

An aerial photograph of a university courtyard. The courtyard is filled with trees displaying vibrant yellow autumn foliage. In the center, there is a large, multi-story building with a classical architectural style, featuring arched windows and a prominent entrance. The courtyard is paved and has several benches. The overall scene is bright and colorful, capturing the essence of a university campus in fall.

UNIVERSITY OF CRAIOVA
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
POLITICAL SCIENCES SPECIALIZATION

Revista de Științe Politice.
Revue des Sciences Politiques
No. 72 • 2021

UNIVERSITY OF CRAIOVA
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
POLITICAL SCIENCES SPECIALIZATION

Revista de Științe Politice.
Revue des Sciences Politiques

No. 72 • 2021



Editorial Board

Editor in chief: Anca Parmena Olimid, University of Craiova, Romania

Deputy editor in chief: Cătălina Maria Georgescu, University of Craiova, Romania

Managing editor: Cosmin Lucian Gherge, University of Craiova, Romania

Regular members:

Pablo Arconada-Ledesma, Universidad de Valladolid, Spain

Simber Atay, Dokuz Eylül University, Turkey

Adisa Avdić-Küsmüş, Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University, Turkey

César García Andrés, Universidad de Valladolid, Spain

Mihai Ghițulescu, University of Craiova, Romania

George Gîrleşteanu, University of Craiova, Romania

Daniel Ghiță, University of Craiova, Romania

Yevheniy Haydanka, Trnava University, Slovak Republic

Eglantina Hysa, Epoka University, Albania

Mihaela Camelia Ilie, University of Craiova, Romania

Ylber Sela, Institute for International and Political Studies, North Macedonia

Paweł Skorut, Pedagogical University of Krakow, Poland

Elena Todorova, American University of Europe-FON, Republic of North Macedonia

Agnieszka Kisztelińska-Węgrzyńska, University of Łódź, Poland

International Advisory Board

Dan Claudiu Dănișor, University of Craiova, Romania

(Chairman of the International Advisory Board)

Jonuz Abdullai, South East European University, Tetovo, Macedonia

Lillian Barria, University of Illinois, United States of America

Jan Bureš, Metropolitan University of Prague, Czech Republic

Jakub Charvat, Metropolitan University of Prague, Czech Republic

Andrzej Dubicki, University of Lodz, Poland

Konstantinos Gogos, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Patricia Gonzalez-Aldea, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain

Francesco Guida, Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Rome, Italy

Jerry Harris, National Secretary, Global Studies Association of North America, United States of America

Ioan Horga, University of Oradea, Romania

Nikolaos Intzessiloglou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Hasan Jashari, South East European University, Tetovo, Macedonia

Petr Just, Metropolitan University of Prague, Czech Republic

Ali Pajaziti, South East European University, Tetovo, Macedonia

Gabriela Rățulea, Transylvania University of Brașov, Romania

Steven D. Roper, San Francisco State University, United States of America

Virgil Stoica, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, Romania

Technical and online assistance: Speranța Predoi, University of Craiova, Romania

Contact: Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques

University of Craiova, 13th A. I. Cuza Street, Craiova, 200585, Dolj, Romania. Phone /Fax: +40251418515,

Email: cepos2013@gmail.com. Website: <http://cis01.central.ucv.ro/revistadestiintepolitice/>

© 2021–All rights reserved to Universitaria Publishing House. The Journal is published quarterly.

(Online) - ISSN 2344 – 4452

ISSN–L 1584 – 224X

No. 72 • 2021

**Revista de Științe Politice.
Revue des Sciences Politiques**



© 2021 – Universitaria Publishing House

Authors are fully responsible for the entire content of their papers. The articles published in *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques* represent the personal opinion of the author(s). The procedure of the article submission for reviewing and publication implies that the work has never been published before (excepting published courses, academic lectures, academic thesis), that is or was not considered for reviewing and publication elsewhere (in English or in other language), that its publication is assumed by the author(s) and its possible acknowledgements were obtained with the consent of the authorities for publication.

The information, perceptions and views set forth in the articles are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the RSP Editors and/ or its International Advisory Board members.

Photocopying. Single photocopies of single/ multiple articles may be done for personal use under the provisions of the national copyright laws.

Electronic storage of the articles contents. Permission from the Editorial Board is required in case of electronic storage or use electronically of any material (article, editors' notes, reviews etc.) contained in this journal (entirely or partially).

All translations from English to Romanian/ Romanian to English are the author's.



NOTE of the EDITORIAL BOARD: *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques* is abstracted by / indexed in:



EBSCO

Political Science Complete (accessed April 08, 2021)

Database Coverage List: <https://www.ebscohost.com/titleLists/poh-coverage.htm>

Category Social Sciences & Humanities: <https://www.ebscohost.com/titleLists/poh-subject.htm>

Central & Eastern European Academic Source (accessed April 11, 2021)

Database Coverage List: <https://www.ebscohost.com/titleLists/e5h-coverage.htm>



ProQuest Database: Political Science Database

ProQuest Political Science Database Title list accurate as of 3 April 2021 (position 1066)

http://tls.search.proquest.com/titlelist/jsp/list/tlsSingle.jsp?productId=1005684&_ga=2.52655656.1051237904.1586630685-491238151.1586630685



INDEX COPERNICUS

ICI Journals Master list, <https://journals.indexcopernicus.com/search/details?id=29570>

ICV 2020: 91.36; ICV 2019: 94.31; ICV 2018: 97.28; ICV 2017: 88.23; ICV 2016: 78.07;

ICV 2015: 65.59; ICV 2014: 65.01 • Standardized Value: 6.55; ICV 2013: 5.04



ERIH PLUS

<https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/erihplus/periodical/info.action?id=486286>

ERIH PLUS disciplines: Interdisciplinary research in the Social Sciences
Political Sciences and International Relations

OECD classifications: Other Social Sciences
Political Science



CEEOL

Central and Eastern European Online Library

<http://www.ceeol.com/search/journal-detail?id=2102>



KVK Catalogue Karlsruhe Institut für Technologie

<https://kvk.bibliothek.kit.edu>



Gale Cengage Learning - Academic OneFile

Report Generated 04/01/2021 (position 17045) <https://support.gale.com/tlist/products/>



Google scholar

https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=geAF_FgAAAAJ&hl=ro; h-index: 10; i10-index: 10



JISC Library Hub Discover

<https://discover.libraryhub.jisc.ac.uk/search?&keyword=1584-224x>



TIB Leibniz Information Centre University Library

<https://www.tib.eu/en/search/id/TIBKAT%3A590280090/Revista-de-%C8%99tiin%C8%9Be-politice/>



Réseau Mir@bel

Mir@bel est piloté par Sciences Po Lyon, Sciences Po Grenoble, la MSH Dijon/RNMSH et l'ENTPE

<https://reseau-mirabel.info/revue/3046/Revista-de-Stiinte-Politice>

Clasificación Integrada de Revistas Científicas – CIRC 2021

Clasificación Ciencias Sociales: C

https://clasificacioncirc.es/ficha_revista?id=42634

CONTENTS

Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques

RSP • No. 72 • 2021

**Resilience, interactions and integration: institutional analysis
during Covid 19 pandemic**

EDITORIAL NOTE

Anca Parmena OLIMID, Cătălina Maria GEORGESCU, Cosmin Lucian GHERGHE, 9

ORIGINAL PAPERS

Ramona BIRAU, Cristi SPULBAR, Jatin TRIVEDI, Ion FLORESCU,
Modeling volatility in the stock markets of Spain and Hong Kong using GARCH family models in the context of COVID - 19 pandemic 13

