarities between these borders end there.

The crisis on the Belarusian border which started in June 2021 was a result of a policy of the Lukashenko regime that aimed to destabilize Eastern EU countries (Śliwa & Olech, 2022). Observers noted that the sudden arrival of refugees at the Polish border was a planned element of hybrid warfare, orchestrated by an alliance between Minsk

and Moscow (*ibid.*). In response, Polish authorities tightened security measures, reinforced border guards, and constructed a special fence to prevent illegal border crossings. Acts of aggression, like pushbacks, denied people entry into Poland or return to Belarus, thus heightening the threat to their lives and health. Amid a declared state of emergency, Polish media faced restrictions in borderland access, giving Belarus control over the narrative (Ociepka 2023). In response, Poland's right-wing United Right alliance intensified media restrictions and fostered a hostile environment for refugees. For instance, during a press conference, a minister showcased alleged explicit pornographic content from a refugee's phone (Wróblewski, 2021). On the flip side, NGOs and volunteers offered essential aid and legal support to people freezing and starving at the border (Jurek, 2022). Public opinion appeared to favour the government's response, with almost 77% of society opposing Poland's acceptance of refugees (Bodalska, 2021).

Amid the ongoing crisis on the Belarus border, another crisis unfolded. In February 2022, Russia launched an attack on Ukraine, making Poland one of the primary destinations for Ukrainian refugees. To date, over 10 million people have crossed the border (Straż Graniczna, 2022), predominantly women with children (Rp.pl, 2023). Poland swiftly responded by organizing charity fundraisers, converting train stations and stadiums into shelters, and establishing the border as a primary distribution point for humanitarian aid. The government adopted a special law to simplify the process of legalizing residency and providing financial support to the refugees. An overwhelming 94% of society supported the arrival of Ukrainian refugees and, as of 2023, 78% still hold this view (Scovil, 2023). In the media narrative, Poland was portrayed as a 'silent hero' and a 'humanitarian empire' that was offering support and solidarity to Ukraine (kgr, 2023; Steć, 2022).

Society, politicians, and the media in Poland approached these two humanitarian crises differently. These disparities in responding to the injustices experienced by civilians reinforce the perception of Poland as a nation embroiled in a 'meta conflict' that extends beyond its borders (Górska, 2019, p. 2). However, it is worth asking about the media's role in this process.

This paper examines how specific media outlets portrayed the Belarus and Ukraine border crises. It focuses on refugees in the period

of border crossings by capturing reactions, emotions, and decisions highlighted in the media during that period. Utilizing media polarization theory, the authors analyse similarities and differences in selected media outlets' coverage of the crises.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Media polarization (MP) – definitions and consequences

Numerous studies have demonstrated the existence of media polarization (MP) (Balch & Balabanova, 2011; McCluskey & Kim, 2012; Guenduez, Schedler & Ciocan, 2016).

Głowacki and Kuś (2019) define MP as the reflection and reinforcement of diverse societal and political views, distinguishing between structural and behavioural levels of media operations. As noted by Jupowicz-Ginalska (2020), the structural level of MP departs from state regulations and broadcasters' and publishers' operations, including editorial policies. The behavioural level relates to media content and its effects. Kotras (2013) suggests that MP deepens isolation rather than fosters dialogue. MP often correlates with media outlets' political affiliations, thus contributing to biased reporting (Brzoza & Kornacka-Grzonka, 2017; Bębenek, 2019). For instance, Skrzypczak and Iwasiuta (2021) note differences in news content between commercial and public broadcasters.

The consequences of MP include the multiplication of ethical standards and a reduction in professional solidarity among journalists (Głowacki & Kuś, 2019; Niziołek, 2007). It is also linked to a reduction in journalistic standards, thus posing a threat to freedom of speech (Szuleka et al., 2019) and restricting pluralist discussions. MP is found to shape people's attitudes towards those with opposing views, thus reinforcing echo chambers (Gul & Pesendorfer, 2012; Morris, 2020). Finally, in political crisis situations, researchers link MP to diminished human solidarity, which leads to a sense of alienation and "us vs. them" mentalities (i.e., Munoriyarwa & Chibuwe 2022; Hurvitz, 2020).

## Migrants, refugees, and borders in MP studies

While there is extensive literature on media portrayal of refugees, the connection between refugees and MP, particularly within the context of borders, remains limited, but some exceptions are worth noting.

Toneva (n.a.) examines Macedonian media's coverage of the 2015 refugee crisis, noting its contribution to information chaos and occasional fear. She identifies two frameworks that dominate in the media: humanitarian (emphasizing citizen engagement in solidarity) and securitization (aligning with governmental agendas). Polarised media, she finds, often lack critical context, particularly regarding refugees' backgrounds. Elliot and Brahim (2022) offer a broader perspective, highlighting how several European media outlets exploit the theme of migration for political purposes. They notice that the language of reporting remains problematic, with independent outlets largely avoiding government narratives, while others resorting to sensational language, thus accelerating MP.

In Poland, Troszyński and El-Ghamari (2022) describe the media's divided positions on migration in 2015–2018 as a "great divide" (p. 1) that is rooted in pro- or anti-government attitudes. Strupiechowska (2018), after studying the 2015–2016 crisis, observes that some people are averse to refugees because they consider them enemies of the nation. She notices that this approach is common among right-wing circles. Additionally, Koźdoń-Dębecka's (2023) study of MP during the Belarus border crisis finds pro-government media portraying mostly young men surrounded by armed services, labelling them 'illegal immigrants' or 'a group', while anti-government media show a more diverse picture that includes including women and children. Lasty Ociepka (2023) finds

a very clear difference between Polish government agencies' and pro-government media's approaches to the two groups of refugees: those from Belarus and those from Ukraine (p. 201).

In summary, while the themes of refugees and migration crises are examined in MP studies, there is room for further exploration, especially regarding the media narrative on the Polish–Belarusian and Polish–Ukrainian borders. This paper does this by answering the following questions: 1) What is the media's portrayal of the refugees

on the Belarusian and Ukrainian borders? 2) What is the impact of the structural level of MP on the behavioural level?

## METHODOLOGY

The authors conducted qualitative media content analysis, following Pisarek's (1983) research process, which included the following steps:

Step 1: Selection of Media and Theoretical Framework. The authors adopted a theoretical framework for the levels of media polarization. Two structurally polarized weekly magazines were selected for further analyses:

- the liberal "Polityka" (hereafter: P): recent years have seen an increase in P's criticism of the conservative ruling party (Mielczarek, 2018; Anculewicz, 2019),
- conservative "Sieci" (hereafter: S): Mielczarek (2018) notes that this outlet serves as an open platform for Law and Justice party activists in government positions, often resorting to established stereotypes, parochialism, and xenophobia (p. 197, 200).

Structural polarization in financing has led to a situation where S benefited from the advertising budgets of state-owned companies in recent years, while P did not receive similar support (Dąbrowska-Cydzik, 2022).

Step 2: Research Sample Selection. To select the research sample, the authors identified the beginning of each humanitarian crisis (June 2021 for Belarus and February 2022 for Ukraine) and sought the first mentions of these crises in both magazines. 10 consecutive issues were selected for each crisis:

- P: Issues 34–44 (2021) and 10–20 (2022)
- S: Issues 35–45 (2021) and 9–19 (2022)

Each issue was searched for articles mentioning the crises under study, excluding interviews and essays. In total, 52 articles were selected from P (31 from 2021 and 21 from 2022) and 53 from S (33 from 2021 and 20 from 2022).

Step 3: Coding and Category Formation. In the third step, the authors employed Mayring's (2014) Inductive Category Formation, identifying categories emerging directly from the selected material. Nvivo software was used to assist this step, and the following

categories were formed for further analyses: number of refugees mentioned, their demographics (age, gender, family role, religion, ethnicity), descriptive words used (excluding demographics), the situation on the border (causes of the crises, their physical and mental conditions, experiences, etc.).

Step 4: Qualitative Content Analysis: The authors cross-checked the coding schema and conducted qualitative content analysis. This approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of media representations of refugees in the context of MP.

## RESULTS

### Borders with Belarus

#### *Polityka*

Information on the number of people arriving on the borders is so imprecise that “even a rescuer cannot accurately count the people” (37) (numbers in brackets refer to the number of articles published by the selected magazines; full references to these articles are included in the appendix). Varying data is presented, ranging from “a few” to “tens of thousands” (58). The intensity of the refugee influx is consistently emphasized (9; 52), and there are predictions of an increase in refugee numbers (10).

*P* quotes a government member stating that “men, mainly young, of conscription age, strong, are staying at the border. There is nothing to suggest that anything bad awaits them. It’s a march towards the European Union and luxury” (9). However, in the same text, there is information about the presence of women and their children among the refugees. Other authors confirm this, writing about “a family with a son”, “cases of families with children”, “a couple with a four-month-old child”, a “nine-person family”, and “children, elders and women” (9; 37; 38; 39; 43; 52; 53; 54). Young men are sometimes described as “falling to their knees”, being “completely weak and cold” (43) and “starting to collapse” (37). 4.1.1. *Polityka* refers to the ethnicity of the refugees. It writes about citizens of Central Asian, Middle Eastern, and African countries: “women, men, and children

from Afghanistan”, “arrivals from Iraq” (9), “immigrants from the Middle East and Africa who fell victim to an organised transfer action through Belarus” (58), or “Afghans deprived of medical care” (52). Skin colour is mentioned, describing “dark hands hidden in gloves” (37). There are also quotations from soldiers about “dirty dark-skinned people” and “Arabs” (9), from hunters about “n\*\*\*\*rs” (37), or from residents who express fear “because they are foreigners. They look different, they have a different culture” (9). For balance, *P* (39) also mentions that “most locals have compassion for refugees” despite rumours that “there might be terrorists or criminals among them” (39).

Refugees are referred to variously as “individuals”, “citizens”, “foreigners”, “arrivals”, “a group of people”, “migrants”, “fleeing individuals”, “people without assistance”, “camping individuals”, “uninvited guests”, “the refugee problem” or “desperate individuals in the forests” (9; 54; 58; 60; 61).

*Polityka* explains the process of smuggling migrants through Belarus, attributing the blame to Lukashenko’s regime. The response of Polish authorities is highlighted, raising alarm that “the rhetoric of a barbarian invasion has returned” (58). This weekly notes that the refugees have found themselves “trapped” between border guards refusing them entry to Poland and Belarusians not allowing them to return (9).

Journalists describe the border fence erected on the government’s orders. They claim that “it separates us from the refugees” (54), but its effectiveness is rather limited (36). The principles of a state of emergency are discussed, and there is a discussion about the strengthening of military patrols, with some suggesting that they seem to be “preparing for war” (9). *Polityka* highlights the challenging living conditions within facilities designated for foreigners, referring to them as “pathological” (52). As descriptions of the refugees’ health conditions emerge, there are mentions of hunger, hypothermia, fear, exhaustion, and concerns about the upcoming winter. Concerns are also raised about the brutality of the border guards and pushbacks, with some emphasizing that these practices are “inhumane” and “illegal” (37; 52; 58). *P* depicts refugees as being resigned, “accepting their circumstances”, and “sitting quietly in front of border guards” (9).



In this context, *P* raises questions about the boundaries of humanitarianism. In one issue, this weekly argues that when “humanitarian values are sacrificed, ... , we treat people just like [Lukashenko]: as biological weapons” (52). Other articles point out that both sides dehumanize the refugees and “seem not to understand that they are dealing with human beings” (9), condemning them to “trauma, mistreatment, drowning in swamps, cutting through razor wire, and starving to death” (60).

### *Sieci*

This weekly initially refers to “small groups” of people (32). However, as the situation unfolds, it mentions a “wave”, a “stream of illegal migrants” (5), “hundreds of thousands of incoming people”, and a “rapidly growing influx” (6). Amid all these descriptions, it is mentioned that there are only a “handful of those in need” (33).

Regarding age and gender, *S* focuses primarily on young men and children. When it comes to young men, one interviewee claims they came “to find a wife” and that they are “having a good time – music, cigarettes, branded clothes” (2). One immigrant “spun terrifying stories about serial murders of women”, while “African men harassed female officers” (*ibid.*).

When it comes to children at the border, *S* warns that it is Lukashenko’s authorities who direct them towards Poland. The strategy is to soften the Polish side with the death of children as “the death of children changes the perspective” (25). The same theory is put forth in other issues, where the children’s situation is seen as a “cynical game played by Lukashenko, immigrants, and some Polish journalists from liberal media” (33) and a “Belarusian propaganda tool” (45). Refugee parents are described as “fairly indifferent” to their children (2). Sometimes, they “simply lose the children in the woods”, or “remove their hats and shoes to arouse pity from the guards” (33).

Regarding refugees’ faith, *S* emphasises that “Muslims are being fed by Belarusians” (32) and that “countries in our region (...) resist the Islamic flood” (44). In terms of ethnicity, the articles not only mention people coming from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, but also touch on the theme of skin colour. They use descriptions such as “tanned”, “dark”, “Arab-like” (32, 3) and “non-Slavic” (34).

*Sieci* points out that liberal media and Lukashenko's journalists "use similar terminology, referring to immigrants as refugees" (34). In contrast, *S* consciously employs alternative terms like "illegal migrants", "anonymous arrivals", "foreigners", "visitors", and "citizens". When this weekly uses the term 'refugee', it places it in quotation marks (46). Descriptions such as "travellers" and "Lukashenko's tourists" (26) aim to diminish the seriousness of the situation on the border.

When describing the refugees' situation, *S* underlines Belarus's role in causing the crisis. The process of smuggling people from Africa and Asia is described as "an instrument of aggression exerting political pressure" (8). *S* contends that the refugee crisis is part of an attack on Poland and the EU's border (15; 5). This leads to an "effect of humanitarian catastrophe" (6), which is considered a "war initiated by Belarus" (44). The escalation of the situation serves Belarus's interests, even at the cost of "causing a rapid increase in fatalities" (6). *Sieci* criticizes the idea of opening the border, suggesting that it might allow anyone, including "jihadists carrying bombs", to enter the country (27). It reminds readers that "millions of people from culturally different regions came to Europe in search of a more comfortable life at the invitation of Chancellor Merkel", while warning about the "civilizational aspect of this migration and its consequences for the Western world" (44). For these reasons, *S* appears to support the government's actions, such as building a fence, which they refer to as "strategic defence infrastructure of the state" (47).

Furthermore, *S* questions the poor mental and physical condition of the people at the border. It argues that there is propaganda about starving refugees and their suffering is an element of hybrid warfare (45), a "fabricated issue" (34). It believes that the "refugees should be helped" (34), but Poland is dealing with "economic immigrants, not victims of war or persecution" (15). The magazine mentions "terrifying stories" about the people at the border (2). Some migrants are alleged to have confessed to strangling women (2). *S* claims that immigrants demand more support and they sometimes "pretend to be in pain and don't like sleeping on mattresses" (2). In the same context, *S* refers to the challenges faced by border guards. They note that "foreigners use sticks and throw stones" (45), but guards "help whenever they can" because "after all, they [migrants] are human

beings" (3). According to this weekly, this dispels the myth of insensitive border guards who leave refugees with no help (3).

## Borders with Ukraine

### *Polityka*

This magazine gives the exact number of people who have crossed the border, emphasizing that these numbers will rise. Still, Poland is dealing with an "exodus" (52), a "sea of people" (21), a "wave of refugees" (19). *P* underlines that most of the refugees are women and children, although there are also seniors (11; 14). Men are fathers, brothers, caregivers who "bring their families to the border and return to fight" (22).

In the context of religion, *P* mentions Ukrainian women's right to access abortion in Poland (where access is significantly limited), quoting that "in Ukraine, it's a normal thing (...) Maybe because we're not as religious as the Poles?" (57). This weekly also acknowledges the Catholic Church's assistance and mentions the scale of actions in local parishes and the role of the Church's hierarchs. It talks about churches' role in housing refugees, providing aid and education, confessions in Ukrainian, and charity fundraisers. It believes that the Church "has passed the test of assistance" (4). At the same time, it adds that this institution could do more, including "calming tensions and extinguishing the fires of hatred" as well as addressing pro-life activists who distribute leaflets at the borders stating that "the greatest threat to peace is abortion" (20).

*P* addresses the situation of "non-Slavic" individuals at the border. It writes that those arriving without a Ukrainian passport "undergo double verification" (55). This weekly quotes experts who highlight the differential treatment of refugees from third countries, even though they are fleeing the same war. It also addresses the situation of Roma refugees, who are considered "lower quality" because most assistance is directed towards Ukrainians, revealing "boundaries of goodness" determined by skin colour. *P* observes that "crossing the border, a Roma-Ukrainian immediately becomes an ordinary Gypsy", with one expert suggesting that "ethnic chauvinism has joined the enthusiasm for helping" (23).

In the category of “situation”, *P* points to the Russian invasion as the cause of the crisis, referring to queues of “frozen, exhausted, hungry people” (49). It provides guidance for those welcoming refugees in their homes, advising consideration for their exhaustion, restraint, or even feelings of embarrassment (40).

The magazine also doesn’t shy away from problematic issues. Journalists point out that assistance is uncoordinated: “Suddenly, a few thousand sandwiches and candy bars appeared from the city. There’s no one to eat all of this”. (22). Difficult conditions prevail at border crossings: “Toilets overflowing. The wind blowing trash around” (22). The impression of chaos is compounded by information about those who try to profit from the situation, for example, by raising the price of gasoline (22). Aid is mainly grassroots, with volunteers organizing transport for the refugees from the border to the cities. Without state support they cannot respond to all aspects of the crisis, such as women disappearing, pimping, extortion, or offering accommodation in exchange for sex (21; 22). Another problem is the lack of gynaecological care, with NGOs responding by providing access to abortion pills, particularly for victims of rape (57).

The government “does very little beyond letting refugees into the Polish territory and promising social support” (56). *P* outlines the content of “The Refugee Act” but emphasizes that the responsibility for its implementation rests largely on volunteers and local authorities. This weekly stresses that “aid comes mainly from private people, while the Polish government is eager take credit for it” (24). Volunteers are quoted, highlighting that “no one can cope with the sea of people and the scale of the problems” (21). Nonetheless, *P* acknowledges their collective effort: “We provide assistance, even if it means learning on the go, and even if the state’s contribution is limited” (13).

*Polityka* briefly discusses both the short-term and long-term consequences of the crisis, noting potential risks for refugees and recognizing instances where Poles’ assistance may not be as extensive as before (21). Challenges include problems with securing employment that aligns with refugees’ qualifications and language barriers (14).

*P* also revisits the Belarusian border, reminding readers that there are still “harassment, arrests, and surveillance” on the border, arguing that “two different police forces and border guards seem to be

operating, as if we had two countries" (24). Furthermore, "offering aid to a dark-skinned person at the Belarusian border is prosecuted by law, while everyone is welcomed at the Ukrainian border" (22). In another text, *P* asks, "Why does a white mother deserve help, while a mother with a different skin colour deserves to be escorted beyond the wire fences?" (40). This weekly notes that "the kindness and openness of state services at the Ukrainian border" turn into "arrogance and oppressiveness on the Belarusian border" (24). The border with Belarus is described as the "dark side, quiet, hush-hush", while with Ukraine it's the "bright side of the moon, where one can feel proud of being Polish" (24).

### *Sieci*

Numbers illustrate the exodus of Ukrainian citizens. *S* talks about "so many refugees", "buses filled with refugees", "millions", "a wave/stream/influx" (1, 12; 17; 42; 50; 61).

Precise information about the age of minors, their mothers, sisters, or grandmothers appears and is often linked to family roles: "these are mothers with children" (41; 42). *S* also notes that men bring their families to the border and then return to fight. It advocates for an inclusive approach to Ukrainian children, stating: "Humanitarian considerations, but also the country's political interest, require us to surround these children with special care and permanently grant them the same rights as Polish children" (50).

The weekly touches on religious themes, with a particular emphasis on the Catholic Church's involvement. It states that the Church "is one of the most active entities", offering "encouragement from God", which "speaks volumes about the Church as a community" (42).

In terms of descriptive terminology, the word "refugees" is predominant. Throughout the text, individuals are, however, also described as "people escaping from war and bombs" "newcomers", "fugitives", "individuals in need", and "war victims" (27; 28; 30; 31).

*S* identifies Russia as the cause of the humanitarian crisis. As the journalists observe, "brutal aggression and crime impose an obligation on us to help the victims" (59). *Sieci* writes about refugees' stress, the hardships of the journey, and their longing for their home

country. The magazine notices that some Ukrainians “arrived with one plastic bag, so [volunteers] equip them from head to toe” (29). It focuses on aid support, considering two aspects: systemic and grassroots. In the first, *S* refers to the government’s and local authorities’ activities. It mentions opening the border, setting up reception points at railway stations and border crossings (50; 48). It notes that even those who don’t have visas or COVID-19 certificates are allowed to cross the border (48). This weekly details actions of local governments and the involvement of border guards (31; 42). The detailed “Refugee Act” expedites the issuance of personal security numbers and financial support to refugees, with instructions on how to correctly fill out documents to receive benefits (31). *S* emphasises grassroots initiatives, speaking of a “spontaneous surge of solidarity among Poles” (50). It describes “lines of wagons with humanitarian aid” (35) and the work of volunteers who, along with local governments, “took on the task of organizing initial aid for those fleeing. And they passed this test with flying colours” (61).

According to *S*, the “scale of empathy” astounds the world and creates a new image of the country because “Poland’s aid challenges existing stereotypes” (48). After all, a country that “welcomed the largest wave of non-EU war refugees” cannot be “an extreme example of a xenophobic society” (51). The magazine stresses this has the potential to shift how Poland is perceived on the international stage, stressing that “in moments of trial, the true cultural code is what matters, not invented identities and preferences” (30; 35).

*Sieci* also returns to the border with Belarus, continuing the narrative of a “battle to shield the Polish border from the operation of the Belarusian dictator” (59). It posits that if Poland had succumbed to Lukashenko’s propaganda, “the extraordinary mobilization of the state and its citizens to help Ukraine and the Ukrainians” would not be achievable today (18; 59). Differences between the crises are highlighted: “war refugees crossing legally through border crossings” are juxtaposed with “migrants storming illegal border crossings, often using violence” (16). It questions the credibility of those arriving via Belarus, stating that they lie because “that’s how they were trained by Lukashenko’s officials in Belarus and Putin’s officials in Russia” (16).

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis yields insights that address the research questions. It is apparent that the structural level of media polarization is reflected in the behavioural level (RQ1). The liberal and anti-government weekly publication *Polityka* takes a critical stance towards the ruling right-wing coalition in both crises. It opposes the border closures and the imposition of a state of emergency during the Belarusian crisis. Additionally, it highlights what it perceives as inadequate and short-sighted actions in response to the Ukrainian crisis. In contrast, the conservative and pro-government magazine *Sieci* unequivocally supports the measures implemented by the authorities on both borders. It offers explanations and justifications for how the Belarusian crisis is handled and adopts a more emotive and positive tone when discussing the Ukrainian crisis, thereby shaping the role and significance of the ruling coalition.

The structural level of media polarization is most apparent in the biased reporting seen in representations of the Belarusian border crisis, which are influenced heavily by political, social, and religious themes. When addressing the Belarusian border, *Polityka* acknowledges the role of Lukashenko's regime in causing the crisis but does not dare question the humanity of the refugees for this reason. The magazine refers to migrants as "refugees" and employs neutral and emotionally charged language that evokes compassion. It provides background information on the newcomers, exposing the racist and derogatory ethnic terms used by some Poles. This magazine also poses uncomfortable questions about the limits of Polish humanity, asking whether we really differ from Lukashenko's regime if we fail to treat others with dignity. In contrast, *Sieci* presents the migrants (not refugees) as a threat, dehumanizing them, referring to them as tools, instruments, and Lukashenko's plan. The government on the other hand is portrayed as a hero, defending the whole region not only from "culturally different people" but also from the Minsk and Kremlin alliance. Poland is under attack, a victim of hybrid warfare, with "refugees" being one of its cogs.

The crisis at the Ukrainian border also exhibits polarizing elements, primarily centring on evaluating or criticizing the authorities and addressing or ignoring uncomfortable and problematic issues.

*P* doesn't shy from emphasising the more challenging aspect of the humanitarian crisis and questions Poles' national sense of self-worth, pointing out that not every refugee receives the same level of help. *S*, on the other hand, focuses primarily on the scale of Poland's involvement in helping, emphasizing the involvement of volunteers, local authorities, law enforcement agencies, and territorial defence forces. However, this weekly remains silent on challenging issues, such as the situation of Roma and non-white refugees, lack of control over aid actions, or the personal tragedies of victims of rape.

This text has certain limitations: it focuses on the analysis of selected texts from two periodicals, omitting other media. Examining media polarization and representations of the refugee crises over a longer period and in other media would undoubtedly provide a more comprehensive picture of polarization regarding refugees. Nevertheless, this study constitutes a significant contribution to the theory of media polarization, addressing it also in relation to issues of diversity, tolerance, inclusivity, and humanitarianism.

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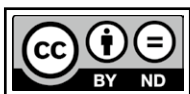
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## Militarization of the Ukrainian Publishing Market During the Russo-Ukrainian War since 2014\*

*Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The purpose of the article is to analyse the impact of the Russo-Ukrainian war, which has been ongoing since 2014, on the Ukrainian publishing industry and to characterize the transformations that the book market has undergone as a result of the full-scale invasion in 2022.

**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The article examines the transformations that have taken place in book media as a result of the military conflict. The research used bibliographic searches, statistical research, the comparative method, desktop research, as well as the methods of typology, observation, generalization and analogy.

**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The events of Russia's war against Ukraine have become a serious challenge for the Ukrainian media system and have impacted the book publishing industry in particular. Therefore, changes in the publishing landscape and in publishing houses' business models are analysed.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The article describes the main changes that the publishing market in Ukraine has undergone as a result of Russian aggression. On the basis of statistical data, the authors analyse the dynamics of changes in the number of publishers and the increase in the number of military books. The authors focus on the emergence of a new literary phenomenon, namely veteran literature, and the emergence of a significant number of veteran publishers. Changes in the business models of publishers are analysed.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The war has had a significant impact on the organizational structure of the Ukrainian publishing industry. This includes the moving of publishing facilities to other territories, changes in infrastructure, transition to other publication formats, entering new markets, etc. This experience could be useful for developing problem-solving strategies in this segment of the media industry.

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**KEYWORDS:**

book publishing market, publishing repertoire,  
Russo-Ukrainian war, military books, veteran (combatant)  
literature

## INTRODUCTION

The publishing industry, which is directly dependent on the socio-political, cultural and material conditions that determine the direction and level of its development, reacts very sensitively to changes in public attitudes, and even more so to the events that lead to these changes.

War as a factor of change has previously been considered mostly in the context of the destruction of library infrastructure and monuments (Knuth, 2006), in particular during the Second World War (Maack, 2001), during the Cold War in certain territories (Manning, 2014), or during the wars in the Balkans (Riedlmayer, 2007). Meanwhile, we are interested in an overview of the problems faced by the publishing industry in Ukraine since 2014, which have begun to be more thoroughly investigated relatively recently (Koleko, 2022).

The significant change of outlook that took place in Ukraine in 2014 due to the Russian Federation's invasion naturally affected the situation with book publishing and determined its ideological priorities. At the same time, the events of the end of 2013 and the beginning



of 2014 (the bloody months of the Revolution of Dignity, the temporary occupation of Crimea, unrest in the east of the country, which eventually ended in hostilities and loss of part of the territory) complicated the financial condition of the industry and fundamentally changed its landscape.

In this study, we trace the mutual influence of military themes and publishing works. As Horbyk (2023) notes, one possible way of studying mediatization is to focus on literary and artistic representations of war, in particular reflection of this experience in books. Therefore, it seems logical to study the militarization of the publishing market by investigating its infrastructural changes and the subject of published titles and literary images.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study covers various aspects of the transformations in the publishing market caused by the war; therefore, a complex of interdisciplinary research methods was used. We used statistical research for various reasons: to process statistical data for the years 2014–2022 related to quantitative changes in the publication of socio-political literature, in particular books on military affairs and military technology; to identify trends in the increase in the number of other thematic groups of books on the topic of the Russian Federation's armed forces' aggression against Ukraine; and to forecast the development of book publishing on this topic and analyse the subjects of the publishing industry. The method of bibliographic information search, systematization and typology was also applied to identify and analyse publications on the topic of the Russo-Ukrainian war. The use of the comparative method was applied to trace the transformations that the book market has undergone since the beginning of the war.

The method of desk research was applied in order to obtain a comprehensive analysis of the influence of the state of war on the transformation of the book publishing industry. Data collected in primary research on changes in certain segments of the steel market formed the basis for generalizations. The obtained results of the empirical information collection were also studied and analysed using mixed analysis comparison.

## CHANGES IN THE UKRAINIAN PUBLISHING LANDSCAPE DUE TO THE WAR

Until 2014, in terms of the number of publishing houses in Ukraine, third place was taken by the Donetsk region (329), after Kyiv city (2,175), and Kharkiv region (700). However, after Donetsk itself and the urban conglomeration around it was cut off from Ukraine (Horlivka, Makiivka, etc.), this large book-producing area lost its position. At the end of 2014, there were 144 publishing organizations in the State Register that were located in the area of this region that was then controlled by Ukraine. Accordingly, the temporarily occupied Crimea almost disappeared from the publishing landscape: of the 133 publishing houses that existed there in 2013, only 65 remained active in the Ukrainian information space at the end of 2014.

However, due to the fact that

more favourable financial conditions and better business opportunities were created in 2014, which encouraged publishing houses to invest in infrastructure and technology as prerequisites for development (British Council, Ukrainian Book Institute, 2021),

the total number of publishing organizations increased from 5,526 at the beginning of 2014 to 5,678 at the end of the year (as of December 1, 2014). In all subsequent years, until the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, the number of publishing organizations grew dynamically: 2015 – 5,834, 2016 – 5,980, 2017 – 6,590, 2018 – 7,153, 2019 – 7,543, 2020 – 7,695, 2021 – 7,948. As of 05/05/2022, i.e., two months after the invasion, the State Register of Publishers, Manufacturers and Distributors of Publishing Products had recorded 8,026 subjects (whose activities naturally take place with very different intensity) (State Register of Publishers, Manufacturers and Distributors of Publishing Products, 2022).

The general state of certain areas of the industry is monitored by relevant state institutions, professional communities and initiative groups. For example, a survey of how Ukrainian publishers have been working during the full-scale war shows that

54.9% of publishing houses have not changed their location in Ukraine. 35.4% of publishing houses have partially moved to other cities; 7.3% have fully moved to other cities, and only 2.4% of publishers now operate abroad (Zahorui & Khmelovska, 2022).

According to this survey, 39% of publishers had not closed during the first 9 months of the war; 51.2% had changed their performance model (i.e., work part-time, online or offline), and 9.8% had been unable to continue their activities. 54.9% of publishing houses had not changed their location in Ukraine; 35.4% of publishing houses had partially moved to other cities; 7.3% had fully moved to other cities, and only 2.4% had moved their operations abroad. Publishers also express new vectors of work: preparation of foreign catalogues, taking up initiatives in selling rights, and plans to prepare e-versions of their recent books (Zahorui & Khmelovska, 2022).

The war has not become an insurmountable obstacle for the industry's further development, despite the losses it has suffered. As a result of shelling, the offices and warehouses of the publishing houses "Vikhola", "Vivat", "Folio", "Korbush Publisher", "Pegas", "Summit-Book", "Lantsuta", "Chas Maystriv", "Zhorzh", "Osнова" and others were damaged; this is 18.5% of the surveyed publishers (Zahorui & Khmelovska, 2022). Most of the damaged premises are in Kharkiv, but warehouses are affected in other regions of Ukraine. For example, in the Kyiv region, in the city of Bucha, the warehouse of the "Adef-Ukraine" publishing house was damaged. "Ranok" publishing house's direct losses reached UAH 16 million, while "Folio" publishing house lost UAH 2 million (Zahorui & Khmelovska, 2022). Nevertheless:

Even during the war, there are those willing to open a publishing business. In 2022, the State Television and Radio Committee received about 178 entrepreneurs' applications to the State Register of Publishers, Manufacturers and Sellers of Publishing Products. This speaks not only of the optimism and faith of Ukrainians in their army, but it also shows the prospects for the development of the publishing industry,

said Oleh Nalyvayko, head of the State Television and Radio Committee (Ostapa, 2022). According to Nalyvayko, in 2022 the number of publishers in Kyiv city increased by 59, in Lviv region by 10, Dnipropetrovsk region by 9, Kyiv region by 8, Khmelnytskyi region by 7, Kharkiv region by 6, Zhytomyr region by 5, etc. (Ostapa, 2022).

The situation is similar with bookstores: "Before the war, there were about 200 bookstores in the whole of Ukraine... This means that there is one bookstore for every 200,000 people... Now, during the war, we have only 130 of them," said Oleksandra Koval, director

of the Ukrainian Book Institute (Kabatsii, 2023b). At the same time, during the full-scale war in Ukraine, new bookstores have opened: “Forest Bookstore” in Irpin, “Vivat” and “Book Lion” bookstores (as well as “Sens”, which opened a few months before the full-scale invasion and did not stop its work) in Kyiv, and the “Persnyi Tom” comic book shop in Cherkasy. Even in Kharkiv, a new “Family Leisure Club” bookstore opened in August (Honchenko, 2022).

Another thing is the sale of books: with the beginning of hostilities, sales fell catastrophically. One of the reasons is the increase in the price of books due to paper shortages, power outages, problems with logistics, devaluation of the national currency, rising prices for services, etc.; all this led to an average 60% increase in the price of books – in some cases even 100% (Melnyk, 2023). The Ukrainian book market is generally small; there are no official statistics, and publishers’ estimates vary. Oleksandr Krasovytsky, director of the publishing house “Folio”, estimates the volume of the printed market at UAH 1.4 billion, and the ebook market at UAH 70 million (Melnyk, 2023). Founder of the “Laboratory” publishing house and the “Librarian” library, Anton Martynov, believes that the market for printed books at the end of 2022 remained at the level of 2021, i.e., around \$100 million (Melnyk, 2023). During the war in Ukraine, the demand for digital ebooks and audiobooks increased significantly. For example, the “Booknet” service reports 353,000 sold copies of electronic books in 2022, which is 2.5 times more than the previous year (Melnyk, 2023). In 2021, a 10-fold sales increase in audiobooks was noted over the previous 2 years (Pyrohova, 2021), and this trend continues.

## MILITARY BOOKS IN NUMBERS: STATISTICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE UKRAINIAN MARKET

Even a brief look at the book windows of Ukrainian bookstores or the websites of online book stores or publishers confirms the changes in war-themed publications, namely a wide range of books dedicated to the events of the Russo-Ukrainian war. These publications belong to different typological groups and have different targets and readership: if a decade ago the readership of military-themed publications was relatively narrow, today in Ukraine the range of books about

war and countering armed attacks is designed for the widest possible readership; even for children’s reading, dozens of books about the war have been published in the last two years.

Statistical analysis of Ukraine’s publishing market allows us to draw certain conclusions regarding the influence of Russia’s military invasion of Ukraine on how publications related to this topic have changed in recent years. Official information on the number of editions, circulations, etc. is published in the annual statistical collection “Print of Ukraine”, the printed body of the Book Chamber of Ukraine. According to the data in the column “Military Affairs. Military equipment”, we can trace the quantitative trends of publications devoted to this topic (Book Chamber of Ukraine, 2012–2022). In her study, Nadiia Zubko analyses how the statistics regarding war-themed books changed in 2014–2018, concluding that the number of titles increased by 76.5% (Zubko, 2020).

In order to illustrate our research and clarify press statistics on this topic, we have expanded the chronological boundaries to a ten-year period (2012–2022) to trace the quantitative indicators of military publications from the start of hostilities in 2014 until 2022, the year of the full-scale invasion. *Table 1* shows a steady increase in the number of titles every year (except for 2020, the first year of the pandemic, and 2022, the year of the full-scale invasion) (Book Chamber of Ukraine, 2012–2022).

Table 1. Publication of books on military affairs and military equipment in Ukraine in 2012–2022 by number of titles, based on Book Chamber of Ukraine statistics

Years	Number of titles (printing units)	Circulation (thousands of copies)
2012	91	83.3
2013	71	75.4
2014	51	56.2
2015	79	72.6
2016	78	67.1
2017	83	74.2
2018	90	63.9
2019	102	60.1
2020	59	27.4
2021	99	65.0
2022	63	54.1

However, these statistics do not cover the entire spectrum of publications because the topic of the Russo-Ukrainian war, in addition to political and socio-economic sciences, has penetrated into other thematic groups, in particular, medical, literary and artistic, children's books, etc.

Ukrainian librarian and blogger Hanna Skorina, author of the "Books about the war" project (Facebook group Книги\_про\_війну), which researches the range of books about the Russo-Ukrainian war, highlights these works in the media, analyses the main trends of the veteran book market, and communicates with readers about them. In March 2020, she published her calculations of books about the war, noting that more than 600 titles had been published in the 2014–2019 period (Skorina, 2020) and more than 1000 titles as of February 2023 (Mymruk, 2023).

## VETERAN LITERATURE AS A PHENOMENON OF THE MODERN UKRAINIAN LITERARY AND PUBLISHING PROCESS

Veteran (combatant) literature has become a key concept in the modern literary process in the last few years and has formed a separate segment of the publishing market in Ukraine. This term is used to denote works about the war, the authors of which were direct participants in the 2014 hostilities in Donbas and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, as well as journalists, volunteers and others (among the authors of veteran literature, the most noticeable are Oleksandr Mykhed, Artem Chekh, Artem Chapeye, Borys Humenyuk, Serhiy Hrydin, Artem Polezhaka, Vitaliy Zapeka, Saigon, etc.). The war as a subject of reflections is the main goal of veteran literature, which is characterized by a true depiction of the events of the Russo-Ukrainian war, living the tragedy of the war on behalf of eyewitnesses and contemporaries, documenting the events, counteracting disinformation and manipulative coverage of the war, showing the authors' perception of war realities, etc.

In our analysis of the publishing repertoire, we observe an emphasis on fiction publications, which, since the beginning of the war in 2014, have described the trauma of the hostilities in Donbas, thus

offering a literary vision of the Russo-Ukrainian war in numerous collections of poetry, prose of various genres, drama, memoirs, etc. The authors of these works are participants in hostilities, eyewitnesses, volunteers and writers, many of whom have a direct or indirect connection with war events but no writing experience; nonetheless, their debut works about the war have won recognition and even national awards (for example, *Daughter* by Tamara Horikha Zernya received the Shevchenko Prize in 2022) (Mori, 2022).

The main thematic emphasis of contemporary publications is the depiction of events in the East of Ukraine and the experience of the full-scale invasion. Works on historical themes – Ukraine’s dramatic twentieth-century history, the national liberation struggle, the Soviet occupation, the activities of The Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists/Ukrainian Insurgent Army – that were popular in previous decades have somewhat lost ground. These publications popularised important historical milestones with a wider audience that did not delve into scientific historical literature but had a demand for historical stories and an understanding of the history of their own country in the postcolonial period.

With the outbreak of hostilities, the thematic emphasis shifted to literature about contemporary historical events, featuring expressive voices of young authors who reflected on their identity, the history of their country, and people’s inner experiences in the context of war. Publishers focused their attention on such publications.

As a result, a total revision of the repertory policy of most publishing houses is taking place, which, together with the participation of veteran publishing houses, has resulted in the release of a significant number of titles about the current Russo-Ukrainian war and about what – event-wise and mentally – preceded it after 2014. Moreover, there are not as many books about actual combat operations (whose analysis and representation will probably happen somewhat later in large-scale, historically balanced works) as there are about the themes of suffering, escape from war, and emigration.

Many books are now published in the format of diaries, written on the hot trail (*Diary of an Illegal Soldier* by O. Bilozerska, 2020; *War 2022: Diaries, Essays, Poetry* compiled by V. Rafeyenko, 2022; *Furious February 2022. Testimony about the First Days of the Invasion* by D. Bura & E. Podobna, 2022; *Fire Shaft. Kharkiv* by O. Boroday, 2023, etc.).

According to researchers' calculations, more than a thousand have been published since 2014, and more than 270 titles of works of various – sometimes unexpected for this topic – genres were published in 2022 alone: from novels and essays to comics, children's books and fiction (*Abyss* by V. Sord, 2019; *After the 24th* by V. Ivchenko, 2022; *The Cat, The Rooster and The Cupboard* by O. Mykhed, 2022, etc.).

A state initiative to support the development of veteran literature and other projects, aimed at the heroization of the defenders of Ukraine, was announced in October 2019 in the program of Ukrainian government activities. In February 2020, its implementation was supported for the next five years. In 2023, so-called veteran literature, in particular works of art related to celebration of veterans' feats of war during the defence of Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability appeared in the "Issue of books according to priority thematic areas" cultural and artistic projects contest alongside two other programs (Announcement of an artistic competition, 2023). The Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, as a state institution, also supported a number of veteran projects, such as a documentary study of the first year of the Russo-Ukrainian war from February 2014 to February 2015 *WAR.ru* by Yu. Rudenko (2020), etc. In 2021, the "Culture Plus" program supported "Culture and Veterans" cultural and artistic projects, which contribute to the social reintegration of veterans, and among them there were many types of media, especially publishing projects.