Lavinia LĂPĂDAT, Maria-Magdalena LĂPĂDAT,
Manifolds of Communication: Negotiating Social, Political and Economic Constructs 22

Mihail GORINCIOI,
Consequences of corruption in the proper exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms 31

Kavya Clanganthuruthil SAJEEV, Mohd AFJAL, Cristi SPULBAR, Ramona BIRAU, Ion FLORESCU,
Evaluating the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions Amongst Indian Gen Z investors Using Structural Equation Modeling 41

Alexandrina BĂDESCU,
Scientific and traditional methods used in the process of conservation-restoration of works of art after the post-communist period in Romania 60

Alexandra PORUMBESCU, Livia Dana POGAN,
Gender equality in the European Union. From strategic engagement to achievements 68

Valentina MARINESCU, Ines RAZEC, Teodor DUMITRACHE,
Media discourse on epizootic epidemics - a diachronic analysis 80

Elenora Olivia BĂLĂNESCU,
Students' Integration in Target Communities of Practice: an ESP Perspective 91

Cristina Maria ANDREI,
Challenging Creativity in Business English Classes 102

Lavinia LĂPĂDAT, Maria-Magdalena LĂPĂDAT, <i>Linguistic Power Structures: Analysing Social Strategies of Communication and Negotiation</i>	112
Irina Janina BONCEA, <i>Modern Teaching Approaches: Listening Skills in Technical English Classes</i>	122
Diana MARCU, <i>“Meeting the Goals”: Enhancing English Language Skills for Students in Engineering</i>	133
Daniela SCORTAN, <i>Using students’ different learning styles to enhance classroom interaction</i>	142
Veronica GHEORGHITĂ, Alexandrina BĂDESCU, <i>Religious coping in times of crisis</i>	152
Daniela Alina MIC (MĂRGINEANU), <i>Unipolarity and Multipolarity in the System of International Relations</i>	165
Tudor UREA, <i>Romanian Post-Communism. Redefining Modernity and the Shortcomings of Communism</i>	174
Daniela Alina MIC (MĂRGINEANU), <i>The Evolution of the Post-Cold War International Relations System. Bipolarity</i>	182
CEPOS NEW CALL FOR PAPERS 2022	194
RSP MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION	208



EDITORS' NOTE

Resilience, interactions and integration: institutional analysis during Covid 19 pandemic

Note of the Editors of the
Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques

Issue 72/2021

**Anca Parmena Olimid¹⁾,
Cătălina Maria Georgescu²⁾,
Cosmin Lucian Gherghe³⁾**

The forthcoming issue of the *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques* (hereinafter RSP) encourages interdisciplinary research with the aim to reveal and focus on the challenges of policy analysis, case studies and institutional analysis during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Editors of RSP kept this period the frequency of four issues per year considering the important research area of the social sciences, political sciences and related fields: political economy, law and human rights, fundamental freedoms and

¹⁾ Associate Professor, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Political Sciences specialization, Editor in Chief of the *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques*, Romania, Phone: 0040351403149, Email: anca.olimid@edu.ucv.ro.

²⁾ Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Political Sciences specialization, Deputy Editor in Chief of the *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques*, Romania, Phone: 0040351403149, Email: catalina.georgescu@edu.ucv.ro.

³⁾ Associate Professor, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Political Sciences specialization, Managing Editor of the *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques*, Romania, Phone: 0040351403149, Email: cosmin.gherghe@edu.ucv.ro.

Editors' Note

gender equality in the European Union, educational policies, business and finance, linguistic analysis and strategies of communication, COVID-19 and teaching approaches, academic skills, social and political interactions, sociological perspectives, diplomacy and international relations.

The views, innovative methodologies and suggestions offered by the papers selected for issue 72 launched in December 2021 represent support, assistance and research guidance to develop new paths of research in all areas of political sciences, law, economics, business and finance, administration, education, international relations, European studies, communication, discourse analysis, media studies and political history.

The contents of the current issue truly encourage high grade studies, focusing on various and diversified analyses in social sciences research, these articles are thought to highlight the current comprehension of the new research areas namely:

- the analysis of the “stock markets” during COVID-19 pandemic using the “GARCH family models” (article: Ramona BIRAU, Cristi SPULBAR, Jatin TRIVEDI, Ion FLORESCU, *Modeling volatility in the stock markets of Spain and Hong Kong using GARCH family models in the context of COVID - 19 pandemic*);
- the approach on “social, political and economic constructs” focusing on the research area of communication (article: Lavinia LĂPĂDAT, Maria-Magdalena LĂPĂDAT, *Manifolds of Communication: Negotiating Social, Political and Economic Constructs*);
- the legal analysis of the human rights and fundamental freedom (article: Mihail GORINCIOI, *Consequences of corruption in the proper exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms*);
- an assessment on the correlations among the spectre of “behavioural finance” and investment practices of Generation Z representatives (article: Kavya Clanganthuruthil SAJEEV, Mohd AFJAL, Cristi SPULBAR, Ramona BIRAU, Ion FLORESCU, *Evaluating the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions Amongst Indian Gen Z investors Using Structural Equation Modeling*);
- the methodological approaches to the research area of the processes of conservation and restoration after the fall of the communist regime in Romania (article: Alexandrina BĂDESCU, *Scientific and traditional methods used in the process of conservation-restoration of works of art after the post-communist period in Romania*);
- a legislative content analysis and a statistical assessment of the occurrence of “gender inequality” across the European Union countries (article: Alexandra PORUMBESCU, Livia Dana POGAN, *Gender equality in the European Union. From strategic engagement to achievements*);

Editors' Note

- a media coverage content analysis highlighting framing practices and communication paradigm in relation to the topic of “*epizootic epidemics*” (article: Valentina MARINESCU, Ines RAZEC, Teodor DUMITRACHE, *Media discourse on epizootic epidemics - a diachronic analysis*);
- the theoretical and practical arguments for enlisting “the principles of Communicative Language Teaching” (article: Elenora Olivia BĂLĂNESCU, *Students' Integration in Target Communities of Practice: an ESP Perspective*);
- changing language teaching paradigms by discussing the prerequisites of introducing creative skills in teaching business English (article: Cristina Maria ANDREI, *Challenging Creativity in Business English Classes*);
- assessing the correlations among the use of language, communication and negotiation, cooperation, agreement (article: Laviniu LĂPĂDAT, Maria-Magdalena LĂPĂDAT, *Linguistic Power Structures: Analysing Social Strategies of Communication and Negotiation*);
- questioning some aspects of formal and informal education by highlighting the role of listening practices as a tool to improve students' competences (article: Irina Janina BONCEA, *Modern Teaching Approaches: Listening Skills in Technical English Classes*);
- presenting the urge to correlate students' specific competences in science and technology according to their field of study with English speaking competences by acknowledging the benefits of the “learner-centered approach of teaching” (article: Diana MARCU, “*Meeting the Goals*”: *Enhancing English Language Skills for Students in Engineering*);
- methodological aspects of promoting the differentiation in “learning styles” and enhancing both the teacher and students' adaptation to specific “pedagogical situations” (article: Daniela SCORȚAN, *Using students' different learning styles to enhance classroom interaction*);
- theoretical and empirical findings regarding the correlations between the peculiar contexts of crisis and different “forms and methods of religious adaptation” (article: Veronica GHEORGHIȚĂ, Alexandra BĂDESCU, *Religious coping in times of crisis*);
- theoretical considerations over the concepts of “unipolarity” and “multipolarity” regarding the configuration of international relations, foreign policy and security strategies (article: Daniela Alina MIC (MĂRGINEANU), *Unipolarity and Multipolarity in the System of International Relations*);

Editors' Note

- theorising on the political changes brought about by the transition period to the democratic order over the societal organization (article: Tudor UREA, *Romanian Post-Communism. Redefining Modernity and the Shortcomings of Communism*);
- a characterisation of the international political system following 1990 facilitating a discussion of the notion of “bipolarity” in the system of international relations (article: Daniela Alina MIC (MĂRGINEANU), *The Evolution of the Post-Cold War International Relations System. Bipolarity*).

Therefore, the contents of the current issues comprise a series of researches in key fields of study, offering a deeper comprehension of the new understandings over policy and institutional analysis forged under the COVID-19 pandemic.

As such, the papers published in issue 72/ December 2021 enable new directions to approach, develop and help the research and analysis of resilience, integration and interactions in the aforesaid areas. All papers selected for the current issue represent important contributions to RSP. The Editors hope that these contributions will encourage other emerging researches aimed to share social experiences and interdisciplinary innovations which would develop a comprehensive overview of the social science research during COVID-19 pandemic.

Wishing you all the best and an enjoyable reading,

The RSP Editors



ORIGINAL PAPER

Modeling volatility in the stock markets of Spain and Hong Kong using GARCH family models in the context of COVID - 19 pandemic

Ramona Birau¹⁾, Cristi Spulbar²⁾, Jatin Trivedi³⁾, Ion Florescu⁴⁾

Abstract:

This research paper investigates changes in volatility and attempts to capture it using statistical property for randomly selected stock markets of Spain and Hong Kong. The COVID - 19 pandemic has significantly affected the global economy and financial markets all around the world in recent few years. We consider data from January 2015 to September 2021 and various statistical and econometric tools being employed i.e. ADF test, correlation analysis, KPSS test, and GARCH family models. To describe visible impact, we used Loess fitness analysis and other density plots which demonstrate volatility scatter impact. The empirical findings revealed that GARCH (1, 1) model is not fitted to any of selected stock markets. However, the volatility of IBEX index was found stronger in magnitude manner.

Keywords: *volatility pattern; Loess fitness analysis; GARCH models; investment, stock market.*

JEL Classifications: G14, E00

¹⁾ University of Craiova, Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, Craiova, Romania, Email: ramona.f.birau@gmail.com.

²⁾ University of Craiova, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, Craiova, Romania, Email: cristi_spulbar@yahoo.com.

³⁾ National Institute of Securities Markets, India, Email: contact.tjatin@gmail.com.

⁴⁾ Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Craiova, Romania, Email: ionut.florescu2021@yahoo.com.

1. Introduction

The recent pandemic has impacted entire economic sectors across the world. Most of financial markets, whether emerging or developed, are not excluded from such impacts. The World Health Organization (WHO) became aware of the existence of this new and very dangerous infectious disease at the end of the year 2019, based on an official report regarding the so called “viral pneumonia” spread in the province Wuhan in China. On the other hand, Cucinotta and Vanelli (2020) have discussed about the fact that on March 2020, the World Health Organization also known as WHO decreed that COVID-19 which is caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 represents a global pandemic. Ozkan (2021) examined the effect of COVID-19 crisis on stock market efficiency and identified a much more speculative behaviour of stock markets during current pandemic, while the expectation of abnormal returns increased due to inaccurate evaluation of the price of financial assets.

According to the most recent official report on FTSE Equity Country Classification, released by FTSE Russell on September, 2021, the stock markets are classified into the following four main categories, such as: developed, advanced emerging, secondary emerging and frontier. The two stock markets analyzed in this research article, i.e. Spain and Hong Kong are both included in the category developed stock markets, based on the selection criteria mentioned above. Moreover, Ejaz et al. (2020) suggested that developed countries are interested in achieving a high level of development for their national systems based on strong international interlinkages.

Hong Kong is not a country in the universally known sense, but it represents a “Special Administrative Region” of China (also known as the People's Republic of China). Moreover, Hong Kong is an autonomous region while also an “inalienable part” of China. The interesting aspect is that China is included in the secondary emerging category based on FTSE Equity Country Classification criteria, while Hong Kong is included in the developed category. In other words, although it is only part of China, Hong Kong is considered as developed market.

On the other hand, we considered this particular pair of developed stock markets from Europe and Asia in order to demonstrate whether there is any impact over statistical property due to global COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of selection of smaller financial markets is to capture identify whether such pandemic impact also reflects in the markets where comparative trading and volume of trading is lower. Spain and Hong Kong have been selected as sample stock markets for this study based on their features. This research study on volatility performance provides a clear image on the changes in market movement patterns. We intend to capture changes in volatility for selected Asian and European financial markets and planned to impose Augmented Dickey Fuller test, KPSS, correlation analysis, and GARCH models. Volatility measurement provides vital information about market movement pattern. This information is useful for researchers, and practitioners across the world.

2. Literature review

In recent past, a wide number of research studies have been conducted using econometrics property in order to investigate stock market behaviour and volatility patterns. It provides changes and persistent level in volatility. Many researchers have worked to abstract changes in volatility considering two different markets for instance, Yong et al. (2021) considered Malaysia and Singapore, two Asian markets and found

Modeling volatility in the stock markets of Spain and Hong Kong using GARCH family...

that standard GARCH (1, 1) and EGARCH (1, 1) models fitted well to series returns. Further they also found that all normal distributions also fitted well before the pandemic impact but post-pandemic the impact remained insignificant. Further, Fang et al. (2020) worked with GARCH-MIDAS model and predicted long term volatility. The GARCH - MIDAS model that provides variable selections allowing maximizing the modelling effect on long term stock market volatility. The model estimation not only worked on estimation and forecasting, many researcher used model for hedge predictions. Such as Basher and Sadorsky (2016) used GO-GARCH with other models to predict changes in oil prices, gold prices and VIX bonds. Moreover, Liu and Chen (2020) used GARCH family models to nominate market efficiency using Sharps ratios based on ARMA-GARCH models. The paper captures the outcome based on new methods for comparing weak form of efficiency of financial markets and also Zhang et al. (2019) used volatility modeling to predict changes in crude oil prices.

The usage of statistical and econometric approach was not limited to predict gold or oil prices but was also used to forecast volatility changes in cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin. For instance, Cheikh et al. (2020) used smooth transition GARCH models considering four cryptocurrencies. Moreover, Chu et al. (2017) have applied GARCH family models in order to forecast changes in asset prices. Other researchers such as Mohsin et al. (2020) investigated volatility of banking stock returns in Pakistan and the impact on sustainable economic development. Ghasemi et al. (2021) argued that sustainable criteria include economic, social, and environmental aspects. In other words, it is important to analyze the concept of sustainable stock market in the context of the current global economy.

Ho and Odhiambo (2015) investigated relevant aspect regarding the performance of Hong Kong stock market and highlighted the importance of its rapid growth and regulatory issues. Moreover, Ho and Odhiambo (2012) examined the linkage between the development of stock market and the economic growth in case of Hong Kong, and concluded that exists only a short-run causality relation from economic growth to the other variable, such as the stock market development.