The information industry, in particular the book industry, is subordinated to the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine; however, in the conditions of the war, the Ministry for Veterans Affairs (MVA) actively contributed to the development of the sphere analysed in our study. MVA has organized a number of promotional events for veteran literature within BookForum in Lviv and Book Arsenal in Kyiv, among which the most significant are the "Veteran Tent" (since 2019), the "Veteran Book" thematic area (2021), and the "Books about the Russo-Ukrainian war" section (2023). In 2019, a stationary "Veteran Tent" exhibition was opened in Kyiv for the purpose of presenting and selling publications about the Russo-Ukrainian war by veterans, volunteers, and immigrants ("Veteranskyi namet", 2019).

Discussions on the topic of veteran literature were held more and more frequently in 2019–2023 within literary festivals and book fairs in Ukraine and beyond. Notable examples include "The role of



veteran literature in countering the semantic war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine” (within the framework of the Book Arsenal 2021 festival) and “Veteran literature, or what soldiers write about” (within the 27th BookForum). The initiators of such discussions in Ukraine are the Ministry of Veterans’ Affairs of Ukraine, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, as well as public organizations (UkrInform TV, 2022).

When analysing interviews, round tables and other events dedicated to the current state of veteran literature, we observe that in the responses of authors, librarians, and publishers there are requests to create more effective mechanisms for supporting military writers, supplying this literature to library collections, and promoting it outside of Ukraine in order to inform other countries about the Russo-Ukrainian war and create an information platform in the radio and television space that would highlight veteran literature for the broad public.

### UKRAINIAN PUBLISHERS: MODELS OF RESPONSE TO THE WAR

In regards to Ukrainian publishers’ business models during the war, Shenderivska et al. (2022, p. 83) define the fulfilment of a social function as well as the use of a collaboration strategy as their priorities. So-called “veteran publishing houses” make up a notable part of the newly created publishing structures today: they began to appear immediately after the events of 2014 with a completely pragmatic goal, namely publishing veteran literature, the volume of which is growing and will grow even more in the near future. These veteran publishing houses include Marko Melnyk’s “Markobook” publishing house (actually established in 2014 and registered in 2016), which is the first veteran publishing house that was created on the basis of the editorial office of the “Azov” regiment newspaper and began publishing the works of soldiers who fought in the east of the country. Today, this publishing house’s repertoire includes books on history and philosophy, memoirs of prominent figures, poetry and children’s literature.

Marko Melnyk and Mykola Kravchenko were also the founders of the “Orientyr” publishing house (2015), which started to publish

memoirs by veterans and participants of past and recent military operations; later, the works of theorists of nationalism appeared in its repertoire. Dmytro Savchenko's "Zaliznyi Tato" publishing house (2016) announced its intention to publish literature that forces the reader to "step out of the intellectual comfort zone", i.e., look at things from a different, unexpected angle. In particular, this publishing house has released many books about the war and the history of the development of the volunteer movement, proving that this movement was born not in 2014 but in the first days of Ukraine's independence. Other publishing houses worth mentioning include Pavlo "Pastet" Belyan-skyi and Dmytro Vokhmyanin's "Dipa" (2016), Iryna Bilotserkivska's "Bilka" (2018), Victoria Hranetska and Vlad Sord's "Dim Khymer" (2018), Oleksiy Beshula's "Propala Hramota" (2019), and Oleksandr Andrievskyi's "Kryla" (2019) and "Stylet i Stylos" (2020), etc.

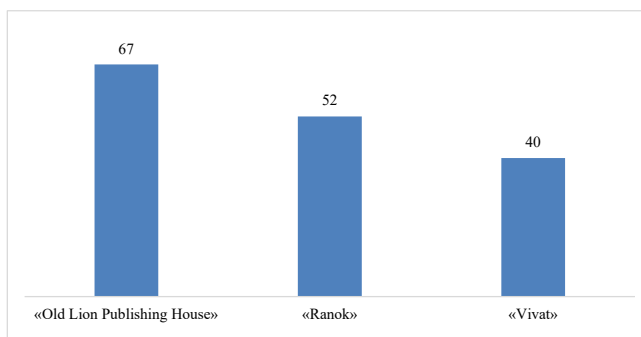
Veteran publishing houses have become a very visible component of Ukraine's publishing market. Their mostly military theme was probably the most noticeable trend of 2022 and was picked up by publishers who previously felt more comfortable in other thematic niches. Paradoxically, with the beginning of the war, new opportunities opened up for Ukrainian publishers, as is well illustrated by the cases of two publishing houses: "Vivat" and "Nash Format".

The "Vivat" publishing house, whose employees were forced to leave Kharkiv in the first days of the full-scale war, moved its activities to Poland. Books were taken from the warehouses to Rivne in the west of the country; an online store was set up in Lviv, and most of the employees started working remotely. Diversification of funding sources (in particular, assistance from various foundations and organizations, including USAID, House of Europe, Universal Reading Foundation), collaboration with other publishers and provision of services to colleagues through their online store) as well as other activities made it possible to quickly establish a production process. Thus, on the initiative of "Vivat" publishing house, cooperation with Polish bookstores and online sales platforms began. It is easier to export books from Poland to many other European countries. Taking into account the current Ukrainian realities, "Vivat" began to emphasize the preparation of e-books and plans to release audio books (at least 40–50 titles annually). Not abandoning the traditional paper format (with a 9% increase in total circulation in 2022), "Vivat"

published a number of titles about the Russo-Ukrainian war (*Weapons of Victory* by M. Zhyrokhov, *Dictionary of War* by O. Slyvynsky). Plans for 2023 include a biography of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, *Invasion* by the British journalist Luke Harding, and many others.

Realizing that the war and the heroism of Ukrainians had increased interest in Ukrainian authors and books in general abroad, “Vivat” began to actively enter the rights sales market, in which it became a leader in 2022 (see *Diagram 1*, source: Ukrainian Book Institute).

Diagram 1. Publishers who sold most licenses in 2022



Over the course of a year, Ukraine made a quantum leap in rights sales. Other countries will read more Ukrainians and see our quality texts, professionally executed illustrations, and will listen to us more, “Vivat” states (Kabatsii, 2023a).

Another well-known publishing house, “Nash Format”, embodies a slightly different model of activity in wartime. Having gained authority long before the full-scale war among readers and in the professional environment by publishing non-fiction literature, mostly in translation (since 2014), this publishing house did not change its general direction *typologically* but significantly adjusted it *thematically*. Today, the repertoire of “Nash Format”, as well as all of its own publishing and non-publishing volunteer activities are clearly oriented to the needs of the front.

Since 2020, “Nash Format”, together with the NGO “Reformation”, has worked on the “Army Reads” project (professional and world-view literature), thus consistently filling still-empty segments

of the book market. However, it can only be called a “market” quite conditionally because, together with the NGO “Reformation”, this publishing house produces all the books that military and medics need at its own expense or using charitable contributions, auction sales, etc. (not via sales). Moreover, “Nash Format” provides access to free electronic versions of these books, including *Emergency Military Surgery*, *Mini-Manual of Urban Defence in Modern Conditions* by John Spencer, *Light Infantry Tactics for Small Units* by Christopher Larsen, *Mild Traumatic Brain Injury. Rehabilitation Toolkit*, *Mortar Commander’s Notebook*, *American Sniper* by Chris Kyle and others. In February 2022, a new program “Printing statutes and manuals for the Armed Forces” was launched on the same basis.

## CONCLUSIONS

A comprehensive analysis of various segments of the Ukrainian publishing market since 2014 allows us to make certain generalisations about the changes in the publishing landscape of Ukraine caused by the military actions on its territory.

Firstly, the war that began in 2014 has led to significant transformations in the publishing infrastructure; the temporary occupation of Crimea and certain regions in eastern Ukraine has led to a substantial reduction in the number of publishing and book trade entities, and their locations have undergone serious changes. However, the ban on imports of Russian books and the cultural policy of new post-Maidan institutions and other factors have contributed to the emergence of new publishing houses and growth of the book market. The large-scale war that started in 2022 has further exacerbated changes in the territorial distribution of publishers and caused enormous material losses in publishing capacity, book collections, etc.

Secondly, analysis of the range of publishing products reveals a significant increase in military-related publications in various thematic and typological groups, from socio-political books to children’s literature, with a particularly large increase in the number of works of fiction and non-fiction books dedicated to the events of the Russo-Ukrainian war.

Thirdly, a new literary phenomenon called veteran (combatant) literature that represents the events of the war in Ukraine is emerging in the publishing repertoire and is forming a separate segment of the literary process, supported by state institutions. As a result, veteran publishing houses have appeared on the Ukrainian market, and discussions about veteran literature are becoming key events at festivals and book fairs.

Fourthly, many publishers have undergone significant transformations of their business models during the war. The number of publishers cooperating with foreign partners, selling copyrights abroad, changing publication formats, and radically revising their repertoire policies has increased.

Each aspect of the changes in the Ukrainian publishing market under the influence of hostilities requires further in-depth research to understand the phenomena that have emerged and to develop strategies to prevent future risks.

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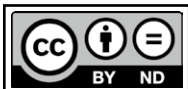
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## The Russian Strategy of Concept Substitution in Facebook and Telegram economic content. Example of the Russian–Ukrainian War in the Period 2014–2023\*

### *Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** To analyze manipulative pro-Russian materials on social networks during the war that apply the “replacement of concepts” method.

**THE RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND METHODS:** The main tasks are the timely detection and counteraction of Russian propaganda, which uses disinformation technologies in the information war against Ukraine; the use of visualization to disprove falsehoods, and determination of the use of the “replacement of concepts” method on social networks. The research methodology used on the Russian tactics of concept substitution on social platforms can be characterized as a synthesis of techniques that should be justified by the interchangeability of traditional objects of media research: author (initiator) – message – intermediary (mediator) – receiver. This research aims to synthesize and combine monitoring methods, content analysis, and comparative analysis.

**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** Several publications were selected. Some contained inaccurate information, while others contained accurate, factual information. As a result of comparing these materials, disinformation was

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refuted, and the importance of timely detection of the “concept substitution” technique used by pro-Russian channels in the Ukrainian information space was described.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The study showed that Russian propaganda often uses concept substitution on Facebook and Telegram. This made it possible to explain how the most common tactics, technologies, and tools of concept substitution work and to fight against their spread.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** In Russia’s war against Ukraine, Kremlin propaganda tries to alter linguistic reality by “suppressing” certain words. Words emphasizing the fact of war and its negative consequences have been banned in Russian media and social networks.

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**KEYWORDS:**

concept substitution, propaganda, interactivity, economic information, manipulation

## INTRODUCTION

Modern conditions in the information space require maintaining a positive international image of Ukraine as a country that has been fighting for European values and democracy in the war against the Russian Federation since 2014 (Khaldarova & Pantti, 228). At the same time, analysis of information in global mass media shows that interest in Ukraine and the events taking place there is not uniform, therefore neglecting to provide high-quality and truthful information can be considered short-sighted in terms of creating and maintaining a positive image of Ukraine in the international arena (Feldstein, 44).

Like any conflict or international crisis, Russia’s war in Ukraine has become fertile ground for the growth and spread of misinformation on the internet (Kost, 2017). Substitution of concepts is one of the most common tactics used by Russian propaganda during the war in Ukraine (Tkachuk, 2022). This is a psychological trick based on a logical fallacy. It consists in presenting any object or phenomenon to the audience as something that it is not (Molotkova, 2022). Over time, this substituted image takes root and functions in society as the only correct one. In this case, commonly used terms (concepts) that cause primarily negative emotions are artificially replaced by

new ones that are perceived neutrally or positively. Nowadays, and especially during the war, social networks have become the primary source of information (Marketer, 2022). Every day, social network users are immersed in a continuous flow of information, but there is a lot of fake news. After all, the information presented on social networks is easily accessible and understandable because its presentation is simple; however, this information is not always true, is presented with a significant distortion, or is taken out of context. With such methods of presenting information, it is easy to manipulate economic indicators because they are mostly offered through data (numbers, infographics, symbols, images, code, tables) that are perceived visually.

After the beginning of the Russian–Ukrainian war in 2014, and especially after February 24, 2022, a lot of information was published on social networks which used certain economic information that does not correspond to reality (Rozenas & Stukal, 982; Tkachuk, 2022).

This publication examines the methods and functions of the manipulative use of data during and about war; it also analyzes the importance of honest reporting of information in avoiding falsehoods, misinformation, and disorientation; it examines the beginning of the mediatization of the economic sphere in wartime and substantiates the use of financial data to promote certain narratives that are intended to influence the world community’s attitude to war. During the war, such means influence the audience’s emotions, cause anxiety, and sow doubts (Rozenas & Stukal, 984). In such cases, mindless dissemination of such information begins, and social networks are “good ground” for such actions.

### RESEARCH TOOLS

Since social media is a new form of communication, it has facilitated the creation of new forms of manipulation. Taking into account the principles of privacy and security of personal data in social networks and the relevant law regarding methods of obtaining, processing, and storing data, as well as being guided by the legislation of the European Union on the protection of personal data (GDPR), as material for our research we used publicly available data that users are

allowed to collect and process. Therefore, only data from open and public groups serve as material.

In the Ukrainian segment of social networks such as Facebook and Telegram, we studied posts on profiles, pages, groups, and channels that are located in Ukraine or have indicated Ukraine as their location. We analyzed them according to the following criteria:

Facebook

- the text of public posts and comments on them;
- information about the time of publication of posts and comments;
- number and type of interactions with posts (likes, shares, clicks);
- names of groups and pages – authors of posts and comments;
- information about open groups (date of creation, whether the page name has been changed, where it is operated from);
- number and list of subscribers.

Telegram

- the text of telegram channel posts and comments on them;
- information about the time of publication of posts and comments;
- information about Telegram channels (date of creation, number of subscribers, country);
- information about the distribution of materials on other Telegram channels or mention of other Telegram channels.

In the research, we focused on two areas: Ukrainian and pro-Russian Facebook pages and Telegram channels. Based on the search program Tgsearch, 50 posts on pro-Russian Telegram channels and 50 comments on the Facebook platform were analyzed by sampling. We consider the Ukrainian channels to be media that distributes content to the Ukrainian audience, while pro-Russian channels are oriented to the spread of disinformation slogans and narratives that repeat Russian propaganda.

Based on the research of the Ukrainian public organization “Detector Media” (Detector Media), the data of the LetsData company, and our observations, we define Telegram channels as pro-Russian if they meet the following criteria:

- channels whose connection with Russia has already been proven;
- channels that spread disinformation messages and content consistent with the narratives and messages of Russian propaganda;
- channels that quote Russian and pro-Russian media, Telegram channels, bloggers, and resources related to Russian special

services, politicians, collaborators, and occupation administrations unilaterally, without critical thinking or analysis;

- channels that masquerade as Ukrainian but whose content contains lexical terms typical of Russian propaganda.

It is worth noting that in order to track similar rhetoric in Ukrainian dimensions of social networks, we define lexical terms that indicate pro-Russianness as a list of critical words formulated on the basis of content analysis of Russian propaganda telegram channels and information resources. In particular, Russian propaganda resorts to concept substitution, mirroring, manipulation, and other techniques. Substitution of concepts is a psychological technique based on a logical fallacy. It presents an object or phenomenon to the audience as something it is not. Over time, this replaced expression takes root and functions in society as the only correct one (Center for Combating Disinformation, 2022) in order to cleverly, unfairly, or unscrupulously control or influence (a person or situation). This is manipulation (Keenan, 2020). These tactics involve the use of specific keywords/phrases, including labeling and derogatory or offensive language.

Labeling is a way in which a propagandist gives negative meaning to the phenomenon he opposes by giving it a name that evokes negative associations, and vice versa. Euphemisms are used when a propagandist is trying to increase the perceived quality, persuasiveness, or credibility of specific ideas. Dysphemism is used when a propagandist intends to discredit, reduce the quality of perception, or undermine the perception of the truth of the object. When creating a “label” or “category” for users, it is easy to manipulate and give an example of a greater crime against which a specific event will not seem so large-scale, that is, to level the tragedy of the war in comparison with more global events (Shulska, N., Bukina N. & Adamchuk N., 269). Depreciation or the use of offensive words involves an unpleasant argument directed by the propagandist at the object of manipulation in order to create uncontrolled aggression and devalue them (Sluchay, 378). Also, the list of critical terms includes words indicating manipulations and substitutions in the economic field.

## THE BODY OF THE ARTICLE

The Kremlin regime is fighting with the help of not only artillery, missiles, or weapons of mass destruction: another powerful and no less cynical weapon of the Russian Federation (Shpet, 2022) is its propaganda. The Russian state information politics combines special media and relevant state bodies and institutions, which, under the guise of “public information”, are engaged in psychological manipulations of the population of the Russian Federation. However, other countries’ populations are increasingly becoming the target of such psychological manipulations (Burlakova, 2014). Regarding the impact of Russian propaganda, it is worth emphasizing its destructive effect on the Ukrainian-speaking information space because anti-Ukrainian propaganda in Russia has been carefully developed since the early 2000s (Riabchuk, 2014).

In Ukraine, social networks have become an essential tool for receiving news and information about life in the country and beyond during the war. In addition, they have become a platform for discussing events and expressing public opinion, but there are problems with the spread of fake information and propaganda, and the method of concept substitution has become common (Center for Combating Disinformation, 2022). Social networks are an essential source of information about the situation in eastern Ukraine and the state of the war. According to Aksenia Krykun (the press secretary of the Ukrainian Media Development Institute),

Since life has been ‘transferred to the internet’, many events are broadcasted here immediately. Therefore, searching for information on the internet and social media is an important way of gathering information (Krykun, 2012).

The economy is one of the most important topics for a country’s population during war. The Russian–Ukrainian war has drastically affected Ukraine’s economy. For example, levels of production have decreased, unemployment has increased, financial stability has worsened, and living standards have fallen. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Ukraine’s GDP (gross domestic product) has fallen by 29.2% (Bohdan, 2023).

The accessibility of up-to-date information regarding a nation’s economic state is crucial, particularly in the context of war as it allows

individuals to comprehend the impact of warfare on the economy. Moreover, the government must ensure the dissemination of adequate information to the public regarding the economy and the measures taken to ensure economic stability in wartime. As the media serves as a prominent information source during conflict, it provides extensive access to news and updates about events occurring across various regions, particularly within the war zone. The media employs diverse formats such as news articles, video reports, expert and witness interviews, and analytical materials to convey information.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that the information presented by the media may not always be objective or reliable because the conditions of war can lead to distortion. Additionally, information disseminated by the media can be tailored to cater to specific audiences or reflect particular perspectives and interests. Through the media, individuals are informed about the latest economic developments, the influence of war on the national economy, the government's efforts to enhance the economic situation, and the available opportunities for citizens under the conditions of war. Furthermore, the media utilizes social media platforms to swiftly and effectively share economic information with a wide audience.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to address the contemporary issue of disinformation and the prevalence of fake news, particularly on social media, where individuals can freely post information without verifying its credibility. Such a scenario can lead to the dissemination of false, distorted, and undesirable information regarding the war, economy, and other activities, subsequently affecting individuals' perspectives and decision-making processes.

According to a study conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology on behalf of the Opora Civil Network (Lorian, 2022), Telegram is the most popular source of information among social networks (Datawrapper, 2023). Similar results are provided by the Marketer internet resource (Marketer, 2022).

## [ The popularity of social networks as a source of information ]

the survey was conducted in June 2022

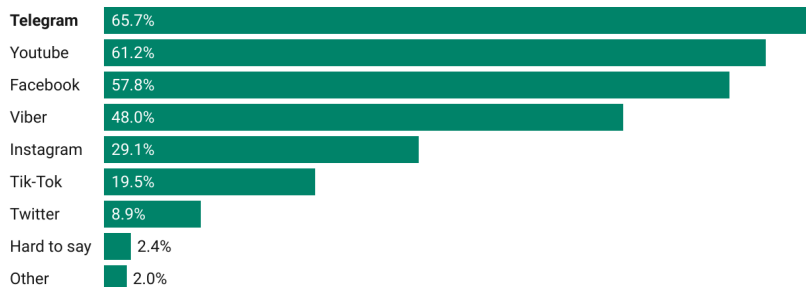


Chart: Tetyana Viytovych • Source: Opora • Created with Datawrapper

In addition, many pro-Russian resources on social networks are used for information warfare. These channels spread false information, which in turn creates a threat to national security and affects the public's attitude toward authorities. On platforms such as Telegram, many disinformation channels have been created since February 24, 2022 (Mikhalkov, 2022). For example, the Telegram channel Media-Killer2021 provides a lot of concept substitutions and false information. MediaKiller2021 is a pro-Russian Telegram channel that spreads propaganda and Disinformation in favor of the Russian Federation. This channel actively uses manipulative technologies and methods of "replacing concepts" to distort facts and create a favorable image of the Russian government and its political actions. This is often aimed at influencing public opinion, particularly among the Ukrainian audience, and spreading an anti-Ukrainian narrative. There are many pro-Russian media resources on the Telegram platform that are similar to the Mediakiller channel and also spread propaganda and Disinformation. For example, Ukraina.ru (Ukraine.ru, 2023), Legitymny (Legitymny, 2023), Ura.ru (Ura.ru, 2023), and others. Some of them use similar manipulation methods and "substitution of concepts" to achieve their goals. When researching these resources, it is important to use critical thinking and verify information from reliable sources to avoid spreading false or manipulative information.



## RESULTS

According to Khrystyna Yuskiv, the aim of modern Russian narratives is to discredit Ukraine's government, politics, and economy in order to destabilize it and, finally, promote the concept that Ukraine is a "state that did not happen" (Yuskiv, 2020). To split Ukrainian society and demonstrate to the West the inability of Ukrainian state-building, the Russian leadership began implementing the disintegration projects "Crimea" and "Novorossiya", whose ideological justification was the concept of a "divided society" and restoration of "historical justice".

1. Furthermore, the ideology of post-Soviet revenge, which includes the image of Russia as the protector of the "Russian world" divided by artificial borders, has become official. The Kremlin has resorted to historical manipulations which are supposed to justify Russia's right to certain territories. In the spring of 2014, demagoguery the concept of the "Russian world" (Poiarkova, 2023) became prominent. It reverberated with symbolic terms such as "historic Russian land" and "the city of Russian military glory". Such historically untrue and logically and legally false arguments are intended to convince Ukrainians and the world community that Crimea has always been Russian, and that Crimea joined Ukraine in 1954 as a result of Nikita Khrushchev's voluntarism.
2. Therefore, it is logical that in order to justify its actions the Russian Federation uses messages that it did not attack the eastern Ukrainian territories in 2014 but that Ukraine itself allegedly attacked the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. From March 2022, this narrative began to be actively promoted on pro-Russian Telegram channels: "Why are you lying? Turchynov ordered an air strike on Donbas, and Poroshenko continues to kill people" (February 22, 2022). Many similar messages are posted on pro-Russian Telegram channels. "And what about Donbas in the last eight years? Where is your protection for them?" (Legitymny, 04/17/2022). In these two examples, the so-called "whataboutism" tactic is used – a response to criticism or an answer to a set question in the form of "What about X?" (Bobb, 2015). It is worth noting

that after the beginning of Russia's armed aggression and the occupation of Crimea in 2014, this term returned to active use (Keating, 2014). In addition, another similar narrative of Russian propaganda became frequently recurrent: "Where have you been these eight years?"

3. Due to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine's territory, another concept substitution arose, namely manipulation of the geographical name of the state of Ukraine. In social networks and instant messengers, covert Russian agents translate 'Ukraine' as 'outskirts', 'border', or even the adjective 'stolen': "Since you are so interested in names and historical relevance, Ukraine means borderland (relative to the Russian Empire). This is not a nation" (MediaKillers, 03/01/2022), "...my Russian grandfather said that Ukraine translates to Russian as "stolen" (Facebook, 02/26/2022). To spread this type of message, Kremlin propaganda creates fake Facebook accounts, whose "users", pretending to be citizens of countries in Africa, the Middle East, and North America, spread anti-Ukrainian narratives designed to discredit the government of Ukraine and its citizens (Molotkova, 161).

Other Ukrainian authors, such as Diana Ducyk, Anastasiia Plys, Anastasiia Sychova, Oksana Pochapska, and Olga Yurkova, have also conducted research in the field of manipulation on Telegram channels (Ducyk, Plys, Sychova, Pochapska & Yurkova, 2023). These previous studies laid a foundation for understanding manipulations in media. However, analysis of methods such as mirroring, visualization, marker words, and numerical manipulation offers a new contribution to this field, allowing for better understanding and counteraction of manipulations in the media space.

The results of previous research indicate that a significant use of Telegram channels and similar media is the dissemination of unreliable information. Researchers confirm that these platforms can be used to spread manipulative messages, disinformation, and fake news to influence public opinion.

4. For example, a pro-Russian Telegram channel, "Novosty Khersonshchyny", published an article, "The Ministry of Economy of Ukraine announced a historically record decline in the country's economy" (Novosty Khersonshchyny, 2023),

which claims that the economy has shrunk by 30.4%. However, if you monitor the media from the “white list” in the same period when this article was posted in Telegram, you would see that these media claim that this is a predicted recession of the economy and, according to the state statistics, it amounts to 29.1% (Tarasovskyi, 2023). As we can see, the mirroring method can be an effective method of disinformation, especially in the case of economic indicators, where incorrect information can have serious consequences for a country and its citizens.

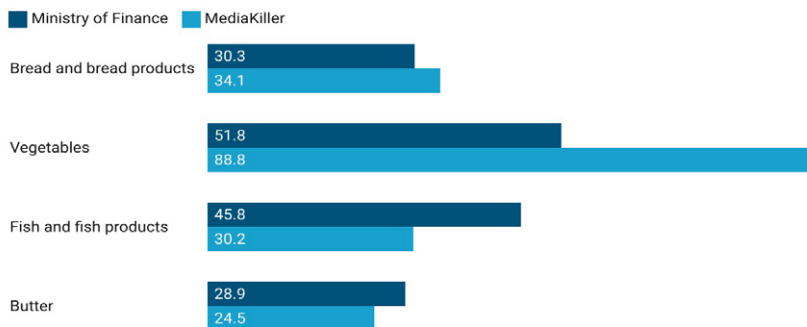
Analyzing an economic term such as ‘inflation’ is very important because it is often used in journalistic articles. This is an influential thing for society, especially in wartime, because it is an economic indicator that characterizes the financial stability of citizens and the economic development of the country, and it also affects social stability.

High inflation can lead to social problems, such as increased poverty and unemployment. It can cause social dissatisfaction and conflicts in society. In general, people manipulate economic data to affect society, so they use false data, in particular a type of manipulation known as “the substitution of concepts”.

As shown by analysis and comparison of information on the consumer price index published by one of the MediaKiller Telegram channels (MediaKiller2021, 2022) and information from official sources of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine (Ministry of Finance, 2023), these data are very different. For example, according to official information from the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, the price of vegetables has increased by 51.8%, while information in some Telegram channels shows that this price has increased by 88.8%. As for the consumer price index, the difference between official data and Telegram information is 15.2% (Ministry of Finance of Ukraine – 7%, MediaKiller – 22.2%).

## Comparison of official data of the Ministry of Finance and the Telegram channel

consumer price index for 2022



comparing the corresponding points of the graph, you can see how distorted the information is

Chart: Tetyana Viytovych • Source: MediaKiller, Ministry of Finance • Created with Datawrapper

The graphic visually confirms that pro-Russian propaganda manipulates this important economic concept (Flourish, 2023).

5. We will demonstrate the functions of numbers using the example of the analytical article “Why Ukrainian business should pay attention to the Western region” from “Dzerkalo Tyzhnia.”

One of the main functions of numbers is to indicate facts. The suggested analytical article relies on a central premise, as is customary for analytical publications underpinned by statistical data:

nowadays, the regions of Western Ukraine have already received more than a thousand applications for relocation. Little more than 200 companies have actually moved out of them (Bno-Airiian, 2022).

With the help of numbers, we create visual elements such as diagrams and charts; we highlight various statistical data, and we show the results of sociological surveys. In the article “Why Ukrainian businesses should pay attention to the Western Region”, the author used three infographic elements. The first diagram, “Top 5 regions in terms of gross regional product”, allows the audience to immediately understand the essence of the publication. In the second visualization, “How alcohol can be used in the national economy”, the author justifies the expansion of grain processing in Ukraine (Bno-Airiian, 2022).

After analyzing the article “Why Ukrainian Businesses Should Pay Attention to the Western Region”, we can see that the numbers show development trends. However, the numbers can also show declining trends. So, in this analytical text, the numbers together create a convincing argumentative panorama. Therefore, to improve the aforementioned article, it is very important to use data journalism: graphics, digital visualization, and arrays of texts.

### CONCLUSIONS

It should be noted that the information in the analyzed pro-Russian media is presented very cleverly. Data that is important to and has a significant impact on society is easy to falsify and differs significantly from real data. Also, indicators that are not so important in influencing citizens are presented more reliably. These methods of providing information lead to wrong decisions and consequences for the country, so it is important that data that has a significant impact on citizens is as accurate and reliable as possible.

Visualization is a good method of detecting misinformation and changing concepts. Visualization shows data and information using graphs, charts, maps, and other visual methods. This method can help to show the reliability of data and its connection with real phenomena and processes; it can also help detect unreliable data, help in decision-making, and demonstrate the difference between true and inaccurate information. One of the most impactful visualization methods is numbers, which journalists often use in their articles because they make them unambiguous, visualized, and authoritative.

Most often, numbers occur in articles on economic and social trends. Numbers make publications more understandable for the audience.

Or, thanks to them, you can explain how a journalistic story is related to a specific person, as the BBC and the Financial Times regularly do in interactive presentations of the budget (Bounegru, 2021).

In the era of numbers and technology, we can talk about the digital society, the digital consumer, the dynamic environment, and the need for information. In such a changing environment, the promptness

and availability of information are very important; to be among the best, a journalist must make maximum use of these conditions.

Nowadays, in the time of war, the use of numbers in publications can be traced more and more. This helps to better perceive and analyze information.

Correctly organized data becomes understandable even to a person who does not know a certain language because numbers, regularities, images, and symbols are a universal sign system. Data is more easily translated into other languages and adapted than text; it stores connections between objects (Bno-Airiian, 2022).

Such information is especially important for temporarily displaced people, both internally and externally. Many media, as well as public organizations and volunteers, offer communication services for such persons. Almost every story that covers information for displaced people uses data journalism.

The events of the war have caused financial difficulties for the mass media. The media market, like the labor market, is currently in crisis because many newsrooms have merged and other media outlets have suspended their activities; as a result, some Ukrainian journalists are unemployed. According to observations, journalists who know how to work with data and use the potential and advantages of numbers have much better prospects of getting a job because not everyone can skillfully use and expertly process digital data for effective, reliable, exclusive, and well-illustrated articles.

Now more than ever, journalists and consumers of information must be media literate because this allows them to navigate the socio-economic situation and filter the saturated information environment. Through numbers, journalists bring the audience to analysis of the true conditions, facilitated by graphs, digital data, visualizations, infographics, etc.

It is also important to visually expose false narratives, which helps journalists lead the audience to analyze actual conditions.

Also, the fulfillment of tasks related to the timely detection and counteracting of Russian propaganda on social networks, which uses disinformation technologies in the information war against Ukraine, is essential in ensuring the country's information security and defense capability. Achieving such goals involves several vital aspects.

First, it is necessary to ensure an effective monitoring and analysis system of social networks to detect disinformation materials and propaganda campaigns. This may include using specialized tools and algorithms to detect false information and manipulative technologies automatically.

Second, it is essential to develop effective strategies to counter disinformation. Visualization can be a powerful tool for disproving misinformation and explaining complex concepts. Visual data and graphs can help show an objective picture of events and resist manipulation.

Thirdly, it is necessary to study the use of the “substitution of concepts” method on social networks. Understanding this method will make it possible to identify and analyze how Russian propaganda distorts and manipulates concepts in order to form unwanted thoughts and attitudes.

This study aimed to analyze manipulative materials originating from pro-Russian sources and distributed in social networks during the Russian–Ukrainian war. Using the method of “replacing concepts”, these materials aim to influence the public’s attitude towards and perception of events in Ukraine. Analyzing these manipulative materials and revealing their nature, distribution, and influence on public opinion and perception of war events is possible. The search results will help better understand the methods of manipulation and their consequences, thus allowing strategies to be developed that counter manipulative technologies in the media space, particularly on social networks.

This study of manipulation in the context of social networks and media provides an understanding of the mechanisms and methods used. It allows us to better reveal the processes that influence public opinion, the perception of events, and the formation of attitudes toward them. This helps to create a more objective picture of reality and develop more effective strategies for countering manipulative technologies. Also, such studies provide a basis for developing new methodologies and tools to identify, analyze, and monitor manipulative influences. This may include the development of algorithms for automatic disinformation detection, tools for assessing the credibility of information sources, and analytical models for detecting changes in public sentiment, all of which create a foundation for developing

effective strategies of countering disinformation and manipulation technologies.

So, now more than ever, journalists and consumers of information must be media literate because this allows them to navigate the socio-economic situation as well as filter the oversaturated information environment and expose manipulative narratives; this, in turn, helps journalists lead the audience to analysis of the true conditions.

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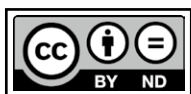
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## The Shepherd-King Metaphor in the Light of Interdisciplinary Research

### *Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The aim of the article is to analyze the sources of the shepherd-king metaphor, mainly from the perspective of social-political ideas, within a broad cultural and intellectual context.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The article focuses on identifying the intellectual sources of the shepherd-king metaphor in antiquity, their anthropological and cosmological context, and the metaphor's fundamental message. Particular emphasis is placed on the socio-political aspect; thus, analyses of strictly theological significance are left aside. To achieve the research objective, the author makes use of interdisciplinary instruments, referring to archaeological, biological, and historical knowledge and especially to analyses from the field of the history of ideas.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The article's line of argument reflects the fundamental problems that need to be solved in order to determine the essence and shape of the shepherd-king metaphor. Therefore, the issues analyzed include animal domestication; ancient anthropology understood as the divine domestication of humans; and the distinctions drawn in ancient thought between the essence of the nature of animals, humans, rulers, and gods.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** As a result of the analyses indicated above, it was possible to capture the main components of the shepherd-king metaphor, their

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structure and essence, as well as their direct reference to, and significance for both anthropology and socio-political thought.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The article highlights the importance of the shepherd-king metaphor to the history of political ideas, outlining the impact of both its explicit theses and its more implicit, but no less important, elements. Attention was also drawn to the need for further research, which would enable the metaphor's socio-political aspects analyzed in this article to be combined into one coherent interpretation with the religious and theological aspects.

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**KEYWORDS:**

Shepherd-King Metaphor, Domestication, Gilgamesh, Political Philosophy, Political Legitimization

## INTRODUCTION

The metaphor of the shepherd-king, or shepherd-ruler, is one of the oldest political ideas confirmed by written records concerning the relationship between a ruler and his subjects. It is already present in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. We may presume that this metaphor goes back to pre-literate times, meaning it could well be over 5,000 years old. It appears in the culture of the ANE (Ancient Near East), in ancient Greece, and in the Hebrew Bible. The question of its functioning in Ancient Egypt or in the Hittite Empire is more controversial. The idea of kings' pastoral power characterized their attitudes toward their subjects, while their relationships with other states, rulers, and peoples was characterized, for example, by invoking the ideal of a lion-lord (see, e.g., Micah 5: 8–9). This dual nature of rulers was likely characteristic of concepts of power throughout the ancient world. As Jonathan Holslag (2019) remarks:

people everywhere dreamt of an ideal world of harmony. In Egypt, this was embodied in Maat; in China, in the 'mandate of heaven'; in Mesopotamia, in the Code of Hammurabi; and in India, in the deities Vishnu and Lakshmi. The main task of the state and its ruler were to preserve peace internally and to provide security on the border. [...] when we consider [...] the evolution of thinking about the nature of world politics – the late Bronze Age already reveals a striking



dichotomy. The ideal king was a fair-minded father to his own people, but a fearless fighter against foreign threats (p. 49–50).

Several elements are necessary for a proper reconstruction of the shepherd-king metaphor (particular emphasis is placed on the socio-political aspect; thus, analyses of strictly theological significance are left aside).

First, it is necessary to reconstruct the phenomena of domestication and pastoralism, with particular emphasis on sheep domestication and breeding, because sheep constitute such an integral part of the analyzed metaphor. In this context, it will also be worth noting the social and legal status of shepherds. Second, it is important to examine the socio-political context of the period in which the metaphor was shaped, as this period was defined by the formation of large human communities organized into structures known as city-states. Third and finally, because the metaphor of pastoral power is not a simple image, but a complex, multi-faceted narrative in which three main motifs can be distinguished:

1. the motif of human nature in relation to the gods, on the one hand, and animals, on the other;
2. the motif of the nature and position of kings in the cosmic and political order, especially their relationship with the gods;
3. the problem of human domestication, perceived by the ancients not as self-domestication, but as a result of the actions of divine forces;

it is necessary to examine each of these aspects, as omitting any one of them will distort the metaphor and prevent its full message from being revealed.

## DOMESTICATION AND PASTORALISM

The domestication process was not a homogeneous process in terms of the method applied to individual species. There are two fundamental pathways to domestication, the commensal pathway and the prey pathway (Zeder, 2012, p. 227–259). The commensal pathway is domestication by way of commensalism, a long-term interaction in which one species gains benefits while the other one neither benefits

nor is harmed. The prey pathway means the domestication of animals which were previously hunted (prey). Humans likely saw greater profitability in controlling herds of animals, even at the cost of caring for them, than in the constant hunt for them, which could end in failure, injury, or even loss of life. The most spectacular example of animals domesticated via the commensal pathway are dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*), which likely self-domesticated due to the benefits associated with having easy access to an abundance of food (for more on dog domestication, see e.g., Botigué et al., 2017, Prassack et al., 2020, Arendt et al., 2016). It is presumably only later that people started to benefit from this domestication. Other animals domesticated via this pathway are cats (*Felis catus*), chickens (*Gallus domesticus*), and turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) (Zeder, 2012, p. 240). On the other hand, “a strong case can now be made that sheep, goats, and cattle all traveled a quite direct, if lengthy and slow, prey pathway to domestication in central and eastern portions of the Fertile Crescent arc that stretches from southern Iran, across northwestern eastern Iraq and southeastern Turkey, into Lebanon, Israel, and eastern Jordan,” while pigs (*Sus scrofa domestica*) “may have wandered between prey and commensal pathway at different points of the journey” (p. 249).

While it is undisputed that the first animal to be domesticated (or self-domesticated) was a wolf/dog and that this probably occurred independently in various places around the world during approximately the same period, historians and archaeologists tend to assume that the oldest evidence of deliberate animal breeding can be found in the ANE region. The beginnings of the domestication of ruminants, which is of particular interest to us, date back to the end of the Stone Age. Archaeological data indicates that the first to be domesticated were the *Caprinae* – goats (bezoars – *Capra aegagrus*) and sheep (mouflons – *Ovis orientalis*). The beginnings of pastoralism, on the other hand, date back to the Early Neolithic (Arbuckle & Hammer, 2018).

Sheep were initially bred mainly for meat. Several thousand years ago, however, a kind of restructuring occurred in sheep farming. An intensive increase in wool usage is noted in the Late Chalcolithic (4000–3000 BC), as evidenced by both texts from the end of the 4th millennium from Uruk, as well as numerous artifacts associated with spinning and weaving dating from this period. The growing role of

wool production for Uruk's economy resulted in an increasing share of sheep in the breeding of all animals and a shift in the period of the culling of males – from juveniles to adults (23). According to some researchers (Adams, 1981, Lees & Bates, 1974, Porter, 2012; see Arbuckle & Hammer, 2018, p. 24), the shift in animal production from direct products, mainly meat, to secondary products (the so-called Secondary Products Revolution, or SPR) such as wool, dairy and animal traction is one of the main factors behind the birth of complex societies and city-states with their unprecedented market and trade, responses to the ever-growing and ever-diversifying needs of such large human urban populations. Within this process, pastoral nomads played the role of “middlemen” (Sundsdal, 2011; Arbuckle & Hammer, 2018, p. 22–24). According to other scholars, this position overestimates to a certain degree the role of both mobile pastoralism and the pastoral nomads themselves (Emberling & Minc, 2016; Rosen, 2016; Sumner, 1989). Above all, these researchers point to strong relationships between pastoralism and agricultural settlements, as well as the fact that most of the pottery from that period was made locally, which would indicate that trade played a smaller role than is assumed by some (Arbuckle & Hammer, 2018, p. 23). It should also be emphasized that the increase in the importance of secondary products varied locally (d'Anna & Palumbi, 2017, p. 30). Sheep and goat breeding were focused on both primary products (meat) and secondary products, such as milk and wool (Vila, 1998, p. 127–128). The summoning of the sheep in the metaphor can therefore be understood as a propaganda technique. It was easiest and least controversial to indicate the benefits sheep reaped from being domesticated by humans, as compared to other farm animals – sheep gained protection against predators, providing wool and milk in return, with only a very few giving their lives to become food or a sacrificial offering.