Spulbar and Birau (2018) investigated the behaviour of certain emerging stock markets, such as: Romania, Poland, India and Hungary for the sample period January 2000 to July 2018 and concluded that there is no empirical evidence to support the existence of long-term causality, while efficient market hypothesis has been rejected even in the case of weak-form efficiency. Trivedi et al. (2021) examined volatility spillovers and correlation between a cluster of European stock markets, such as: Spain, UK, Germany, and France, which are developed markets and Poland, Hungary, Croatia and Romania, which are emerging markets. This empirical study used GARCH (1, 1) family models for the period January 2000 to July 2018, while the findings indicate that both recent and past news determine a significant impact on present volatility. In addition, Spulbar et al. (2019) investigated volatility patterns, causality and international contagion between certain developed stock markets, like USA, Canada, France and UK using GARCH (1, 1) model for the sample period January 2000 until June 2018.

3. Data collection, research methodology and empirical results

This research paper focuses on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on financial market volatility patterns. We consider randomly selected a European and a Asian financial markets i.e. stock market of Hong Kong and Spain. The research study on

based on sample indices indicates an impact on statistical property of financial market returns (closing price returns) changes with extra-ordinary news impact. Daily closing returns from 1st January 2015 to 30th September 2021 have been considered for the study.

The log returns or also known as the continuously - compounded daily returns are obtained based on the log - difference of the sample stock market indices, such as :

$$r_t = \ln\left(\frac{p_t}{p_{t-1}}\right) = \ln(p_t) - \ln(p_{t-1})$$

where p represents the daily closing price.

Augmented Dickey Fuller test is used considering no constant and no trend impact, such as the following: $\Delta y_t = \gamma y_{t-1} + v_t$. Result property for the specimen of Hong Kong stock market is used considering 4 lags and (BIC) criterion indicates asymptotic p-value 0.6879 where, 1st-order autocorrelation coefficient for e: 0.006 and lagged differences: $F(2, 943) = 13.180 [0.0000]$. The sample test obtained with 946 observations and indicates presence of unit root in the series returns, indicating non-stationary impact. Further changing property with trend and with constant $\Delta y_t = \alpha + \gamma y_{t-1} + \lambda_t + v_t$ indicates asymptotic p-value 0.08417 where, 1st-order autocorrelation coefficient. for e: 0.005, and lagged differences: $F(2, 942) = 14.358 [0.0000]$ with same observations. Both of the process passes through $(1-L)y = b_0 + (a-1)*y(-1) + \dots + e$.

The stock market of Spain (IBEX index) processes with same model property considering 939 daily observations provides results (with no constant-no trend) asymptotic p-value 0.6682, where 1st-order autocorrelation coefficient for e: 0.058. However, considering constant and trend impact it suggests asymptotic p-value 0.7669. where 1st-order autocorrelation coefficient for e: 0.061, indicating unit-root null hypothesis $a = 1$. We failed to find any correlation between selected developed stock markets.

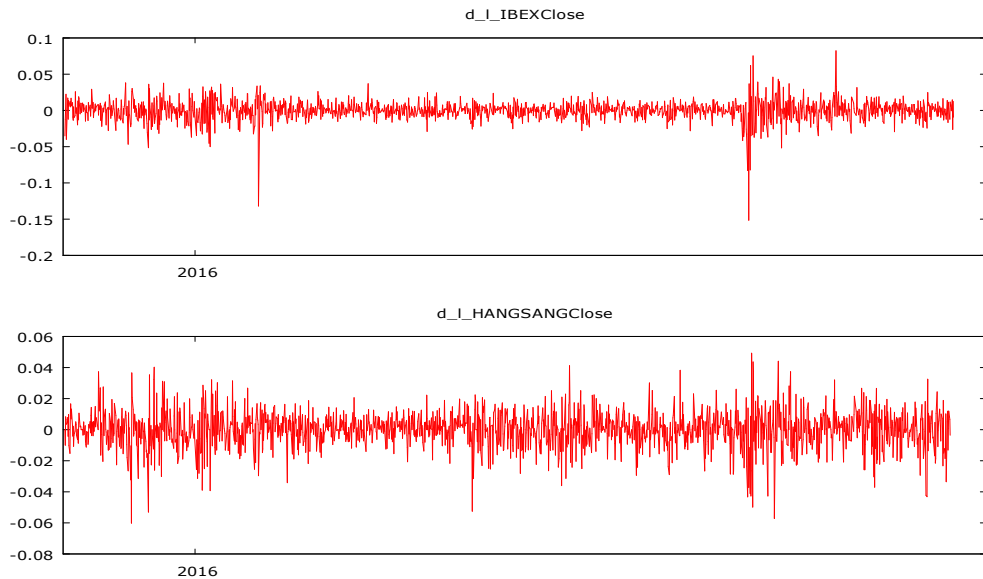


Fig. 1 Volatility sketches (Stationary series returns)

Source: Author's computation using daily series returns of selected period

Modeling volatility in the stock markets of Spain and Hong Kong using GARCH family...

It is important to highlight the fact that figure 1 provides property of first difference of log returns of selected stock markets. Large number of high and low magnitude sketches appears in Hang Sang stock market index, whereas the stock market index of Spain, i.e. IBEX represents a stable movement but with high magnitude and unpredictable shocks.

The comparative graph pattern with Loess FIT for Hong Kong and Spain stock exchanges represents the following impact presented in figure no.2.

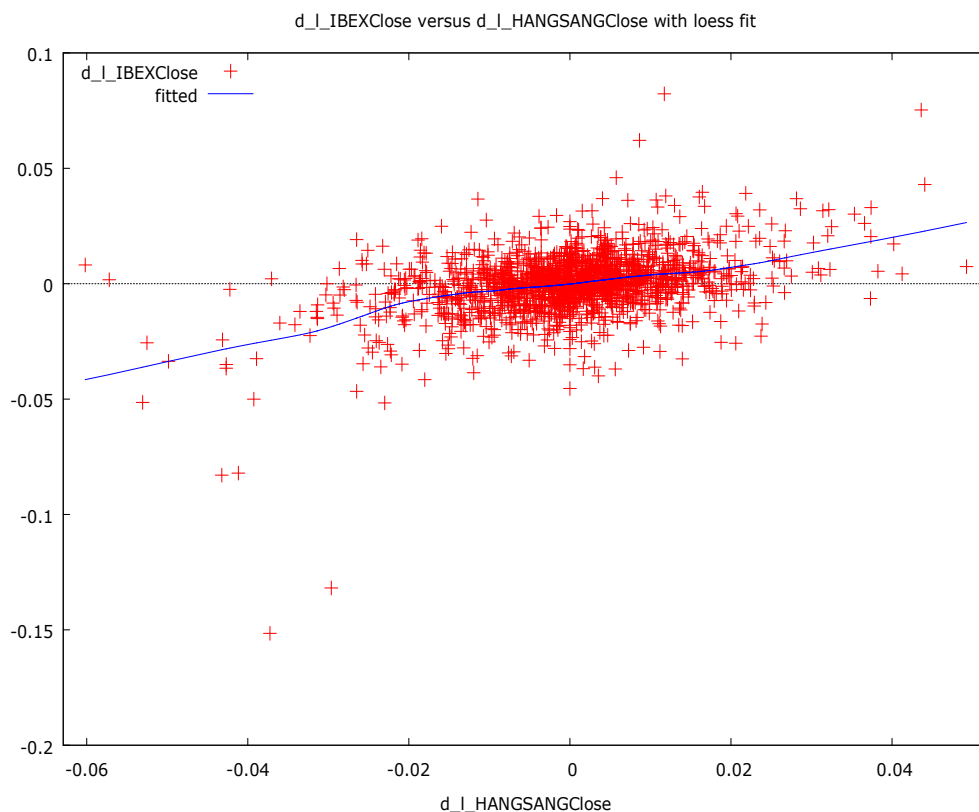


Fig. 2 Scatter Plot – Loess fitness plot for IBEX and Hang Sang stock indices

Source: Author's computation using daily series returns of selected period

Loess test property provides visible impact where returns from IBEX Stock Exchange scattered and plotted with no relationship (no correlation found) with the financial market movement of the Hong Kong stock exchange. However, it indicates that there was no relationship between movement of each financial markets during selected period.