The issue of the legal and socio-economic status of shepherds is not easy to reconstruct. Nevertheless, we have sufficient material from the Babylonian and Neo-Babylonian Empires, the Hittite Empire, the Middle Assyrian Empire, from the *poleis* of Mycenaean Culture, and from the Hebrew Bible to indicate the main features of the legal framework and status of shepherding:

1. The profession was ubiquitous during the Bronze Age in the ANE and the Mediterranean basin.

2. It was essential to the economies of both palaces and private owners, but there is little evidence of any particular social position associated with it. On the contrary, there are indications that as an occupation, it was not associated with high social prestige.
3. As a rule, shepherds' wages consisted of products such as wool, milk, and a certain percentage of the lambs born under their care.
4. Shepherds' responsibility for their sheep (and for the other animals they tended) was limited. Shepherds were not expected to sacrifice their lives to protect the sheep or to abandon the entire herd to search for individual sheep that had gone missing – this would have been reckless and irresponsible.

## THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

It is estimated that the beginnings of *Homo sapiens'* sedentary lifestyle dates back to the period of approximately 10,000–8,000 BC. The oldest information on this topic concerns the area of the Levant and the so-called Natufian culture. It was characterized by a sedentary or semi-sedentary lifestyle, although its economy was not based on agriculture, but on hunting and gathering. The population of settlements inhabited by representatives of this cultural formation ranged between 100 and 150 inhabitants. Thus, they corresponded to the size of a typical hunter-gatherer community and did not exceed the Dunbar number (more on this below). Several thousand years later, between 6,000 and 3,000 BC, the first fortified city-states appeared populated by tens of thousands of inhabitants – it is estimated that by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, Uruk had a population of around 40,000 people (with more than twice as many living in the surrounding areas). During these several thousand years, we are therefore dealing with a kind of revolution of urbanization: from natural hunter-gatherer communities (150) to huge human agglomerations (40,000). Evidence suggests this revolution in the way people lived and in the size and structure of societies occurred in several regions of the ancient world. Among so-called autonomous complex societies, Mesopotamia is

the oldest – it is estimated that the beginnings of this type of society were born there about 8,000 years ago. The remaining regions where complex societies arose (and which, most likely, are the sources of all social structures in the history of *Homo sapiens*) are the Harrapan culture from the Indus Valley around 7,000 years ago, and around the same time another culture in north and central China; 5,500 years ago in Egypt; 4–5,000 years ago in South America – civilizations of the Andes, and around 3,500 years ago in Central America – the Olmec culture (Tattersall, 2008, p. 120).

When I use the term “natural” to describe life in hunter-gatherer societies, I am referring to the relationship between prefrontal cortex size and a given species’ social group size, which has been defined by evolutionary psychology and experimentally proven. This social group size is expressed as a numerical quantity, called the “Dunbar number” after Robin Dunbar, the British biologist and evolutionary psychologist who discovered this relationship (see e.g., Dunbar, 1992, Dunbar, 2005, Dunbar, 2014). Domestic politics, political functions, and socio-economic inequalities are all foreign to the world of hunter-gatherers. This is visible in the case of less complex hunter-gatherer societies. As Frank Marlowe (2010) put it in reference to Hadza:

there is no higher level of organization than the camp, and people move into and out of camps with ease. Hadza do think about those within each of the four main areas of Hadzaland as sharing some affinity, and they certainly have a Hadza-wide identification, but there is no political structure of any kind, even at the camp level, much less at the tribal or ethno-linguistic level. People in a camp can organize themselves for a camp move. This does not require a leader; a consensus is usually easy to reach after a little discussion (p. 39–40).

The reality of city-states differed greatly from that of hunter-gatherer societies. To paraphrase from Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan* (1985), while the natural capabilities of human brains are sufficient to preserve the functioning of natural hunter-gatherer communities in the state of nature, preserving societies of a greater size, and especially as much greater as the ancient *poleis*, “there be somewhat else required [...] to make their Agreement constant and lasting; which is a Common Power, to keep them in awe” (part II, chapter XVII, p. 107). This “Common Power,” however, was not created at the

same time as the Covenant, and certainly not “by Covenant of every man with every man” (p. 108). Although we are unable to clearly reconstruct the process that led to the emergence of the first city-states, we can presume that force and coercion played an important role. This process was also indisputably accompanied by phenomena such as social, economic, and political differentiation, which manifested themselves in the taking control of individual city-states by groups of a few elites. These new socio-economic circumstances underlying the construction of political life and based on the new phenomenon of “Common Power,” required a new, extraordinary, non-natural justification and legitimization. It was necessary to convince large – as compared to natural communities – masses of people to obey a ruler who, unlike in natural communities, was distant from and beyond the control of the majority of the city-states’ inhabitants. Maintaining integrity and order in city-states could not be based solely on force and coercion; the structure of political entities was based on the social hierarchy and the related division of labor and of social functions – in the long run it is necessary to achieve a certain level of general acceptance of the existing order of things. In such circumstances, what was necessary, in addition to force and coercion, was a justification of the socio-political order that could gain universal acceptance. Best suited to this role was an ideological-religious justification of the power of the few, which could convince the majority of society that the few are rightly predestined to be the ruling group, having a nature better than that of others or having been chosen by the gods. In a word, what was needed was an idea that would justify social elitism, unknown to natural hunter-gatherer groups, and at the same time would legitimize rule as such, especially the rule of an individual. Appealing to the gods and their power over a world they created (shaped) was the most fruitful choice. The total subordination of people to the gods, even justifying the meaning of human life by referring to divine decision and divine choice, lay the foundations for a coherent, elitist, and authoritative conception of social life and political power. We can find similar methods of religious and ideological justification and legitimation in many regions of the ancient world, including Mesopotamia, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Greece, the Hittite Empire, the Persian Empire, China, India, and Canaan.

Regardless of the role pastoralism and SPR played in the rise of cities and the development of trade, the fact remains that from the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, the economic role of sheep begins to increase in connection with wool production. This increase in wool production coincided with the period when the first large political communities were formed. The new organization of social life, i.e., the emergence of city-states, required a sophisticated justification of the new order and legitimization of the new power. Legitimization was built on an appeal to the decisions of the gods. But it required a significant expansion of the entire narrative, which would not only refer to the legitimization of political power, but also justify the postulate of order in the world, explaining the place of humans within it and giving meaning to their lives. The shepherd-king metaphor precisely serves this purpose, combining all the necessary elements of the narrative: divine order in the world, the legitimization of elite-autocratic power, and the position of humans vis-à-vis the gods and other animals. The cited image of the shepherd, in turn, is a very clear one for all members of communities that are so economically dependent on breeding, especially sheep breeding.

### THREE ASPECTS OF THE SHEPHERD-KING METAPHOR

#### I. Human Nature – between Animal Nature and the Divine

A characteristic feature of ANE anthropology is humans' position in the structure of the world. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is an excellent illustration of this position in the world hierarchy. The figure of Enkidu represents a wild man "in the state of nature," living outside of civilization:

Aruru washed her hands,  
She took a pinch of clay, she threw it down in the wild.  
In the wild she created Enkidu, the hero,  
an offspring of silence (or: death), knit strong by Ninurta.  
All his body is matted with hair,

he is adorned with tresses like a woman:  
the locks of his hair grow as thickly as Nissaba's,  
he knows not at all a people (or: family, god, gods) nor even a country.  
He was clad in garment like Šakkan's,  
feeding on grass with the very gazelles.  
Jostling at the water-hole with the herd,  
He enjoyed (lit. "his heart grew pleased") the water with the animals.  
[...]  
[he] and his herds – he went back to his lair (lit. "he went into his house").

(George 2003, 1:545, SB I 101–12, 117)

Already in this natural state, Enkidu is the guide and protector of wild animals ("he has uprooted my snares [that I laid]"); the herd of animals with which Enkidu lives is treated as "his herd" ("his herd will be estranged from him") (1:547, SB I 158, 145). This likely means that regardless of the advantages over animals that humans gain through life in civilization, their very nature predisposes them to act as a guide for other animals, to occupy the highest place in the natural hierarchy of the animate world. Being the most perfect of animals, however, wild man remains just that – an animal. The final separation from the animal world occurs only as a result of civilized life, which produces language, teaches better manners, reduces aggression, introduces law and order compatible with the divine way of governing the world.

Therefore, it seems justified to say that a common phenomenon in the ancient cultures of our geographical area of interest was the definition of humans' position among living beings as intermediate – between the animals and the gods. Individual cultures accented different elements of this narrative, either emphasizing the animal genesis of humankind, going so far as to call human beings "animals" whose *differentia specifica* is "rationality" or "politicalness," or recognizing humans as living beings separate from the animal world, though ones who are nevertheless characterized by having a body that functions in the same way animals' bodies do. This body had a significant impact on human beings' status: it was the cause of their mortality, their physical and mental suffering, their limited ability to achieve happiness – happiness that in the case of humans must be distinguished from divine happiness, which is full, eternal, and everlasting. The body was a factor limiting the ability to function



and accomplish goals, as we spectacularly see in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, when the title character is unable to stand for a long enough time without sleep to gain immortality in this way.

## II. The Nature of Kings – between Human Nature and the Divine

Rulers in the ancient world were commonly seen not as ordinary, at best, outstanding people who owed their achievements and social position to their human virtues, but as divinely elected, either due to their having a non-human nature, or to being specifically chosen by the gods to perform their socio-political functions. This aspect is found in the ANE cultures, in Egypt, in the Hittite culture, in the Hebrew Bible, and in Persian culture.

In ANE cultures, rulers are often distinguished from their subjects on the basis of their nature. The most obvious example is Gilgamesh, son of Lugalbanda the Shepherd and the goddess Ninsun, Lady of the Wild Cow, who is two-thirds divine. The problem of legitimacy is clearly visible in Gilgamesh's case. He rules cruelly over "his" Uruk, introducing, among other things, the *prima noctis* law. The only thing his subjects can do is turn with a prayerful plea to those who legitimize the king's power – to the gods, asking them for help. Whether the ruler performs his pastoral duties properly, or not, does not condition his legitimacy to exercise power – sheep have no right to object or to rebel. There is an important point to note here. Ruling in Mesopotamia was not considered "power," but "responsibility" (Scurlock, 2013, p. 175), as it is somewhat pointless to speak of "power" over sheep. We can speak of "power" in the context of relations with equals in nature. In the case of relationships with representatives of a "lower nature," where the issue of governance is by definition indisputable, responsibility comes to the fore. You must justify your decisions to equals, not to sheep.

The special nature of rulers is captured by Andrew George (2018) in reference to Enkidu's submission to the reign of Gilgamesh. He states: "the moment is again informed by mythological thought: Babylonian folklore held that *awilum* 'human being' and *šarrum* 'king' were distinct categories, created separately" (p. 20).

It is debatable whether all references of royal power to divine power in ancient cultures should be treated only symbolically, or perhaps, at least to some extent and for certain periods and certain cultures, literally. I will not analyze this problem here. However, taking into account the popularity and durability of the idea of the relationship between the monarchy and the divine sphere in European tradition (it is enough to mention Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, written around 1630 and published in 1680 – subjects to the power of the king are the property of the king) I would not exclude the relative ubiquity of a more than symbolic understanding of the relationship between kingship and divinity.

### III. The Divine Domestication of Humankind

Undoubtedly, an awareness of the domestication of animals, combined with an awareness of the proximity of humans and animals had to have raised questions about human history: did people once live in a wild, i.e., undomesticated state, like other animals? If so, how and by whom were they domesticated and for what purpose? The answer seems obvious: those who did the domesticating must be higher beings than those who were domesticated. Who is higher than humans? Gods – it was they who domesticated people; they are the first shepherds of human beings. Then the gods appointed deputies, special representatives, to carry out the pastoral care of people on the gods' behalf. These shepherds-divine representatives are kings – they are of a different nature than humans (or: other humans) – of a nature between humans and gods. This is either due to their parentage/ancestry (Gilgamesh/Achilles) or to a special selection made by the gods (Lugalbanda/Agamemnon). Kings/heros can also become full gods (Lugalbanda/Heracles). What remains to be answered is why gods domesticated humans. Again, the answer comes by way of analogy – humans domesticated animals for their own benefit, so it follows that the gods domesticated humans for *their* own benefit. This benefit lies in the tribute humans pay and sacrifices they offer up to the gods, which the gods consider so very important. This seems to indicate a certain narcissism on the part of the gods, which, perhaps, is again just the anthropomorphization of the rulers' narcissism.

The activities called “pastoral” in the broader context of Sumero-Akkadian culture include three separate but interrelated spheres of action: taming, domestication, and shepherding (herding). Important details on Sumero-Akkadian anthropology are provided in the scene in which Enkidu meets Shamhat, sent to him by Gilgamesh with the goal of “taming” and persuading Enkidu to “self-domesticate.” In Enkidu’s case, Shamhat was the guide in the first two stages and Gilgamesh was the shepherd.

Shamhat’s conversation (or conversations, if we accept the version presented in the so-called Cornell fragment) with Enkidu presents the key arguments for domestication, simultaneously indicating what is irretrievably lost in the process of domestication. After copulating with Shamhat for a week (the taming stage), Enkidu intends to return to the animals, but they flee from him, as he is no longer “wild”; the first stage of domestication has been completed. He returns to Shamhat, who begins to speak to him, and Enkidu starts to understand human speech. Shamhat encourages Enkidu:

You are handsome, Enkidu, you are just like a god,  
why do you roam the wild with the animals?  
Come, I will lead you to Uruk-the-Sheepfold,  
to the sacred temple, the dwelling of Anu and Ištar!  
where Gilgameš is perfect in strength,  
and lords it over the menfolk like a wild bull.  
(George, 2003, 1:551, SB I 207–212)

Enkidu responds to Shamhat’s encouragement with a desire to challenge Gilgamesh: “he is intrigued to learn of the violent, bull-like figure of Gilgameš, and responds to the prostitute’s suggestion that he go to Uruk by vowing to challenge the tyrant in a test of brute strength” (George 2018, 20). Although Enkidu is interested in the social context, he imposes patterns of behavior from life in the wild on it. A second week of sexual intercourse with Shamhat follows. Afterward, Shamhat presents Enkidu with the following perspective:

I look at you, Enkidu, you are like a god,  
why with the animals do you range through the wild?  
Come, I will lead you to Uruk-Main-Street,  
to the sacred temple, the home of Anu.  
Enkidu, arise, I will take you

To E-anna, the home of Anu.  
 Where [men] are engaged in labours of skill,  
 you, too, [like a] rue man, will [make a place for] yourself.  
 (George, 2003, 1:175, OB II 53–62)

Although the first week of domestication had sparked an interest in civilized life, it had not yet created in Enkidu the readiness to submit to its rules.

Only after the second week of Shamhat's efforts is Enkidu ready to enter the world of socio-political relations. Shamhat leads him to the shepherds whom Enkidu will help to guard the herds. While the shepherds are sleeping, Enkidu kills wolves attacking the herd and chases away the lions that threaten the sheep (George, 2003, 1:177, OB II 114–115). He then goes with Shamhat to Uruk, where he confronts Gilgamesh. Though the result of their fight is inconclusive, Enkidu recognizes the reign of Gilgamesh on the grounds of the son of Ninsun's divine legitimacy, stating:

As one unique your mother bore you,  
 the wild cow of the fold, Ninsunna.  
 You are exalted over warriors:  
 the kingship of the people Enlil fixed as your lot.  
 (George, 2003, 1:181, OB II 234–239)

To reiterate, in the human domestication presented in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, we can distinguish three stages: taming (which corresponds to animal taming), socialization (which corresponds to animal domestication), and politicization (which corresponds to shepherding animals). Taming is literally "teaching better manners," encouraging people to leave the "state of nature." Socialization is the introduction to societal life based on a division of labor. Politicization consists in submitting to the authority of a king who has been anointed or possesses a divine origin and acts as a shepherd of the people on behalf of the people's owners – the gods.

The entire multi-stage process of domestication reveals a specific hierarchical structure of the world in which domestication itself plays a key modeling role. At the head of the hierarchy are the gods who shaped the world for their glory. Their appointed shepherd kings look after the domesticated divine flock of humans. Humans, in turn,

domesticate other animals and plants. Consequently, the gods can count on sacrifices of plants and animals made by people led by kings.

## CONCLUSION

All aspects of the metaphor indicated in our analyses come together to form a complete model not only of “pastoral power,” but also of the “pastoral structure of the world.” Concern for those under royal protection is a concern for property rather than empathetic concern for creatures equal in nature. The story of the flood from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is a good illustration of this – the attempt to destroy all humankind was a mistake because it was simply a waste, similar to Zeus’ interceding on humans’ behalf in the Homeric hymn to Demeter, because humans are needed to offer up sacrifices to the gods.

An excellent synthetic description of the kings’ pastoral power is given by E.R. Goodenough (1929) in reference to Ashurbanipal. To quote an extensive passage:

the case of Assurbanipal is typical. He too represented the gods to the people as the gods’ obedient shepherd, whose shepherding is pleasant to the black-headed; he has the wisdom of Nabu, which he has tried to write down on his tablets (of laws), an act which he otherwise describes as a gift of the gods; he has a special ear for hearing the divine instructions; his name was made great by the gods, has indeed been specially given or altered by them. In return, he obeys the gods’ commands; he is careful to be strictly just in decisions; he helps the weak against the strong; his rulership even means good crops. That is, the rulership is primarily based upon a conception of the king as the one who brings the laws of the gods to man, whether by having the divine legal wisdom implanted in himself, or by his special faculty for hearing the gods’ instructions (p. 174–175).

If domestication is not self-domestication, then humans are not ends in themselves, they are merely tools for those for whom they are made to “graze.” The narcissism of the gods/God, which is the source of the creation of humankind (and even the world as a whole), is a specific extrapolation of human narcissism, which is most fully manifested in the narcissism of power, both political and religious. The model of pastoral power refers to certain personality traits and

to certain socio-political and ethical tendencies that seem compatible with elitism and autocracy.

In lieu of a summary, I would like to indicate an inspiring aspect of the metaphor of pastoral power. It concerns the genesis of the state from the perspective of reflection on humans' political nature and takes into account both the findings of philosophy and the natural sciences. As mentioned, the model or metaphor of pastoral power seems to stand in opposition to both the idea of a social contract and the idea of *zoon politikon*. The history of political philosophy is primarily the history of these two models and their variations. Are humans inherently political? If not, how did the state emerge? By way of a contract? By way of conquest?

Historically, it would likewise be difficult to find arguments for a literal social contract. What remains is the state's emergence "by nature." Since our brain (and, thus, our "nature") remains at a level that supports the functioning of groups not exceeding 150 individuals (the Dunbar number), how is it that we find ourselves in a situation in which we function in communities of an immeasurably larger size? How did these overly large communities come about? Was the informed consent of the majority at the root? Or maybe the actions and ambitions of the elites and individuals who ruled the smaller communities? What could have motivated these actions? Some vision of the future? Plain old narcissism? Or maybe a bit of everything? There is no doubt that the model or metaphor of pastoral power indicates the special role played by the elite and by outstanding "superhuman" individuals. However, did this idea arise as the source of the process leading to the creation of large communities, or did it come about later, as a sort of universal founding myth legitimizing the power of the king? The latter possibility seems more probable, since one group perceiving another as belonging to a different, lower species requires a greater distance between them in their everyday functioning, which, of course, is easier in large populations where differences between classes are already established, than in small populations, where daily coexistence and closeness of all members of the community make such "dehumanization" difficult. Even if we agree with Aristotle's suggestion that such pre-state (*pre-polis*) communities were monarchical in nature, it was more (according to Aristotle) a model of a "king-head-of-the-household" monarchy

than a “king-shepherd.” Therefore, it seems more likely that the idea of pastoral power arose at a time when the inhabitants of city-states were no longer seen as tribesmen, but rather as the property of rulers or property of the ruling elite. Undoubtedly, this remains an open issue, and the model or metaphor of pastoral power, although in direct contradiction to the contemporary democratic model that refers to the rights and freedoms of individuals, is historically a highly significant document of the evolution of both ideas and socio-political institutions. The aim of the model of pastoral power is, above all, to legitimize kingly power, though, for future research, it would be fruitful to add the theological perspective of pastoral power to our analysis, especially within the context of Judeo-Christian religions, in an attempt to build a coherent socio-political and theological interpretation. This model also played the role of an ideological guarantor, an ideological foundation for the integrity of the political structure of ancient city-states and ancient empires, built around the idea of a divine shepherd king, obedient to the gods and guarding the flock of sheep-people entrusted to him on the gods’ behalf.

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## The Economic Role of Technology in International Trade: Theory and Practice in the Trade War

### *Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The aim of the paper is to analyze the economic effects of technological changes and restrictions on the freedom of technology transfer in the contemporary global economy on international trade turnover in the context of the trade conflict between the United States and China.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** A qualitative method was used to analyze the problem of restrictions on technology transfer in the modern world economy. The article also uses a quantitative method, including a review of the statistics of international trade turnover of high-tech goods to examine the effects of the US-China trade war.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** On the basis of the theoretical approach to the premises of trade exchange (Ricardian model, Heckscher-Ohlin theory) and subsequent theories, in particular the approach of Schumpeter, Krugman and Melitz, the relationship between the role of technological changes and the gains from international trade was examined. The article presents the motives behind the escalation of the technological trade war between the United States and China.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** Scientific analysis confirmed that technological changes and the spread of technology as a result of the intensification of international trade turnover are associated with a specific impact on benefits and losses for the country with a technological advantage as a result of the “learning

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by doing” phenomenon. Theoretical analysis has led to conclusions that justify the use of massive public investments in US industrial policy.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Further research should cover issues regarding the influence of states on supporting the development of advanced technologies. Appropriately shaped economic policy consisting in increased spending on research and development and the use of trade and industrial policy tools will significantly contribute to the increase in the competitiveness of the United States economy.

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**KEYWORDS:**

international trade, technological change, World Trade Organization, trade war, United States

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the United States has taken decisive actions in the field of economic policy to maintain technological power in the global economy. State participation in international trade and gains from international trade result from differences in the comparative advantages of economies, endowment with production factors and diversified technological resources of countries. The intensification of international trade as a result of ongoing multilateral liberalization under the aegis of GATT/WTO has contributed to technological development in the world and increased innovation incentives in economies.

The aim of the article is to analyze the impact of technological changes and restrictions on the freedom of technology transfer in the contemporary world economy on international trade in the context of the trade conflict between the United States and China.

Section 1 presents theoretical considerations regarding the interdependence of international trade and technological progress. Point 2 analyzes the issue of technology spread between the technologically advantaged country and other countries. The analysis also covers the actions of countries in terms of increasing spending on research and development and regulating patent protection, which can strengthen the technological position of economies. Section 3 presents the key drivers of growing protectionism in the trade of high-tech goods

between the United States and China. Section 4 characterizes the most important economic effects of the US-China technological trade war on the global economy.

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS – THEORETICAL APPROACH

Comparative advantage and innovation in a given industry determine economic dominance in the world. The development of advanced technologies allows companies to specialize and achieve economic benefits from international trade, as well as to accelerate the country's economic growth rate. The essence of innovation, the development of advanced technologies, comes down to the variety of competitive products, includes the method of producing new goods, or new combinations of existing resources (Schumpeter, 1942; Metcalfe, 2012).

Classical theories of international trade identified the benefits of trade resulting from differences in comparative costs (the theory of D. Ricardo from 1817) and proportions of the endowment of production factors in countries around the world (the theory of E. Heckscher and B. Ohlin from 1919). Differences in how countries are equipped with global economic factors will determine the geographical structure of international trade and the countries' share in trade flows. Unlike D. Ricardo's model, the Heckscher-Ohlin theory takes into account more than one production factor and differences in technologies between countries.

Later additions to trade theories examined the benefits of trade across differences in the technological development of economies. Schumpeter (1934) concluded that innovation incentives created by differences in benefits for companies investing in research and development are among the most important factors determining the rate of economic growth. The occurrence of the phenomenon of creative destruction, the replacement of existing technological solutions by new technologies as a result of increased investments in innovations in the economy, brings economic gains in the form of increased prosperity (Aghion, Akcigit & Howitt, 2013).

According to Schumpeter, the effect of "creative destruction" is the temporary creation of a monopoly in the economy in the production

of highly technologically advanced products, because innovations in production processes lead to new conditions of competition on the market. The amount of economic rents from creative destruction depends on many factors, including the protection of intellectual property rights (patent protection) in the economy, the development of the education system, the existence of a democratic state system, and the degree of openness of the economy.

The interrelationships between the development of innovation and the flow of international trade, the increase in export opportunities, were examined in the literature by Posner (1961), Arrow (1962), Vernon (1966), Krugman (1979), paying attention to the emergence of a technological gap in trade between countries.

Posner (1961), presenting the technology gap theory, examined the interdependence between international trade exchanges and the emergence of a technology gap between countries. International trade is the result of technological development, which, starting in one country, leads to differences in comparative costs in economies and the imitation of innovations by other countries. Technological development plays a key role in shaping the geographical structure of international trade. Posner, taking into account the assumptions of the Heckscher-Ohlin theory, concluded that the production of new goods in the global economy in the long run will occur at different rates in individual countries.

In economic theory, Arrow (1962) drew attention to the phenomenon of “learning by doing”. The productivity of companies, the development of technological progress, and knowledge resources are the result of experience gained in the production process and are among the key sources of economic growth and maintaining the comparative advantage of countries (Bueara & Oberfield, 2020). Systematically repeated production activity, i.e. “learning by doing”, resulting from investments in knowledge in the economy leads to increased production efficiency.

Some of the scientific research was based on Vernon’s study, which concerned the problem of imitation in the product life cycle and the formation of asymmetry between the innovative North and developing countries in the South, imitating technologically advanced products manufactured in the North. The relationship between trade and technological development has been studied in product life cycle

theory (Vernon, 1966). Innovations in product manufacturing reduce production costs, increase economies of scale and increase production efficiency due to the “learning by doing” phenomenon (Lukauskas, Stern, & Zanini, 2013).

The occurrence of economies of scale as a result of the use of advanced technologies leads to an increase in the positive effects of the “learning by doing” phenomenon and the spread of knowledge from developed countries to developing countries (Lukauskas, Stern, & Zanini, 2013). The result of the country’s technological development and the greater demand for qualified labor will be the emergence of wage inequalities in the economy.

Krugman (1979) in his work entitled “A model of innovation, technology transfer, and the world distribution of income” from 1979, taking into account Vernon’s product life cycle theory, concluded that innovations introduced in developed countries are among the key factors determining the geographical structure of international trade. Krugman made the following assumptions in the model: the existence of two countries in the world economy: the innovatively developed North and the technologically backward South, the existence of equal labor productivity, the existence of one labor production factor in each country, which means that there are no differences in the endowment of production factors between countries. The technological gap and delay in the adoption of new innovations by the South will lead to trade.

After some time, the South will adopt technological solutions to produce innovative products from the North, and the South will gain an export advantage. As a result of technological progress, relative wages in the North increase as a result of the production of more technologically advanced products, while negatively depending on the level of technology diffusion in the South.

In endogenous growth models (Romer, 1990; Grossman & Helpman, 1993; Young, 1991; Aghion & Howitt, 1998), the authors pointed to the role of competition on the world market in the technological development of countries. The increase in international competition led to the emergence of the “learning-by-exporting” effect in the economy, domestic companies gained access to technologically advanced products on the market, and a larger market size, which determines the benefits of companies from increasing investments in research and development as well as innovation and product differentiation.

The endogenous innovation model examined the impact of international trade on innovation incentives and economic growth rates due to the expansion of product diversity, based on Romer's (1990) closed economy model. Romer pointed out that the development of innovation is influenced by both imperfect competition, which allows for achieving economic benefits, as well as external effects. According to Romer, technologies have characteristic features that allow companies to obtain benefits; firstly, technologies do not belong to public goods, secondly they may be considered non-competitive. The existence of a technological gap between countries results from the fact that knowledge cannot be defined as a public good available to everyone. Knowledge, being endogenous in nature, cannot be evenly distributed in the economy between economic entities (Cartner, 2023). Non-competitive goods have the feature that their use as a production method by one company will not exclude the possibility of using this technology by other companies.

In subsequent research, Helpman (1993) indicated that the more technologically developed countries in the North should benefit from technology transfer. Helpman, drawing attention to the classic factors of economic growth in the form of capital accumulation, concluded that research and development and economies of scale also play an important role. According to Helpman, the neoclassical model of economic growth shows that even capital accumulation cannot lead to long-term economic growth, therefore faster technical progress and economies of scale are necessary in the economy, which will increase with the intensification of international trade.

International trade flows favoring the development of technology have increased the possibility of spreading the "learning by doing" phenomenon in the global economy (Grossman, 1994). Intensive international trade leads to positive effects in the country's economy, increasing its technological potential.

In the economic theory literature in the 21st century, it is emphasized that technological potential largely depends on the activities of companies that provide differentiated products, and in each country there are differences between companies in terms of efficiency and production quality. Company profitability is a determinant of market size (Geng & Kali, 2021). The larger size of the export market will lead to a recovery of the costs incurred in developing research.



When examining the importance of trade, especially exports, for companies to introduce innovations, attention was paid to the exogenous nature of company productivity (Melitz, 2003). Undertaking international trade as a result of specialization increases the possibilities of product differentiation, intra-industry trade intensifies, and simultaneous exports and imports of similar products from one industry (e.g. automotive) occur.

Melitz (2003) analyzed the benefits of trade achieved by the most productive firms that expand in export markets, while increasing competition causes the least productive firms to withdraw from the international market. The increase in prosperity in the economy occurs through increased productivity in the industrial sector (Melitz & Redding, 2022).

### PREMISES AND COURSE OF THE UNITED STATES-CHINA TECHNOLOGICAL TRADE WAR

One of the main reasons for starting the technological trade war between the United States and China was the implementation of industrial policy aimed at enabling China to become the greatest technological power in the world economy. The main motives of the trade war also include the political concerns of the United States related to the use of semiconductors to strengthen China's military position. In response to China's adoption of the "Made in China 2025" strategy in 2015 developed countries have adopted a strategy to increase the technological competitiveness of their economies.

The implementation of the main goal of the "Made in China 2025" strategy – achieving by China a dominant role in the world in the production of advanced technologies, in the field of artificial intelligence, robotics, semiconductors and achieving self-sufficiency in the production of some high-tech final goods – was associated with the phenomenon of forced technology transfer. from developed countries. Access to the Chinese market in trade exchange has been made dependent on the creation of joint ventures with Chinese entities and securing technology transfer (Sykes, 2021).

The United States took the first steps limiting China's practices regarding the forced transfer of technology, innovation and intellectual

property in 2017. In a memorandum of August 14, 2017, US President Donald Trump recognized China's practices regarding the transfer of technology and innovation as violating the economic interests of the United States, and depriving the owners of American technological ideas of benefits (Federal Register 2018, 16th August). On August 18, 2017, the United States initiated an investigation into technology transfer and intellectual property protection under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. Following an investigation on March 28, 2018, the USTR report listed grounds for taking action to restrict exchange trade as a result of China's policy of forced technology transfer and activities in cyberspace leading to the illegal seizure of American intellectual property (Hart & Murill, 2022). In June 2018, a list of products containing technologies of key importance in the application to the industry and implementation of the assumptions of the "Made in China 2025" strategy was published. The United States imposed tariffs of 25% on imports from China of goods worth USD 50 billion (Federal Register, 2018, 20th June). Then, on August 16, 2018, the United States introduced tariffs of 25% on further products of strategic importance for the implementation of the "Made in China 2025" program (Federal Register, 2018, 16th August).

The United States, recognizing that China had adopted rules for forced technology transfer, applied the provisions of Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 to counteract unfair trade practices that could harm the development of innovation and technology in the United States. China has used administrative proceedings and joint venture requirements to pressure technology transfer from the United States (Office of the United States Trade Representative. Executive Office of the President, 2018).

In the conditions of the trade war with China, the issue of separating the US economy from the Chinese economy plays a key role. The US Congress recognized that China intends to gain technological dominance in the world as a result of the transfer of internally acquired and external technologies. China, through legal and illegal means to capture technology and develop secondary patents, has already achieved a total GDP comparable to that of the US. The United States found the results of GDP growth dynamics disturbing, which may be higher in China than in the USA in the coming years (118th Congress, 2023).

When considering the issue of forced technology transfer, the Congress invoked the argument of national security. Huawei was found to be intercepting American technologies, including 5G technologies of strategic importance to the national security of the United States.

In addition to the provisions of Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, restricting trade, the United States has adopted regulations controlling the flow of foreign direct investment, citing the argument of national security. The adoption of the Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act (FIRRMA) in 2018 increased control over technology exports to China (Chorzempa, 2019).

In 2018, the United States introduced export controls on technology products and components, and in 2019, Huawei, a leading technology giant, was identified as an entity of national security concern. The National Security Bureau indicated that there were grounds to consider Huawei's actions as contrary to the national security of the United States (Federal Register, 2019, 21th May). On October 7, 2022, the United States introduced export controls on semiconductor and artificial intelligence production technologies, followed by the next stage of export controls on October 17, 2023, aimed at limiting the creation of China's technological power.

The United States has taken further actions to limit the transfer of technology to China. President J. Biden adopted on August 9, 2023, an outbound investment control program, based on the powers of the acts applicable in emergency situations: the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 USC 1701 et seq. (IEEPA), the Emergency Situations Act (50 USC1601 et seq. (NEA), and Section 301 of Title 3. Outward investment control covered states whose strategic goal is to acquire and use advanced technologies to achieve military dominance.

Countries of concern to the United States, rapidly developing the production of semiconductors, microelectronics, and quantum information technologies, may pose a threat to US national security (Swanson, 2023).

The House of Representatives Committee of the US Congress notified key technology companies about concerns about investments in China and investing capital in the assets of Chinese companies producing artificial intelligence and semiconductors. On February 28, 2024, the United States introduced an Executive Order on Preventing Countries of Concern from Accessing Bulk Sensitive Personal

Data of Americans and Data from the US Government (Brown, Chin-Rothmann & Brock, 2024).

Trade policy measures included some activities enabling the United States to maintain its technological advantage in the world. The second part of consolidating US technological supremacy was the adoption of industrial policies that promoted high-tech industries. The trade war for global technological dominance has led to developed countries, including the United States and the European Union, adopting industrial policy and subsidizing the strategic semiconductor manufacturing industry. The effect of the trade war between the United States and China is the emergence on a global scale of the so-called “technonationalism” and directing technological development towards closed economies (Bradford, 2023).

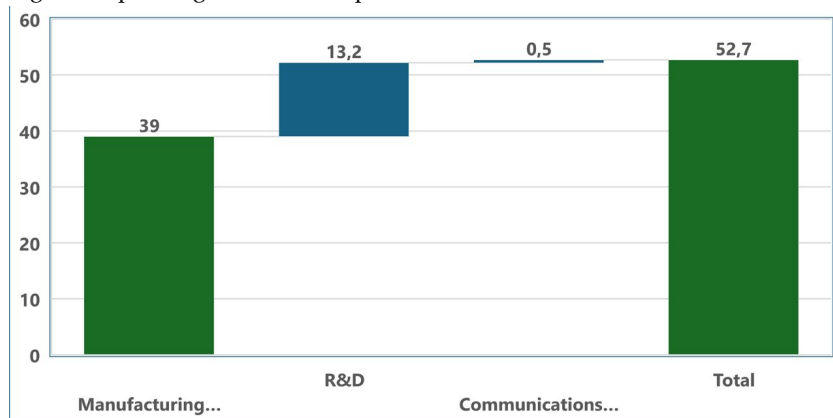
Subsidizing production by the United States government, introducing industrial policy, financing domestic investments in the advanced technology industry will allow for an increase in the production of semiconductors and will ensure the development of innovations in the following industries: computer science, quantum technology, nanotechnology, clean energy, artificial intelligence. The Chips and Science Act of 2022 guaranteed funding for research and development spending, creating production incentives and ensuring that the United States pursued its national security argument (Semiconductor Industry Association, 2023). The main objectives of the Chips and Science Act were to restore jobs in the industrial sector and “win the race for the 21st century” (White House, *Fact Sheets*, 2022).

The technological importance of semiconductor production will increase due to their use in the industrial sector, in the production of aircraft, microelectronics equipment, microwave ovens, televisions, computers, watches, and cars (Irwin, 1996). In the 21st century, the United States’ position in semiconductor production has weakened due to the development of global supply chains and the relocation of production abroad. The United States was mainly involved in the production of older chips, while the most advanced chips were manufactured abroad, including in East Asia (White House, 2023).

By adopting the Chips and Science Act in 2022, the United States initiated an industrial policy to pursue specific economic and political goals of strengthening the United States’ technological advantage in semiconductor production. The United States has a total

budgeted \$52.7 billion for research and development spending, as well as manufacturing. An amount of \$39 billion was allocated for manufacturing incentives. Under the Chips and Science Act, \$13.2 billion was allocated for research and development and job creation in the semiconductor manufacturing industry. An amount of USD 0.5 billion has been allocated to guarantee the international security of information technologies and the functioning of the semiconductor supply chain (Figure 1). Tax credits of 25% for public investment in semiconductor production increased the possibility of creating new jobs in the high-tech industry

Figure 1. Spending under the Chips and Science Act of 2022, in billions of dollars



Source: White House, Fact Sheets (2022).

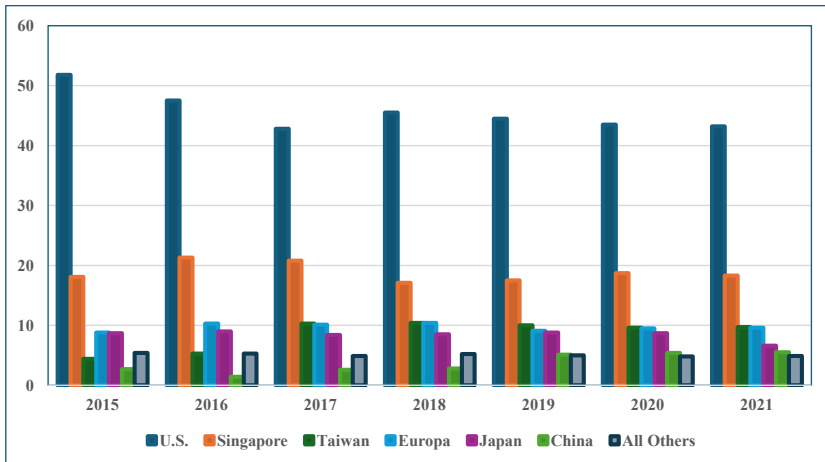
The United States has made the largest public industrial policy investment in the development of artificial intelligence and research and development covered by the Chips and Science Act since the end of the Cold War (Gross & Sampat, 2023).

The implementation of the assumptions of the Chips and Science Act allowed for an increase in investments in expanding the semiconductor production base and creating programs for the development of a highly qualified workforce. There has been a clear economic recovery and employment in the semiconductor production industry (Alfaro & Chor, 2023).

Implementation of industrial policy assumptions will increase the United States' production potential in the field of advanced

technologies. In the 21st century, the United States' leading role in semiconductor production has weakened, in 2021 US production amounted to 43% of global production. The technological potential of Asia has increased, both in China (5.5%), as well as in Singapore (18%) and Japan with a share of 9% (Figure 2). The production of semiconductors is associated with relatively high expenditure on research and development, and companies achieving profits then increase their investments in scientific research. Companies producing semiconductors often find themselves without production factories and only have research projects (Dachs & Bernhard, 2023).

Figure 2. Share of the United States in global semiconductor production in alt 2015-2021, in %



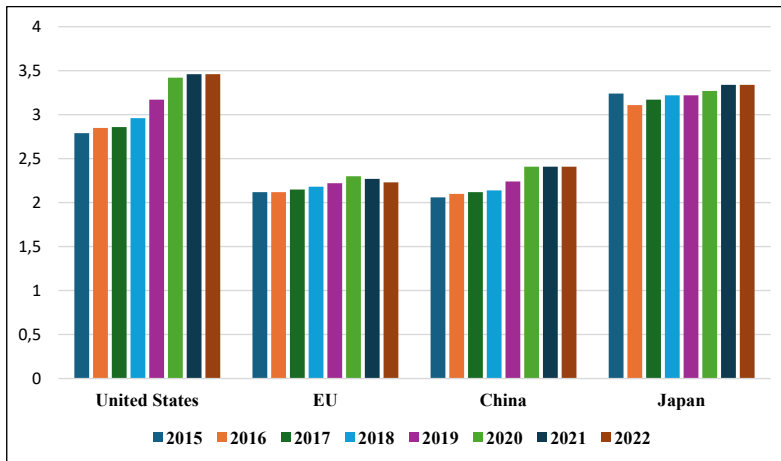
Source: Semiconductor Industry Association 2022, Factbook.

In 2022, total U.S. semiconductor exports were \$61.1 billion, the fifth highest among U.S. exports behind refined crude oil, crude oil, natural gases and aircraft. Exports from the United States amounted to over 80% of the total production of the US semiconductor industry.

The technological development of the United States and the economies competing for a dominant position in the production of advanced technologies in the world depends largely on research and development spending, which enables the growth of innovation incentives. China belongs to the group of middle-income countries where research and development expenditure constitutes a high percentage of GDP

(2.41%). The percentage of EU research and development expenditure reached 2.24% of GDP, in Japan (3.34% of GDP), (Figure 3).

Figure 3. State expenditure on research and development as % of GDP, in 2012-2022



Source: Eurostat: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=R%26D\\_expenditure#Gross\\_domestic\\_expenditure\\_on\\_R.26D](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=R%26D_expenditure#Gross_domestic_expenditure_on_R.26D), (accessed on 27th February 2024).

China is currently one of the largest economies allocating significant financial resources to research and development, increasing the production capacity of advanced technologies.

### ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE TRADE WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA FOR TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Restrictions on technology transfer have had the intended effects in separating the interdependence of economies within the global supply chain. The implementation of the national security argument by the United States will increase the intensity of separation of the interdependence of economies in the production of goods using advanced

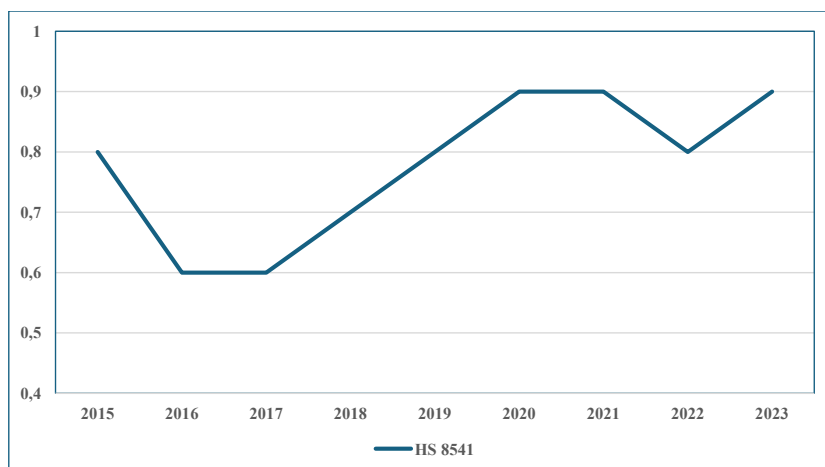
technologies (Shivakumar & Wessner, 2024). During the presidency of J. Biden, the United States recognized the semiconductor production industry as a priority for the economy, creating the possibility of increasing the USA's self-sufficiency in the production of advanced technologies.

Trade restrictions from the United States have resulted in restrictions on trade with China for goods involving advanced technologies. After the United States initiated an investigation under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 on August 18, 2018, examining technology transfer practices to China, it established trade barriers to imports from China (Office of the United States Trade Representative Executive Office of the President Update Concerning China's Acts, 2018). An import duty of 25% was introduced on parts necessary for the production of semiconductors against China for diodes (HS 85411000); diodes for semiconductor devices (HS 8541.40.60); electronic integrated circuits and parts thereof (8542), including processors and controllers (HS 8542.31.00), semiconductor memory (HS 8542.32.00), electronic integrated circuits, amplifiers (HS 8542.33.00), other parts (HS 8542.39.00), electronic integrated circuit parts and micro assemblies (HS 8542.90.00) (Office of the United States Trade Representative, Notice of Action Pursuant to Section 301, 2018).

Integrated circuits, discrete devices and optoelectronic components play the most important roles in the production of semiconductors. US exports of electronic integrated circuits (HS 8541) increased from USD 0.7 billion to USD 0.9 billion (Figure 3). In the initial period after 2018 of the trade restrictions, there were no restrictions on the export of semiconductor devices (diodes, transistors, photosensitive semiconductor devices). The situation regarding the possibility of exports to China was changed by the export controls on advanced technologies introduced by the United States in 2022 and in October 2023. Similarly, in the case of electronic integrated circuits, exports from the US to China decreased after 2021 (Figure 5). In response to the protectionist actions of the United States, China increased the level of subsidies for technology production (Triolo, 2024).

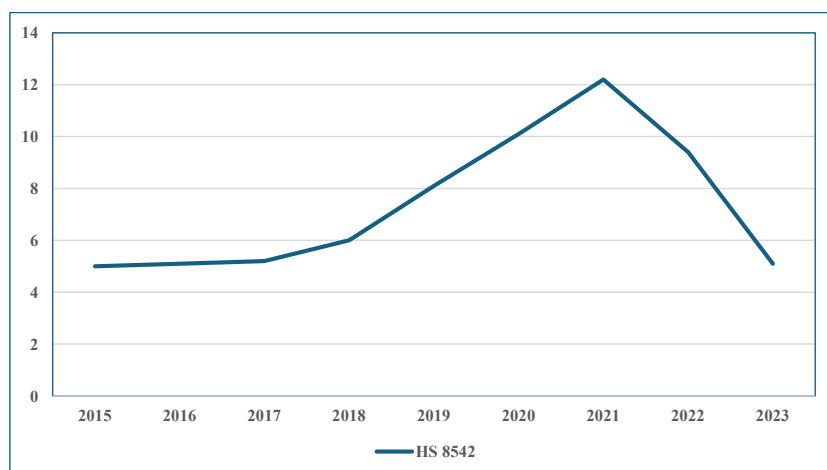


Figure 4. US exports to China of semiconductors (HS8541), billion dollars



Source: UN Comtrade basis.

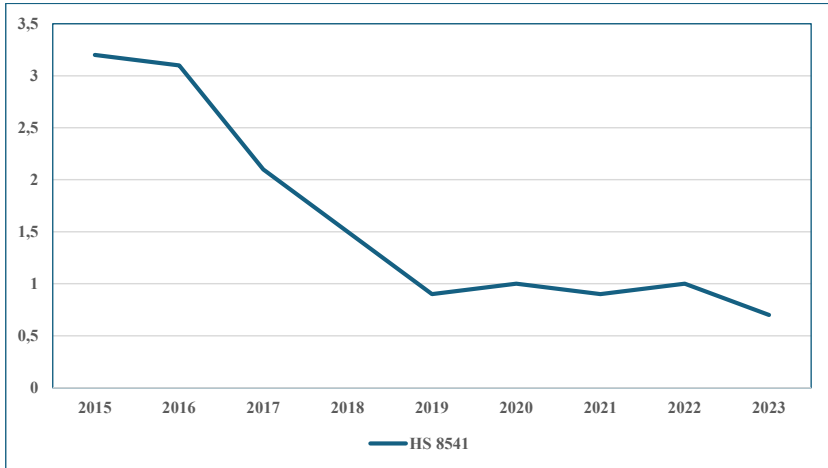
Figure 5. US exports to China of semiconductors (HS 8542 electronic integrated circuits), in billions of dollars



Source: UN Comtrade basis.

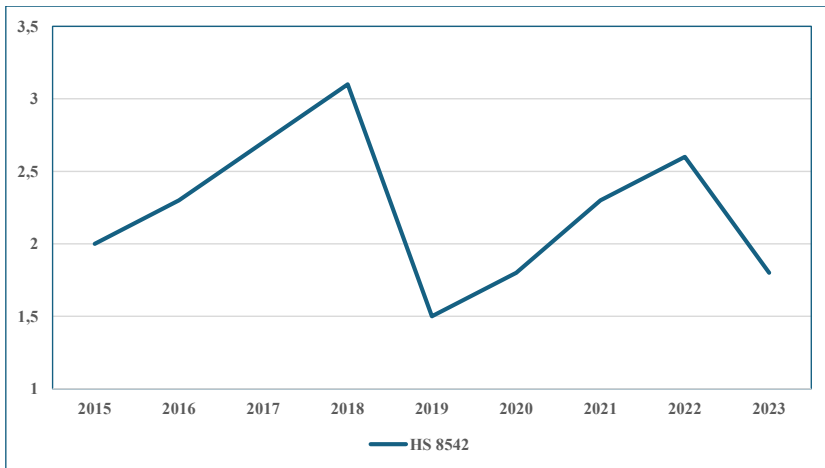
As a result of the technological trade war, there has been a decline in imports from China to the United States of semiconductors (HS 8541). Imports decreased from USD 1.5 billion in 2018 to USD 0.7 billion in 2023.

Figure 6. Imports of semiconductors to the USA from China (HS8541), in billions of dollars



Source: UN Comtrade basis.

Figure 7. Imports to the United States from China (HS 8542), in billions of dollars



Source: UN Comtrade basis.

Trade in semiconductors between the United States and China has decreased (Figures 6 and 7). The production structure in this industry is monopolized and is subject to significant regionalization

of production in the global economy. China, being a key producer of semiconductors in the world, depends on supplies of parts and production materials from developed countries, such as the Netherlands, Japan, and Germany (Ren, Yang, Wang & Liu, 2023). To achieve technological dominance in semiconductor production, China needs to maintain participation in global value chains and international trade.

The implementation of the “Made in China 2025” strategy did not bring the expected results, subsidies under industrial policy led to a reduction in the economic growth rate. The trade war with the United States has weakened the ability to achieve the goals included in the “Made in China 2025” program and has led to economic costs for the Chinese economy (Branstetter, 2022).

Protectionist tools of the United States trade policy in the field of advanced technologies in the long term may lead to a significant reduction in the spread of technology around the world and limit the access of innovation to emerging economies and developing countries (Cerdeiro, Eugster, Muir & Peiris, 2021).

In response to the threat to security of supply and the need to maintain a leading position in the production of semiconductors, the European Union adopted an industrial policy program and the “European Chips Act” (The EU Chips Act). Similarly, Japan, being the largest producer of semiconductors in the world in the 1980s with a subsequent sharp decline in global production, adopted an industrial policy program (World Trade Organization, 2023).

## CONCLUSIONS

The actions of the United States seeking to maintain technological dominance in the world have translated into protectionism in trade policy in the form of protection against imports and export controls of advanced technologies and the use of strategic trade policy.

The trade war over U.S. technological dominance has led to shortages in the global economy of some high-tech goods, particularly semiconductors. The US-China trade war has also led to uncertainty over high-tech manufacturing capacity in East Asia.

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## The role of inflation in shaping changes in the employment rate: evidence from the selected EU countries

### *Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The objective of the article is to empirically verify the fundamental relationship implied by the Phillips curve: the relationship between the dynamics of employment and inflation in selected European Union countries.

**THE RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND METHODS:** The research problem is to find out what effect inflation has on the evolution of the employment rate. The study was based on the scoping method used in the literature review. The empirical analysis used the distance-weighted least squares method and neural network analysis.

**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The first part examines the literature on the relationship between inflation and the employment rate. This is followed by an analysis that identifies the role of inflation on the employment rate in selected European Union countries.

**RESEARCH RESULTS:** Our research has shown that changes in inflation can contribute to explaining the formation of employment in examined European countries. At the same time, the analysis revealed that the impact of inflation on the employment rate is relatively low.

**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The implications of the Phillips curve with regard to the relationship between

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inflation and the labour market are present. However, the relationship itself described is relatively weak with regard to other factors. The labour market in the European Union is multi-dimensional and is shaped by a number of factors.

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**KEYWORDS:**

employment, inflation, Phillips curve, European Union

## INTRODUCTION

In view of a number of socio-economic changes, one of the observed trends is changes in the labour market (Maitah & Urbánková, 2015). Recent decades are associated with the process of globalisation, technological advances, as well as various shocks affecting the economies of individual countries. Developed economies tend to be affected by shocks that are widespread around the world, and the impact of these shocks is not homogeneous. Their conditioning depends on a wide variety of factors, including market institutions (Fedeli et al., 2015)

As of 2020, two exogenous shocks significantly affect the global economy (Caporale et al., 2022). The economic shock caused by the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the recession of European economies. In view of the spread of the coronavirus worldwide, extensive measures were taken to limit the spread of the pandemic (Jestl & Stehrer, 2021). The blockades and social distancing restrictions put in place affected economic as well as social life, impacting on employment. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian-Ukrainian war also affected the labour market and inflation globally (Caporale et al., 2022; Topalova et al., 2023).

The purpose of this article is to empirically verify the fundamental relationship implied by the Phillips curve: the relationship between the dynamics of employment and inflation, and to answer the following research question: What role does inflation play in shaping changes in the employment rate? The study was based on triangulation of research methods, including the scoping method used in the literature review. The empirical analysis was based on the distance-weighted least squares method and neural network analysis.

While there are many studies in the literature and in practice on the relationship between employment dynamics and inflation, more

research is needed to better understand the effects and consequences of this phenomenon. This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, our study presents the relationship between employment dynamics and inflation over the long term. Second, our study covers 19 European Union member states, so it provides a comprehensive analysis for countries with varying levels of socioeconomic development. Third, the study conducted analysis using the distance-weighted least squares method and neural networks. To the best of our knowledge, to date, these methods have not been applied to the study of the impact of inflation on the development of changes in the employment rate.

The article begins with an introduction of the research problem and an explanation of our contribution to the development of the research, followed by an explanation of the research methods used in the methodological section. The main part of the article consists of the process of argumentation and results of the empirical research. The discussion compares the results obtained with previous studies. The final section presents a summary of the results with an indication of research limitations and suggestions for further research.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the article is empirical verification of the fundamental relationship implied by the Phillips curve: the relationship between the dynamics of employment and inflation. The study uses quarterly data for 2003–2022, describing the following indicators: GDP per capita, GDP rate, Inflation rate, Labour cost. The data used in the study is mainly from the dataset in the Eurostat and OECD database (download date: 10.10.2022).

The choice of this time frame was determined, first, by the research objective of analysing the relationship between employment dynamics and inflation over the long term, and second, by the availability of comparable data.

Finally, the study used a panel time series containing 1,482 observations each, referring to results from the following 19 countries: Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland,

Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain. The choice of countries included in the study was determined by the availability of comparable data.

From a methodological point of view, descriptive methods (including the distance-weighted least squares method, or selected statistical parameters) were used to describe the relationship between inflation and employment in the introductory section. In turn, the later part of the article presents the results of modeling the impact of inflation on employment, and an assessment of the relevance of inflation in this modeling, using analysis with the help of neural networks (these methods are finding increasing use in research in the field, e.g. (Angelini et al., 2008) The process of creating the final models is explained later in the paper.

In order to assess the quality of the research, the choice of research methods used in the article was determined by meeting two research criteria – reliability and validity. These criteria were met by the relevance of the selection of indicators and the use of publicly available data, which makes the research replicable. The use of research triangulation methods provided an answer to the research question of what role inflation plays in shaping changes in the employment rate.

## THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION

There are currently many changes of an economic nature taking place globally, and this is also affecting the European Union, which remains one of the fastest growing economies (Gricar et al., 2022; Maitah & Urbánková, 2015). The labour market is extremely important to the functioning of the economy, and the unemployment rate is ranked alongside the inflation rate, GDP and the balance of payments among the most important features of economic efficiency (Maitah & Urbánková, 2015). Unemployment therefore remains one of the key challenges in the economic dimension and is one of the main areas of economic policy, including in the European Union (Ho & Iyke, 2018). At the same time, it is indicated that price stability is an important element for sustainable economic growth and employment (Epstein & Yeldan, 2008). As Milton Friedman (1977) observed: “there is no stable trade-off between inflation and unemployment;

there is a “natural rate of unemployment” (UN) which is consistent with the real forces and with accurate perceptions; unemployment can be kept below that level only by an accelerating inflation; or above it only by accelerating deflation”. Similarly, Samuelson and Solow’s research saw a possible trade-off between inflation and unemployment. However, like Friedman, they pointed out that this trade-off is unsustainable (Samuelson & Solow, 1960). Furthermore, Samuelson and Solow indicated that when unemployment is low, it can be further lowered by reducing inflation (Berentsen et al., 2011; Hall & Hart, 2012; Samuelson & Solow, 1960).

A literature review of the relationship between inflation and the employment rate was conducted using the scoping method. This method is relatively new, but it is increasingly being used to broadly analyse the literature in a specific area (Daudt et al., 2013; Munn et al., 2018; Peterson et al., 2017; Pham et al., 2014). There is no formal definition, purpose or methodological framework for the scoping method in the literature (Daudt et al., 2013; Peterson et al., 2017; Pham et al., 2014; Tricco et al., 2015). However, the scoping method provides a broad and diverse overview of the topic under analysis, and also allows mapping the existing literature on the topic area (Peterson et al., 2017; Pham et al., 2014). In addition, it is pointed out that the scoping method, on the basis of defining the scope and design of existing research, enables the identification of research gaps (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005; Munn et al., 2018). Thus, the scoping method can be used to determine the significance of the relationship between inflation and the employment rate in the European Union member states studied.

To conduct a literature review through the scoping method, we used the SCOPUS publication database, which is a widely used publication database by researchers worldwide. In addition, the SCOPUS publication database is reliable and has a multidisciplinary profile (Parmentola et al., 2022).

The selection of literature used for the literature review was based on the following set of keywords: inflation and employment and European Union or EU or Europe. In order to achieve the research objective and make an appropriate selection of literature for analysis, the following research question was posed: What is the role of inflation in shaping changes in the employment rate?

In further, inclusion and exclusion criteria were defined and used to identify the literature for the literature review. The inclusion criteria included the fields of economics, econometrics and finance, as well as articles from peer-reviewed journals and review articles. Books, conference proceedings, book series and a professional journal were excluded from the literature review. In addition, only English-language texts were included in the literature review. Table 1. provides a complete list of the inclusion and exclusion criteria that were used in the scoping review.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria used in the literature review

Selection steps for literature review	Comments	No.
Items identified during the initial browsing of the SCOPUS database	Scopus database were used	98
Application of inclusion and exclusion criteria	Inclusion and exclusion criteria included: a. Subject area: Economics, Econometrics and Finance b. Document type: Articles and Review articles c. Source: Journal d. Language: English	40
Duplicates removed	Two duplicates were identified and removed	2
Title and abstract review	At this stage, 17 articles with low contributions were excluded, and one report was removed, which was disclosed	17
Full-text review	The low contribution item has been deleted	22
Final review sample		9

Source: own elaboration

After applying keywords, 98 results were identified. The inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined above were then taken into account, which reduced the results to 40 publications. Among the results, 2 duplicates were found. A review of titles and abstracts revealed 17 articles that do not contribute significant insights to the topic under study, and it was decided not to include them in the literature review. In addition, a report was identified at this stage that was also excluded from further analysis. Based on the established inclusion and exclusion criteria, 22 articles were finally identified for inclusion in the study. The next step was to obtain full-text versions of the articles included in the study. Each of these articles was reviewed, and this

step allowed the identification of 12 low-contribution articles. In the end, 9 articles were included in the study, and during the analysis of these articles special attention was paid to the purpose of the study: the empirical verification of the fundamental relationship implied by the Phillips curve, i.e.: the relationship between the dynamics of employment and inflation.

When reviewing the research articles that were selected in the scoping review, it seems that the researchers focused on analysing the relationship between employment and inflation from different perspectives. Studies have taken into account the impact of significant economic experiences on long-term unemployment, wage flexibility, the impact of globalization on the labour market in terms of wage inflation, income inequality, political support, or the extremely important environmental aspect from the perspective of the EU economy.

In a research paper, Yong (2019) explains theoretically and empirically the period of impact of significant economic experience on long-term unemployment. The author referred to Fisher and short-run causation – inflation encourages the public to engage in profitable economic activity, which reduces the unemployment rate. At the same time, Yong noted that unemployment has fallen since 2014, while inflation has remained low. Thus, inflation was not a factor in the decline in unemployment. In addition, the analysis showed that unemployment is negatively related to inflation and real GDP. In further addition, the conclusion of this study is that the economy's exposure to changing economic conditions in the distant past is a kind of knowledge and learning process. The use of past experience and knowledge makes it possible to deal with current economic conditions, such as reducing the unemployment rate, even after a considerable time distance has passed. From the empirical results, a significant time distance is identified as even one decade, moreover, it was found that the duration of impact on unemployment is extended to a period of several decades.

At the stage of full-text review of scientific articles, it was observed that considerable attention was paid to the NAIRU unemployment rate. Fedeli et al. (2015) found that underlying net lending of government as a percentage of potential GDP (UNLG/pot. GDP) and an increase in the tax burden can increase NAIRU unemployment in the long run by studying 13 European Union member states and the United Kingdom. According to the Keynesian approach, market

economies are inherently unstable and cannot provide enough aggregate demand to guarantee full employment in the economy. An increase in the tax burden with unchanged UNLG/pot. GDP has a negative impact on unemployment. High taxes can burden employment both directly (through the fiscal wedge) and indirectly (taxing consumption, capital or businesses). In addition, high NAIRU unemployment is correlated with high long-term budget deficits.

In light of the increase in the unemployment rate in the European Union after the 2008–2009 financial crisis, the determinants influencing NAIRU unemployment in 14 European Union countries between 1985 and 2012 were examined (Heimberger et al., 2017). It was highlighted that there is a link between labour market rigidity and rising unemployment across Europe. In addition, it was pointed out that real estate booms and busts and capital accumulation should not be ignored when estimating NAIRU unemployment.

On the other hand, Pino and Soto (2014) analysed wage flexibility as a factor affecting inflation in 12 Eurozone countries. The study used the New Keynesian Phillips curve to calculate the equilibrium value for labour income share ratio (LISR). Unemployment NAIRU and LISR stabilize inflation, while wage inelasticity can account for the countercyclical behaviour of LISR. The long-run LISR is consistent with NAIRU unemployment or equivalently with the natural level of output. This enabled the authors to study the evolution of wage flexibility over time and identify countries with wage flexibility negatively affecting employment. The highest levels of wage flexibility among the countries included in the study were Austria, Ireland, Italy and Portugal. Thus, it turned out that high unemployment in Ireland, Italy and Portugal was not caused by wage flexibility, but by a decline in the competitiveness of these economies. Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain were shown to have the highest levels of wage rigidity. In addition, Spain had the highest increase in unemployment after the 2008–2009 financial crisis.

The impact of globalization on the labour market in terms of wage inflation and the distribution of activity across regions was examined by Demertzis et al. (2009). Their analysis focused primarily on the impact of aggregation in labour markets on the distribution of employment and inflationary pressures. They pointed out that European labour markets were characterized by low labour mobility,



wage inelasticity and high capital mobility. The study showed that the cost of reducing wage or price inflation for a country or region becomes greater as unemployment increases and the dispersion of unemployment rates decreases. It was pointed out that a flatter Phillips curve means lower inflation at each level of unemployment, as well as greater fluctuations in unemployment during the adjustment stage of the economy. The analysis also showed that during the period studied, i.e. 1984–2007, there was a trade-off between wage inflation and unemployment in Germany. However, after convergence, Germany no longer plays a dominant role in the way prices and wages are set across the European Union. In addition, differences in unemployment between EU member states will persist, as they depend on labour market institutions, wage sensitivity and cost structure.

From the perspective of the European Union, it is extremely important to reduce regional disparities and narrow the socioeconomic gap. As Čiegis et al. (2008), pointed out, reducing regional disparities, income gaps and effectively solving the problem of poverty is possible when steady economic growth is ensured. It is also important to overcome the problem of unemployment, since the unemployment rate is one of the indicators that most accurately depict inequality. Countries with lower unemployment rates have achieved a higher level of development and are able to reduce the growing income disparity among different social groups. In addition, the authors stress that inflation reduces the competitiveness of the economy and undermines public confidence..

The positive impact of inflation on income inequality was also demonstrated in a study by Thalassinos et al. (2012). Importantly, the study found that there is a negative relationship between employment and income inequality. However, income inequality and inflation lower the average per capita income in the European Union. Income inequality and inflation are important in designing stabilization programs. An increase in the unemployment rate tends to affect those classified in the lower end of personal income. Moreover, economies with higher levels of income inequality tend to have higher levels of inflation.

Building political capital and the impact of political support on the labour market and inflation have been proven by Friedrichsen and Zahn (2014). The authors emphasize that in the context of political support, employment policies are more important than economic

growth. An analysis conducted for 16 European countries using a log-it model proved that people with higher education and employment are more concerned about inflation than those who are not employed or unskilled. In addition, those with higher education and employment are able to accept higher unemployment rates in real terms. It is worth noting that the authors reason that preferences for revolution increase when the economy weakens. Thus, macroeconomic performance can increase an individual's satisfaction with democracy. This was reflected in Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain and Portugal, which fell into recession during the 2008–2009 financial crisis. As a result of the deteriorating economic situation in all these countries, governments were removed from power.

An analysis of the relationship between GHG emissions, employment, inflation and GDP at constant prices was conducted by Gricar et al. (Gricar et al., 2022). Employment has been increasingly discussed in terms of its impact on GHG emissions. The study, which covered the EU-27, Iceland and Norway, was conducted using cointegration and Granger causality testing. The analysis showed that inflation affects employment; as a result, there is no direct relationship between the employment variable and GDP at constant prices. The average value of the relationship between inflation and employment was -29.22 for the EU-27 and 3.91 for Norway. Thus, high employment is beneficial for lower inflation, and vice versa for the EU-27 and Norway. Interestingly, this relationship does not apply to Iceland.

Given the results of research to date, it was decided to formulate the following research hypothesis:

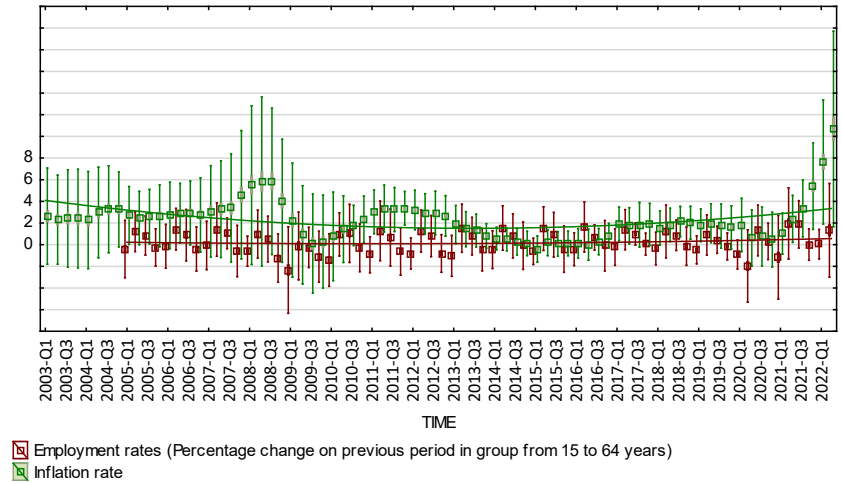
**H:** The impact of the inflation rate on employment dynamics in EU countries remains relatively low.

An empirical study verifying the above hypothesis was carried out in further stages of the work.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The relationship between the volume of employment and inflation is still under discussion, but in view of the goal of stabilizing the economy, both the employment rate and the inflation rate are important indicators (Alisa, 2015).

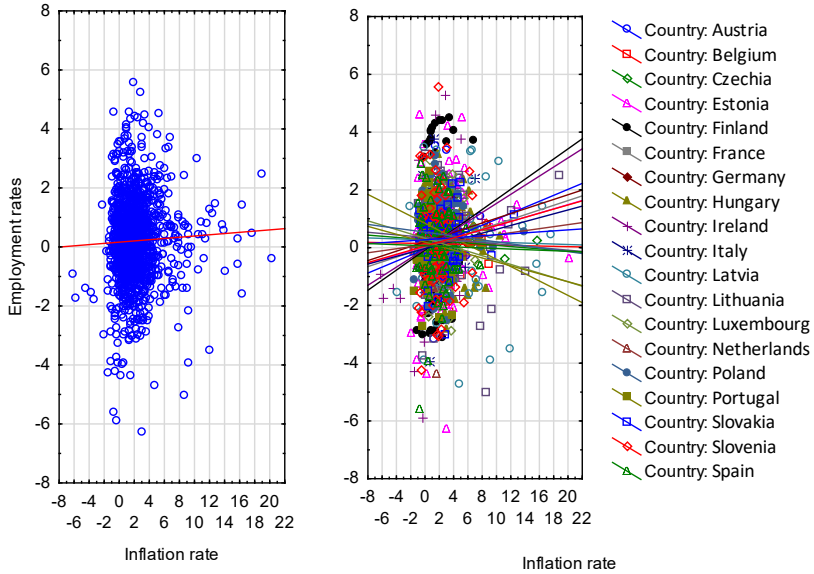
Figure 1. Development of values of Employment rate and Inflation rate indicators in selected time periods



Source: own elaboration based on OECD and Eurostat (available online 10.10.2022).

This topic is particularly relevant in view of the economic transition taking place in the 2021–2022 period due to the sharp increase in inflation rates in all European countries. As shown in Figure 1. (the points on the graph represent the average value for the countries studied in the period, while the whiskers represent the values of the standard deviation; to improve the visibility of the trend, a fitted polynomial trend was superimposed on the data) the value of inflation growth in the period 2010–2020, in the countries studied, oscillated on average between 0–2 percentage points, while from 2021 onward a sharp increase is observed (the highest increase, as of 2q2022, was observed in Estonia and amounted to 22%). The topic of the growth of the inflation rate is widely discussed in various economic perspectives (Afonso, 2023; Afonso & Pinho, 2022; Ball & Mazumder, 2021). The current period also provides an interesting observation in view of the previously discussed relationship between the inflation rate and the employment rate.

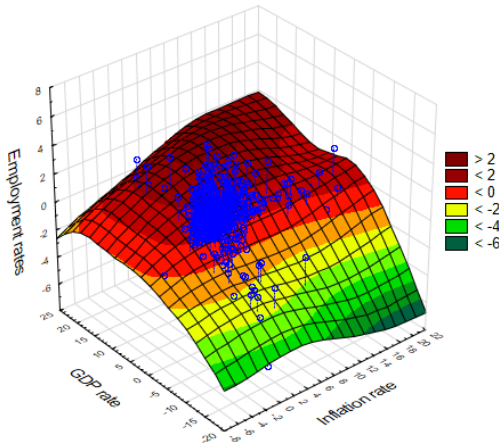
Figures 2–3. Scatter plots of Employment rate and Inflation rate in global and country perspective



Source: own elaboration based on OECD and Eurostat (available online 10.10.2022).

At the same time, the described “Phillips curve” relationship in simple terms (i.e. without taking into account time lags and additional macroeconomic variables) is not easily observable. As shown in Figures 2–3, a slight trend indicating the existence of a positive relationship between employment and inflation can be observed in the studied period of 2003–2022 in general. However, this relationship is noticeably weaker on an individual basis, and may indicate the presence of different vectors of this relationship (for example, trend matching for Finland’s data indicates a clear positive relationship, while Hungary’s data indicates a negative relationship).

Figure 4. Values of Employment rate, GDP rate and Inflation rate indicators



Source: own elaboration based on OECD and Eurostat (available online 10.10.2022).

The need to complete the analysis of the development of employment dynamics in relation to inflation was pointed out by Ball and Mazumder (2021). One of the primary variables introduced into models describing the development of employment, in addition to the inflation rate discussed above, is the GDP per capita and GDP rate. As shown in Figure 4, in a preliminary overall view (in order to preliminarily examine the relationship between the three indicators presented, a distance-weighted least squares smoothing method, commonly used in the field, was used, e.g. Banerjee et al. (2004), Tomala et al. (2021) – The points on the graph thus represent successive observations included in the study), it can be observed that it is indeed possible for employment growth to occur as a result of inflation growth, particularly in countries with higher GDP growth.

The preliminary approach presented also indicates a strong concentration of data around the 0 value for all three indicators. Therefore, the presented relationship can be considered apparent. As previously mentioned, subsequent authors indicate the need to expand exogenous variables in the study of the relationship between inflation and employment. Therefore, the study decided to introduce lags for the GDP rate and inflation rate indicators up to two

years, thus obtaining eight more indicators for each variable (since the data are quarterly). The introduced lags are due to indications that employment in the real economy is made using predictions of the economic environment by entrepreneurs based on past events (Ball & Mazumder, 2021; Beccarini & Gros, 2008). In addition, the level of employment, as well as its changes, will depend on the level of the economy and therefore the GDP per capita measure was also used in the final modelling (Correia & Carvalho, 2016; Fullerton et al., 2011; Huber, 2009).

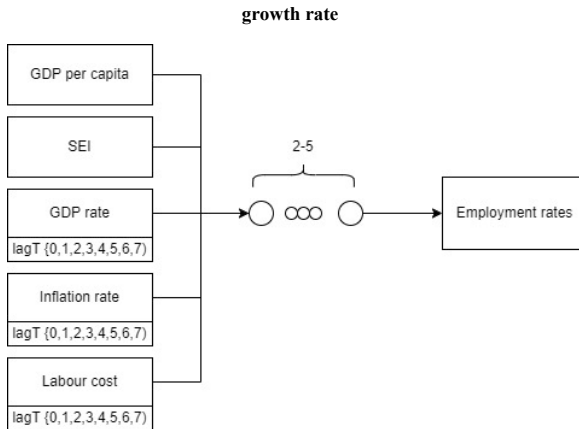
Another indicator included was the cost of labour, the inclusion of which stems from an attempt to take into account the diverse nature of the European economies studied. There is a diversity of development in Europe, which affects the structure of employment, which can be based, for example, on selected sectors, technology, or cheaper labour (Afonso, 2023; Akinsola & Odhiambo, 2017; Fullerton et al., 2011; Imdorf et al., 2017; Kyriazi, 2023; Núñez & Livanos, 2010). The last factor, in turn, strongly differentiates the countries studied in terms of the categorization of labour markets and can explicitly translate into the formation of employment (Kyriazi, 2023). In addition, the Simple Expectation Indicator (SEI) was included in the final modelling, which attempted to capture public expectations about the formation of the economy. The value of this indicator was developed based on a moving average, viz:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{y_{t-1} + y_{t-2} + y_{t-3}}{3} \geq y_t &\rightarrow SEI_t = 0 \\ \frac{y_{t-1} + y_{t-2} + y_{t-3}}{3} < y_t &\rightarrow SEI_t = 1 \end{aligned}$$

Where  $y_t$  is GDP per capita growth rate in period  $t$ , and  $SEI_t$  Simple Expectation Indicator in period  $t$ . The introduction of this indicator resulted from an attempt to take into account the assumption on expectations of future performance, which was signalled by Alon et al. (2020) and Mongey et al. (2021).

Neural network modelling was conducted to assess the impact of the usefulness of the inflation growth rate in assessing employment growth. The general architecture of the models eventually took the form shown in Figure 5 below.

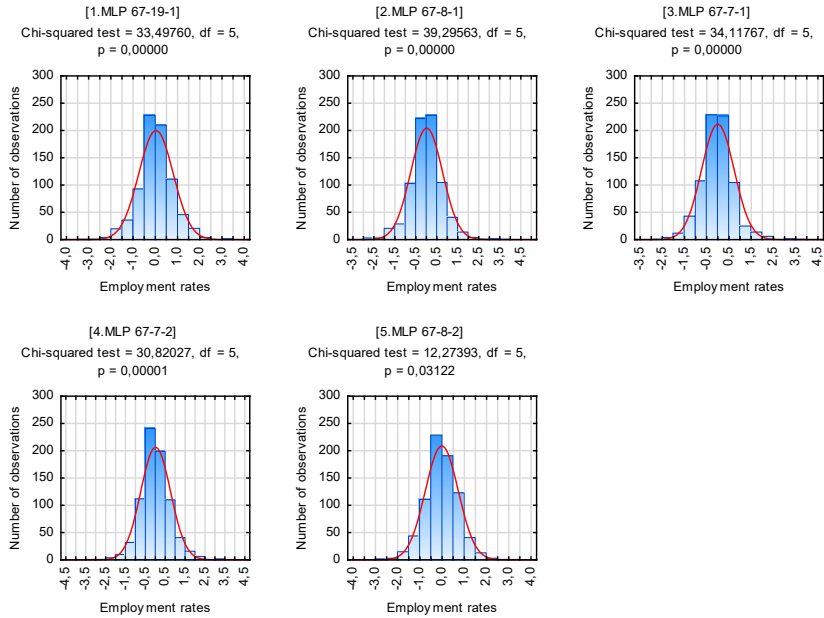
Figure 5. Theoretical architecture of models explaining the formation of the employment growth rate



Source: own elaboration.

The architecture shown in Figure 5. was the starting point in the approach used, which was based on the construction of another 500 neural network models using linear, logistic, tanh and exponential functions in the input, output and hidden layers (the number of which was determined in the range of 2 to 5). The dataset described in the paper was divided into three groups: teaching (70% of the data), validation (15% of the data) and testing (15% of the data). The selection of the best five models was dictated by minimizing the value of the sum of squares of model errors.

Figure 6–10: Distribution of residuals of models with the highest level of fit

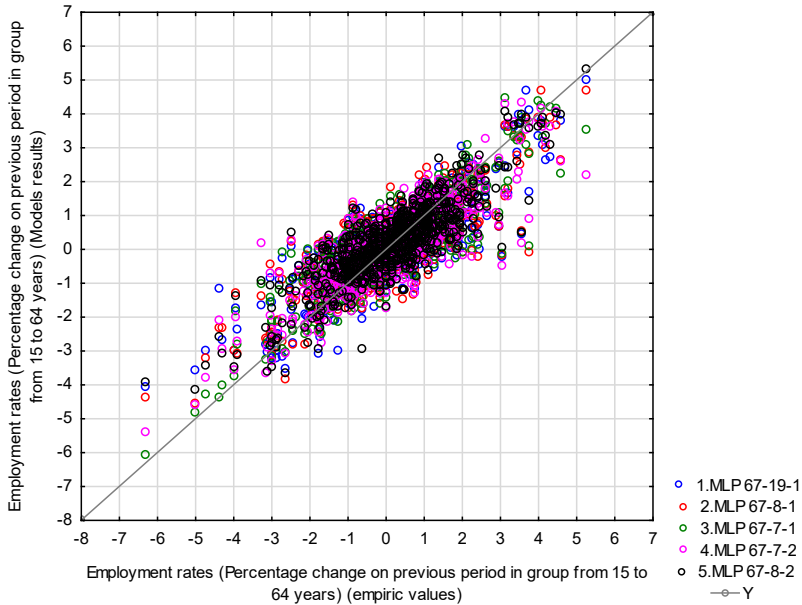


Source: own elaboration.

As depicted in Figures 6–10, five more models were developed: MLP 67-19-1, MLP 67-8-1, MLP 67-7-1, MLP 67-7-2 and MLP 67-8-2, whose residuals took on the values of a normal distribution. At the same time, however, the range of this distribution oscillated around -2 to 2, which, in the perspective of the employment change rate in question, may indicate further room for improvement in prediction.



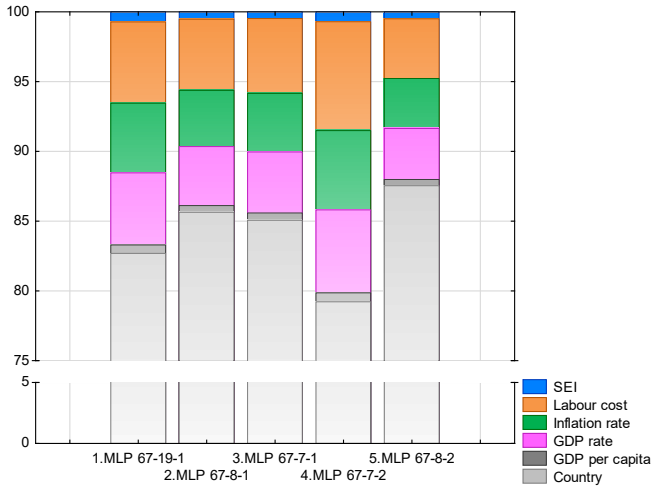
Figure 11: Distribution of observable to modelled employment rate values



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 11 shows the result of the modelling, where it is clearly indicated that the factors that were included in the modelling can serve to explain the formation of the value of employment changes. At the same time, as previously indicated, all five models indicate the possibility of improving the prediction by including additional factors that differentiate the results.

Figure 12. Sensitivity structure of models describing the formation of employment



Source: own elaboration.

The most relevant in the perspective of the entire work seems to be Figure 12, which describes the structure of the influence of each category of factors on the ability of the model to predict changes in employment. As we can observe, by far the greater part of the effectiveness of the models is based on the use of information about the diversity of the set in relation to the origin of the data (country). The remaining factors generate about 15% of model effectiveness. Indicators of changes in inflation are responsible for about 5% of the changes in the models performed (also after taking into account time-delayed series). As a result, therefore, it can be pointed out that the formation of this measure can be used in explaining the formation of employment in the European countries studied, but the impact of this factor is relatively low (in relation to the others included in the study). This therefore confirms the research hypothesis that the impact of the inflation rate on employment dynamics in the European Union countries remains relatively low. Consequently, the relationship described by Phillips, analogously, can occur in the real economy. However, it is not a relationship that determines the formation of the labour market in highly developed European countries.

Over the past several years, the behaviour of inflation in European Union countries has puzzled economists (Ball & Mazumder, 2021;

Yong, 2019). It was pointed out that inflation was falling as a result of the 2008–2009 global financial crisis and the 2011 European debt crisis. In addition, the oil sector and fluctuations in oil prices had an impact on headline inflation. Inflation in the European Union was also expected to be shaped by factors such as the development of the service sector and the globalization process (Ball & Mazumder, 2021). Currently, European Union member countries are experiencing high inflation rates like other economies, due to the economic slowdown following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising energy prices, and the war between Russia and Ukraine (Caporale et al., 2022; Ruiz Estrada, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic led to an unprecedented and multidimensional impact on the economy, contributing to a jump in inflation (Caporale et al., 2022).

The shock of the COVID-19 pandemic more severely affected the economies of the southern part of the European Union – Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy. The economies of these four countries shrank in 2020 by 10% (Greece), 11% (Spain), 7.6% (Portugal) and 8.8% (Italy), respectively (Afonso & Pinho, 2022). Tourism and recreation remains a very important sector in these four economies. Restrictions imposed due to the pandemic have contributed to rising unemployment, declining human capital, and declining investment and trade in the aforementioned countries (Afonso & Pinho, 2022; Ruiz Estrada, 2022; Vegas & Winthrop, 2020).