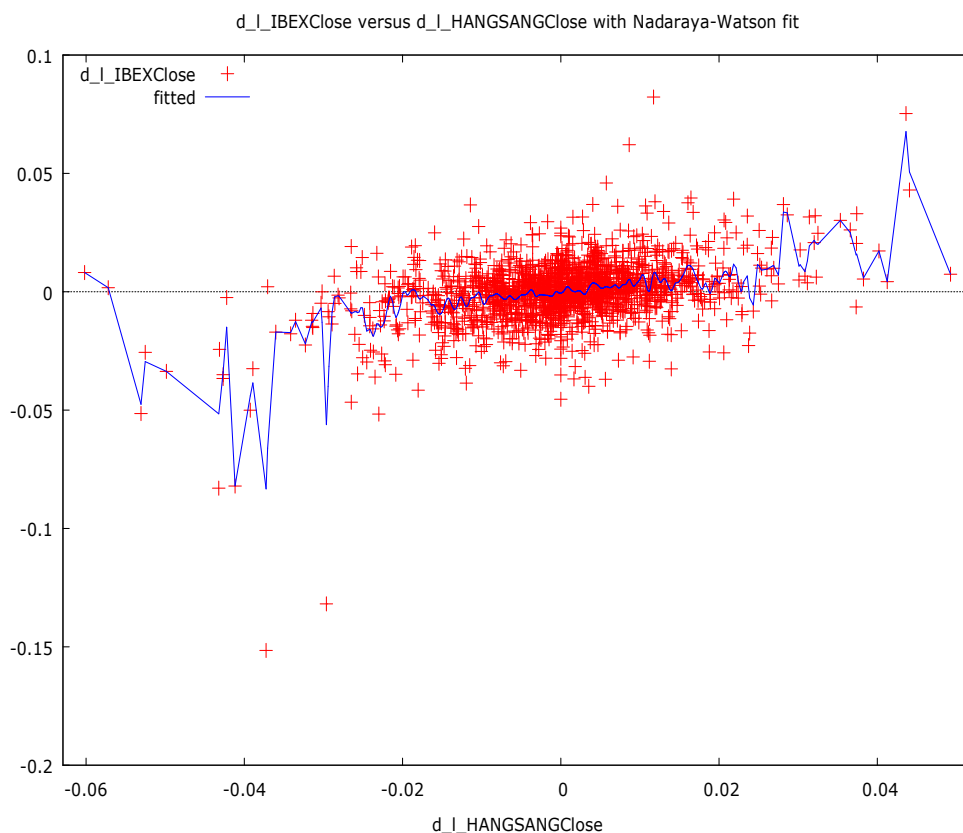


Fig.3 Estimated density plot for Spain and Hong Kong Stock Exchanges – Nadaraya – Watson fitness test

Source: Author’s computation using daily closing returns from selected financial markets

Nadaraya - Watson fit provides different outcomes compared to Loess fitness. It indicates fitted variables of IBEX against Hang Sang financial markets.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics property

Descriptive Statistics				
	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness	Ex. Kurtosis
IBEX	-9.5054e-005	0.013287	-1.52	18.417
HANGSANG	2.0752e-005	011332	-0.374	2.4674

Source: author’s calculation

IBEX index of the stock market of Spain is having the highest degree of investment risk as the kurtosis creates higher leptokurtic impact compared to Hang Sang

Modeling volatility in the stock markets of Spain and Hong Kong using GARCH family...

Stock Exchange for the covered period. The degree of standard deviation varied more than 10 times with negative skewness. Kurtosis is creating leptokurtic impact for Spain and remained under control of Hang Sang index of Hong Kong stock market. The negative mean returns indicates that investors over a period of time generated negative returns.

Table 2 Empirical results of GARCH (1, 1) model for the stock market of Spain

Conditional mean equation				
coefficient	std. error	z	p-value	
const	0.000101803	0.000245412	0.4148	0.6783
Conditional variance equation				
coefficient	std. error	z	p-value	
omega	5.365e-06	1.71753e-06	3.124	0.0018 ***
alpha	0.138789	0.0352435	3.938	8.22e-05 ***
beta	0.834293	0.0307342	27.15	2.87e-162 ***
Llik: 5252.37598		AIC: -10496.75195		
BIC: -10474.97028		HQC: -10488.69116		

(Normal), Dependent variable: d_l IBEX Close

Sample: 2015-01-05 -- 2021-09-30 ($T = 1712$), VCV method: Robust method

Source: author's calculation

Table 3 Empirical results of GARCH (1, 1) model for the stock market of Hong Kong

Conditional mean equation				
coefficient	std. error	z	p-value	
const	0.000330106	0.000258844	1.275	0.2022
Conditional variance equation				
coefficient	std. error	z	p-value	
omega	2.487e-06	1.588e-06	1.565	0.1176
alpha	0.0567	0.01534	3.692	0.0002 ***
beta	0.926559	0.0239400	38.70	0.0000 ***

(Normal), Dependent variable: d_l Hang Sang Close, ($T = 1712$), VCV method: Robust method

Source: author's calculation

The results included in both table 2 and 3 indicate that GARCH (1, 1) model did not fit to any of selected stock markets. However, the conditional variance equation fitted with 1% significance.

4. Conclusions

Currently, the COVID - 19 pandemic represents a significant challenge for the global economy.

We used GARCH (1,1) standard model to capture the volatility and found that GARCH (1,1) model provides insignificant and not fitted on any sample markets. However, changes in volatility is captured by summary of statistics and different fitness test. The stock market index of Spain, such as IBEX has been found to be more volatile compared to the stock market index of Hong Kong, such as Hang Sang. This research study demonstrates changes in statistical property of financial market series returns. It indicates that during the pandemic impact, the selected two developed stock markets have no significant correlation and found significant pattern of moment while markets are falling due to pandemic impact. The normality test considering with constant and trend, but also without constant and trend demonstrated how selected stock markets behaved abnormally during the COVID – 19 pandemic period.