By contrast, the labour market in the European Union is characterized by multidimensionality, which is conditioned, among other things, by global economic cycles (Caravale, 1997; Ho & Iyke, 2018; Snieska et al., 2015; Stanila et al., 2014). In addition, the varying level of socioeconomic development of individual countries is also important (Čiegis et al., 2008). Technological advances, as well as an increase in R&D spending, have contributed to the narrowing of the technology gap, the positive impact of knowledge between sectors, and the relative increase in private sector wages (Afonso, 2023).

It is pointed out that another of the factors that affect the employment rate in European Union countries is education. The level of education affects the employment rate in most EU member states (Snieska et al., 2015; Stanila et al., 2014). When considering the importance of education level, it is worth noting the phenomenon of overeducation, which also affects many EU economies. Falling unemployment leads

to an increase in the number of people educated to a much higher level than necessary. Thus, over-educated people prefer to remain unemployed and look for jobs in line with their education rather than enter the labour market and work below their qualifications and skills (McGuinness et al., 2018).

The socio-economic changes that are taking place globally are contributing to changes in the labour market. In turn, inflation can affect all economic processes, including employment. Given this, inflation and the level of employment, as well as their economic effects, require constant research. This research contributes to the debate on the relationship between the employment rate and the inflation rate, as well as the development of economic policy research.

## CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the article was empirical verification of the fundamental relationship implied by the Phillips curve: the relationship between employment and inflation dynamics. The study carried out concerned selected member countries of the European Union.

The analysis conducted, as well as the results, allowed us to formulate several conclusions and identify limitations. First, the implications of the Phillips curve with regard to the relationship between inflation and the labour market are present. However, the relationship itself described is relatively weak with regard to other factors. Second, the labour market in the European Union is multidimensional and is shaped by a number of factors. These factors can include technological progress, level of education, varying levels of socio-economic development among EU members, or global economic cycles, among others. Thus, the unpredictability of inflation and general economic uncertainty can affect changes in the employment rate. Third, the expansion of the set of macroeconomic variables may further improve the explanation of the path of changes in the labour market. Fourth, Phillips inflation can be replaced by more specific indicators, particularly relating to the nature of inflationary changes, e.g.: inflation caused by wage-price spirals, inflation resulting from distorted production markets, which can contribute to a better understanding of the relationship.

In addition, further research on the relationship between employment and inflation can also be extended to all European Union countries. It is also worthwhile to focus on the factors affecting the employment rate in the European Union, especially since individual member countries have different levels of socio-economic development. It also seems necessary to frame the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war between Russia and Ukraine in the context of the labour market and inflation. This is important because both the COVID-19 pandemic and the war have affected many aspects of economic and social life.

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## Status analityczny pojęć typu: „n-ta władza”

### *Streszczenie*

**CEL NAUKOWY:** Celem jest ocena wartości analitycznej kategorii typu: „n-ta władza” oraz refleksja nad przydatnością tych kategorii w analizach teoretycznych.

**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** Przyjęto teoretyczno-politologiczny punkt widzenia, stąd przeanalizowano status ontologiczny, poznawczy i metodologiczny kategorii typu: „n-ta władza”. Poddano rozważaniom też ich zawartość merytoryczną oraz porównano z cechami, które są kojarzone ze „zjawiskiem władzy”. Zastanowiono się również nad rolą tych kategorii w analizach naukowych – czy są one funkcjonalne, czy dysfunkcjonalne w rozpoznawaniu zjawisk politycznych, a zjawiska władzy w szczególności.

**PROCES WYWODU:** We wprowadzeniu sformułowano szczegółowe zadania analizy pojęć n-tej władzy, genezy tych pojęć oraz ich funkcji, jakie mogą spełniać w opisie rzeczywistości. W syntetyczny sposób przedstawione zostały wybrane teorie władzy, w ramach których winny być prowadzone analizy. Następnie przeanalizowany został „wpływ” – czasami utożsamiany z władzą – ponadto „władza mediów” i „władza samorządu terytorialnego” w charakterze „czwartej władzy”.

**WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ:** W konkluzji stwierdzono, iż pojęcia typu: „n-ta władza” nie spełniają warunków stawianych kategoriom analitycznym i nie są przydatne w badaniach teoretycznych. Stwierdzono też, że „władza samorządu terytorialnego” jest najlepiej predysponowana do roli „czwartej

władzy”, co nie oznacza, iż jest to powód wystarczający, aby na trwale osadzić go w tej roli.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** Nie ma potrzeby wprowadzenia do języka naukowego pojęć tak słabo zdefiniowanych jak pojęcia typu: „n-ta władza”. Każde pojęcie zaczerpnięte wprost z języka potocznego wnosi bowiem do analizy naukowej nie do końca uświadamiane „znaczenia”, które mogą być przeszkodą w rozpoznawaniu rzeczywistości.

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**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:**

władza, n-ta władza, teorie władzy, media – czwarta władza, samorząd terytorialny – piąta władza

*Abstract*

ANALYTICAL STATUS OF NOTIONS LIKE:  
NTH POWER

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The purpose is to assess the analytical value of nth power type categories and to reflect on the usefulness of these categories in theoretical analyses.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The author has adopted a theory-political point of view, hence he analyzes the ontological, cognitive and methodological status of these categories. He also analyzes their substantive content and compares them with the characteristics that are associated with the “phenomenon of power.” He also reflects on the role of these categories in scientific analysis – whether they are functional or dysfunctional in recognizing political phenomena, including the phenomenon of power in particular.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The introduction formulates the detailed tasks of analyzing the concepts of the nth power, the origins of these concepts and their functions that they can perform in description of reality. Selected theories of power, within the framework of which analysis should be carried out, are presented in a synthetic way. Next, “influence” – sometimes equated with power, is analyzed, in addition, “the power of the media” and “the power of local government” as the “fourth power”.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** In conclusion, the author states that concepts of the nth power type do not meet the conditions for analytical categories and are not useful in theoretical research. He also concludes that the “local government authority” is best predisposed to the role of the “fourth authority,” which does not mean that this is reason enough to permanently place it in this role.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

There is no need to introduce into the scientific language such poorly defined concepts as those of the nth power type. This is because any concept taken directly from colloquial language brings into scientific analysis not fully realized “meanings” that can be an obstacle to recognizing reality.

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**KEYWORDS:**

power, nth power, theories of power, media, fourth estate

**WPROWADZENIE**

Koncepcje podziału władzy na legislatywę, egzekutywę i władzę sądowną współcześni dość powszechnie przypisują Monteskiuszowi, chociaż podział ten „został wypracowany już w starożytności (Arystoteles, Polibiusz), był dyskutowany i komentowany w średniowieczu (Akwinata, Marsyliusz z Padwy), a także w czasach nowożytnych (J. Bodin, J. Locke)” (Nieć, 2023, s. 5–7). Obawy przed monopolem władzy, przed absolutyzmem monarchy, towarzyszyły ludzkości od początku cywilizacji. Mimo iż władza nigdy nie była sprawowana przez jeden podmiot, zawsze była zjawiskiem wielopodmiotowym, nawet w absolutnej monarchii czy totalitaryzmie, to presja na jej dalszy podział była równie powszechna, co i permanentna. Społeczna presja na upodmiotowienie zaowocowała wykreowaniem nowych pojęć typu: czwarta, piąta, szósta... władza, używanych głównie w publicystyce, propagandzie, praktyce politycznej i – niestety coraz częściej – w analizach naukowych. Nowe pojęcia tworzono przez połączenie liczby z rzeczownikiem „władza”. I tak Monteskiuszowski podział władzy zostaje powiększony o:

- „czwartą władzę” – dla oznaczenia politycznej roli mediów,
- „piątą władzę” – dla określenia władzy realizowanej przez samorząd,
- „szóstą władzę” – dla określenia wpływu partii politycznej albo systemu politycznego na życie polityczne,
- „siódmą władzę” – dla podkreślenia i uwzględnienia faktycznej roli politycznej instytucji kościelnych.

Podejmowane są też próby nazywania w ten sposób władczych ról „społeczeństwa obywatelskiego” czy władczych oddziaływań ruchów społecznych.

Warto więc tym kreowanym pojęciom poświęcić nieco uwagi, aby zastanowić się, jaką odgrywają one rolę w wyjaśnianiu czy zrozumieniu zjawiska władzy politycznej. Czy są konstruktem sztucznym, czy też można je łączyć z jakimiś realnymi bytami, czy można przypisać im jakieś desygnaty? Na ile wynikają one z zastosowania teorii bądź metod interpretacyjnych w badaniach politologicznych? Innymi słowy – warto byłoby zastanowić się nad ich statusem metodologicznym.

Wyjaśnienia wymaga też ich geneza. Czy wywodzą się one z narracji potocznych o władzy, czy ich pojawienie wiązać należy z jakąś doktryną czy ideologią, a być może są one zaczerpnięte z języka propagandy, z myśli programowej partii politycznej czy – być może – z marketingu politycznego?

Najważniejsze pytanie, na które warto znaleźć odpowiedź, dotyczy funkcji tych pojęć w narracjach naukowych, czyli w rozpoznawaniu zjawisk politycznych, a w szczególności zjawiska władzy.

Założyć musimy, iż pojęcia te mogą okazać się funkcjonalne bądź dysfunkcjonalne w procesie poznawczym – i ten aspekt analizy będzie dominował w niniejszym opracowaniu. Zjawiska, a właściwie pojęcia będą w nim analizowane z perspektywy teoretyczno-politologicznej, z punktu widzenia ich walorów poznawczych, statusu ontologicznego, czyli ogólnie z metodologicznego punktu widzenia.

Naszą analizę poprzedzić musimy przypomnieniem najważniejszych elementów i cech, które najczęściej skłonni jesteśmy przypisać zjawisku władzy.

## TEORETYCZNE REFLEKSJE NAD ZJAWISKIEM WŁADZY

Refleksja nad władzą jest przedsięwzięciem niezwykle trudnym, bowiem wydaje się, że „władza jest wszędzie” i że „wszystko jest władzą”.

Mimo iż władza zajmuje poczesne miejsce w refleksji filozoficznej, socjologicznej, psychologicznej czy politologicznej, i to od czasów Platona po dzień dzisiejszy, to efekty nie są satysfakcjonujące, aby nie powiedzieć, że nikłe.

Dla jednych jest ona bytem ontycznym, dla innych czymś nieuchwytnym poznawczo (Hindess, 1990, s. 11). Wystarczy przytoczyć pojęcia, które są bliskoznaczne, a które trudno oddzielić od „władzy”. Już na poziomie rozważań etymologicznych pojawiają się liczne niejasności i rozbieżności.

I tak w języku Greków władza wywodzi się od dwóch słów, z których każde ma dwa znaczenia: *archein* oznacza „rządzić”, jak i „zaczynać”, *arche* oznacza „suwerenność”, ale także „początek”.

W języku angielskim polską kategorię „władza” można, w zależności od kontekstu, tłumaczyć na trzy sposoby: *power*, *authority*, *rule*.

Z władzą ściśle powiązane są takie pojęcia jak: panowanie, rządzenie, przywództwo, kontrola. Nie ma też zgodności co do tego, jakie elementy konstytuują władzę. Najczęściej do czynników tych zalicza się: konflikt, konsensus, przymus, przemoc, intencjonalność. Nie wiemy, które z nich współwystępują z władzą, a które są tylko okazjonalnie z nią powiązane. A przecież poszukiwania kryteriów pozwalających na odróżnienie od władzy takich pojęć jak: wpływ, przemoc, perswazja, siła oddziaływania, konflikt, nadzór, autorytet itd. winno być podstawą każdej teorii społecznej (Dybel & Wróbel, 2008, s. 230).

Nie sposób nawet wymienić wszystkich teoretycznych refleksji na temat władzy, stąd musimy się ograniczyć do podania jedynie wybranych przykładów.

W refleksji filozoficznej, ze względu na siłę oddziaływania na socjologię i politologię, na szczególną uwagę zasługują koncepcje teoretyczne T. Hobbesa, J. Locka i J.J. Rousseau. T. Hobbes wyróżnił władzę suwerena, który uzyskuje ją na podstawie porozumienia między tymi, którzy mieli stać się jego podwładnymi. Ludzie, kierując się rozumem, zamieniają stan wojny każdego z każdym na stan zrzeczenia się prawa do wszystkiego na rzecz suwerena, który w zamian ma im zapewnić bezpieczeństwo życia i posiadania. Władza suwerena powinna być absolutna, aby zapewnić mu skuteczność działania. Absolutna władza suwerena wynika z tego, że poddani sami przekazali mu władzę, przez co wyrzekli się prawa do buntu (Szahaj & Jakubowski, 2008, s. 139). Suweren bowiem nie umawiał się z żadnym z poddanych, to poddani porozumieli się między sobą, aby przekazać mu władzę i tym samym utracili prawo do oporu (Bloom, 2012, s. 407).

Odmianą koncepcję przedstawił J. Locke, który wyszedł z założenia, że wszyscy ludzie mają prawo do przyrodzonej, wynikającej z prawa natury wolności. Władza zatem uprawniona jest do tworzenia prawa dla dobra publicznego. Musi ona tworzyć prawo, kierując się dobrem publicznym i zapewnić skuteczne jego egzekwowanie. Gdyby jednak tego nie czyniła, to lud ma prawo do jej usunięcia i przejęcia władzy. Rozwiązanie to trwale powiązało władzę z obowiązkiem permanentnego procesu jej legitymizowania (Goldwin, 2012, s. 479 i n.).

J.J. Rousseau również wyszedł z założenia, że wszyscy ludzie są wolni, a zarazem równi. Dodatkowo stwierdził, że wszystkie ustroje są nieprawomocne, bowiem społeczeństwo obywatelskie więzi człowieka – staje się on niewolnikiem prawa oraz innych ludzi. Aby zachować wolność i równość ludzi, trzeba znaleźć odpowiednią formę stowarzyszenia. Dla jej stworzenia potrzebna jest „umowa społeczna”, która zapewni formę stowarzyszenia będącą w stanie bronić i chronić osoby oraz ich dobra. Może to być zrealizowane, gdy każdy człowiek wraz ze swoją własnością i prawami odda się wspólnocie (Bloom, 2012, s. 577). „Władza zwierzchnia” (obywateli) winna być suwerenna, niepodzielna i niezbywalna, a to wyklucza zasadę reprezentacji. Obywatele (zwierzchnik) mogą być reprezentowani wyłącznie przez siebie. Przekazywana może być jedynie władza, a nie wola (Kantyka, 1997, s. 14 i n.).

Psychologiczne teorie władzy z kolei utożsamiają władzę ze specyficznym rodzajem przeżycia, gdzie podmiot władczy przeżywa „prawo do decydowania” za kogoś innego, a podmiot podporządkowany jest przekonany o „obowiązku posłuszeństwa” podmiotowi władczemu.

Proces stawania się podległym nazywany jest „ujarzmieniem”. Podmioty podporządkowane, przytłoczone siłą podmiotu władczego, przystają na jego warunki i uwewnętrzniają to przeżycie. Dzięki temu władza, która początkowo jawi się jako zewnętrzna, gdy przyjmie formę psychiczną, gdy zostanie zinternalizowana, sprawia, że relacje między tymi podmiotami stają się naturalne, a więc normalne (Butler, 2018, s. 7–9).

Znaczący wpływ na teorię władzy wywarli K. Marks i M. Weber. Marksistowska teoria władzy wyprowadza ją z gospodarki i z własności środków produkcji, a konkretniej ze specyficznego pojmowanego panowania klasowego – panowania ekonomicznego, politycznego



i ideologicznego. M. Weber z kolei uznał, że władza stanowi swego rodzaju konkretyzację panowania. Według niego władza jest potencjalnym panowaniem, a panowanie jest władzą realizowaną. M. Weber, rozwijając swą koncepcję panowania, wyróżnił trzy czyste jej typy oparte na prawomocności – panowanie legalne, tradycyjne i charyzmatyczne.

Warto przywołać jeszcze dwie koncepcje władzy: T. Parsonsa i R. Dahla. T. Parsons przypisał władzę nie osobom czy rodom politycznym, lecz pozycjom społecznym bądź podsystemowi systemu społecznego. Władza jest zdolnością dokonywania zmian w systemie. Nie jest ona rodzajem społecznej interakcji, a mechanizmem funkcjonującym w ramach interakcji. Początkowo traktował on władzę jako środek o sumie zerowej, a później stwierdził, że należy ją ujmować w kategoriach gry o sumie niezerowej (Wróbel, 1997, s. 64 i n.). Z kolei R. Dahl koncentrował swoje zainteresowania na władzy politycznej. Wyszedł z założenia, że polityka polega na wywieraniu wpływu. A zatem władza według Dahla jest relacją, która może zachodzić pomiędzy dowolnymi jednostkami i zbiorowościami. Źródła władzy są różnorodne – uczucia, strach, pieniądze i wszystkie inne instrumenty, które posłużą jako narzędzie do skutecznego oddziaływania na zachowania innych. Władza jest zawsze ograniczona przedmiotowo, bowiem dostępności i możliwości oddziaływania A na B są zróżnicowane, a zatem uzyskanie zamierzonego efektu w oddziaływaniu A na B nie jest pewne, a najwyżej prawdopodobne. Dahl postulował też, aby w badaniach władzy zmierzać do kwantyfikowania „mocy”, względnie „potęgi” władzy. Władza według niego to

rodzaj zależności pomiędzy podmiotami społecznymi, w którym zachowanie jednego lub wielu podmiotów uzależnione jest w pewnych okolicznościach od zachowania innego podmiotu lub podmiotów (Pałeczki, 2021, s. 54 i n.).

Reasumując te krótkie rozważania na temat teorii władzy, musimy stwierdzić, że trudno jest wyróżnić którąś z tych teorii, ponieważ żadna nie spełnia wszystkich kryteriów. Każda z nich natomiast zwraca uwagę na cenne poznawczo elementy, które uzupełniają naszą wiedzę o władzy.

W niektórych teoriach władza jest cechą, w innych jest relacją społeczną, jest rodzajem przeżycia, jest zależnością

przyczynowo-skutkową, rodzajem wpływu, nieekwiwalentną wymianą, funkcją, sytuacją komunikacyjną itd.

Rozpatrywanie władzy bez określenia ram teoretycznych nie jest zatem uprawnione, bowiem operują one różnymi pojęciami, różnymi założeniami teoretycznymi i tym samym kreują różne teoretyczne opisy rzeczywistości.

Naszą analizę musimy zatem ograniczyć i skoncentrować się na jednej wybranej koncepcji. Wybieramy koncepcję, która władzę utożsamia z wpływem, jako że jest to ten element, który najczęściej pojawia się w teoriach władzy i to albo bezpośrednio, jak u R. Dahla, albo pośrednio, jak u B. Russella. Według Russella władza to osiągnięcie zamierzonych celów. Nie widać tu roli „wpływu”, ale jeżeli zastanowimy się głębiej i zadamy sobie pytanie, kto może zrealizować więcej celów, to musimy odpowiedzieć, że ten, kto dysponuje odpowiednim wpływem na innych ludzi, kto dysponuje większą ilością środków i większymi umiejętnościami. Jednym słowem: ten, kto ma większy wpływ na ludzi i przedmioty (Pałeczki, 2021, s. 16).

## WŁADZA A WPŁYW

Władza polityczna często bywa zestawiana, a nawet utożsamiana z wpływem. „Władzę społeczną (*Social power*) tradycyjnie określa się jako zdolność do wywierania wpływu na innych ludzi oraz opieranie się ich oddziaływaniu” (Lee Chai, 2009, s. 147). Ale nie zawsze, bowiem równie często jest ona pojmowana odmiennie. I tak, podmiot władczy ma normatywnie określoną przewagę nad podmiotami podporządkowanymi, natomiast podmiot ulegający wpływowi sam podejmuje decyzje o tym, czy ulegnie danemu wpływowi, czy też nie. Zatem w przypadku wpływu nie jest konieczna przewaga żadnej ze stron. Ponadto wpływ nie jest uregulowany żadnymi normami społecznymi, nie jest więc w ogóle stosunkiem społecznym, a rodzajem zależności faktycznej. Wpływ można wywierać i wpływowi można ulegać bez uświadomienia sobie tego procesu, czyli w stanie nieświadomości. Manipulacja jest rodzajem wpływu, bowiem za pomocą narzuconego, spreparowanego, często fałszywego obrazu rzeczywistości stara się wpływać na decyzje ludzi, aby były takie, jakimi zainteresowany jest manipulujący.

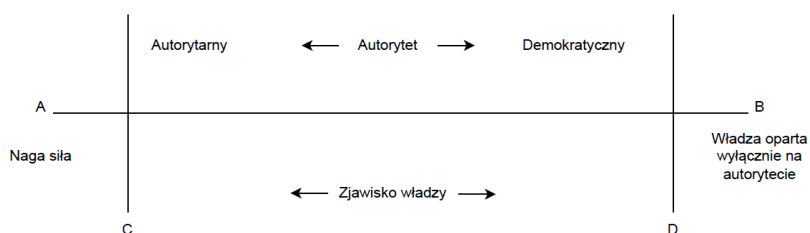
Władzę wyróżnia to, że może ona, ale nie musi, posługiwać się manipulacją, że może, ale nie musi, zabiegać o zwolenników podejmowanych przez siebie decyzji, bowiem daje możliwość wymuszania pożądanego zachowań, używając przymusu albo samą groźbą jej użycia. Władza bowiem oprócz autorytetu może posługiwać się przemocą, pod warunkiem iż całkowicie nie pozbawi podwładnego podmiotowości. W relacji władzy to „Y” decyduje, czy podporządkować się „X”, zaś w przypadku gdy mamy do czynienia z przemocą polegającą na zastosowaniu bezpośredniej siły, to sam „X” decyduje o losach „Y”. Ten ostatni wariant bywa nazywany „nagą siłą” i nie mieści się w zjawisku władzy demokratycznej.

Na osi środków: siła – autorytet zjawisko władzy znajduje się między nimi i nie może przyjąć punktów skrajnych.

Władza, która posługiwałaby się „nagą siłą”, utraciłaby konstytuujące ją cechy, natomiast władza, która całkowicie zrezygnowałaby z przymusu, byłaby władzą wyłącznie opartą na autorytecie i jako taka stałaby się fikcją, bowiem również nie spełniałaby warunków przypisywanych zjawisku władzy. Historia jak dotąd nie zna takich sytuacji i nic nie wskazuje, że coś tutaj zmieni się w najbliższej przyszłości.

Graficznie można byłoby zatem przedstawić rzecz następująco.

Schemat 1. Granice zjawiska władzy



Źródło: opracowanie własne

Zainteresowanych sposobami definiowania autorytetu autorytarnego i autorytetu demokratycznego odsyłam do pracy mego autorstwa pod tytułem *Teoria polityki. Studia*.

Utożsamianie władzy z wpływem jest zatem pewnym uproszczeniem. Nie każdy wpływ jest władzą, chociaż każde zjawisko władzy

jest wpływem. Wpływ władczy różni się od wpływu tym, iż jest on wyposażony w odpowiednie instrumentarium, które pozwala władzy zmusić drugą stronę do określonego postępowania i jego kontrolowania.

A zatem władza polityczna to także rządzenie, to także kierowanie ludźmi bądź grupami społecznymi, to możliwość podejmowania decyzji regulujących zachowania społeczne oraz rzeczywista możliwość egzekwowania podjętych decyzji z zastosowaniem przymusu, a nawet przemocy.

Po tym wprowadzeniu należy skierować naszą uwagę na status teoretyczny pojęć typu: „n-ta władza”.

## MEDIA JAKO „CZWARTA WŁADZA”

Analizę naszą rozpoczniemy od czwartej władzy mediów. Idea „czwartej władzy” pojawiła się w angielskim parlamentarystyce w XVIII wieku jako uzupełnienie Monteskiuszowskiego trójpodziału władzy. Samo pojęcie zaś przypisywane jest Edmundowi Burke’owi, który ponoć w swym wystąpieniu parlamentarnym zwrócił się do dziennikarzy z ław prasowych tymi słowami: „Jesteście czwartą władzą w królestwie”, jesteście „czwartym stanem” po stanie szlacheckim, duchownym i mieszczańskim. Rosnąca rola prasy stworzyła zapotrzebowanie na nowe pojęcia, które nazywałyby te szybko zyskujące na znaczeniu role prasy i dziennikarstwa w oddziaływaniu na społeczeństwo i politykę. Pojęcia „czwartej władzy” zaczęto używać dla podkreślenia wpływu prasy na opinię publiczną mimo braku formalnego umocowania tego wpływu (por. Paczkowski, 1973, s. 5 oraz Goban-Klas, 2008, s. 296).

Pojęcie „czwartej władzy” zawiera w sobie sugestie, iż prasa i pozostałe media zostały upodmiotowione i że stały się wręcz swoistym podmiotem władzy, mimo iż formalnie nie zmienił się status mediów, chociaż rzeczywiste ich funkcje polityczne zostały bardzo rozbudowane. Z tego powodu jednak media nie nabrały cech, które przypisujemy „zjawisku władzy”. Media nie zyskały przecież bezpośredniego dostępu do środków przemocy, a jedynie zwielokrotnione zostały ich możliwości wywierania wpływu. Wpływ, jak stwierdzono wcześniej, nie może być utożsamiany z władzą, stąd używanie pojęcia „czwarta

władza” w nazywaniu funkcji mediów nie jest uprawnione z politologicznego punktu widzenia, chociaż jest tak często obecne w języku polityki i publicystyki. Przenikanie tego pojęcia do języka politologii oznacza pewien zamęt przy definiowaniu zjawiska władzy. Władza ustawodawcza, władza wykonawcza i sądownicza mają inny status ontologiczny niż „czwarta władza” w odniesieniu do mediów. Mają też one inny status epistemologiczny. Komentarza wymaga status mediów przy wywieraniu wpływu na politykę i społeczeństwo.

Czy można określić media jako samodzielny podmiot wywierania wpływu politycznego? W moim przekonaniu – nie, bowiem media nie są autonomiczne przy wywieraniu wpływu na politykę, na polityków i na władzę. Wpływ ten bowiem może być funkcjonalny względem władzy, względem rządu, ale może być też dysfunkcyjny. W dodatku funkcje te mogą zmieniać się diametralnie, na przykład po wygranych przez opozycję wyborach. Na funkcje realizowane przez media ogromny wpływ wywierają stosunki własnościowe – zarówno w sferze mediów, jak i w społeczeństwie – czyli struktura własnościowa kapitału funkcjonującego w danym państwie. Podmiotowość wpływu jest w sferze mediów tylko częściowa, w rzeczywistości bowiem niezależność dziennikarzy faktycznie podlega ograniczaniu. Z samego statusu dziennikarza nie można wnosić, iż jest on decydem w sprawie treści zamieszczanych w mediach. Dużo większe kompetencje decyzyjne mają właściciele mediów, którzy albo podejmują je bezpośrednio, albo pośrednio przez osoby powołane przez nich do zarządów czy rad nadzorczych. Możliwości oddziaływania na treści zamieszczane w mediach mają, chociaż w mniejszym zakresie, podmioty zamieszczające reklamy, ogłoszenia czy sponsorowane artykuły, audycje itd. Wreszcie pośredni wpływ na umieszczane w mediach treści mają ich odbiorcy: czytelnicy, widzowie, słuchacze. Permanentne nieliczenie się z ich gustami, poglądami, zachowaniami, kulturą najczęściej jest początkiem końca danego medium.

Co zatem oznacza sformułowanie „czwarta władza mediów”? Czy jest to adekwatne określenie funkcji mediów? Nie. Czy jest to nazwa wpływu mediów na politykę? Nie. A skoro tak się sprawy mają, to jakie podmioty ukryte zostały w tej nazwie? Jakie są faktyczne związki tzw. czwartej władzy (mediów) z „władzą pieniądza”? Po to aby rozszyfrować pojęcie „czwartej władzy” mediów, należy wcześniej udzielić odpowiedzi na powyższe pytanie.

W kontekście nauki o polityce pojęcie „czwartej władzy” w znaczeniu, w jakim ono dotąd funkcjonuje, trudno zaakceptować, bowiem nie pomaga w poznaniu zjawiska władzy, a wręcz to utrudnia. Opowiadając się za wyeliminowaniem tego terminu z języka analiz naukowych, biorę pod uwagę to, że poszczególne „pojęcia” są nośnikami pewnych zakodowanych w nich treści, które rzutują na opis rzeczywistości, na sens opisywanych zjawisk i na wyniki badań. Pojęcia, nazwy czy terminy nie są nośnikami żadnych obiektywnych czy uniwersalnych znaczeń, a wprost przeciwnie – są przeszkodą w dotarciu do wiedzy obiektywnej (Polakowski, 2013, s. 157 i n.). A skoro tak, to nie można do języka nauki włączać pojęć czy nazw bezpośrednio zaczerpniętych z języka potocznego, a jedynie te, które cechuje większa jednoznaczność, większa precyzyjność i spójność z pozostałymi elementami języka nauki.

Pod pojęciem „media – czwarta władza” skrywają się treści, które różnią się od tych, jakie powszechnie się im przypisuje. Zatem sens poznawczy tego terminu jest co najmniej niejasny, jest on wieloznaczny, a być może jest to pojęcie, które skrywa treści niewygodne dla niektórych grup społecznych (kapitał).

## SAMORZĄD TERYTORIALNY JAKO CZWARTA WŁADZA

Podobne uwagi sformułować można też w odniesieniu do innych pojęć typu: „n-ta władza”. Wśród tych pojęć pewien wyjątek stanowi władza samorządowa, często określana jako „piąta władza”, chociaż niektórzy samorząd terytorialny są skłonni określać mianem „czwartej władzy”. Nazywanie samorządu terytorialnego „czwartą władzą” zgodne było z założeniami liberalizmu, filozofią praw natury i z będącą tego pochodną naturalistyczną teorią samorządu terytorialnego. Nazwy tej natomiast nie akceptują zwolennicy państwowej teorii samorządu terytorialnego, według której samorząd terytorialny powstał z woli państwa, np. poprzez decentralizację władzy (Sieklicki, 2023, s. 73). Wypada więc tę wyjątkowość uzasadnić.

Rozpocząć musimy od usytuowania władzy samorządowej w szerszej kategorii, jaką jest władza lokalna. Ta ostatnia nie jest bytem samodzielnym, lecz efektem mniej lub bardziej wymuszonego

podziału władzy państwowej. Podziału specyficznego, bowiem przebiegającego pomiędzy podmiotami, które z natury rzeczy nie są równorzędne. Zachodzą między nimi podobne relacje jak między społeczeństwem globalnym określonego państwa a lokalnymi społeczeństwami będącymi jego częściami. Efektywne zarządzanie całym państwem i całym społeczeństwem wymaga scedowania pewnych kompetencji ze szczebla władzy centralnej na szczebel lokalny po to, aby stworzyć odpowiednie warunki zarządzania mniejszymi społecznościami. To scedowanie kompetencji władczych w dół może być zrealizowane w dwojaki sposób: drogą dekoncentracji lub drogą decentralizacji. Z kolei odwrotne procesy przekazywania kompetencji władczych w górę noszą nazwy: koncentracji kompetencji władczych i centralizacji kompetencji władczych (Blok, 2018. s. 19 i nast.).

W sytuacji gdy organy władzy centralnej są władne samodzielnie powoływać i odwoływać instytucje i funkcjonariuszy władz lokalnych, władza taka przybiera charakter rządowy i staje się przedłużeniem rządu na danym terenie. Rozwiązania tego typu praktykowane są w systemach niedemokratycznych i prowadzą do powoływania lokalnej władzy rządowej, na przykład szczebla regionalnego, powiatowego czy gminnego. Dekoncentracja nie jest procesem demokratyzacji, bowiem nie jest *de facto* procesem faktycznego podziału władzy, lecz jedynie zmianą wewnętrzną struktury władzy centralnej.

W systemach demokratycznych tworzenie władz lokalnych dokonuje się poprzez proces decentralizacji, czyli upodmiotowienia społeczności lokalnych. Władze lokalne powoływane są w drodze wyborów, w których uczestniczy społeczność lokalna władna do powoływania i odwoływania ze stanowisk samorządowych. Taki charakter władzy lokalnej oznacza, że przestaje być ona władzą rządową, a przybiera postać „samorządowej”. Jest bowiem bezpośrednio powiązana z upodmiotowieniem społeczności lokalnych, z przekazaniem kompetencji władczych w dół. Warunkiem rzeczywistej decentralizacji jest przekazanie w dół nie tylko kompetencji, uprawnień władczych strukturom samorządowym ale wraz z nimi przekazanie środków prawnych, finansowych, rzeczowych itd. niezbędnych do realizacji ich kompetencji. Tylko wtedy możemy procesy te nazwać demokratycznymi i tylko wtedy mamy do czynienia z przekazaniem uprawnień władczych na rzecz samorządów. Skuteczne przekazanie kompetencji musi powodować ograniczenie kompetencji władzy

rządowej, wykonawczej. Jeśli to nie nastąpi, to decentralizacja okaże się fikcją. A. Piekara nazwał taką decentralizację „decentralizacją pozorną i nieautentyczną” (Piekara, 1994, s. 56).

Decentralizacja i ściśle z nią powiązany proces demokratyzacji mają miejsce wtedy, gdy instytucje samorządowe w drodze delegowania uprawnień władczych uzyskują w mniej lub bardziej okrojonym zakresie wszystkie rodzaje władzy państwowej.

Co to oznacza? Otóż nie można interpretować tego przekazu jako przyzwolenia na to, aby władza lokalna, nawet w formie samorządowej, stała się bytem samodzielnym. Stąd lokalna władza samorządowa nie może stać się rodzajem państwa w państwie, bowiem byłoby to zjawisko wysoce niebezpieczne dla zachowania jedności państwa.

Władza lokalna w żadnej wersji nie jest bytem samodzielnym i nie może istnieć poza strukturami państwa. Argument ten nie oznacza, iż zostaje ona pozbawiona atrybutów przypisywanych władzy. Żadna z władz, której status nie jest kwestionowany – tzn. władza ustawodawcza, wykonawcza i sądownicza – nie jest bytem samodzielnym w tym sensie, że żadna nie może istnieć poza państwem i bez współistnienia z pozostałymi. Władza ustawodawcza nie byłaby władzą, gdyby władza wykonawcza i sądownicza nie zapewniły jej warunków do wprowadzenia prawa i przestrzegania jego norm. Władza wykonawcza nie byłaby władzą, gdyby nie było instytucji stanowiących prawa i instytucji rozstrzygających o ich nieprzestrzeganiu oraz instytucji egzekwujących wyroki sądowe. Władza sądownicza również nie byłaby władzą, gdyby władza ustawodawcza nie ustanowiła norm prawnych i nie istniałyby instytucje zaliczane do „resortów siłowych”, bez których nie byłoby możliwe egzekwowanie przestrzegania norm prawnych.

A skoro żadna z władz nie jest bytem samodzielnym, to brak samodzielności nie jest równoznaczny z pozbawieniem podmiotu cech przypisywanych władzy. Zatem władza lokalna – rządowa czy samorządowa – z powodu braku samodzielności nie traci cech władczych. Władza samorządowa ma wiele cech, które przypisać należy władzy i stąd określenie jej mianem czwartej, piątej czy szóstej władzy jest pojęciem, które wzbudza najmniej kontrowersji. B. Constant wymienił samorząd jako jedną z sześciu władz w państwie (Sieklicki, 2023, s. 75).



Według autora na miano „czwartej władzy”, spośród wszystkich rodzajów, najbardziej zasługuje władza samorządu terytorialnego, chociaż nie oznacza to, iż pojęcie „czwarta władza” samorządu terytorialnego spełnia wszystkie cechy przypisane „zjawisku władzy” i może być traktowane jako kategoria analityczna.

Nie oznacza to, iż należy akceptować kategorię n-tej władzy w analizie naukowej, która – jak wiadomo – ukierunkowana jest na poznanie. Skoro władza jest zawsze mniej lub bardziej rozproszona, czyli ma charakter wielopodmiotowy, a w dodatku każdy z tych podmiotów ma różny status metodologiczny, to numerowanie poszczególnych podmiotów władzy wydaje się zabiegiem utrudniającym, bowiem wprowadza do tak skomplikowanej analizy, jakim jest zjawisko władzy, dodatkową płaszczyznę rozważań, która może ją bardziej skomplikować niż uprościć.

## ZAKOŃCZENIE

W wyniku analizy przeprowadzonej w niniejszym artykule można stwierdzić, że podział władzy wiąże się bezpośrednio z tym, iż podmioty, które były nośnikami władzy, redukują swoje władcze cechy na rzecz innych. Od zakresu podziału władzy zależy to, na ile podmioty dotąd władcze zachowują swój status władczy, ewentualnie na ile go tracą na rzecz innych, czasami nowych podmiotów. Podział władzy oznacza zatem inne rozdysponowanie jej zasobów – takie, w wyniku którego podmioty dotąd władcze przekazują część swojego zasobu innym podmiotom. Proces ten kojarzy się z grą o sumie zerowej, szczególnie w krótkich okresach, w których zasób władzy wydaje się wielkością względnie stałą. W długich okresach dziejowych natomiast zasób władzy jest wielkością zmienną, a nawet szybko rosnącą i stąd władzę możemy sobie wyobrazić jako grę o sumie niezerowej. Czy jednak każdy podział zasobu władzy oznacza większe upodmiotowienie innych, czy jest równoznaczny z powołaniem nowych podmiotów władczych?

Otóż wydaje się, że zależy to od zmian, które zajądą w otoczeniu podmiotu władzy. I tak, ważne są kierunki zmian w sferze: panowania, rządzenia, przywództwa, lobbingu czy kontroli. Istotne są też zmiany na osi konfliktu – konsensusy społeczne oraz skala, jaką

przybiorą przymus i przemoc w życiu społecznym, a także różnice między deklarowanymi a rzeczywistymi intencjami władzy.

W tej sytuacji, z metodologicznego punktu widzenia, przypisywanie podmiotom władczym jakiegoś numeru typu: „n-ta władza” nie jest uzasadnione z uwagi na dużą zmienność elementów otoczenia. Przykładowo, gdyby przypisać odpowiednie przymiotniki czy liczebniki 1, 2, 3 do Monteskiuszowskiego podziału władzy na ustawodawczą, wykonawczą i sądowniczą, to mogłoby to doprowadzić do zafałszowania obrazu rzeczywistości. Od co najmniej stulecia bowiem obserwujemy tendencję ustanawiania prymatu władzy wykonawczej nad ustawodawczą i sądowniczą i to niezależnie od istniejącego reżimu politycznego, ewentualnym wyjątkiem może być jedynie system polityczny Szwajcarii. Opisując współczesność, władzy wykonawczej wypadałoby przypisać 1, władzy ustawodawczej 2, a sądowniczej 3 lub odwrotnie sądowniczej 2, a ustawodawczej 3 tam, gdzie rola sądów w ustalaniu konstytucyjności ustaw jest duża.

W ramach konkluzji możemy wysnuć następujące wnioski. Otóż na potrzeby analiz naukowych tworzony jest język sztuczny. Jest nim też język politologiczny, którego pojęcia tworzone są z myślą o ich jednoznaczności, co zresztą nie zawsze się udaje, ale w porównaniu z pojęciami języka potocznego, języka polityki czy publicystyki są one bardziej precyzyjne, a przede wszystkim każdorazowo są one definiowane. Stąd pojęcia typu: „n-ta władza” pozbawione są cech pojęć analitycznych i jako takie są mało użyteczne w analizach naukowych, a co więcej – mogą je dodatkowo jeszcze komplikować. Nie oznacza to, że nie mogą one odgrywać nawet ważnych ról w propagandzie, marketingu, polityce czy publicystyce.

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## Budżet obywatelski/partycypacyjny jako forma uczestnictwa obywateli w procesie decyzyjnym w Polsce

### *Streszczenie*

**CEL NAUKOWY:** Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego jako formy uczestnictwa obywateli w procesie decyzyjnym w Polsce w wymiarze prawnym i praktycznym.

**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** Głównym problemem badawczym jest określenie podstaw prawnych dla budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego w Polsce oraz praktyki jego funkcjonowania. W celu realizacji postawionego zadania badawczego zastosowano analizę źródeł pierwotnych (akty prawne, dokumenty, raporty) oraz krytyczną analizę tekstu (opracowania naukowe).

**PROCES WYWODU:** Omówione zostały podstawy prawne oraz praktyka budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego jako formy uczestnictwa obywateli w procesie decyzyjnym w Polsce.

**WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ:** W Polsce do 2018 roku nie obowiązywały ustawowe regulacje budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego. W praktyce były tworzone na podstawie Ustawy o samorządzie gminnym. W roku 2018 budżet obywatelski/partycypacyjny został uregulowany prawnie jako forma konsultacji obligatoryjna dla 66 miast na prawach powiatu. W Polsce instytucja

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ta funkcjonuje od 2011 roku i obejmuje także zielony budżet, młodzieżowy budżet obywatelski oraz szkolny budżet partycypacyjny. Pandemia Covid-19 oraz wybuch wojny w Ukrainie spowodowały problemy w jego realizacji.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** Dyskusje dotyczące regulacji prawnych z 2018 oraz 2022 roku mogą posłużyć jako podstawa do dalszej debaty na temat wykorzystania budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego zarówno w Polsce, jak i w innych państwach Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej.