References:

- Basher, S. A., & Sadorsky, P. (2016). Hedging emerging market stock prices with oil, gold, VIX, and bonds: A comparison between DCC, ADCC and GO-GARCH. *Energy Economics*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eneco.2015.11.022>.
- Cheikh, N. Ben, Zaided, Y. Ben, & Chevallerier, J. (2020). Asymmetric volatility in cryptocurrency markets: New evidence from smooth transition GARCH models. *Finance Research Letters*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.frl.2019.09.008>.
- Chu, J., Chan, S., Nadarajah, S., & Osterrieder, J. (2017). GARCH Modelling of Cryptocurrencies. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm10040017>.
- Cucinotta, D., & Vanelli, M. (2020). WHO Declares COVID-19 a Pandemic, *Acta Biomedica Atenei Parmensis*, 91(1), 157–160. <https://doi.org/10.23750/abm.v91i1.9397>.
- Ejaz, A., Birau, R., Spulbar, C., Buda, R., & Tenea, A.C. (2020) The impact of domestic portfolio diversification strategies in Toronto stock exchange on Canadian textile manufacturing industry, *Industria Textila*, 71, 3, 215–222, <http://doi.org/10.35530/IT.071.03.1696>.
- Fang, T., Lee, T. H., & Su, Z. (2020). Predicting the long-term stock market volatility: A GARCH-MIDAS model with variable selection. *Journal of Empirical Finance*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jempfin.2020.05.007>.
- FTSE Russell (2021) FTSE Equity Country Classification, official report released in September 2021, https://research.ftserussell.com/products/downloads/FTSE-Country-Classification-Update_latest.pdf
- Ghasemi, P., Mehdiabadi, A., Spulbar, C., & Birau, R. (2021) Ranking of Sustainable Medical Tourism Destinations in Iran: An Integrated Approach Using Fuzzy SWARA-PROMETHEE, *Sustainability*. 13(2), 683, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13020683>.
- Ho, S.Y. & Odhiambo, N.M. (2015) Stock market performance in Hong Kong: an exploratory review, 29 (1), 47 - 61, *Asian-Pacific Economic Literature*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., <https://doi.org/10.1111/apel.12098>.
- Ho, S., & Odhiambo, N. (2012) Stock Market Development And Economic Growth In Hong Kong: An Empirical Investigation. *International Business & Economics Research Journal (IBER)*, 11(7), 795–808, <https://doi.org/10.19030/iber.v11i7.7066>.
- Mohsin, M., Naiwen, L., Zia-UR-Rehman, M., Naseem, S., & Baig, S. A. (2020). The volatility of bank stock prices and macroeconomic fundamentals in the Pakistani

Modeling volatility in the stock markets of Spain and Hong Kong using GARCH family...

- context: An application of GARCH and EGARCH models. *Oeconomia Copernicana*.
<https://doi.org/10.24136/OC.2020.025>.
- Ozkan, O. (2021) Impact of COVID-19 on stock market efficiency: Evidence from developed countries, *Research in International Business and Finance*, 58, 0275-5319, Elsevier B.V., <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ribaf.2021.101445>.
- Spulbar, C., & Birau, R. (2018) Testing weak-form efficiency and long-term causality of the R.I.P.H emerging capital markets, *International Journal of Business Quantitative Economics and Applied Management Research*, 5(2), 1-19.
- Spulbar, C., Trivedi, J., Birau, R., Tenea, C.A. & Ejaz, A. (2019) Estimating volatility spillovers, dynamic causal linkages and international contagion patterns between developed stock markets: An empirical case study for USA, Canada, France and UK, *Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu Jiu, Economy Series, „Academica Brâncuși” Publisher*, Issue 3/2019, 44-62.
- Trivedi, J., Spulbar, C., Birau, R., & Mehdiabadi, A. (2021) Modelling volatility spillovers, cross-market correlation and co-movements between stock markets in European Union: an empirical case study. *Business, Management and Economics Engineering*, 19(1), 70-90. <https://doi.org/10.3846/bmee.2021.13588>
- Yong, J. N. C., Ziaei, S. M., & Szulczyk, K. R. (2021). The impact of covid-19 pandemic on stock market return volatility: Evidence from Malaysia and Singapore. *Asian Economic and Financial Review*.
<https://doi.org/10.18488/JOURNAL.AEFR.2021.113.191.204>
- World Health Organization (WHO), Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019> (accessed online on September 10, 2021).
- Zhang, Y. J., Yao, T., He, L. Y., & Ripple, R. (2019). Volatility forecasting of crude oil market: Can the regime switching GARCH model beat the single-regime GARCH models? *International Review of Economics and Finance*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iref.2018.09.006>.

Article Info

Received: November 05 2021

Accepted: November 11 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Manifolds of Communication: Negotiating Social, Political and Economic Constructs

LavinIU Lăpădat¹⁾, Maria-Magdalena Lăpădat²⁾

Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to explore the concept of communication, analysing binary systems such as both the verbal and the nonverbal, objectivity and subjectivity honesty and manipulation. Social negotiation entails an economic sense of specificity, selling not only a product, but also yourself. Selling means having something in common with your buyer and, if that is not the case, you are forced to forge that bond yourself through communication, empathy, emotional and factual eloquence. The seller's constructed message represents an important cog in the mechanism of efficient communication, yet that is sometimes prone to vulnerability. The articulated message can often be overruled by the partner of discussion who is unable to find himself or herself in what you are selling, in what you are communicating. The interlocutor may reject the necessity of admitting or recognising certain truths or limitations and reject a message based on the simple flaw that it is not subjectively self-evident. No matter how well we might describe the general qualities of the goods and services we are trying to sell, no matter how objectively and explicitly we might expound the situation, any such arguments may fall prey to platforms of disavowing in the absence of a personal functionality of language, a direct human connection.

Keywords: *negotiation; bargaining; manipulation; suggestion; nonverbal.*

¹⁾ Assistant Professor, Ph.D, University of Craiova, Department of Applied Modern Languages, Phone: 0040773985380, E-mail: lapadat_lavinIU@yahoo.com.

²⁾ Assistant Professor, Ph.D, University of Craiova, Department of Applied Modern Languages, Phone: 0040731297911, Email: magda_faurar@yahoo.com.

1. Introduction

The development and fulfilment of the entire negotiation apparatus is meant to produce an acceptable future outcome derived from a current or present situation that is socially unacceptable. The main objective of the negotiating parties is to make sure that a solution raring from one part to another is achieved based on the enactment of an equivalent reaction on the other side of the negotiating table. The felicitous harmonisation of the interests of distinct parties represents an essential pillar of a functional society. The fuel behind a negotiating is basically the desire to obtain the benefits that can only be the product of an accord while at the same time fearing the losses and negative consequences that might ensue in the event of disagreement. Thompson defines negotiation as “an interpersonal decision-making process by which two or more people agree how to allocate scarce resources” (Thompson 2000, 2). Any negotiation is motivated by interests and the two partners would not be part of that negotiation if they did not desire to reach a solution or agreement, no matter how strict or different their initial standpoint might be. Both parties may be deadlock if, from a communicative perspective, they are reluctant to make the first step or accept and tolerate the slightest modifications in the status quo. This is also an issue when weak negotiators crack under the pressure and get a bad deal that is detrimental to the interest that they represent. Researcher Zhang Yuxian, in his paper *The Politeness Principles in Business Negotiation*, believes that: “Negotiation is the solution to reach an agreement or to solve the disagreement. It is also a process of exchanging, discussing and even arguing about the issue. Any party in the negotiation wants to cooperate with the other party to reach his purpose and try to win the most benefits as well. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt the appropriate language strategies. Among them, politeness strategies are most commonly used to contribute to a successful business negotiation. Politeness strategies can enhance the mutual trust and understanding among negotiators so as to increase the opportunities. This article attempts to highlight the politeness principles and analyze their application in business negotiation. The appropriate treatment to the threat of face in communication can retain both positive and negative aspects of the face, thus making the negotiation go on smoothly.” (Yuxian 2013, 50)

The main issue facing negotiators is how to present a reasonable amount of flexibility as to the initially formulated demands without conceding too much, thus, jeopardizing their own interests, but providing just enough in order to break the ice and forge a bridge of dialogue that can swiftly expand the negotiating potential of the entire discussion. Most individuals engaged in the art of conversation shall also resort to methods of manipulation and intimidation against their interlocutors. These elements can be easily decoded if one focuses on the artificial, unnatural scaffolding of the dialogue. We owe it to ourselves and our partners to overlook the negative and keep an open mind to those hints that betray a genuine willingness to come to a mutually beneficial agreement. These positive signs are basically a covert invitation, indirectly granted to the partner in dialogue, fostering the idea to reject the unacceptable and negotiate honestly and in accordance with the principles of profit and synergy. According to Diana Marcu that conversational synergy is fuelled by the ability to engage and convince one’s interlocutor: “Negotiation implies persuasion, which is the ability of one person to make the other change his/her point of view on a particular aspect or situation. The difference between negotiation and a discussion is that the negotiation has a purpose and it usually ends with a firm conclusion, while at the end of a discussion the partners don’t always

find a common conclusion. While negotiating, individuals always need to take into consideration the needs of the other party.” (Marcu, 2013:70)

Certain eventual indicators act as transitional vectors which signal both perception and convenient response as it applies to the other. It would be functionally erroneous not to fully analyse and interpret the complete ramifications of an elusive conversational undertaking. The generation and formulation of hints in negotiation do, by no means, guarantee an automatic response, but they go a long way towards mitigating the differential objectives of the parties, keeping the negotiation open, hoping for a possible solution and the drafting of an agreement. Every time such aspects are afforded the privilege to intercede, the entire process of negotiation is somewhat reset in order to interpret and integrate the desires of other negotiators, as well as their reactions to new propositions.

The nonverbal provides an invaluable gathering of intelligence for negotiators. The entire outcome of an act of communication can, sometimes, be changed through a single look. Accepting the other means understanding the other, and this can only be done if we display a willingness to connect to our partners of discussion. A proper attitude can shatter the flood doors of dissent and make way to a river of cooperation and harmony. Eye contact, a relaxed and familiar voice, open arms replacing rigidity, touching one's face or hair, even unbuttoning one's coat can act as a facilitator for good dialogue. Hostility, on the other hand, is the great enemy of negotiation. Aggressive body language, maintaining an excessive distance, hostile staring, as well as a high-pitched tone of voice can crush a potentially productive dialogue before it even gets the chance to be formed. In analysing the traditional versus the contemporary as they relate to communication and negotiation, Thomas West believes that: “Whereas traditional understandings of negotiation are characterized by a willingness to compromise, understandings of mutual critique are characterized by uncertainty and risk. And whereas negotiation is invested in maintaining the status quo, mutual critique realizes that strong critique may serve as an impetus to upset the status quo. Mutual critique involves an understanding of social relations as dependent on both the need to critique other positions as well as the need to listen critically to them.” (West 1997, 16)

Negotiation must always be an act of equality and social harmonisation. If these preconditions are not achieved, an agreement will be almost impossible to reach and even if one is produced through fear and intimidation, it will undoubtedly fail the test of time. The person seeking to establish dominance will attempt to express force, speak loudly, harshly, not allow the other to communicate, even point fingers and systematically attack the other interlocutor. The other person, finding himself or herself under the spectre of dominance, may be inclined to reduce the intensity of all channels of communication and avoid eye contact in an attempt to elude confrontation. This will swiftly make way to frustration, shortness of breath and isolation, both self-imposed as well as external. If the status quo is not rapidly modified, the entire process of communication will fall under the tentacles of disappointment and dismay, triggering an absolutely minimal amount of eye contact and connectivity.

2. Manipulation

There countless individual and social perspectives regarding negotiation but underlying truth that there can be no negotiation without manipulation. Therefore, manipulation is not necessarily a strictly negative element but rather a direct consequence of strategy and tactics. Each and every negotiation is reliant on the

Manifolds of Communication: Negotiating Social, Political and Economic Constructs

formulation of specific strategies. There are multiple scenarios and procedures of control that can be successfully employed in a discussion. The exploration of these factors is very important in order to perfect them or avoid them at all costs, depending on which side of the negotiation we are. The purpose of manipulation in the procedure of a negotiation is to generate the perception of a broken power report. Thus, a power struggle will be able to generate a superior level of expectations or, quite the opposite, it will reduce the horizon of expectation should we vastly overestimate the power of our interlocutors and significantly underestimate ours. Simply put, if the other party seems stronger, you will be willing and even happy to walk away with far less. Therefore, manipulation will influence and control all levels of expectations and behaviour within the framework of a partnership in negotiation. In the paper *Power Dynamics in Negotiation*, it is postulated that: “the conceptualization of potential power allows us to incorporate prior negotiation research, which has typically operationalized power in terms of power-dependence theory’s two dimensions. Negotiation researchers typically have altered the power relationship between negotiators by manipulating either the benefits negotiators can bring to the bargaining table.” (Kim, Pinkley and Fragale 2005, 803)

There are very effective tools in resisting manipulation. The first would be the procurement and allocation of preconditions for negotiations. In this case, one might postulate a safe framework of discussion that can actually shield from any attempts at manipulation. Secondly, we might also find solace in declaring certain parts of the discussion non-negotiable. Although there may always exist a vulnerability, it is up to us to distinguish stability from instability. Thirdly, we can set a strict agenda for discussion. This agenda shall not be influenced by context or illusion, allowing one to consolidate and stabilise personal power and interest. Sometimes, it is enough to simply not let yourself fall prey to illusions or artificial perception if you always perceive things as objectively as possible, grounding arguments into facts rather than subjective constructs which rely solely on declaration and manipulation. Another tactic of manipulation will see one party try to impress the other by appearing extremely well-prepared, bringing forth props such as an abundance of files and documents that may bear little relevance but will undoubtedly be powerful visual vectors of consolidation. Daniela Scortan asserts that “the persuasive discourse used by researchers to convince their peers of the merits of their research, or by authorities to explain and gain acceptance for their decisions, also consists of selling ideas. In all situations, arguments, reasoning and evidence in order to generate persuasion.” (Scortan, 2019:58)

A very efficient strategy in trying to dislodge the defences of the other party will see the opposing negotiator morph into an ally of sorts that totally agrees with you and supports your standpoint, but who is somehow limited by a superior authority. The negotiator will justify his or her reluctance by invoking tough bosses that somehow, indirectly, are now basically, to a certain extent, your bosses. The conversational possibilities are negatively controlled by an elusive third party that cannot be dealt with or negotiated with because it is not even in the room.

The construction of a self-deprecating image can also act as a powerful tool of manipulation in a negotiation. It will significantly disarm the other party as you yourself will fully agree that they are offering a more than fair deal, which you are unable to comply with, based on your own artificially constructed limitations. Paradoxically, by portraying a weak image of yourself, you are actually consolidating your role in the

negotiation, making the other party believe that a deal cannot be reached if they do not lower their standards significantly in order to accommodate your deceptive weakness.