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**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:**

budżet obywatelski, budżet partycypacyjny, partycypacja, obywatele, Polska

*Abstract*

CIVIC/PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING  
AS A FORM OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION  
IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN POLAND

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The article aims to present civic/participatory budgeting as a form of citizen participation in the decision-making process in Poland in the legal and practical terms.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The main research problem is to determine the legal basis for the civic/participatory budgeting in Poland and the practice of its functioning. To carry out the research task, an analysis of primary sources (legal acts, documents, and reports) and a critical analysis of the text (scientific studies) were used.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The legal basis and the practice of civic/participatory budgeting as a form of citizens' participation in the decision-making process in Poland were discussed.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** Until 2018, there were no statutory regulations on participatory budgeting in Poland. In practice, they were created on the basis of the Act on municipal self-government. In 2018, the civic/participatory budget was regulated by law as a form of obligatory consultation for 66 cities with county rights. In Poland, this institution has been operating since 2011 and also includes the green budget, youth civic budget and school participatory budget. The Covid-19 pandemic and outbreak of the war in Ukraine caused problems in its implementation.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Discussions on the legal regulations of 2018 and 2022 may serve as a basis for

further debate on the use of civic/participatory budgeting in Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries.

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### **KEYWORDS:**

civic budgeting, participatory budgeting, participation, citizens, Poland

## WPROWADZENIE

W Polsce stosowane są dwa określenia: budżet obywatelski i budżet partycypacyjny. Pierwsze z nich kładzie nacisk na podmiot, czyli obywateli. W drugim z kolei akcent jest przeniesiony na uczestnictwo. Mogą w nim brać udział także osoby, które nie są obywatelami danego państwa (Kęmbłowski, 2013, s. 8). Poza Polską najczęściej stosowane jest pojęcie budżetu partycypacyjnego. Ze względu na złożoność problemu w artykule stosowane jest pojęcie budżet obywatelski/partycypacyjny (Marczewska-Rytko & Maj, 2021).

Budżet obywatelski/partycypacyjny jest formą konsultacji społecznych (z tą jednak różnicą, że jego wyniki są dla władzy wiążące). Można w nim odnaleźć elementy charakterystyczne zarówno dla demokracji bezpośredniej, jak i demokracji deliberatywnej oraz współzrządzenia publicznego (Podgórska-Rykała, 2018; Składanek, 2017; Marczewska-Rytko, 2023; Marczewska-Rytko, 2001; Kłucińska & Sześciło, 2017; Sroka, Pawlica & Ufel, 2022). Jego istotę stanowi mechanizm włączania mieszkańców do procesu decyzyjnego, dotyczącego wydatków w skali lokalnej (Allegretti & Herzberg, 2004; Cabannes, 2004; Marczewska-Rytko & Maj, 2021; Marczewska-Rytko, Aksiuto, Maj & Pomarański, 2018; Marczak, 2015; Rytel-Warzocho, 2013; Gnela, 2022). Część badaczy traktuje je jako instytucję demokracji partycypacyjnej o charakterze semibezpośrednim (Sokala, Michalak & Uziębło, 2013). Część badaczy zwraca uwagę na to, że „budżet opracowuje się z szerokim udziałem obywateli, wykraczającym poza tradycyjne konsultacje społeczne” (Kulesza & Sześciło, 2013, s. 123). Inni z kolei podkreślają, że dzięki budżetowi mieszkańcy mogą prezentować własne żądania i priorytety oraz dzięki udziałowi w dyskusjach i negocjacjach wpływać na strukturę wydatków budżetowych (Wampler, 2007; Rybińska, 2018), kształtować i „oswajać” przestrzeń

miasta (Rzeńca & Sobol, 2018), rozwijać samorząd lokalny (Rybińska, 2018).

W procesie badawczym sformułowano dwa pytania badawcze:

1. Jakie rozwiązania prawne regulują funkcjonowanie budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego w Polsce?
2. Jaka jest praktyka funkcjonowania budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego w Polsce?

W celu odpowiedzi na postawione pytania badawcze analizie poddano źródła pierwotne, obejmujące akty prawne obowiązujące w Polsce i dokumenty oraz źródła wtórne, obejmujące opracowania naukowe. W toku badań posłużono się metodą analizy aktów prawnych i dokumentów. Wykorzystano także metodę krytycznej analizy dyskursu naukowego oraz metodę porównawczą.

## PODSTAWY PRAWNE BUDŻETU OBYWATELSKIEGO/ PARTYCYPACYJNEGO W POLSCE

Kwestia konsultacji społecznych i powiązanego z nimi budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego nie została w sposób bezpośredni uregulowana w obowiązującej Konstytucji RP z 1997 roku (Marczewska-Rytko, 2019). Jednakowoż jako podstawę wskazuje się zasady konstytucyjne dotyczące suwerenności narodu, demokratycznego państwa prawnego oraz społeczeństwa obywatelskiego (Konstytucja RP z dnia 2 kwietnia 1997 r.).

W Polsce przed 2018 rokiem nie obowiązywały ustawowe regulacje budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego (Tykwińska-Rutkowska & Glejt, 2015). Przywoływano natomiast rozwiązania prawne zawarte w ustawach: o działalności pożytku publicznego i o wolontariacie; o udostępnianiu informacji o środowisku i jego ochronie, udziale społeczeństwa w ochronie środowiska oraz o ocenach oddziaływania na środowisko; o zasadach prowadzenia polityki rozwoju; o pomocy społecznej; o promocji zatrudnienia i instytucjach rynku pracy; o planowaniu i zagospodarowaniu przestrzennym. Konsultacje prawne były także regulowane przez Ustawę o Trójstronnej Komisji do Spraw Społeczno-Gospodarczych i wojewódzkich komisjach dialogu społecznego, która przewidywała prowadzenie dialogu społecznego odnośnie do wynagrodzeń, świadczeń społecznych, spraw o dużym



znaczeniu społecznym i gospodarczym. Uchylono ją w 2011 roku. Wskazywano także Ustawę o finansach publicznych, która pozwalała na angażowanie obywateli w proces rozdysponowywania pieniędzy publicznych.

W praktyce do 2018 roku budżety obywatelskie/partycypacyjne tworzone były na podstawie artykułu 5a Ustawy z dnia 8 marca 1990 r. o samorządzie gminnym. Na tej podstawie rada gminy była władna ustalić tryb i zasady przeprowadzenia konsultacji w sprawach ważnych dla wspólnoty, a kwestie budżetu były traktowane jako ważne (Odpowiedź sekretarza stanu w Ministerstwie Administracji i Cyfryzacji). Gminy mogły zatem uchylać prawo lokalne dotyczące zasad tworzenia budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego (Sobol, 2017; Dolewka, 2015). Każda gmina mogła przyjmować własne zasady dotyczące sposobu zgłaszania projektów, ich konsultowania i wyboru. Środki finansowe wyodrębnione w ramach takiego budżetu mogły być przeznaczone na realizację przedsięwzięć obejmujących ustawowe zadania danej jednostki terytorialnej. Rozwiązania te miały charakter fakultatywny i w pełni zależały od decyzji władz danej jednostki samorządu (NIK, 2019).

W listopadzie 2017 roku złożono do Sejmu poselski projekt ustawy o zmianie niektórych ustaw w celu zwiększenia udziału obywateli w procesie wybierania, funkcjonowania i kontrolowania niektórych organów publicznych (Poselski projekt ustawy o zmianie niektórych ustaw, 2017). Ustawa weszła w życie z dniem 11 stycznia 2018 roku (Ustawa z dnia 11 stycznia 2018 r. o zmianie niektórych ustaw w celu zwiększenia udziału obywateli w procesie wybierania, funkcjonowania i kontrolowania niektórych organów publicznych). Dokonano nowelizacji ustaw: o samorządzie gminnym, powiatowym oraz województwa. Zgodnie z ustawą uznano budżet obywatelski/partycypacyjny za szczególną formę konsultacji społecznych.

W znowelizowanej ustawie o samorządzie gminnym przyjęto rozwiązanie, zgodnie z którym

w ramach budżetu obywatelskiego mieszkańcy w bezpośrednim głosowaniu decydują corocznie o części wydatków budżetu gminy. Zadania wybrane w ramach budżetu obywatelskiego zostają uwzględnione w uchwale budżetowej gminy. Rada gminy w toku prac nad projektem uchwały budżetowej nie może usuwać lub zmieniać w stopniu istotnym zadań wybranych w ramach budżetu

obywatelskiego (Ustawa z dnia 8 marca 1990 roku o samorządzie gminnym; tekst ujednolicony Dz.U. z 2023 r., poz. 40, 572, art. 5a, pkt 4).

Gminy będące miastami na prawach powiatu mają obowiązek tworzenia budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego. W Polsce taki status posiada 66 miast. Wysokość takiego budżetu nie może być niższa niż 0,5% wydatków gminy wyliczonych na podstawie ostatniego przedłożonego sprawozdania z wykonania budżetu (art. 5a, pkt 5).

Odnosnie do środków finansowych wydatkowanych w ramach budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego mogą one być dzielone na: 1) pule, obejmujące całość gminy i jej części w postaci jednostek pomocniczych lub grup jednostek pomocniczych, 2) kategorie kwotowe projektów obejmujące całość gminy lub jej części (art. 5a, pkt 6). Na Radę gminy został nałożony obowiązek przygotowania uchwały zawierającej szczegółowe wymogi formalne, jakie musi spełnić zgłaszany projekt; wymaganą liczbę podpisów pod projektem (nie może być ona większa niż 0,1% mieszkańców terenu objętego pulą budżetu obywatelskiego, w którym zgłaszany jest projekt; zasady oceny zgłoszonych projektów (zgodność z prawem, wykonalność techniczna, spełnianie wymogów formalnych, tryb odwoławczy; zasady przeprowadzania głosowania, ustalania wyników i podawania ich do wiadomości mieszkańców (art. 5a, pkt 7). Analogiczne rozwiązania prawne przyjęto na poziomie powiatu oraz województwa. Szczegółowe zasady i tryb przeprowadzania konsultacji z mieszkańcami w ramach budżetu zawarte są w uchwałach rad miejskich.

W styczniu 2022 roku do Sejmu wpłynął projekt nowelizacji ustawy o samorządzie gminnym (Poselski projekt ustawy o zmianie ustawy o samorządzie gminnym, ustawy o samorządzie powiatowym oraz ustawy o samorządzie województwa, 2022). Projekt powstał w odpowiedzi na petycję skierowaną do Sejmu przez Macieja Czempieła z Piekar Śląskich, którą Komisja do Spraw Petycji Sejmu RP uznała za zasadną. Jej celem było wprowadzenie regulacji umożliwiających gminom swobodny podział swojego terytorium w celu przeznaczenia puli środków w ramach budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego. Uzasadniając zgłoszoną propozycję, jej autorzy podkreślali, że dotychczasowy przepis eliminuje obszary mniej zaludnione w procesie podziału środków oraz stanowi barierę dla

współpracy jednostek pomocniczych, gdyż pozbawia gminy swobody dysponowania swoimi zasobami w ramach niektórych jednostek pomocniczych. W marcu 2022 roku Sejm znowelizował ustawę o samorządzie gminnym. Art. 5a, ust. 6 zyskał następujące brzmienie: „Środki wydatkowane w ramach budżetu obywatelskiego mogą być dzielone na pule obejmujące całość gminy i jej części lub kategorie kwotowe projektów dotyczące całości obszaru gminy lub jej części” (Ustawa z dnia 28 kwietnia 2022 r. o zmianie ustawy o samorządzie gminnym). Nowe przepisy po raz pierwszy znalazły zastosowanie podczas konsultacji społecznych budżetów na 2023 rok, w sytuacji gdy zgłaszanie projektów budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego w danej gminie nie zostało zakończone.

W związku z wybuchem wojny w Ukrainie pojawiły się kolejne zmiany prawa. Na mocy Ustawy z dnia 12 marca 2022 r. o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa zmodyfikowano przepisy dotyczące miast na prawach powiatu. Rady takich miast mogły przyjąć uchwałę, w której zadecydują o: „nieprzeprowadzaniu budżetu obywatelskiego dotyczącego projektów przewidzianych do realizacji w 2024 r.; zawieszeniu przeprowadzania budżetu obywatelskiego dotyczącego projektów przewidzianych do realizacji w 2023 r.; zawieszeniu w 2022 r. realizacji niektórych projektów ze środków budżetu obywatelskiego” (art. 112, ust. 1). Przyjęta uchwała nie dotyczyła projektów rozpoczętych przed przyjęciem nowych regulacji. Na radę miasta nałożono obowiązek odniesienia się w uchwale do terminu realizacji projektów zawieszonych w roku 2022 oraz przewidzianych do realizacji w 2023 roku. Przepisy te mają charakter tymczasowy.

### PRAKTYKA BUDŻETU OBYWATELSKIEGO/ PARTYCYPACYJNEGO W POLSCE

W Polsce budżet obywatelski/partycypacyjny znalazł zastosowanie w 2011 roku (Marczewska-Rytko & Maj, 2021; Krasnowolski, 2020; Błaszak, 2019; Popławski, 2018; Dubicki, 2021; Misiejko, 2020). Pierwszą inicjatywą był budżet przyjęty w Sopocie. Znaczącą rolę odegrała działająca od 2008 roku nieformalna grupa Inicjatywa Rozwoju Sopotu (Stokłuska, 2012). Rezolucję w sprawie wprowadzenia budżetu

Rada Miasta Sopotu podjęła 6 maja 2011 roku (Sopot Gmina, 2012). W kolejnych latach budżety zostały wprowadzone we wszystkich miastach wojewódzkich w Polsce oraz w większości miast powiatowych. W roku 2013 roku instytucję budżetu wprowadzono w Białymstoku, Bydgoszczy, Gorzowie Wielkopolskim, Poznaniu, Zielonej Górze. W roku 2014 dołączyły kolejne miasta: Gdańsk, Katowice, Kielce, Kraków, Łódź, Olsztyn, Opole, Rzeszów, Szczecin, Toruń, Wrocław. Rok później także Lublin i Warszawa zastosowały budżet obywatelski/partycypacyjny.

Perturbacje w przeprowadzeniu budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego zostały spowodowane pandemią Covid-19. Zgodnie z rozporządzeniem Ministra Zdrowia w Polsce w okresie od 20 marca 2020 roku do 15 maja 2022 roku obowiązywał stan epidemii (Rozporządzenie Ministra Zdrowia z dnia 20 marca 2020 r.). W tabeli 1 przedstawiono dane dotyczące odsetka miast wdrażających budżet obywatelski/partycypacyjny w latach 2016 i 2020.

Tabela 1. Miasta wprowadzające budżet obywatelski/partycypacyjny w Polsce w roku 2016 i 2020

Wielkość miasta	Miasta wprowadzające budżet obywatelski/partycypacyjny w roku 2016 w %	Miasta wprowadzające budżet obywatelski/partycypacyjny w roku 2020 w %
Małe miasta (5–20 tysięcy mieszkańców)	36	19
Średniej wielkości miasta (20–50 tysięcy mieszkańców)	61	34
Średniej wielkości miasta (50–100 tysięcy mieszkańców)	78	62
Duże miasta (100–200 tysięcy mieszkańców)	100	96
Duże miasta (powyżej 200 tysięcy mieszkańców)	100	100
Razem	49	31

Źródło: Fundacja Stocznia, *Budżety obywatelskie; Barometr budżetu obywatelskiego. Edycja 2020*, Instytut Rozwoju Miast i Regionów, Warszawa–Kraków 2021

Z danych przedstawionych w tabeli 1 wynika, że odsetek miast stosujących tę formę konsultacji w 2020 roku zmniejszył się o 18 pp. w porównaniu z 2016 rokiem. Zmiany te dotyczyły głównie miast małych i średnich. W porównaniu do małych miast (5–20 tys.

mieszkańców) spadek wyniósł 17 pp. W miastach średniej wielkości (20–50 tys. mieszkańców) spadek wyniósł 27 pp., a w miastach średnich (50–100 tys. mieszkańców) 16 pp.

Na podstawie danych zawartych w Raporcie wpływu pandemii na budżet obywatelski w 2020 roku, opublikowanym przez Fundację Stocznia, można stwierdzić, że 29% samorządów w miejscowościach powyżej 5 tys. mieszkańców zrezygnowało z realizacji budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego w 2021 roku. Zgodnie z wynikami Raportu 43% samorządów – poza 66 miastami zobowiązanymi ustawą – wycofało się z realizacji budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego. Głównym powodem rezygnacji z tej formy konsultacji była obawa o stabilność finansów lokalnych i brak możliwości realizacji działań na odległość. Z badań przedstawionych w Raporcie wynika, że 40% gmin chciało zachować na przyszłość metody on-line lub ograniczyć niektóre elementy tego procesu, takie jak głosowanie i zgłaszanie projektów.

Budżety obywatelskie/partycypacyjne w miastach w 2020 roku zostały zrealizowane na podstawie 180 uchwał rad miejskich. Wśród opublikowanych dokumentów wskazać można przykładowo uchwały rady miejskiej w Bielsku Podlaskim (Uchwała nr XXXVI/278/21 Rady Miasta Bielsk Podlaski); w Chrzanowie (Uchwała nr X/77/2019 Rady Miejskiej w Chrzanowie); w Gdańsku (Uchwała nr XLIV/1144/22 Rady Miasta Gdańska z dnia 27 stycznia 2022 r., w Kielcach (Uchwała nr XLII/798/2021 Rady Miasta Kielce z dnia 18 marca 2021 r.); w Krakowie (Uchwała nr LI/1410/21 Rady Miasta Krakowa z dnia 13 stycznia 2021).

Jak wynika z Raportu opracowanego przez Instytut Rozwoju Miast i Regionów, w 2022 roku tę formę konsultacji przeprowadziło 43,5% miast powyżej 5 tys. mieszkańców, przeznaczając na realizację projektów ponad 630 milionów złotych (*Barometr budżetu obywatelskiego. Edycja 2022*). Jedynie 22 miasta zrezygnowały z organizacji budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego. Wśród nich znalazło się 6 z 66 miast na prawach powiatu: Bielsko-Biała, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Krosno, Olsztyn, Piotrków Trybunalski i Zielona Góra. Generalnie poziom finansowania w ramach budżetu jest dość stabilny. Jeśli chodzi o frekwencję w głosowaniach, pozostaje ona na podobnym poziomie kilkunastu procent (w 2022 roku wyniosła około 11%). Projekty wybrane przez mieszkańców do realizacji obejmują przede wszystkim

zadania infrastrukturalne, zaplanowane na terenach zieleni i rekreacji, w pasach dróg oraz na działkach administrowanych przez placówki oświatowe (*Barometr budżetu obywatelskiego. Edycja 2022*).

Oceny przeprowadzenia oraz wyniki budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego można znaleźć w corocznie sporządzanych raportach. Przykładowo w odniesieniu do Krakowa raporty można znaleźć na stronie [www.budzet.krakow.pl](http://www.budzet.krakow.pl) (Ewaluacja. Raport końcowy).

W Polsce istnieją również inne rozwiązania traktowane jako budżety obywatelskie/partycypacyjne. Jako przykłady można wskazać zielony budżet, młodzieżowy budżet obywatelski oraz szkolny budżet partycypacyjny. Zielony budżet obejmuje osiem grup tematycznych: zielona infrastruktura, niebieska infrastruktura, ochrona przyrody, ochrona powietrza i atmosfery, edukacja ekologiczna, opieka nad zwierzętami domowymi, gospodarka odpadami, ochrona przed hałasem (Bernaciak, Rzeńca & Sobol, 2017; Airly, *Zielony budżet obywatelski – o co walczy*). Jest on traktowany jako oddzielny instrument partycypacji społecznej z wydzieloną pulą środków i zasadami zgłaszania projektów. Taki instrument wprowadzono między innymi w Lublinie w 2017 roku, w Gdańsku w 2020 roku, w Szczecinie w 2020 roku, w Katowicach w 2020 roku (Marczewska-Rytko & Maj, 2021; Rzeńca, 2018).

Młodzieżowy budżet obywatelski był realizowany po raz pierwszy we Wrocławiu w 2014 roku, w Sosnowcu i Dzierżoniowie w 2016 roku, w Markach w 2017 roku oraz w Lublinie i Szczecinie w 2019 roku (Marczewska-Rytko & Maj, 2021). Dużą rolę w jego przygotowaniu odgrywają miejskie rady młodzieżowe. Zwycięskie projekty wybiera komisja grantowa (Młodzieżowy budżet obywatelski, 2019). Przykładowo w Lublinie wypracowano model młodzieżowego budżetu wspólnie z Młodzieżową Radą Miasta i Zespołem ds. Młodzieży i Dzieci, realizację całego procesu zlecono organizacji pozarządowej specjalizującej się w działaniach z młodzieżą, zwycięskie projekty wybiera komisja, w której składzie jest także młodzież (Młodzieżowy budżet obywatelski w Lublinie). Projekty mogą być składane przez minimum trzyosobowe grupy dzieci i/lub młodzieży (uczniów lubelskich szkół publicznych i niepublicznych od 1 klasy szkoły podstawowej; studentów lubelskich szkół wyższych i uczelni do ostatniego roku studiów drugiego stopnia lub jednolitych studiów magisterskich) (Młodzieżowy budżet obywatelski w Lublinie).

Wysokość środków przeznaczona na wydatkowanie w ramach młodzieżowego budżetu jest różna. Przykładowo w edycji na rok 2023 w Tychach suma ta wyniosła 9 tysięcy złotych dla każdej placówki. Projekty mogli zgłaszać uczniowie publicznych szkół ponadpodstawowych (Młodzieżowy budżet obywatelski w Tychach, VI edycja). W Szczecinie uprawnieni do składania projektów są wszyscy uczniowie szczecińskich szkół ponadpodstawowych, dla których organem prowadzącym jest Gmina Miasto Szczecina. Na realizację zwycięskiego projektu/projektów dla każdej ze szkół przewidziany jest budżet w wysokości 6 tysięcy złotych (Zarządzenie nr 59/23 Prezydenta Miasta Szczecin z dnia 2 lutego 2023 r. w sprawie Młodzieżowego Budżetu Obywatelskiego 2023).

Szkolny budżet obywatelski był programem pilotażowym realizowanym w ośmiu warszawskich szkołach w roku szkolnym 2018/2019 (Chabiera, Chodacz, Jagaciak, Pliszczyńska & Wojcieszak, 2019; Sienkiewicz, *Budżet obywatelski w szkole*).

## ZAKOŃCZENIE

Kwestia konsultacji społecznych i powiązanego z nimi budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego nie została w sposób bezpośredni uregulowana w obowiązującej Konstytucji RP z 1997 roku. W Polsce do 2018 roku nie obowiązywały ustawowe regulacje zasad funkcjonowania budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego. Obowiązujące przed nowelizacją ustawy o samorządzie gminnym z roku 2018 procedury miały charakter fakultatywny i w pełni zależały od decyzji władz danej jednostki samorządu. Poszczególne jednostki określały warunki i zakres funkcjonowania budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego oraz pulę środków finansowych przeznaczonych na realizację przyjętych projektów.

Regulacje prawne przyjęte w roku 2018 zakotwiczyły budżet obywatelski/partycypacyjny w ustawie. Ustawa zdefiniowała tę instytucję jako szczególny rodzaj konsultacji społecznych. Ustawa nałożyła obowiązek organizacji budżetu na miasta na prawach powiatu (w sumie 66 podmiotów o takim statusie). W stosunku do miast na prawach powiatu Ustawa przyjęła minimalną wysokość budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego na poziomie 0,5% wydatków gminy

zawartych w ostatnim przedłożonym sprawozdaniu z wykonania budżetu. Pozostałe podmioty mają swobodę w zakresie organizacji budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego. Ustawa dała możliwość podziału środków na pule obejmujące całą gminę i jej części w postaci jednostek pomocniczych lub grup jednostek pomocniczych.

W związku z wybuchem wojny w Ukrainie wprowadzono nowe regulacje o charakterze tymczasowym. Ustawa z dnia 12 marca 2022 r. o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa (artykuł 112) dała radom gmin na prawach powiatu większą swobodę w zakresie przeprowadzenia i realizacji budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego. Z kolei Ustawa z dnia 28 kwietnia 2022 r. o zmianie ustawy o samorządzie gminnym (artykuł 5a, ust. 6) dała możliwość wydzielania pul rejonowych (które nie pokrywały się z jednostkami pomocniczymi) oraz wyodrębniania pul kwotowych.

Wyniki kontroli przeprowadzonej przez Najwyższą Izbę Kontroli wykazały, że w latach 2016–2018 w sposób nieprawidłowy wydano uchwały rad miast oraz zarządzenia burmistrzów i prezydentów miast w zakresie budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego (NIK, 2019). Nieprawidłowości te wynikały między innymi z uzależnienia prawa do udziału w konsultacjach od ukończenia określonego wieku, wprowadzenia obowiązku podawania w trakcie konsultacji nr PESEL, rozszerzenia kręgu podmiotów uprawnionych do składania wniosków (m.in. o wspólnoty i spółdzielnie mieszkaniowe, organizacje pozarządowe).

W wyniku pandemii Covid-19 ponad 40% samorządów wycofało się z realizacji budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego. Nie dotyczyło to oczywiście 66 miast zobowiązanych do przeprowadzenia budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego na mocy Ustawy. Głównym powodem rezygnacji z budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego była obawa o stabilność finansów lokalnych i brak możliwości realizacji działań na odległość. Pewne obawy dotyczące realizacji budżetu obywatelskiego/partycypacyjnego wywołała także Ustawa z dnia 12 marca 2022 r. o pomocy obywatelom Ukrainy w związku z konfliktem zbrojnym na terytorium tego państwa. Generalnie te obawy nie znalazły potwierdzenia w praktyce. Jedynie 6 miast na prawach powiatu zrezygnowało z przeprowadzenia budżetu.



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## Depopulation as a Long-term Policy Problem: From Dilemmas to Strategies

### *Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The scientific objective of this article is to analyse strategies for urban decision-makers to address the dilemmas of depopulation. The theoretical framework for the article is the typology of long-term policy problem-solving dilemmas by Pot et al. (2022).

**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The authors answer the question of how public administration officials are responding to the challenge of regional depopulation, what dilemmas they face in the process, and whether patterns can be detected in their preferred solutions. To answer these questions, the authors rely on qualitative research findings – in-depth interviews (IDI) performed with mayors of Polish cities liable to depopulation and their direct subordinates.

**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** How policymakers navigate specific long-term challenges is contingent upon, inter alia, their resolution of the ensuing pivotal dilemmas.

**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The strategies followed by municipalities are strongly affected by contextual factors inclusive of the monetary scenario, the character

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of the metropolis and its hyperlinks with other city centres, the connection with the government, or even the management style represented by means of the mayor. An aggregate of 3 styles seems to predominate, i.e. making an investment in targets, the responsive, and the reactive ones.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Two challenges, which we call meta-dilemmas, are particularly relevant for local government in Poland: the meta-dilemma of defining the functions of local government and the dilemma of agency. Resolving them determines the decision of policy when dealing with strategic dilemmas.

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**KEYWORDS:**

depopulation; long-term policy problems; policy dilemmas;  
policy strategies

**INTRODUCTION**

Long-term challenges to which organisations must currently respond include climate change, technological progress, education and skills, economic competitiveness, and poverty (Locke, 2013; Finnegan, 2022). These organisations also include public administration units established to carry out certain state functions, and, as a result, are to varying degrees vulnerable to the difficulties that confront the entire state or its individual regions (Bricker & Ibbitson, 2019). An example of such a challenge is the risk of depopulation, which, both at the national and local level, can lead to several negative consequences, such as the relocation of companies (Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012); overdevelopment of residential and industrial infrastructure and increasing maintenance costs (Sobotka & Fürnkranz-Prskawetz, 2020); financial deterioration of the city (Carbonaro et al., 2018); weaker social relations and disintegration of the local community (Rybczyński & Linneman, 1999).

Poland's population is expected to fall by 12% (4.55 million people) by 2050, with cities accounting for 8% of the predicted population decrease by 2050 (CSO, 2014). In 64 medium-sized cities, a substantial depopulation concern has been identified. These are cities with a population of more than 20,000 that are not centres of voivodeships (provinces), as well as those with a population of 15,000 to 20,000



that are the seats of poviats (county authorities), where population decline will directly impair the functions of major administrative units (Śleszyński, 2016). Depopulation in Polish cities has notable social, economic, and environmental impacts. Socially, it leads to an ageing population and increased isolation, straining healthcare and social services. Economically, it reduces the labour force, increases unemployment, and lowers property values, shrinking the tax base and deterring investment, thus worsening economic decline and infrastructure deterioration. Environmentally, it results in urban decay and safety hazards but can reduce pollution and environmental footprints.

Specific dilemmas or tensions are highlighted about public policies aimed at solving long-term challenges (cf. Goetz, 2014; Pot et al., 2022), for example, a choice between responsive versus responsible democratic politics (Goetz, 2014), i.e. actions with quick effects vs. sustainable actions (pursued over a longer timeframe, considering the benefits and costs of a given intervention). An undeniable dilemma of policies in the first half of the 21st century is the orientation toward long-term or short-term outputs. The latter viewpoint, rooted in a mindset typical of New Public Management (NPM), focuses on achieving measurable results in a relatively short time (Gieske et al., 2020; Jelonek & Mazur, 2020).

The topic of the article is embedded in the scientific discourse on strategies to solve long-term dilemmas. The primary scientific aim is to examine the array of strategies available to urban policymakers for mitigating the challenges posed by depopulation. This investigation is anchored within the theoretical framework provided by the typology of long-term policy problem-solving dilemmas as outlined by Pot et al. (2022).

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH METHOD

This paper is based on the findings of qualitative research involving in-depth interviews with mayors of cities at risk of depopulation and their immediate subordinates (e.g. city treasurers and secretaries) conducted between February and September 2021. Based on the findings of the study titled *Delimitation of medium-sized cities*

*losing socioeconomic functions* (Śleszyński, 2016), 64 medium-sized cities in Poland were selected as being most vulnerable to depopulation. According to the assumptions adopted for this study, these were cities with a population of more than 20,000, which are not centres of voivodeships (provinces), and those with a population of 15,000 to 20,000, which are the centres of poviats, where depopulation was found to entail a significant loss of administrative functions (Śleszyński, 2016).

A total of 25 in-depth interviews were conducted with the representatives of these cities<sup>1</sup>. Among these, 21 were carried out in an optimal configuration, involving the mayor and a minimum of two subordinates. Two interviews included only subordinates, and two were conducted with the mayor alone. This structure was deemed ideal as it provided insights from two perspectives on the mayor's approach to resolving depopulation dilemmas: the decision-maker's viewpoint and that of his or her immediate subordinates. This dual perspective enhances the reliability of the obtained results.

The article aims to answer the following research question: How do the mayors of cities at risk of depopulation deal with a long-term policy problem (such as depopulation)? The question is further subdivided into the following subquestions: RQ1: What dilemmas do city officials face when addressing depopulation as a long-term policy problem? RQ2: Can any patterns be identified in the prevailing solutions to the dilemmas of depopulation? To answer these questions, the article relies on the findings of qualitative research – in-depth interviews (IDI) conducted with mayors of Polish cities at risk of depopulation and their direct subordinates (e.g. city treasurers and secretaries).

The main problem that emerged during the study was the recruitment of interviewees for the IDI, both mayors and their subordinates. The challenges identified at this stage were mainly related to issues such as a difficult period of the year related to the heavy reporting burden, accounting and planning work for municipalities, and the involvement of decision-makers in the search for solutions

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<sup>1</sup> The survey covered municipalities mainly from the south of Poland: Mielec, Rydułtowy, Starachowice, Chrzanów, Ciechanów, Wadowice, Jastrzębie Zdrój, Braniewo, Tarnowskie Góry, and Hajnówka.

minimising the negative effects of centrally introduced measures under the government's social and economic programme known as the Polish Deal. In other municipalities, both mayors and their subordinates expressed reservations about the interview topic, especially the expectation to comment on the behaviour of their immediate supervisor. These concerns, depending on the situation, were minimised using different strategies tailored to individual interviewees. In general, active or direct strategies involving person-to-person interactions were used: reassuring about the confidentiality of the research and anonymising the results; matching the moderators to the respondents' expectations regarding the timing and length of the interviews; emphasising the importance of the research for the local authorities' self-knowledge, etc. (cf. Bonisteel et al., 2021; Porter & Lanes, 2000). Furthermore, respondents were encouraged to engage in the study by the researchers, who relied on their extensive network of so-called gatekeepers (Thomas et al., 2007) and the snowball technique (cf. Noy, 2008).

Due to the pandemic, the interviews were conducted remotely using platforms such as Teams or Zoom while adhering to the IDI implementation criteria (cf. Brinkmann, 2013). The principal researchers and moderators, who were properly trained in the subject topic, conducted the interviews. Structured in this way, the surveys ensured several key benefits. They provided flexibility and accessibility, enabling participants from diverse geographic locations to engage without the constraints of physical presence. This approach also promoted cost and time efficiency by eliminating travel and logistic expenses associated with face-to-face interviews. Additionally, the method increased respondent anonymity and comfort, potentially leading to more candid responses. However, one significant challenge identified during the moderation of the interviews, which aligns with widely reported findings in the literature, was the loss of non-verbal cues (cf. de Villiers et al., 2022). This limitation occasionally impeded the comprehensive evaluation of respondents' statements, as the absence of body language and facial expressions restricted the depth of understanding and interpretation of the participants' responses.

To improve the quality of the data obtained, it was believed that the mayor and his/her direct subordinates should be handled by the same interviewer. This allowed for a more effective comparison

of two perspectives: that of the decision maker and that of his/her superior. The interviews were transcribed, coded according to a pre-prepared codebook, and analysed using MaxQda based on CAQDAS (computer-assisted qualitative data analysis) principles.

## DEPOPULATION AS A LONG-TERM POLICY QUESTION

Long-term policy problems are defined as challenges that affect at least one generation, are characterised by a high level of uncertainty about both the prospects for their resolution and the consequences of action taken (unforeseeable alleviating or aggravating factors) (cf. Foxon et al., 2009). Long-term policy challenges extend beyond traditional public policy planning cycles (Boston, 2017; Bührs, 2012), usually cannot be solved within one to two legislative periods, and the actions taken for them usually have long-term effects and hence are less attractive from the vantage point of achieving the current policy goals (Lempert et al., 2009; Ferraro et al., 2015). At the same time, these problems raise serious societal issues that can be addressed with the help of public policy solutions, but over a longer period following the targeted intervention. Furthermore, these are issues that produce ambivalence among public actors: they are crucial for a region's well-being and quality of life, and they rank high on the public debate agenda; however, because they are difficult to address in the short term, they appear unappealing to decision-makers whose operational timeframes are constrained by election cycles. Depopulation is one of such issues.

Depopulation may have the characteristics of a long-term policy concern if all three of its defining features are met. It frequently affects several generations (gradual population shrinkage), any interventions to combat it are fraught with ambiguity as to their effectiveness, especially considering that a substantial proportion of them targets the quantitatively limited resource of potential residents (some interventions intended to attract new residents to a given area cause outbound migration from other regions). Depopulation is also a difficult problem to overcome within the confines of a single election cycle. Actions performed at a certain time may have consequences

only in the long run. As such, it has the traditional characteristics of a meta-problem, namely multidimensionality due to the multitude of causal elements and the plurality of individuals engaged in resolving the issue. (cf. Seidl & Werle, 2018; Trist, 1983).

Long-term policy issues can be perceived, defined, and communicated to audiences differently. For example, Pot et al. (2022) in their Dutch water authority study identified the following four meanings of the term: 1. as part of the external environment; 2. associated with a long-time horizon; 3. as long-term objectives; and 4. as future developments. In the first case, the problem is defined as a typical external factor, which entails treating the issue as a national rather than local trend, a certain supra-local factor that harms the functioning of a city or region. These problems are also often seen as issues which are very likely to occur in the future. The authors also point out that long-term policy problems tend to be treated as “autonomous developments,” or things that simply will happen regardless of any interventions designed to prevent or combat them.

When it comes to long-term policy issues, actors face several dilemmas. The typology of strategies to solve them proposed by the same authors was used in this study as a framework to categorise the findings of qualitative research conducted among Polish municipal leaders to the strategies used to address the problem of depopulation. According to Pot et al. (2022), how policymakers approach certain long-term problems depends, among other things, on how they resolve the following critical dilemmas.

### *Investing in the realization of objects or objectives*

This task entails determining how to best invest in long-term policy concerns, whether through physical (material) investment or through organisational and targeted changes, as well as leveraging opportunities from the external environment. In the former case, infrastructure efforts, the implementation of which is subordinated to addressing immediate concerns, are employed in practice to address long-term policy issues. In the latter, there is a non-organisational external initiative that can be exploited to achieve a long-term aim. Strategies intended to achieve objectives include emphasising long-term goals,

mapping all planned and anticipated long-term investments and activities, and seeking collaboration to align strategies with long-term thinking (Pot et al., 2022, p. 13).

*Adopting a stable or responsive approach*

In this case, the question is whether to devote consistent attention and funding to long-term problems during budget and election cycles or to remain sensitive to external impulses by attempting to solve long-term policy problems through inter-organisational agreements that are not always based on the organisation's budget. For example, using political venues to highlight long-term concerns or presenting long-term plans and tactics to the existing administration demonstrates a consistent approach. The responsive method is characterised by the differentiation between ambition levels (hierarchy of objectives) and the linking of actions to a particular and politically attractive long-term objective (Pot et al., 2022, p. 13).

*Taking a proactive or reactive stance towards the external environment*

The dilemma is whether to proactively target the long-term goals of the organisation and prioritise resources for long-term challenges or to reactively accept opportunities and ideas about long-term policy issues from outside. The reactive approach combines strategies such as co-investment in developing new technologies, leaving the primary responsibility for the long-term challenges with other organisations, co-development of joint long-term visions and plans, and using collaborative platforms to gain knowledge about the long-term outcomes. In contrast, the proactive approach consists of the following actions: seeking collaboration to achieve long-term objectives, setting criteria for external initiatives based on fit with long-term obligations, and emphasizing formal responsibilities towards the long term (Pot et al. 2022, p. 13).

## FROM STRATEGIC TO META DILEMMAS

To answer the research questions, the main dilemmas to be addressed as part of long-term policy problems were framed according to Pot et al. (2022) and further characterised based on the findings of the qualitative research.

To begin, it is important to note that identifying a single 'correct' response to any of the dilemmas is next to impossible. Conversely, long-term policy problems necessitate flexibility in action strategy selection and a combination of frequently divergent approaches, depending on the context and circumstances. The examples of qualitative research reveal the fact that frequently combination strategies are chosen, or certain circumstances tend to be associated with preferred solutions, therefore a range of common patterns can be identified. Examples of such circumstances are shown in Table 1 and discussed below.

It should be added that a municipality's choice of a particular strategy for solving the dilemma may have been influenced to some extent by the unfavourable legal provisions (i.e. declining local revenues), modifications to the funding model of municipalities causing their financial uncertainty, and an increase in the burden of spending on education. Financial issues and budgetary constraints arising from changes in national legislation appear to be one of the most crucial contextual aspects for understanding the adopted solutions to the difficulties. Apart from the deteriorating financial status of local governments, an equally discouraging factor preventing effective action is the emerging climate of centralisation of the state governance system. Given the associated high financial and political risks, the ensuing volatility and uncertainty pose a considerable obstacle to implementing any long-term initiatives (Jaworska-Dębska et al., 2019).

To a greater or lesser extent, almost all of the municipalities studied invested in objects. They usually involved infrastructure, housing (e.g. construction of rental flats, 'starter flats' for the young), and cultural, recreational, and sports facilities (to improve overall quality of life). In part, this phenomenon may be interpreted as an instrumental adaptation to the logic of distribution of European funds prevailing among territorial local government units, consisting in prioritising the implementation of investment tasks. On the one hand,

this is due to the genuine need to improve the quality and accessibility of technical infrastructure; on the other, material investment brings immediate popularity, moreover, spending European funds earmarked for investment is fairly simple.

These actions were pursued by both those who declared that did not believe that any efforts on their part could make a difference and those who felt partly in control of the situation. According to one interviewee, investing in facilities appeared to be the most natural course of action, given it was part of the municipality's institutional functions. Although this was not always associated with addressing the issue of a shrinking population, interviewees frequently recognised it as part of their policy's rationale. As a result, it appeared to be an ex-post reframing of the municipality's actions from "discharging public mandates" (improving the quality of life) to "conducting development policy" (by way of reducing depopulation).

Some municipalities favoured investing in objects, whereas others built a coherent vision for the achievement of long-term objectives, including infrastructure investment. Naturally, most municipalities found themselves between both extremes. Some of them attempted to structure the process of attracting new residents by planning long-term activities and investments, involving external partners both to jointly implement certain activities and to identify future goals and strategies for achieving them. Typically, in the case of such actors, the problem of depopulation was perceived as a multidimensional one and was directly related to the need to improve the quality of life of (current and future) residents. High-quality infrastructure investments included, among others, formulating development plans, designating new areas for housing development, bicycle paths, sports, recreational, and cultural (leisure) facilities. These activities were often carried out jointly with private entities or non-governmental organisations, rarely involving only the municipality itself.

Some interviewees mentioned collaboration with other municipalities aimed at obtaining funds for improving the quality of transportation to and from urban agglomerations, direct settlement incentives (e.g. crèche vouchers), tax exemptions, and efforts to improve the quality of education for children. Some municipalities have also implemented soft initiatives intended to improve their city's image (e.g. promotion of regional assets, raising its profile, emphasis on the



friendliness of the local administration), build social (local) identity and a sense of belonging to a given region, and develop a sense of empowerment among residents (e.g. through a civic budget). The multidimensionality of effective “investment in objectives” was noted by one interviewee:

Yes, we have succeeded in reversing this trend. There was a moment when the number of inhabitants went down. Local plans certainly accelerated the investment process. And the second thing is that we tried to emphasise all these assets. That is, the green city, the cycle paths. We built sports and recreational infrastructure together with the association. All this was written down somewhere in the strategy and was a certain range of activities. Not just one action, but a whole package. [...] The UNESCO title is also the final icing on the cake. Here, it gives such a multifaceted character that we have something with which to distinguish ourselves from others (IDI, Deputy Mayor).

As previously stated, the studied municipalities regard depopulation as a major issue that jeopardises their capacity to operate (not only due to declining revenues and increasing financial burdens, but also to the shrinking human capital potential in the region). Addressing this problem, however, is not directly codified in the legal provisions that the municipalities would be required to implement. Even though it undermines the feasibility of establishing a fully stable approach with a clear policy and a goal-oriented budget, it also mitigates the potential of conflict between the strengths and abilities of politics and bureaucracy as articulated by Peters (2001). As a result, the situation compels municipalities to choose a responsive approach in which the opinions and financial, human resources, as well as conceptual involvement of external players, must be considered. The municipalities’ orientation toward a responsive approach is also aided by their financial situation and budget constraints, which force actors to be more open to external opportunities, prioritise, and be flexible in terms of their timetable and strategies for achieving their set objectives. Flexibility can be demonstrated, for example, in the scenario where the prospect of funding activities from outside sources serves as a catalyst for refining the objectives and establishing the timescale for their completion as part of the strategy:

In March, we are supposed to approve a strategy for the development of our city, so the first question that was asked and we were asked was 'Are we going to include something specific in this strategy?' I am saying, precisely, that we have already worked out the assumptions for local development and it seems to me that this is really a milestone for the actions that we have set for ourselves. And what happens if we don't get the funds? If we don't, these activities will fit beautifully into our development strategy. And in small steps, we will not do it as quickly as we would if our project won the funding. But we will implement it in small steps (IDI, Mayor).

The adopted responsive-stable approach is to some extent related to the last dilemma, i.e. proactive vs. reactive stance towards the external environment. It is worth recalling that the former approach is associated with strategic planning (formalising objectives, seeking cooperation to achieve tasks, and subordinating external initiatives to these objectives) and responsibility for achieving long-term goals. The reactive approach, on the other hand, demands greater flexibility of action and sensitivity to external impulses, identification of 'windows of opportunity,' and taking advantage of them as they arise. The reactive approach manifests itself primarily in sharing responsibility in both the conceptual and investment spheres – in jointly developing long-term visions and plans and in co-investing in the development of new solutions and technologies to help reduce long-term policy problems. Interviews with representatives of municipalities experiencing depopulation revealed examples of reactivity in the formulation of goals and action plans that take advantage of opportunities provided by external sources. Such reactivity was also evident in attempts to reinterpret constraints as opportunities for local development. One such option involved repurposing areas damaged by mining into socially attractive spaces.

Table 1. The intensity of strategies for solving key dilemmas related to depopulation as a long-term policy challenge typically adopted by the studied municipalities (actions involving a specific kind of solution: ++ numerous actions, + a few actions, – no actions, +/- actions in both a given and opposite direction)

Municipality number	Investing in objects	Investing in objectives	Stable	Responsive	Proactive	Reactive
G2	+	++	+	++	+	++
G4	+	++	+	++	+	++
G6	+/-	–	Unsolved dilemma	Unsolved dilemma	Unsolved dilemma	Unsolved dilemma
G7	+	++	+	++	+	++
G8	+/-	+/-	++	+	++	+
G9	++	+	+	++	++	++
G10	++	++	+	++	+	++

Source: own study.

However, these are not the only dilemmas faced by municipal authorities in Poland. Two other challenges, which we call meta-dilemmas, are particularly important for them: the meta-dilemma of defining local government functions, and the agency dilemma. The prefix meta- is used to emphasise that this dilemma is distinct from the others, and its resolution may influence the choice of a solution to the previously outlined fundamental problems.

The meta-dilemma of defining local government functions in the context of depopulation is typically handled by choosing between an emphasis on contracted tasks or development policies and reflects the underlying issue of the state’s territorial and functional organisation. In this context, two mutually contradictory perspectives emerge: one sees local government as a geographical community of citizens with a high degree of autonomy, while the other perceives it as an exponent of the state’s functional organisation subject to the quality of public service provision. The state becomes an omnipresent organisation under the latter approach, monopolising development resources while also bearing responsibility for resolving socio-economic problems that arise in territorial systems.

The above-mentioned questions are indirectly related to the agency dilemma, the solution to which consists in determining the possibilities

(or lack thereof) for the local government to effectively solve a given problem. We deliberately call it a dilemma, because the choice of strategy to solve it not only results from objective premises but is also deeply rooted in the personal beliefs of the interviewees. At the same time, it inevitably gravitates toward specific answers to the fundamental issues of depopulation. As previously said there appears to be a scale of agency ranging from absolute disbelief in the ability of local governments to deal with depopulation to enormous optimism in this regard. The most common sentiments, which might be labelled as limited optimism and limited pessimism, are found in the middle.

In general, identifying a clear pattern in the relationships between the strategies to solve these three dilemmas remains a challenge. Municipal policies are influenced by the characteristics of the long-term problem of depopulation, the context in which they have operated in recent years, and, possibly as a hypothesis for future research, the leadership style demonstrated by the community leader. A mixture of three solutions appears to predominate: investment in objectives, responsiveness, and reactivity (G2, G4, and G7). G10 also shows a similar approach, with a clear preference for responsive and reactive solutions, but no obvious preference for investing in objectives over investing in objects. The solution patterns of G6 and G8 municipalities are worth exploring in more detail – their uniqueness rests in the declared limited belief in the municipality's ability to solve a particular problem. In the case of these two communities, local leaders expressly admit that depopulation is a natural impediment to development, but they see no opportunity or point in taking steps to address it. In G6, the mayor directly points to the central government as the party expected to play an active role in halting human resource shrinkage, but he declares no efforts to address the problem at hand. The representatives of G8 report a limited belief in the possibility of fully solving the problem (partial disbelief), but still declare willingness to do something about it, partly based on the principle "because it is the right thing to do, and it is expected of us." Two solutions predominate in this case: stable and proactive (activities are planned from own resources and, included in the strategy) with limited investment both in objects and objectives.

G9 proved to be the least typical, preferring to invest in objects while also choosing responsive and both proactive and reactive

behaviours. Such an unconventional array of solutions may also be attributed to the city's specificity, which is part of an agglomeration and currently is a mining monoculture, exploiting the labour market potential of the other neighbouring cities (as part of a strategy to overcome being a monoculture). At the same time, the leader sees him/herself and the municipal management as being accountable for addressing the problem by implementing a strategy that views constraints as opportunities to promote the municipality's development.

### CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Depopulation, as a long-term policy problem, evokes ambivalent attitudes among politicians. They recognise its importance, but at the same time are aware that it cannot be solved quickly. The short political cycles discourage them from attempts to actively solve it (cf. Bührs, 2012; Boston, 2017). Undoubtedly, New Public Management reinforces such an attitude, which places a premium on actions that enable visible results to be achieved in the short term (cf. Höglund et al., 2018; Gieske et al., 2020; Jelonek & Mazur, 2020).

The key question posed in this paper was how public administration responds to a long-term policy problem, specifically how mayors of cities at risk of depopulation deal with this challenge. Understanding the responses to this question requires a grasp of the context in which Polish cities function. They are battling an uncertain legal and financial condition as well as rising costs of education, their anxiety being compounded by the increasing centralisation of the state governance regime. Given the substantial financial and political risks, the ensuing instability and unpredictability make long-term actions difficult. It should be emphasised that aspects of investment in objects were found in all municipalities. A small percentage of them developed a clear vision to achieve long-term goals, such as infrastructure investments. Most municipalities chose a solution that lay somewhere between the first and second scenarios. The apparent emphasis on investment in objects may be viewed as an instrumental adaptation to the logic of allocating European funds by prioritising the implementation of investment tasks. It is also linked to the popular acceptance of infrastructure investments and the ease with which

funds designated for this purpose can be spent. This strategy, in part, reflects the principles of rational choice institutionalism, which analyses the behaviour of individuals capable of rationally calculating and optimising decisions that lead to the most effective and efficient ways of attaining their goals (cf. Olson, 1971; Peters, 2005).

In Poland, municipalities do not have a clear legislative mandate to combat depopulation. To some extent, this hinders their ability to adopt a fully stable approach with well-defined policies, objectives, and funds for their implementation. This seemingly negative scenario, however, has the beneficial effect of driving municipalities to adopt a responsive approach, in which it becomes vital to consider both the ideas and participation of external actors. The responsiveness is also influenced by their financial condition and budgetary constraints, which compel them to be more open to collaboration with external parties. Both proactive and reactive responses to the external environment were noticed in the studied cities. While the former is more prevalent in planning efforts, the latter tends to dominate in action. What is significant, however, the level of consistency between the two is not always high.

It is difficult to clearly identify dominant patterns of solutions to depopulation dilemmas. The strategies adopted by individual municipalities in this regard are strongly affected by contextual factors such as the financial situation, the nature of the city and its links with other urban centres, the relationship with the government, or even the leadership style represented by the mayor. However, in general, a combination of three approaches seems to predominate, i.e. investing in objectives, the responsive, and the reactive ones.

The article highlights three issues that may inspire a more in-depth examination of the problem of depopulation in the context of long-term challenges. The first theme concerns the reality conjured up as a result of investment. Investment in infrastructure development is considered as a reasonable response to population shrinkage by both local officials who believe in the municipality's ability to combat depopulation and those who do not. This has two possible outcomes. The first is the belief that investment is the most effective strategy for combating depopulation, whereas the other one perceives it through the prism of increasing maintenance expenses, which can exacerbate the municipality's financial problems. In such

a setting, tools originally designed to combat depopulation appear to aggravate the situation. The second issue concerns the rationale behind the selection of main patterns of anti-depopulation measures. Our research shows the importance of contextual elements in the selection of depopulation techniques, such as the type of leadership. Further exploration of this thread, in our opinion, has the potential to considerably broaden the capacity for the scientific study of this topic.

The final issue to consider involves the so-called meta-challenges in the analysis of dilemma-solving strategies for long-term policy problems, that is, dilemmas whose resolution dictates the orientation of responses to specific challenges. In the context of the depopulation problem, one example of a meta-challenge is the approach to establishing the extent of agency of local decision-makers. This refers to the initial belief (or lack thereof) in the feasibility of taking effective action on a long-term challenge, which determines the resolution of the dilemmas outlined by Pot et al. (2022). The previous remark implies that an analysis of anti-depopulation strategies should be incorporated into a larger study framework and debate with a focus on questions concerning the local government's position and agency in the modern state.

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## Dyplomacja humanitarna jako wyznacznik „normatywnej potęgi” Turcji

### *Streszczenie*

**CEL NAUKOWY:** Ukazanie dystynktywnych cech polityki zagranicznej Turcji, które pozwalają na określenie roli tego państwa jako normatywnej potęgi w stosunkach międzynarodowych.

**PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE:** W artykule dokonano analizy dyplomacji humanitarnej Turcji i wartości związanych z tą formą działania w polityce zagranicznej w celu sprawdzenia, czy na jej podstawie można określić normatywną potęgę państwa.

**PROCES WYWODU:** W pierwszej części artykułu omówiono pojęcia pomocy humanitarnej oraz dyplomacji humanitarnej oraz wskazano wartości normatywne, na których oparte są te dwie formy. Dzięki temu możliwe staje się zrozumienie ich znaczenia dla zmian, które zaszły w środowisku międzynarodowym pod wpływem działań Turcji. W dalszej części artykułu dokonano analizy tureckiego modelu dyplomacji humanitarnej i przytoczono przykład Somalii, w której elementy tego modelu implementowano w największym stopniu.

**WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ:** Dyplomacja humanitarna daje Turcji możliwość określenia swojej pozycji i roli jako apolitycznego i bezinteresownego donatora, który podejmuje działania normatywne w stosunkach międzynarodowych. Turecki model dyplomacji humanitarnej i polityki zagranicznej wykracza jednak poza pomoc humanitarną, łącząc tę formę z projektami rozwojowymi (wymagającymi długoterminowego zaangażowania), umowami biznesowymi, kwestią budowania pokoju oraz stabilnych stosunków politycznych

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z partnerami. To wszystko pozwala na określenie tureckiej polityki zagranicznej zarówno jako humanitarnej, jak i przedsiębiorczej.

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**WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE:** Zasady, na których oparta została dyplomacja humanitarna, pozwalają na określenie aktorów wykorzystujących tę formę działania potęgami normatywnymi. Kategoria ta wymaga dalszych analiz dotyczących jej wykorzystania w polityce zagranicznej państw.

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**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:**

Turcja, dyplomacja humanitarna, potęga normatywna, miękka siła, pomoc humanitarna

*Abstract*

HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY AS A DETERMINANT  
OF TURKEY'S "NORMATIVE POWER"

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The aim is to show the distinctive features of Türkiye's foreign policy, which make it possible to define the role of this state as a normative power in international relation.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The article analyzes Turkish humanitarian diplomacy and the values related to this form of action in foreign policy. Thanks to this, it will be possible to check whether it is possible to determine the normative power of the state on its basis.

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The first part of the article discusses the concept of humanitarian aid and humanitarian diplomacy. The normative values on which these two forms are based are also indicated. This will make it possible to understand their significance for the changes that have occurred in the natural environment under the influence of Turkish activities. In the further part of the article, the Turkish model of humanitarian diplomacy is analyzed and the example of Somalia is cited (because in this country the elements of the Turkish model of humanitarian diplomacy were implemented to the greatest extent).

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** Humanitarian diplomacy gives the opportunity to define the position and role of Türkiye as an apolitical and selfless donor that enables normative action in international relations. However, the Turkish model of humanitarian diplomacy and foreign policy goes beyond humanitarian aid, combining this form with development projects (requiring long-term commitment), business deals, peace-building, and stable political relations with partners. All this allows Türkiye's foreign policy to be described as both humanitarian and entrepreneurial.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The principles on which humanitarian diplomacy is based make it possible to define the actors using this form of action as normative powers. This category requires further analysis regarding its use in the foreign policy of states.

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**KEYWORDS:**

Türkiye, humanitarian diplomacy, normative power, soft power, humanitarian aid

**WSTĘP**

Potęga normatywna to koncepcja, której badacze poświęcili szczególne miejsce w zakresie ukazania roli Unii Europejskiej (UE) i jej tożsamości w stosunkach międzynarodowych. Zwolennik teorii konstruktywizmu społecznego Ian Manners zaproponował teoretyczne ujęcie sposobu, w jaki UE kształtuje środowisko międzynarodowe, nie tyle za pomocą instrumentów materialnych, ile poprzez siłę atrakcyjności projektu europejskiego (Skolimowska, 2015, s. 112). Normatywna potęga charakteryzuje się stosowaniem przez UE wspólnych zasad oraz dążeniem celowo lub nieumyślnie do legitymizacji „normalności” i stworzenia ideowej zmiany wśród podmiotów trzecich. Władza normatywna oznacza zatem nie tylko określony rodzaj podmiotu w polityce międzynarodowej, ale związana jest także z określonym celem, którym jest ustanawianie pewnych standardów (Manners & Diez, 2007, s. 175). Choć na pierwszy rzut oka podobnie funkcjonują też inni aktorzy sceny globalnej, to specyfika UE polega na tym, że jej działania w ogromnym stopniu opierają się na zestawie określonych wartości, które przyjęła oficjalnie jako ideologiczno-prawną podstawę dla swoich stosunków ze światem zewnętrznym. Aktor ten, nie rezygnując z realizowanych przez siebie różnorodnych interesów politycznych czy gospodarczych, funkcjonuje jako podmiot międzynarodowy, który w największym stopniu opiera swoją działalność na podstawach normatywnych (Barburska, 2016, s. 71).

„Koncepcja potęgi normatywnej, w jej idealnej lub najczystszej formie, jest raczej ideowa, aniżeli materialna czy fizyczna” (Manners, 2009, s. 2). W związku z powyższym można przyjąć, że jest to typ idealny rozumiany przez Maxa Webera jako obraz myślowy,

który nie stanowi ani historycznej rzeczywistości, ani tym bardziej rzeczywistości właściwej. Nie istnieje zatem po to, by służyć jako schemat, do którego porównywana jest rzeczywistość, tylko jako czyste pojęcie graniczne. Ma ono skonfrontować ze sobą rzeczywistość w celu wyeksponowania pewnych istotnych części składowych jej empirycznej zawartości (Weber, 2004, s. 175). Niezależnie zatem od zastosowania samego pojęcia potęgi normatywnej najważniejsza staje się jego funkcja, która sprowadza się do możliwości identyfikacji odrębnych stanowisk badawczych, rozróżnianych w odniesieniu do podstawowych założeń współtworzących pierwotny sposób definiowania tego pojęcia i jego interpretację, jako przedmiotu badań stosunków międzynarodowych (Nocoń, 2017, s. 18).

Debata na temat władzy normatywnej, która koncentrowała się przede wszystkim na UE, wynikała częściowo z faktu jej bardzo euro- czy zachodniocentrycznego charakteru (Futák-Campbell & de Sauvage Nolting, 2022). Jednak w kolejnych latach normatywność polityki zagranicznej innych podmiotów stosunków międzynarodowych była przedmiotem m.in. pracy zbiorowej pod redakcją Nathalie Tocci *Who is a Normative Foreign Policy Actor? The European Union and its Global Partners* (2008). Wykorzystując teorie obejmujące miękkie instrumenty w polityce zagranicznej, autorzy dokonali analizy działania takich podmiotów jak: Stany Zjednoczone, Chiny, Rosja czy Indie. W kolejnych latach również polityka zagraniczna Turcji stała się przedmiotem badań dotyczących potęgi normatywnej tego aktora wobec muzułmańskich społeczności w czasie arabskiej wiosny (Emrer Parlal Dal, 2013; Beatrix Futák-Campbell oraz Hylke de Sauvage Nolting, 2022).

W niniejszym artykule dokonano z kolei analizy dyplomacji humanitarnej i wartości związanych z tą formą działania w polityce zagranicznej w celu sprawdzenia, czy na jej podstawie można określić normatywną potęgę państwa. W pracy posłużono się przykładem Turcji, która w ostatnich latach stworzyła swoisty model dyplomacji humanitarnej, stanowiący wzór dla innych podmiotów sceny międzynarodowej. Celem analizy jest zatem ukazanie dystynktywnych cech tego podmiotu w zakresie polityki zagranicznej, które pozwalają na określenie jego roli jako normatywnej potęgi w stosunkach międzynarodowych.

## POMOC HUMANITARNA I HUMANITARYZM JAKO WYZNACZNIKI POTĘGI NORMATYWNEJ PODMIOTÓW STOSUNKÓW MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH

Pomoc humanitarna to pojęcie kompleksowe, obejmujące wiele obszarów takich jak schronienie, warunki sanitarne, żywność i woda. Wojna domowa w Syrii była punktem zwrotnym w sensie ponownego zdefiniowania i rozszerzenia przez społeczność międzynarodową koncepcji pomocy humanitarnej. W ten sposób działania podjęły zarówno międzynarodowe organizacje pomocowe, jak i państwa dyplomacji humanitarnej (Sadik & Zorba, 2017, s. 15). W związku z rosnącą liczbą podmiotów poszkodowanych przez katastrofy naturalne i konflikty zbrojne, a także z apelami kierowanymi przez nie do społeczności międzynarodowej państwa zostały poniekąd zmuszone do podejmowania reakcji, stając się najważniejszymi dawcami pomocy humanitarnej. Poszczególni aktorzy włączają się jednak w działania pomocowe w różnym stopniu, a ich motywy nie zawsze są bezinteresowne. Do uwarunkowań wewnętrznych wpływających na bardziej aktywną bądź pasywną postawę państw zaliczyć można stopień rozwoju gospodarczego, system polityczny oraz identyfikowanie interesów. Tradycyjnie w momencie pojawienia się kryzysów humanitarnych postulaty o pomoc kierowano do wysoko rozwiniętych państw demokratycznych. W ostatnich latach wzrosły jednak oczekiwania wobec grupy podmiotów odnotowujących znaczące postępy gospodarcze (tzw. *emerging powers* – Brazylia, Chiny, Indie), a także wobec państw bogatych w surowce naturalne (Katar, Zjednoczone Emiraty Arabskie) (Bieńczyk-Missala, 2016, s. 101; De Lauri, 2018).

Pomoc humanitarna stała się m.in. okazją do zadbania o wizerunek poszczególnych państw i wzmocnienia ich pozycji w stosunkach międzynarodowych. Sfera pomocy humanitarnej stanowi bowiem symbol empatii, bezinteresowności, a często wręcz heroizmu. Ten wizerunek związany z pomocą humanitarną nie traci na znaczeniu. Wystarczy wspomnieć w tym miejscu o licznych sytuacjach, w których pracownicy i wolontariusze organizacji humanitarnych zostali zarażeni trudno uleczalnymi chorobami czy stracili życie lub zostali ranni podczas konfliktów zbrojnych, w wyniku wstrząsów wtórnych

po wielkich trzęsieniach ziemi (Grzebyk, Mikos-Skuza, 2016 s. 8). Pomoc humanitarna stanowi zatem odzwierciedlenie pracy na rzecz ideałów i uniwersalnych zasad niezależnie od interesów konkretnych aktorów politycznych.

Podmioty udzielające pomocy ludności znajdującej się w nagłej potrzebie odwołują się do zasad humanitaryzmu oraz solidarności w stosunkach międzynarodowych, a także potrzeby zapewnienia ochrony praw człowieka. Istotne jest ukazanie dystynktywnych cech działań związanych z pomocą humanitarną a tych, które określić można jako pomoc rozwojowa. Podstawowe atrybuty odróżniające oba te pojęcia to cel, czas oraz miejsce. Z założenia pomoc humanitarna ma za zadanie ratowanie życia i łagodzenia cierpienia w następstwie konkretnych wydarzeń, o względnie krótkookresowym wymiarze czasu (trwa zwykle nie dłużej niż dwa lata). Udzielanie pomocy ma miejsce w rejonach objętych kryzysem niezależnie od stopnia ich rozwoju gospodarczego. Z kolei pomoc rozwojowa ma ułatwić rozwój gospodarczo-społeczny oraz polityczny w następstwie problemów systemowych w długiej perspektywie czasowej wyłącznie w krajach rozwijających się. Ważna jest też różnica w zakresie zasad działania. W związku z tym, że pomoc humanitarna wywodzi się z koncepcji humanitaryzmu oraz praw fundamentalnych i uniwersalnych, a celem pomocy ma być chęć ulżenia w cierpieniu potrzebującym, nie powinna być instrumentem polityki zagranicznej państwa. Jej podstawę stanowią zasady humanitaryzmu, neutralności, bezstronności i niezależności od wszelkich wpływów czy względów politycznych, militarnych bądź gospodarczych (Grzebyk & Mikos-Skuza, 2016 s. 10). Natomiast pomoc rozwojowa, chociaż odwołuje się do zasady solidarności, to stanowi jeden z instrumentów służących państwu do osiągnięcia celów politycznych na arenie międzynarodowej. Jednak również neutralność humanitarna jest często kwestionowana przez naukowców i praktyków, co wynika m.in. z ukrytych założeń politycznych (De Lauri, 2018). Zatem pomoc humanitarna może także okazać się istotnym narzędziem służącym do realizacji doraźnych czy długoterminowych interesów poszczególnych podmiotów (Bieńczyk-Missala, 2016, s. 99). Państwo humanitarne (*humanitarian state*) ma bowiem istotne implikacje dla priorytetów polityki zagranicznej, stanowiąc w rzeczywistości strategiczną koncepcję.



## KONCEPCJA DYPLOMACJI HUMANITARNEJ W STOSUNKACH MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH

Koncepcja dyplomacji humanitarnej zrodziła się pierwotnie w związku z działaniami organizacji o charakterze humanitarnym, przede wszystkim Międzynarodowego Komitetu Czerwonego Krzyża (ICRC/MKCK). Odnosiła się ona do potrzeby zaangażowania dyplomacji w relacjach organizacji pozarządowych z podmiotami państwowymi w kontekście kryzysu humanitarnego.

W przeszłości terminy „dyplomacja” oraz „humanitarny” określone zostały jako zasady niekompatybilne. Wynikało to z faktu, iż słowo „humanitarny”, wywodzi się z najbardziej podstawowej i fundamentalnej zasady humanitaryzmu, którą należy rozumieć jako „zasadę niezbędną”, bowiem „stanowi wyraz głębokiej motywacji [organizacji humanitarnych] [i to z niej] wywodzą się wszystkie inne zasady”. Z kolei pojęcie „dyplomacja” zbyt mocno powiązано ze światem polityki, przez co mogło nie odzwierciedlać działalności organizacji pomocowych (PCK, 2020, s. 2). Niemniej jednak jest to termin na tyle szeroki, że opisuje cel, jakim jest znalezienie rozwiązania danego problemu dotyczącego zwykle państw lub jednostek. Można przyjąć zatem, że dyplomacja stanowi pewną strategię i może zostać zastosowana w celu wprowadzania rozwiązania zaspokajającego potrzeby ludzi będących w potrzebie. Jak zauważa Lakhdar Brahimi,

wymaga [ona] umiejętności zdefiniowania własnych celów oraz jednocześnie, bycia świadomym poglądów, interesów, warunków i celów strony przeciwnej (Minear & Smith, 2017, s. XIV).

Zgodnie z definicją dyplomacji humanitarnej opracowanej przez ICRC koncepcja ta umożliwia państwom zdobycie wiedzy na temat problemów, które dotyczą ludzi, i na dzieleniu się tą wiedzą ze społecznością międzynarodową. Polega ona m.in.

na przekonywaniu ważnych osobistości oraz liderów opinii publicznej do działania, w każdym czasie, w interesie osób potrzebujących, z poszanowaniem fundamentalnych zasad humanitarnych (PCK, 2020, s. 2).

Dyplomacja humanitarna powstaje w sytuacji nadzwyczajnej i zajmuje się problemami podmiotów niepaństwowych. Chociaż jej obowiązki nie są do końca jasne, to niektóre z nich zostały unormowane czy powszechnie przyjęte, jak np. zapewnienie ochrony praw człowieka ludności znajdującej się w trudnej sytuacji, czy promowanie przestrzegania międzynarodowego prawa humanitarnego w jeszcze większym stopniu (Sadik & Zorba, 2017, s. 15–16). Poza tym, że dyplomacja humanitarna korzysta z imperatywu humanitarnego w celu zapewnienia w szybkim tempie bezpieczeństwa ludności w sytuacjach nadzwyczajnych oraz ułatwienia dystrybucji pomocy, to podobnie jak dyplomacja tradycyjna korzysta z zasad prawa międzynarodowego i ma kilka ważnych zadań. Można wymienić wśród nich zbieranie informacji (monitorowanie programów pomocowych, promowanie poszanowania prawa międzynarodowego) (De Lauri, 2018), negocjacje (dotyczące obecności organizacji humanitarnych czy dostęp do ludności cywilnej potrzebującej ochrony), komunikację (angażowanie się w rzecznictwo na rzecz szerszych celów humanitarnych).

## TURCJA JAKO „SOFT POWER”

Już na początku lat 90. XX w. Samuel Huntington stwierdził, że Turcja posiada atrybuty, aby stać się podstawowym państwem islamu i po powrocie do swoich religijnych korzeni „może zacząć przewodzić światu islamskiemu w kontrze do innych cywilizacji” (Tekin, 2005, s. 291). Założenie takie zawiera też koncepcja „strategicznej głębi” Ahmeta Davutoğlu z 2014 r., na której oparta jest realizowana w ostatnich latach polityka zagraniczna Turcji. Zgodnie z tą koncepcją wyjątkowe położenie geograficzne („głębina geograficzna” wynikająca z usytuowania na styku trzech kontynentów), a także bogaty dorobek cywilizacyjny związany z osiągnięciami Imperium Osmańskiego predestynują to państwo do odgrywania zasadniczej roli na obszarze określanym jako świat muzułmański (Niemiec, 2019, s. 1). Chociaż swoje cele aktor ten realizuje wielotorowo, to ważnym elementem jego strategii stała się stabilizacja regionu oraz budowa swojej międzynarodowej pozycji lidera w świecie islamu za pomocą aktywnej dyplomacji oraz związków gospodarczych i kulturowych.

Pomimo tego, że położenie geopolityczne i wyzwania związane z bezpieczeństwem wewnętrznym nie dają Turcji możliwości całkowitej rezygnacji z narzędzi jej „twardej siły” (Szyszlak, 2021, s. 178), to w swojej polityce zagranicznej państwo to stosuje liczne instrumenty „miękkie” pozwalające na określenie jego roli jako *soft power* w stosunkach międzynarodowych. Podniesienie rangi konstruktywnej pozycji Turcji na arenie międzynarodowej było możliwe m.in. przez odrzucenie w 2003 r. poparcia amerykańskiej inwazji na Irak (Altunışık, 2022b, s. 3), a także zaangażowanie mediacyjne w licznych konfliktach (m.in. Ukrainy z Rosją). Atrakcyjność Turcji zwiększyła też jej polityka rozwojowa oraz dyplomacja humanitarna. Ponadto państwo to przyjmuje największą liczbę uchodźców na świecie i w zakresie udzielanej pomocy humanitarnej jest w ostatnich latach światowym liderem.

Dążąc do bycia podmiotem światowym, Turcja głęboko zaangażowała się w politykę, w której polityczny priorytet nadany został działaniom w zakresie współpracy na rzecz rozwoju i pomocy humanitarnej. Polityczna wola aktywnego zaangażowania w rozwiązywanie takich problemów spotkała się z pozytywnym odzewem w ciągu mniej niż dziesięciu lat, szczególnie biorąc pod uwagę tempo oraz skuteczność tureckich działań. Stosowanie licznych instrumentów „miękkich” w ramach tureckiej polityki zagranicznej podniosło międzynarodową pozycję Turcji i poszerzyło jej wpływy m.in. na Bliskim Wschodzie, Bałkanach Zachodnich, a także w części państw Afryki.

### HUMANITARNA DYPLOMACJA JAKO WYZNACZNIK NORMATYWNEJ POTĘGI TURCJI

Konceptualizacja dyplomacji humanitarnej, realizowanej w Turcji przez rządzącą od 2002 r. Partię Sprawiedliwości i Rozwoju (AKP), ma zarówno wymiar historyczny, jak i polityczny. Wymiar historyczny definiuje i uzasadnia tę formę działania trwałą tradycją pomocy humanitarnej, która wywodzi się z historii i kultury Turcji. Pomoc krajom w trudnej sytuacji, powstałej w wyniku klęsk żywiołowych, wojny czy ubóstwa jest traktowana jako obowiązek humanitarny oraz ważny element budowania stabilnej społeczności międzynarodowej

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023b) (przez co ustanawia dyplomację humanitarną w rzeczywistości podejściem do polityki zagranicznej, a nie wyłącznie jej narzędziem). W swojej argumentacji AKP wielokrotnie podkreślała „głęboko zakorzenioną przeszłość” państwa, które ponosi odpowiedzialność wobec ludzi żyjących na byłych terenach Imperium Osmańskiego, a także ambicje rekonstrukcji globalnej tureckiej tożsamości jako wschodzącego przywódcy świata muzułmańskiego. W tym kontekście w literaturze pojawiają się m.in. opinie, że AKP przywłaszczyła sobie termin „dyplomacja humanitarna” do opisu swojej polityki zagranicznej, ukształtowanej i motywowanej polityką wewnętrzną partii, globalnymi ambicjami i tożsamością religijną (Altunışık, 2019, s. 1).

Z kolei wymiar polityczny tureckiej dyplomacji humanitarnej wyznaczony jest poprzez treść humanitarnej polityki zagranicznej Ankary. Jest ona wyjaśniana potrzebą wynikającą z nadejścia nowej ery światowej i koniecznością podjęcia działań po upadku ładu powojennego oraz „zachodniocentrycznego porządku światowego”. W wielobiegunowej erze, w której w obrębie poszczególnych regionów wyłaniają się nowi gracze, Turcja miała ukazać się w odmiennej roli aktora, który „jest orędownikiem sprawiedliwości, sumienia i uczciwości” (Altunışık, 2019, s. 3). Dyplomacja humanitarna stanowi jeden z głównych elementów działania Turcji na arenie międzynarodowej od drugiej dekady XXI w. Po raz pierwszy termin ten został użyty do opisu tureckiej polityki zagranicznej przez Davutoğlu w styczniu 2013 r. w trakcie V Dorocznej Konferencji Ambasadorów. W swoim przemówieniu inauguracyjnym uzasadniał on, iż wybrał koncepcję dyplomacji humanitarnej, ponieważ odzwierciedla ona współczujący i kompetentny charakter państwa i przedstawia zorientowaną na człowieka naturę tureckiej polityki zagranicznej, łączącej interesy z wartościami (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023a). Jedną z najważniejszych konsekwencji takiego pojmowania polityki stało się aktywne wykorzystanie dyplomacji humanitarnej (Sadık & Zorba, 2017, s. 18), która stanowić ma nie tylko pomoc humanitarną, ale bardziej kompleksową misję. W celu wdrażania lepszej i bardziej kompleksowej polityki zwiększającej odporność, a także zdolność krajów otrzymujących pomoc do samodzielnego stawienia czoła kryzysom humanitarnym, nieuniknione okazało się powiązanie pomocy humanitarnej z rozwojem (Ulusoy, 2023, s. 733).

Poza tym, że Turcja jest międzynarodowym darczyńcą, jest też krajem dotkniętym kryzysami humanitarnymi, co umożliwia jej lepsze rozumienie światowego systemu humanitarnego (Ulusoy, 2023, s. 733). Wykorzystanie dyplomacji humanitarnej odbywa się zatem na trzech poziomach. Pierwszy z nich jest związany z obywatelami Republiki. W tym przypadku wzmocnienie potęgi następuje poprzez poprawę ich życia. Drugi poziom dotyczy działań zorientowanych na ludzi żyjących w obszarach problematycznych. Kryzysy i to, co dzieje się gdziekolwiek na świecie, wymaga polityki zorientowanej na pomoc humanitarną. Choć Turcja szanuje granice i prawo międzynarodowe, to dyplomacja humanitarna pozwala na wykraczanie poza własne terytorium i podjęcie działań w tych częściach świata, w których istnieje taka potrzeba. Trzeci poziom kategoryzacji związany jest z działalnością Ankary na poziomie globalnym, m.in. w ramach systemu ONZ. Ten poziom działań ukazuje zakres tureckiej dyplomacji humanitarnej, który obejmuje bardzo szeroki obszar geograficzny (Sadık & Zorba, 2017, s. 19).

Za sprawą działalności Turcji ukazuje się pewne istotne rozróżnienie między tzw. darczyńcami tradycyjnymi i wschodzącymi. Polityka Ankary z jednej strony wykazuje podobieństwa i różnice z tzw. liberalnym modelem budowania pokoju i państwowości tradycyjnych darczyńców. Jednak w jej podejściu przyjęto koncepcję humanitaryzmu opartą na normach, co nie jest aż tak jednoznaczne w przypadku darczyńców z Zachodu (Altunışık, 2022a, s. 2). Inną cechą wyróżniającą Turcję jest też „świadomość” i troska o odbiorców pomocy, które angażują ich na równych zasadach. Ponadto turecka elita polityczna, urzędnicy oraz organizacje pomocowe odwołują się często do „sumienia”, „doceniania życia ludzkiego”, a także „pomocy ucisnionym i ofiarom”. Są to czynniki napędzające dyplomację humanitarną i przez to Turcja definiuje siebie jako aktora „oredującego za sprawiedliwością, sumieniem i uczciwością”.

Analiza tureckiego modelu wykazała kilka istotnych cech kampanii pomocowych. Pierwsza z nich zgodna jest z zasadą niezależności pomocy humanitarnej, która mówi, że wyłącznym jej celem jest łagodzenie cierpienia i ratowanie życia ludzi. Pomoc humanitarna nie może służyć innym celom, przez co podejście Turcji skoncentrowane jest na człowieku, stabilności regionu i dobrobycie ludzi. Tureckie rozumienie dyplomacji humanitarnej stawia człowieka

w jej centrum, niezależnie od narodowości, religii czy pochodzenia etnicznego (Türkcan & Çetin, 2018, s. 5). Założenie to zgodne jest z kolei z zasadą neutralności oraz bezstronności pomocy humanitarnej. Neutralność jako wartość pomocy stanowi, iż darczyńca nie może faworyzować żadnych grup ludności, przez co istotne jest jego nieangażowanie się w spory religijne, polityczne, rasowe czy ideologiczne i nieopowiadanie się za żadną ze stron konfliktu. Zgodnie z zasadą bezstronności pomoc humanitarna jest dostarczana wyłącznie w zależności od potrzeb i bez żadnej dyskryminacji, czyli bez względu na narodowość, rasę czy wyznanie. W tym przypadku decydujące znaczenie ma sama potrzeba udzielenia pomocy.

Sukces modelu tureckiego polega m.in. na tym, że nie narzuca on polityki i nie ingeruje w procesy decyzyjne krajów, a raczej skupia się na wspieraniu ludzi. Ponadto zapewnia on kompleksowe i integracyjne ramy, w których zarówno agencje państwowe, jak i niepaństwowe (organizacje pozarządowe, charytatywne, przedsiębiorstwa i organizacje społeczeństwa obywatelskiego), biorą czynny udział w podejmowanych działaniach. Bardzo istotne znaczenie w prowadzeniu operacji humanitarnych na całym świecie ma m.in. Turecki Czerwony Półksiężyc (Türkiye Kırmızı Haç Derneği). Stanowi on największą humanitarną organizację działającą w Turcji i część Międzynarodowego Ruchu Czerwonego Krzyża i Czerwonego Półksiężyc. Organizacja założona została 11 czerwca 1868 r. jako Osmańskie Towarzystwo Pomocy Rannym i Chorym Żołnierzom (tur. Osmanlı Yaralı ve Hasta Askerlere Yardım Cemiyeti) (Türk Kırmızı Haç, 2023a). W ciągu ostatnich 10 lat podejmowała reakcje na klęski żywiołowe i katastrofy spowodowane przez człowieka w 138 różnych krajach. Akcje obejmowały państwa takie jak Palestyna, Sudan, Indonezja, Sri Lanka, Kirgistan, Kosowo, Somalia i Pakistan (Türk Kırmızı Haç, 2023b). Choć organizacja stanowi jednostkę autonomiczną, a jedną z fundamentalnych wartości, na których oparto jej działalność, jest niezależność (pozostałe to: człowieczeństwo, bezstronność, neutralność, jedność, wolontariat, powszechność), to sama określa siebie jako „pomocnika rządu w zakresie pomocy humanitarnej” (Turkish Red Crescent, 2022, s. 20–21).

Poza organizacjami pozarządowymi wspomnieć należy również o agencjach rządowych biorących udział w działaniach humanitarnych i pomocy rozwojowej. Jedną z nich jest ustanowiona przy

Ministerstwie Kultury i Turystyki – Agencja Rozwoju Współpracy Międzynarodowej Turcji (TİKA). Działająca od 1992 r. agencja stała się początkowo pośrednikiem wykonawczym polityki zagranicznej w krajach, łączących z Turcją wspólne wartości. Po objęciu rządów przez AKP TİKA rozszerzyła obszar swojej działalności, podejmując projekty w ok. 160 krajach i obecnie działa na całym świecie za pośrednictwem 62 biur, zlokalizowanych w 60 krajach na 5 kontynentach.

Kultywowanie nowej formy pomocy w ramach współpracy międzynarodowej było wynikiem instytucjonalnych, proceduralnych i politycznych oddziaływań. Reorganizacja i mobilizacja organizacji pomocowych oraz udzielanie im rekomendacji, a także bezpośrednie zaangażowanie znaczących polityków i urzędników stały się ważnym politycznym aspektem przepisywanym tureckim działaniom pomocowym. 26 września 2013 r. Sekretarz Generalny ONZ, przemawiając na Światowym Szczycie Humanitarnym 68. Zgromadzenia Ogólnego ONZ, pochwalił międzynarodową działalność pomocową Turcji i zadeklarował, że będzie ona gospodarzem pierwszego Światowego Szczytu Humanitarnego w 2016 r. Tureckie władze przyjęły wówczas z zadowoleniem deklarację, określając szczyt jako „najbardziej znaczący, jaki [miał odbyć] się w [ich państwie]” (Haşimi, 2014, s. 138). Decyzja o organizacji wydarzenia o takim znaczeniu, razem z próbą pomocowego zaangażowania się w niszowych obszarach, „potwierdziły polityczne ambicje [...] Turcji jako średniej potęgi” (Wódka, 2015, s. 283). W wyniku zmieniającej się polityki XXI w. „średnie” czy „wschodzące” mocarstwo zyskało zatem szansę odgrywania istotnej roli w polityce międzynarodowej.

Jak zauważa Antonio De Lauri, w rzeczywistości „dyplomacja humanitarna” stała się użytecznym terminem wyjaśniającym zaangażowanie w momencie, gdy turecka polityka zagraniczna nie była już w stanie sprostać wymogom rozwoju regionalnego i globalnego. Za jej pośrednictwem Ankara zyskała możliwość „legalnego wjazdu” do stref niestabilnych (De Lauri, 2018), a rosnący humanitaryzm stworzył zarówno szanse, jak i wyzwania w zakresie dalszych planów rozwojowych i współpracy w obszarze bezpieczeństwa w Azji i Afryce. Z kolei Meliha Benli Altunışık wykazała, że turecka dyplomacja humanitarna jest zgodna z „koncepcją roli narodowej” w dwupoziomowym aspekcie relacyjnym (Altunışık, 2022a, s. 4). Z jednej strony rząd AKP wykorzystał ją do zdobycia statusu na

arenie międzynarodowej. Z drugiej z kolei za sprawą dyskursywnego odróżnienia się od „innych”, poprzez zbudowanie tożsamości określanej jako „autentyczna” możliwe stało się implementowanie założeń dyplomacji humanitarnej do polityki wewnętrznej państwa.

## SOMALIA JAKO MIEJSCE „BUDOWY MODELU” DYPLOMACJI HUMANITARNEJ TURCJI

Za punkt zwrotny we wzroście znaczenia Turcji jako światowego supermocarstwa humanitarnego (Gilley, 2015, s. 38) uznaje się rok 2011. Wówczas Somalię, będącą państwem „bezprawia”, wojny domowej oraz głodu, znaczna część społeczności międzynarodowej uznawała za strefę zakazaną. Latem w trakcie ramadanu (co symbolicznie podkreślało wspólną religijną tożsamość obu państw) (Wódka, 2019, s. 280) wizytę w Somalii złożył premier Erdoğan, krytykując narody zachodnie za doprowadzenie do upadku tego państwa.

Był to początek największej tureckiej akcji humanitarnej w historii. Suma darowizn publicznych oraz funduszy państwowych w ciągu zaledwie dwóch miesięcy osiągnęła kwotę 300 mln dolarów, a dzięki organizacji nadzwyczajnego posiedzenia Organizacji Współpracy Islamskiej (OIC) możliwe stało się zebranie 350 mln dolarów na pakiet pomocy żywnościowej (Durmaz, 2021). Niedługo po wizycie w Mogadiszu (wrzesień 2011 r.), w trakcie debaty wysokiego szczebla na forum Zgromadzenia Ogólnego Narodów Zjednoczonych premier Erdoğan zaznaczył, że „społeczność międzynarodowa patrzy na cierpienie w Somalii jak na film” i podkreślił, że świat „powinien pilnie stawić czoła tej sytuacji, która jest sprawdzianem [...] człowieczeństwa” (UN News, 2011).

Skala tureckiej pomocy podkreślona została m.in. przez Andrew Harding w jego książce *The Mayor of Mogadishu: a Story of Chaos and Redemption in the Ruins of Somalia*. Autor zwrócił uwagę, że jadąc na lotnisko w Mogadiszu, ujrzał turecki konwój białych ciężarówek z czerwoną flagą, białym półksiężycem i gwiazdą. Jego zdaniem „Turcja – ambitna, zorientowana biznesowo, gotowa by zawstydzić i wstrząsnąć międzynarodową pomocą dla Somalii «bez ceregieli» wkraczała do [Somalii] jakby był[a] zupełnie bezpiecznym miejscem” (Wódka, 2019, s. 280). Rozpoczęta przez Turcję akcja humanitarna



stanowiła początek działalności większości organizacji międzynarodowych i misji dyplomatycznych i „coś w rodzaju efektu katalizacyjnego dla społeczności udzielającej [Somalii] pomocy”. Na temat tureckiej akcji wypowiedział się m.in. ambasador Wielkiej Brytanii w Somalii Matt Baugh, który zwrócił uwagę, że stanowiący przykład „Turcy pokazali, co można zrobić operacyjnie [tworząc] silną siłę polityczną [poprzez swoje zaangażowanie]” (Harding, 2012). Z kolei tempo działań tureckich organizacji, wolontariuszy i pracowników zastępcą koordynatora ONZ ds. pomocy humanitarnej w Somalii Killian Kleinschmidt uznał za wzór dla społeczności międzynarodowej. Zwrócił jednak uwagę, iż atut tureckich działań stanowią „islamskie korzenie”. Jak zauważa Meliha Benli Altunışık, w rzeczywistości „geografia islamu”, a także „obowiązki” Turcji wobec społeczności muzułmanów pozwalają władzom tego państwa na większy interwencjonizm, w przeciwieństwie do innych „wschodzących mocarstw”, które są mniej skłonne do kwestionowania suwerenności i norm nieinterwencji (Altunışık, 2022a, s. 6).

Tureckie działania w Somalii pozwoliły w pewnym sensie kontekstualizować samo znaczenie pomocy międzynarodowej (Haşimi, 2014, s. 128–129) i umożliwiły wyjście poza wszelkie „dystanse” (w szczególności emocjonalne), które stworzone zostały przez ustalony światowy system państw narodowych. Odbiorca pomocy przestał być postrzegany jako „cudzoziemiec w potrzebie”, a stał się „żywą jednostką”, będącą symbolem globalnej niesprawiedliwości i błędnej polityki „innych państw”, dominujących na arenie międzynarodowej. Pomoc międzynarodowa stała się zatem naturalną częścią samego pojmowania Turcji, a nie wynikiem kalkulacji strategicznej, sojuszu politycznego czy wyrazu solidarności.

Władze Turcji zdawały sobie sprawę, że pomoc nadzwyczajna nie zapewni zrównoważonego rozwoju i stabilności Somalii nawet w momencie pokonania klęski głodu. Zdywersyfikowano zatem zaangażowanie, podejmując wiele inicjatyw, począwszy od projektów humanitarnych, poprzez pomoc rozwojową, a skończywszy na budowaniu somalijskiej państwowości. Rozwój dyplomacji humanitarnej Turcji nastąpił w kierunku bardziej dwustronnego zaangażowania o wielowymiarowym wpływie. Podejście to implikowało potrzebę budowania zdolności państwa somalijskiego do świadczenia usług w sektorach zdrowia, edukacji i bezpieczeństwa (Durmaz, 2021).

Napływająca z islamskim przesłaniem solidarności pomoc ukazała „turecki model” dyplomacji humanitarnej oparty na demokratycznych rządach oraz wartościach islamskich. Zawierał on – poza ambitnymi planami rozwoju – również retorykę „wzywającą do ostrożności przed zachodnimi interwencjami” (Durmaz, 2021).

Zaangażowanie w Somalii głęboko wpłynęło na rosnącą pozycję Turcji w Afryce. Jednak, jak zauważa Ahmed Guled, w rzeczywistości model turecki stanowi „humanitarną dyplomację przedsiębiorczą” (*humanitarian enterprise diplomacy*), bowiem jej celem było „zdobycie pozbawionych środków do życia somalijskich serc i poparcie skorumpowanych elit politycznych, które czerpią korzyści z uzależnienia pomocy od Zachodu”. Guled uznaje, że Turcja wykorzystała Somalię do inkubacji swoich firm z sektora prywatnego i w tym celu wykreowania swojego pozytywnego wizerunku w innych krajach afrykańskich (Ahmed, 2021). Wniosek ten wynikał z faktu, że na przestrzeni kolejnych lat wiele tureckich firm zaczęło inwestować w Somalii, a niektóre z nich zdobyły lukratywne kontrakty na zarządzanie portem i lotniskiem w Mogadiszu. Niemniej jednak w tzw. międzyczasie wielu somalijskich przedsiębiorców otworzyło też swoje firmy w Turcji, a dla innych kraj ten stał się celem w zakresie szkolnictwa wyższego czy turystyki zdrowotnej (Mukhtar, 2021). Pragnąc zabezpieczyć swoje strategiczne interesy w Somalii, Turcja zbudowała też akademię wojskową TURKSOM na obrzeżach Mogadiszu, w celu wyszkolenia somalijskich żołnierzy. Zdaniem Ibrahima Mukhtara państwo to dostrzegło okazję do wykorzystania tego, co postrzega jako wyłaniający się wielobiegunowy światowy porządek i wzmocnienia swojej pozycji regionalnego mocarstwa (Mukhtar, 2021). Za pośrednictwem „integralnej mocy” i dzięki połączeniu swojej „miękkiej siły” w Somalii i całym regionie z narzędziami „twardej siły” możliwe stało się zabezpieczenie własnych narodowych oraz strategicznych celów.

## PODSUMOWANIE

Dyplomacja humanitarna stanowi jedną z istotnych form działania Turcji na arenie międzynarodowej i element jej *soft power*. Kontekst historyczny uzasadnia stosowanie tej formy współpracy w odniesieniu

do trwałej tradycji pomocy humanitarnej, która wywodzi się z historii i kultury tego państwa. Wykraczając poza pomoc humanitarną, dyplomacja humanitarna Turcji łączy w sobie zasady humanitaryzmu oraz zrównoważonego rozwoju i opiera się na skoordynowanej działalności aktorów państwowych i niepaństwowych (Bogatyreva, 2022, s. S1364). Dzięki niej Turcja ma możliwość legalnego „wjazdu” do stref niestabilnych i szansę na realizację dalszych planów współpracy w zakresie rozwoju oraz bezpieczeństwa z partnerami z Azji i Afryki. Ponadto tureckie zaangażowanie pozwala określić pozycję i rolę tego państwa jako „apolitycznego i bezinteresownego” donatora, podejmującego działania normatywne w stosunkach międzynarodowych. Jednak model tureckiej polityki zagranicznej wykracza poza pomoc humanitarną, łącząc tę formę z projektami rozwojowymi (wymagającymi długoterminowego zaangażowania), umowami biznesowymi, kwestią budowania pokoju oraz stabilnych stosunków politycznych z partnerami. To wszystko pozwala na określenie tureckiej polityki zagranicznej zarówno jako humanitarnej i normatywnej, jak i przedsiębiorczej.

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RECENZJE

REVIEWS





Lubecka, J., & Zakrzewski, M. (2023). *Polityka historyczna*. Seria „Słowniki Społeczne”. W. Pasierbek, & B. Szlachta (Red.). Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ignatianum w Krakowie [recenzja]

### Historia czy pamięć

Sposób odczytywania i interpretowania przeszłości zawsze był i jest obszarem zajadłych nieraz sporów z towarzyszącymi im indywidualnymi i zbiorowymi emocjami, przez co stają się chętnie używanym, a nierzadko nadużywanym narzędziem politycznych rywalizacji i konfliktów.

Po 1990 roku, szczególnie na przełomie XX i XXI wieku, w Polsce gwałtownie wzrosło powszechne zainteresowanie historią, a zwłaszcza jej najmniej odległym okresem, obejmującym drugą połowę minionego stulecia. Owo zainteresowanie przeradzające się niemal w ekscytację, a ta – jak wiadomo – nieraz zniekształca obraz rzeczywistości, manifestowało się mnogością rozmaitych nośników wiedzy w postaci bogatej, aczkolwiek różnorodnej pod względem wartości oferty księgarskiej, powstających periodyków naukowych lub popularyzatorskich oraz specjalnych dodatków tematycznych do niemal wszystkich liczących się tytułów prasowych. Tworzono kanały historyczne w telewizji publicznej, w czym rywalizowały z nią inne stacje telewizyjne, które wchodząc na polski rynek medialny, zaciekle walczyły o widza. W tyle nie pozostawały rozgłosnie radiowe umieszczające w swych ramówkach cykliczne audycje o tematyce historycznej. Nieodległa przeszłość stała się nieodłącznym tematem rodzinnych i towarzyskich spotkań, te zaś nieraz dawały początek rozmaitym zorganizowanym (w postaci np. klubów) forum dyskusyjnym i popularyzacyjnym, zyskujących z czasem polityczną afiliację.

To zaskakujące niektórych zanurzenie się w przeszłość wydaje się całkowicie zrozumiałe wobec trwającego kilka powojennych dziesięcioleci programowego manipulowania edukacją historyczną kolejnych pokoleń, czyli, powiedzmy to jednoznacznie, polityką historyczną konsekwentnie i pragmatycznie prowadzoną przez partię komunistyczną w PRL. Nadszedł zatem czas wypełniania „białych plam”, przywracania historycznej prawdy i kształtowania

na jej podstawie zbiorowej pamięci Polaków. Proces ten przybierał nieraz burzliwy charakter. Obalanie pomników i wznoszenie nowych, demontaż panteonu peerelowskich bóstw i herosów, a w jego miejsce tworzenie lub przywracanie przestrzeni publicznej słusznych i prawdziwych patronów i towarzyszące temu kształtowanie się nowej mitologii narodowej stało się jednym z jego przejawów.

Spontaniczność i niemal rewolucyjne rozgorączkowanie nie pozwalały wybrzmieć nieśmiałym głosom wskazującym pilną potrzebę kreacji spójnej i przemyślanej polityki pamięci, której głównym celem ma być odbudowanie i umocnienie wspólnotowych więzi społecznych.

Kiedy w pierwszych latach obecnego wieku Instytut Pamięci Narodowej rozpoczął proces publikowania i opracowywania zawartości archiwów komunistycznego aparatu represji, emocje społeczne sięgnęły zenitu. Okazało się bowiem, że archiwalne źródła powodują konieczność stawiania bardzo zasadniczych pytań i rzetelnego wyjaśniania piętrzących się wątpliwości dotyczących wydarzeń z nieodległej przeszłości i biorących w nich udział postaci. „Lustracyjna gorączka”, jak nieraz określano zbiorowe emocje, stała się niewątpliwie jednym z czynników polaryzujących i pogłębiających podział polskiej sceny politycznej. Coraz częściej i dosadniej w debacie publicznej pojawiał się postulat poważnego potraktowania konieczności prowadzenia w państwie polityki historycznej przekraczającej naturalne w kształtującej się polskiej demokracji podziały polityczne i stanowiącej ważne narzędzie polityki państwa także w wymiarze międzynarodowym, co nabierało szczególnego znaczenia wobec mnożących się w zagranicznych publikacjach, a nawet w wypowiedziach polityków sformułowań typu „polskie obozy koncentracyjne”, wywołujących co najwyżej histeryczne reakcje polskich ośrodków politycznych z jednej strony, a z drugiej sugestie o potrzebie zepchnięcia poważnej debaty historycznej na dalszy plan, gdyż przeszłość, jak się okazuje, dzieli zamiast łączyć.

Obecne podziały polityczne przejawiające się w stosunku do przeszłości opierają się na, z grubsza rzecz ujmując, dwu toposach: Polskiego Państwa Podziemnego, Powstania Warszawskiego i działalności powojennego podziemia antykomunistycznego oraz etosie Solidarności, wyborów czerwcowych w 1989 roku i kształtowania się III Rzeczypospolitej. Obydwie mocno zmitologizowane narracje

są dość znaczącym elementem rozmaicie manifestowanej identyfikacji politycznej i światopoglądowej dwu głównych sił współczesnej polskiej sceny politycznej.

Mitologizowanie i nadawanie roli integrującej idei wybranym zjawiskom z przeszłości nie jest niczym niezwykłym ani nowym, a w refleksji badawczej używa się określenia „mit fundatorski”. Ma ono przede wszystkim walor użyteczności w odróżnieniu od obiektywnej prawdy historycznej, jest idiosynkratyczne, pomaga utrwalić podziały.

Chantal Delsol (*Kamienie węgielne*, 2018), zwracając uwagę na dominujące w dzisiejszej kulturze europejskiej zjawisko zastępowania historii jako nauki pamięcią kształtowaną przez dysponujące bogatym instrumentarium ośrodki opiniotwórcze, utożsamia je z generalnym kryzysem wartości dociekania prawdy. Także – a może przede wszystkim – w historii, której rzetelne uprawianie uważa za akt doskonalenia się ludzkości, akt bolesny, wrywający ze strefy komfortu, ale przybliżający do zrozumienia świata.

Pojęcie „polityka historyczna” na stałe zadomowiło się w zbiorze kluczowych pojęć współczesnej debaty publicznej. Nieraz nadużywane lub nader swobodnie interpretowane dowodzi trudności w jego rozumieniu, a także sporych problemów, przed którymi stają badacze tego obszaru życia politycznego. Wskazuje na to stosunkowo skromna ilościowo rodzima literatura przedmiotu, wśród której przykładowo wskazać należy przede wszystkim *Politykę historyczną* – opublikowaną w 2020 roku obszerną syntetyczną pracę Rafała Chwedoruka – czy wydany dwa lata wcześniej zbiór opracowań *Historia w przestrzeni publicznej* pod redakcją Joanny Wojdoń czy jeszcze wcześniejsze (2015) *Narracje pamięci: między polityką a historią* pod kierunkiem Katarzyny Kąckiej, Joanny Piechowiak-Lamparskiej i Anny Ratke-Majewskiej. Badacz podejmujący się eksploracji tej tematyki ma przy tym do dyspozycji bogatą literaturę, głównie angielsko- i niemieckojęzyczną, a trzeba w tym miejscu zwłaszcza wspomnieć o udostępnionych polskiemu czytelnikowi rozważaniach Paula Ricoeura *Pamięć, historia, zapomnienie* (2012) i *Czas opowiadany* (2008).

Tym bardziej na uwagę zasługuje wydany w ramach realizowanego na Uniwersytecie Ignatianum w Krakowie projektu Słowniki Społeczne, prowadzonego przez Wita Pasierbka i Bogdana Szlachtę,

dwunasty już tom serii zatytułowany *Polityka historyczna*, przygotowany przez Joannę Lubecką i Marcina Zakrzewskiego reprezentujących młodsze pokolenie historyków i politologów, ale posiadających znaczący dorobek naukowy i publicystyczny.

Tom zawiera dwadzieścia haseł tematycznych podejmujących próbę możliwie szerokiego, ale ze względu na formę publikacji syntetycznego ujęcia mocno zróżnicowanych aspektów zagadnienia z wyraźnie zarysowanym podziałem na dwie części. Jedenaście pierwszych haseł dotyczy problematyki teoretycznej obejmującej analizę samego pojęcia oraz próbę prześledzenia związków polityki historycznej z rozmaitymi sferami życia społecznego, jak polityka, w tym polityka zagraniczna, a także związana z nimi propaganda polityczna, edukacja, środki masowej komunikacji, aspekty prawne, życie kulturalne. Część druga zaś to przegląd polityk historycznych w wybranych krajach – wybranych, jak się zdaje, ze względu na bliskie sąsiedztwo oraz wspólne dramatyczne doświadczenie II wojny światowej i będącego jej następstwem totalitaryzmu w naszej części Europy. Omówienie w osobnych hasłach polityk historycznych pozornie „egzotycznych” Japonii i Chin w rzeczywistości spełnia wspomniane wcześniej kryteria doboru.

Ciekawe wprowadzenie w tematykę stanowi pierwsze hasło słownika *Czyja władza, tego historia?*, które w ujęciu chronologicznym dowodzi politycznego znaczenia intepretowania dziejów w burzliwych nieraz okresach historii, począwszy od starożytności po wiek XX, z podkreśleniem znaczenia tego procesu dla radykalnych nieraz przemian politycznych, ideowych i światopoglądowych. Autorzy wskazują przy tym na niebezpieczeństwa wynikające ze zmonopolizowania przekazu historii przez państwo lub różne ośrodki życia politycznego, zagrażające głównie utrwalaniu głębszych więzi społecznych.

Rafał Chwedoruk w opracowanym hasle tematycznym koncentruje się na zdefiniowaniu pojęcia polityki historycznej, podkreślając, że jego obecne rozumienie ukształtowało się w latach 90. XX wieku, będąc efektem trwających wiele lat prac i studiów niemieckich historyków, czego ukoronowaniem była praca politologa Edgara Wolfruma *Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Der Weg zur bundesrepublikanischer Erinnerung 1948–1990*. Warto przy tym zauważyć, że powszechnie używane polskie określenie zjawiska jest

kalką z języka niemieckiego: *Geschichtspolitik* konkurującą z angielską *politics of memory*, która jako „polityka pamięci” chętniej znajduje miejsce w naukach społecznych. Konkludując swój wywód, autor wyraża znamiennej opinię: „Sednem polityki pamięci stawałoby się to, co zostanie społecznie zinternalizowane, tzn. jaka jest społeczna recepcja przeszłości, a nie jaka była historia” (s. 49).

Analizie napięcia między pamięcią a historią poświęcone są dwa kolejne opracowania hasłowe. Jakub Greloff zwraca uwagę na dynamiczny, deliberatywny, podporządkowany określone celowi charakter pamięci zbiorowej ulegającej zmianom narracyjnym, sprzyjającym budowaniu tożsamości wspólnotowych wobec chłodnego, zdystansowanego od chwiejnych emocji charakteru historii – nauki, której jedynym celem jest zbliżenie się do prawdy. Polityka historyczna jako instrument władzy kształtuje pamięć różnymi metodami, a szczególnym zadaniem tego oddziaływania – zwłaszcza na zbiorowości strauumatyzowane swą przeszłością – winno być podążanie do jedynego sensownego celu, jakim jest zrozumienie, przebaczenie i pojednanie.

Z kolei Filip Musiał, dokonując przeglądu relacji między polityką historyczną a historią jako nauką o przeszłości zakładającą istnienie prawdy historycznej, wskazuje na moralną konieczność oparcia polityki pamięci na bezspornych metodologicznie faktach. Nie pomija przy tym szczególnego wyzwania stojącego przed kreatorami naszej polityki historycznej, jakim jest oczyszczenie pamięci zbiorowej z tkwiących w niej schematów będących wynikiem manipulacji historią w latach totalitaryzmu, dostrzegając opierające się krytycznej refleksji mocno utrwalone ówczesną propagandą klisze.

W aksjologicznej refleksji Barbary Markowskiej-Marczak dominuje przeświadczenie o konieczności wyeksponowania wartości i moralnego sensu w procesach i wydarzeniach z przeszłości, jako zasadniczej powinności nowoczesnej polityki historycznej. Pamięć historyczna umożliwia przeżywanie przeszłości na każdym poziomie społecznym. Pamięć aksjologiczna w wydarzeniach z przeszłości pozwala dostrzec wartości, a postawy i wybory dokonywane przez postacie w przeszłości postrzega jako wypełnienie moralnej powinności. Autorka, odwołując się do refleksji Hannah Arendt, podkreśla, że „pamięć konstytuuje wspólnotę polityczną pojętą jako wspólnota moralna” (s. 97), choć ma świadomość, że może stać to w sprzeczności

z historycznym obiektywizmem. W polityce historycznej postmodernizmu i postsekularyzmu wskazuje na cztery zasadnicze procesy. Są to: dominacja przeszłości nad przyszłością będąca osią sporu konserwatyzmu i lewicowości, dwie wizje aksjologiczne – pojmowanie narodu jako wspólnoty moralnej i politycznej oraz pluralistyczne społeczeństwo oparte na wartościach solidarności, obywatelskości i krytycznego patriotyzmu, waloryzacja narracji narodowych kosztem uniwersalnych oraz sakralizacja przeszłości.

Kolejne hasłowe opracowanie poświęcone jest prawnym aspektem polityki historycznej. Jest to o tyle istotne, że w Polsce po 1989 roku wymiar sprawiedliwości stał się ważnym elementem polityki historycznej, czego przejawem jest dochodzeniowo-śledczy i lustracyjny charakter wyspecjalizowanych struktur IPN połączony z określonym orzecznictwem sądowym. Polski system prawny nie koncentruje się tylko na ściganiu zbrodni przeciwko narodowi polskiemu, kwalifikowanych jako komunistyczne, nazistowskie lub zbrodnie ludobójstwa, lecz zawiera szereg regulacji określanych jako memorialne, których zadaniem jest upamiętnianie ważnych wydarzeń i wybitnych postaci, a także ochrona narodowej i państwowej symboliki. Krótko rzecz ujmując, elementy polskiej tożsamości objęte są ochroną prawną. W analizie tego zagadnienia dostrzeżone zostały pewne niebezpieczeństwa wynikające z jurydyzacji historii, głównie w postaci ograniczenia swobody wypowiedzi i dociekań badawczych, a w szczególnych przypadkach grożące usankcjonowaniem kłamstwa historycznego.

Znaczenie pamięci historycznej w stosunkach międzynarodowych ma w opinii autora kolejnego hasła charakter kluczowy. Każdy, nawet pobieżny obserwator toczących się obecnie w Europie i świecie dramatycznych sporów kulturowych oraz politycznych konfliktów, ze zbrojnymi włącznie, musi dostrzec swoistą restaurację historycznych argumentów uzasadniających rozmaite roszczenia i akty agresji. Arkadiusz Stempin wskazuje na trzy modele polityki historycznej w relacjach międzynarodowych: pozytywny i negatywny, konwergencyjny oraz agoniczny, konkludując swój wywód stwierdzeniem zupełnego fiaska koncepcji „końca historii” w polityce zagranicznej.

Obszar kultury, w którym przeszłość jest cechą immanentną, wydaje się szczególnie uwrażliwiony, ale także otwarty na oddziaływania mające swe źródło w polityce historycznej. Autorka poświęconego

tej problematyce hasła, Anna Winkler, szczególne znaczenie dla kształtowania pamięci zbiorowej nadaje ochronie dziedzictwa kulturowego materialnego i niematerialnego. Dostrzega przy tym spoczywający na władzy obowiązek inspirowania i wspierania bieżącej działalności kulturalnej, co wymusza na kreatorach polityki historycznej uwzględnianie rozmaitych trendów i konkurujących nieraz ze sobą narracji o przeszłości oraz nowatorskiego, przełamującego utrwalone standardy odczytywania i interpretacji rozmaitych artefaktów. Staje się to przyczyną gorących nieraz sporów ideowych i politycznych, by przywołać choćby tylko atmosferę wokół niedawnej inscenizacji Mickiewiczowskich „Dziadów” na deskach krakowskiego Teatru im. J. Słowackiego. By przybliżyć możliwy sposób odnoszenia się do takich zjawisk, warto przytoczyć fragment omawianego hasła Słownika:

Czy zatem polityka historyczna musi zawsze dążyć do sprowadzenia naturalnej polifonii pamięci w kulturze do jednej, odgórnie narzuconej narracji? Poszukując odpowiedzi na to pytanie, warto odwołać się do zaproponowanego przez Georgiya Kasianova rozróżnienia na ekskluzywistyczny i inkluzywistyczny model prowadzenia polityki historycznej. Ten pierwszy „wspiera i narzuca homogeniczną wersję pamięci historycznej” i wyklucza wszystko, co do niej nie pasuje, a wszystko, co pozostaje poza nią, określa jako „obce”. Drugi próbuje zintegrować różne warianty (nieantagonistyczne) pamięci zbiorowej we wspólną opowieść, na przykład odwołując się do koncepcji obywatelskiego patriotyzmu. Kasianov wspomina również o trzecim modelu – mieszanym – oznaczającym współistnienie różnych wariantów pamięci zbiorowej, ale zaznacza, że pojawia się on raczej na skutek zaniechania prowadzenia polityki historycznej niż jako rezultat świadomego działania (s. 160).

Kolejne trzy hasła, autorstwa Barbary Markowskiej-Marczak, Rafała Opulskiego i Jan Wróbla, odnoszą się do szeroko rozumianej popularyzacji wiedzy historycznej, której celem jest zakodowanie w zbiorowej pamięci utrwalonych wzorców semiotycznych. Media, propaganda i edukacja szkolna wydają się więc przedmiotem szczególnego zainteresowania kreatorów polityki historycznej, stając się niezwykle skutecznymi instrumentami jej urzeczywistniania. Popularyzatorska forma przekazu obarczona jest ryzykiem uproszczeń, zbyt daleko posuniętych uogólnień i wybiórczego podejścia do

materii, swobodnej interpretacji, a w skrajnych przypadkach świadomej i celowej manipulacji czy wręcz zakłamywania przeszłości. Ostatnie, charakterystyczne dla propagandy, jest doświadczeniem pokolenia wyrosłego w latach PRL, a dziś najaktywniej reagującego na politykę pamięci. Można więc zrozumieć te środowiska, które ową politykę traktują nieufnie bądź wręcz utożsamiają ją z propagandą, negując jej zasadność i dezawuuując integrującą funkcję. Autor poświęconego tej problematyce hasła stara się jednak precyzyjnie wykazać to, co odróżnia propagandę polityczną od polityki historycznej, postulując radykalne odejście od języka i metod propagandy w kształtowaniu pamięci zbiorowej.

Uwrażliwieni na propagandowe uproszczenia i manipulacje również krytycznie odnosić się będą do przekazu medialnego operującego tabloidyzacją i personalizacją przekazu, fabularyzacją narracji i immersyjnością odbioru treści, uniwersalizacją ludzkich postaw i ahistorycznością myślenia oraz promującego tzw. kulturę uczestnictwa.

W realizowaniu polityki historycznej w edukacji szkolnej ścierają się natomiast dwie tendencje. Jedna to swobodne inspirowanie zaciekawienia dziejami przy zachowaniu postawy krytycznej, ale prowadzące do kształtowania postaw patriotycznych. Przeciwstawia się jej szczegółowy wykaz tematów, zadań i obowiązujących interpretacji, mających stanowić podstawę wiedzy w zakresie historii. W jednym i drugim przypadku celem jest pamięć, połączone ze zdrowym krytycyzmem rozumienie przeszłości, a wreszcie budowanie w świadomości wychowanka miłości Ojczyzny. Oba te sposoby edukacji historycznej są po 1989 roku tłem gorących politycznych sporów, prowadzących do kolejnych reform systemu edukacji i programów nauczania, co z pewnością nie jest korzystne dla spójności i ciągłości procesu nauczania i wychowania.

Jak wspomniano wcześniej, drugi zespół haseł Słownika stanowią prezentacje polityk historycznych w wybranych krajach. Z punktu widzenia polskiej polityki historycznej, ale także, co ważne, polskiej polityki zagranicznej, istotne znaczenie mają te, które dotyczą naszych bezpośrednich sąsiadów, a więc Niemiec, Rosji, Ukrainy i Litwy, czego, jak się zdaje, nie ma potrzeby bliżej uzasadniać. Osobny rozdział poświęcony polityce historycznej Izraela jest ważny przede wszystkim ze względu na szczególny charakter wielowiekowych relacji między naszymi narodami, ale także dlatego, że polityka



pamięci Państwa Izrael uchodzi w opinii wielu badaczy za modelową i szczególnie efektywną w kształtowaniu tożsamości narodowej i w stosunkach międzynarodowych. Z perspektywy stosunków polsko-niemieckich warto przyrzeć się ujętej w osobne hasło polityce historycznej Francji, gdzie główny akcent położony jest na prawdę i sprawiedliwość historyczną.

Ostatnią, zamykającą pozycją Słownika jest rozdział poświęcony polityce historycznej Kościoła. Autor dokonuje zasadnego rozróżnienia między katolicką wizją dziejów ludzkości rozumianą jako historia zbawienia z immanentną obecnością Boga w każdym jej momencie a historią Kościoła w świecie i jego interpretacją tej historii. Skupiając się na tej drugiej perspektywie, Michał Wenklar analizuje trzy jej główne obszary, tj. tezę o nierozzerwalnym związku kultury europejskiej z chrześcijaństwem, przywracanie i oczyszczanie pamięci o „czarnych kartach” w przeszłości Kościoła przyjmujące charakter ekspiacyjny oraz weryfikację oceny stosunku Kościoła do XX-wiecznych systemów totalitarnych. Szczególną rolę w tych procesach przypisuje Janowi Pawłowi II, który nadał im pragmatyczną formułę polegającą na ustaleniu historycznej prawdy poddanej następnie teologicznej refleksji z zamykającym ewentualnym określeniem i wyznaniem win. Win konkretnych osób, które zbrukały świętość Kościoła.

*Polityka historyczna* jako część cyklu stawiającego sobie za cel prezentację ważnych dla kondycji dzisiejszych społeczeństw kierunków humanistyki i socjologii, uwzględniającego głębokie zróżnicowanie współczesnego świata pod względem światopoglądowym, kulturowym, religijnym, ideowym, która to różnorodność mocno zaznacza swą pozycję w nauce, a zwłaszcza w naukach humanistycznych i społecznych, jest bez wątpienia pozycją zawierającą kompendium niezbędnej wiedzy i stosowanych metod badawczych nad niesłabnącym, a wręcz narastającym zainteresowaniem przedstawicieli tych nauk znaczeniem świadomości historycznej i praktycznego jej zastosowania na różnych płaszczyznach polityki. Powyższa prezentacja zawartości tomu ukazuje bogactwo warsztatu, jakim mogą dysponować kreatorzy polityki historycznej. Zabrakło natomiast opisu i analizy jednego z głównych narzędzi budowania i utrwalania wspólnej pamięci, jakim jest kształtowanie przestrzeni publicznej, nie tylko poprzez rozmaite, nieraz kontrowersyjne obiekty memoriałowe, ale

także poprzez nazewnictwo nadawane ulicom, obiektom itp., co jest przedmiotem onomastyki i jej działu chrematonimii. Warto zatem w badaniach nad polityką historyczną uwzględnić także refleksję językoznawczą.

Lektura tego tomu Słowników Społecznych uświadamia także, jak żmudna praca czeka jeszcze poświęcających się badaniom tego zjawiska, co ilustruje choćby trudność w sformułowaniu jego wyczerpującej definicji. Znamienne, że każde z haseł tomu z założenia rozpoczyna się próbą definicji polityki historycznej i niemal w każdym przypadku autorzy formułują ją ogólnie, starając się uwypuklić elementy istotne dla tematyki, której poświęcają swoje refleksje.

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**Kołomycew A. (2023), *Instrumenty zaangażowania obywatelskiego. Założenia teoretyczne demokracji partycypacyjnej a praktyka ich stosowania*. Warszawa: CeDeWu [recenzja]**

Wielu badaczy formułuje tezę o kryzysie demokracji liberalnej i zastanawia się nad możliwościami zmian, a część z nich skłania się w kierunku rozwoju demokracji partycypacyjnej. Rodzi się pytanie, w jakim stopniu takie rozwiązanie jest realne, a przede wszystkim: czy dotychczasowe doświadczenia w tym zakresie pozwalają sądzić, że poziom zaangażowania obywatelskiego będzie na tyle wysoki, że możliwa stanie się realizacja demokracji partycypacyjnej jako podstawowego modelu uczestnictwa obywateli w rządzeniu. Częściowej odpowiedzi na to pytanie dostarcza recenzowana książka, co stanowi o aktualności i ważności zagadnień podjętych przez Autorkę.

Książka Anny Kołomycew dotyczy bowiem problematyki aktywności obywatelskiej i partycypacji obywateli w rządzeniu w skali lokalnej i można ją traktować jako głos w toczącej się dyskusji na temat konieczności i kierunku zmian w dotychczasowym modelu demokracji. Książka powstała na podstawie przeprowadzonych przez Autorkę badań empirycznych, bardzo dobrze przemyślanych i zrealizowanych, co bezsprzecznie podnosi wartość opublikowanej pracy. Badania tego rodzaju, wymagające poświęcenia znacznej ilości czasu i energii – szczególnie kiedy przeprowadza je jedna osoba – nie są czymś częstym. Wnioski sformułowane na ich podstawie są nie tylko ciekawe i dobrze uzasadnione, ale także bardzo istotne dla zrozumienia mechanizmów demokracji lokalnej i sądzę, że powinni się z nimi zapoznać wszyscy ci, którzy mają wpływ na ustawodawstwo i politykę lokalną.

Zasadniczy problem badawczy Autorka sformułowała jako pytanie, czy instrumenty zaangażowania obywatelskiego stosowane w gminach w Polsce pozwalają urzeczywistniać teoretyczne założenia demokracji partycypacyjnej. Głównym celem było wyjaśnienie, w jaki sposób w gminach są stosowane zinstytucjonalizowane formy zaangażowania obywatelskiego, jakie są zależności pomiędzy zasadami formalnymi, praktyką ich stosowania wynikającą z doświadczeń decydentów oraz społeczności lokalnej a narracjami towarzyszącymi

wdrażaniu poszczególnych instrumentów. W głównej hipotezie, która zresztą została potwierdzona, Autorka założyła, że pomimo instytucjonalizacji instrumenty zaangażowania obywatelskiego są wykorzystywane okazjonalnie, mobilizując tylko tych obywateli, których interesy są zagrożone, bądź chcących uzyskać określone korzyści.

Struktura opracowania jest poprawna i przejrzysta, umożliwiającą Autorce pełne przedstawienie problematyki, a odbiorcy ułatwiająca percepcję prowadzonych rozważań. Obejmuje (oprócz wstępu, zakończenia, bibliografii, aneksów, indeksu nazwisk i streszczeń w języku polskim i angielskim) siedem rozdziałów podzielonych na dwie części. W pierwszej bardzo precyzyjnie dokonano konceptualizacji tematu i w sposób wyczerpujący przedstawiono założenia teoretyczne dotyczące demokracji partycypacyjnej i deliberacyjnej, instrumentów zaangażowania obywatelskiego oraz nowego instytucjonalizmu jako ramy teoretycznej badań, w drugiej – przedstawiono wyniki badań empirycznych. Zostały one, oprócz rozdziału dotyczącego sposobu badania, uporządkowane w trzech rozdziałach, zgodnie z przyjętą koncepcją analizy Vivien Lowndes i Marka Robertsa wyróżniającą trzy wymiary instytucji: zasady, praktyki i narracje. W ten sposób powstały trzy rozdziały, z których pierwszy został poświęcony regulacyjnemu wymiarowi instrumentów zaangażowania obywatelskiego, drugi wymiarowi funkcjonalnemu, trzeci wymiarowi regulacyjnemu.

Całość została bardzo solidnie i poprawnie pod względem metodologicznym opracowana. Autorka, opierając się na paradygmacie interpretatywistycznym, zastosowała przemyślaną strategię badawczą, obejmującą zarówno badania ilościowe (najpierw przeprowadzono 525 ankiet), jak i jakościowe (potem przeprowadzono 43 wywiady). Dokonała również wielu wnikliwych analiz zebranego materiału, prowadzących do istotnych, a przy tym wyważonych i ciekawych wniosków. Ich przytaczanie tutaj zajęłoby zbyt wiele miejsca, choć warto zacytować jeden z ważniejszych, odnoszący się do instrumentów quasi-decyzyjnych: „Instrumenty zaangażowania obywatelskiego istniejące w polskich rozwiązaniach prawnych *de facto* nie pozwalają członkom społeczności lokalnych na faktyczne decydowanie ani na – coraz powszechniej stosowane – współdecydowanie (...)” (s. 177). Ponadto można przytoczyć niektóre zdania z zakończenia, odnoszące się do weryfikacji głównej hipotezy: „Pomimo

instytucjonalizacji normatywnej (formalnoprawnej), instrumenty zaangażowania obywatelskiego stosowane w gminach w Polsce, nie pozwalają urzeczywistniać wspomnianych założeń” (chodzi o założenia demokracji partycypacyjnej, m.in. równość, inkluzyjność, bezpośrednio zaangażowanie obywateli w procesy decydowania bądź oddziaływania na kształt decyzji, a także informacyjny i edukacyjny charakter zaangażowania), oraz „Większość instrumentów wykorzystywanych w gminach ma charakter konsultacyjny co oznacza, że nie pozwalają one rzeczywiście uczestniczyć obywatelom w procesie podejmowania decyzji (...)” (s. 326). Interesujące są też m.in. wnioski dotyczące tendencji do „deformalizacji” działań społecznych (s. 253) oraz spostrzeżenia, które powinny prowadzić do indywidualizacji działań normatywizujących instrumenty zaangażowania, czyli – inaczej mówiąc – do ich decentralizacji.

Praca została napisana bardzo poprawnym językiem naukowym, wiele zagadnień zostało przedstawionych w postaci tabel, co znacznie ułatwia ich odbiór. W książce wykorzystano bardzo obszerną bazę źródłową obejmującą akty prawne, inne dokumenty, oraz znaczną liczbę opracowań, w większości anglojęzycznych; bibliografia zajęła ponad 50 stron. Zarówno recenzowana książka, jak i zawarta w niej bibliografia mogą stanowić punkt wyjścia dla innych badaczy tej problematyki, a orientację w niej na pewno ułatwi także obszerny indeks nazwisk.

W konkluzji recenzji należy stwierdzić, że opracowanie autorstwa Anny Kołomycew zasługuje jednoznacznie na bardzo pozytywną ocenę i będzie stanowić pozycję wartościową tak dla badaczy zajmujących się tą problematyką, dla decydentów i aktywistów działających w sferze lokalnej, jak i dla wszystkich zainteresowanych partycypacją polityczną.

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## DYSKURS POLITOLOGICZNY

Seria wydawnicza Instytutu Nauk o Polityce i Administracji Uniwersytetu Ignatianum w Krakowie pod redakcją Włodzimierza Bernackiego, Wita Pasierbka, Bogdana Szlachty

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