Apart from these psychological constructs, there are also cheap tricks that are meant to influence and destabilise the physical and psychological wellbeing of an opponent. Providing an inferior, low quality, smaller chair, making the other person face the light in a room, triggering interruptions are meant to disrupt and destabilise the other party. Even the location where the negotiation takes place can be important as it can provide the proverbial home advantage for one interested party. Once the home advantage is established, you can resort to all manners of tricks such as adjusting the temperature in a room in order to make people uncomfortable or uneasy, placing a big clock in the middle of the room in order to subconsciously suggest there is a time pressure involved. This manner of trickery can be successful if they remain cloaked, perceived only by the subconscious mind. When placed under such circumstances, the simple acknowledgement of the situation can turn the tables and grant you the power to ask to adjust the temperature, demand a better chair, pull the blinds and shutters etc.

3. Formulating suggestions

Social confrontation tends to make negotiations more difficult as it sabotages the process of agreement. Proposals, on the other hand, will help the negotiation process move along through concrete steps and initiatives. That is why they must never be deemed as taboo or inappropriate. Cristina Burtea-Cioroianu believes the formulation of suggestion is deeply rooted in the acquisition of general fluency and linguistic prowess: “the acquisition of a general fluency, where the main emphasis is on the successful communication (a successful transmitting/receiving of messages) and where the acquisition of grammar is only an episode towards reaching a major goal.” (Burtea-Cioroianu, 2020:146)

When our partner in discussion presents a set of proposals, he or she attempts to provide an ideal outlook regarding personal objectives. Therefore, the objectives presented can be compatible or incompatible, thus, the subject of the negotiation process shall be to harmonise incompatibilities. The desire for compatibility is a strong enabler generating a strong platform of agreement for opposite objectives, striving to achieve agreement and unlock a seemingly tough and inaccessible negotiation. It is paramount for us to comprehend an order of priorities and acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses that facilitate flexibility based on the manners in which he or she communicates. Uncovering that which is genuine, real and vulnerable will open a lot of access points that can ultimately overlap and connect to our own desires for the discussion. If we have compatibility, an agreement will be more than likely, but if this compatibility is compromised or cancelled, then we are prone to failure as both negotiators and communicators. Technology is the latest instrument that has uplifted social interactions, evaluations and assessments to previously unforeseen levels of proliferation: “The evolution of technology, worldwide access to the internet (the largest and fastest way of communication) and the appearance of social media, all these, have revolutionized every field of activity. We can say that everyone is online and is interconnected with the world. Information travels fast and it can be easily accessed through smart devices.” (Stoian, 2019:133)

Timing is also of the essence when it comes to bringing forward proposals and options, and the ability to simply feel when the moment is right separates the experienced negotiator from an inexperienced beginner. Any negotiation sees deadlocks,

Manifolds of Communication: Negotiating Social, Political and Economic Constructs

moments of difficulty, portions of dialogue that simply demand something special in order to restore equilibrium. If the other party shows a willingness to put pen to paper and reach an agreement, then we are looking at a mutually advantageous undertaking. Being in a hurry or rushing things can also compromise the objectives of the negotiating parties, as too much desire and willingness must always be tempered by wisdom and pragmatism. Usually, however, any act of communication that seeks to obtain something from the other partner will see vast portions of time and energy drained by little things and capricious aspects of human interactions and unwillingness. It is, therefore, up to a skilled and intuitive negotiator to be able to navigate through the uncertainties and reach the proverbial end of the maze, without the added risk of seeing the agreement revised or reevaluated because of poor construction. In his analysis of the complexity of communication in negotiation, Francesco Gardani expounds that: “Due to its necessarily cross-disciplinary character, the topic of negotiation has been studied by students from different backgrounds, most prominently by sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists and political scientists. In the wake of globalization and the rise of free trade, the transformation of the general context in which negotiations take place has increasingly shifted the focus of research to the cross-cultural aspects of business communication, and business negotiation in particular. Researchers have shown that four elements of culture – behavior, attitudes, norms and values – may impact negotiating practice and, based on this insight, have set up catalogues of factors and variables to which negotiators should pay attention in intercultural settings.” (Gardani 2017, 91)

All proposals must be structurally sound and allow for a solid development of stages. When bringing forth the proposals, we should consider and integrate both our desires and those of our interlocutor, and an honest and open dialogue can go a long way towards achieving this status quo. It is for this exact reason that we see an extended use of conditionals and modal verbs in order not to challenge or make the other person feel pressured or constrained. Proposals must entertain the conditional dimension of an eventual hypothesis, as one cannot simply provide a framework of concession from the get-go. A conditional element will generate a lot of space for the subsequent implementation of the negotiating process. The level of assertiveness has to be toned down, limited as much as possible, and we must shy away from structures of imperative aggression.

Vagueness, as a functionality of language, can open an astonishing platform of flexibility as it relates to an initial stratagem of variation. Too little flexibility can kill a negotiation before it even gets a chance to get off the ground while too much will be synonymous to weakness and an unwillingness to fight for or defend your own personal position. Being silent in times of uncertainty represents a great tool for avoiding utterances that can be detrimental to the position for which you are trying to find arguments.

A harmonious dialogue is often predicated on the principle that we should never push our partners into a corner, and always provide two or more options and suggestions when we ask for something. This will prevent an immediate and instantaneous rejection and harness the power of vagueness by demanding additional adjustments and clarifications. Irina Boncea envisions a social discourse learning curve that is empowered by a complex sense of learning based on synaesthesia, the successful cooperation of senses: “The use of several senses simultaneously instead of a single sense as a primary source of information ensures multiple cognitive associations and

deepens our experience of the learning situation, which, in turn, ensures long-term retention.” (Boncea, 2020:71)

When the questions are asked and the answers are listened to, the next step is, almost always, to provide a counteroffer. An additional proposition will also integrate the willingness of the other negotiator to bring forward a personal brand of solutions and stratagems in order to soften and possibly even eliminate the possibility of impasse, thus, reaching a reasonable state of compromise. The exchange of proposals and ideas shall be managed by using non-restrictive conditionals for the betterment of specific solutions. When negotiators achieve a level of sufficient trust, they can accelerate the honest exchange of proposals, and this will, in turn, accelerate the discussion process itself, reaching objectives that are desired or at least tolerated by all the people involved.

4. Nonverbal structures of interaction

The simple encounter of gazes when one meets another for the first time, maintaining and respecting personal and social boundaries can go a long way towards the establishment of an honest chain of communication. A simple shake of the hand, its intensity, its duration can convey respect as well as politeness and a willingness to adhere to social taxonomies. The information sent by our body, face and tone of voice can set up the perfect background for a successful communication. A handshake can even convey importance, interest, and is often associated with balanced synchronicity. We can choose to initiate the base, intensity and rhythm of that handshake, or simply mimic and adapt to the handshake of our interlocutor, thus, conveying a climate of trust and submission, giving the other communicator the sense that he or she is in control, and this circle of safety will open countless pathways towards productive communication in conversational awareness and reciprocity.

Maintaining the right distance from the people we seek to interact with is also paramount and full of relevance. Breaching protocol and invading one's personal space can activate territorial self-defence mechanisms and hinder the willingness of the other to communicate. Too much proximity can even be misconstrued as aggression and trigger the body's natural defence mechanisms of rejection and abandonment. Too much distance will automatically be deemed as abnormal behaviour, hiding an entire range of negative emotions such as a lack of compassion, weakness or even a negative hidden agenda that you are unable to keep under control. Communication is about more than finding the right message, it is also about finding the right distance, about learning how to get close to people but not too close and not too far. Moreover, too much distance outright sabotages communication, both psychologically and even physically. One might have trouble seeing the expressions of the other person's face, even see the phatic function of language compromised by simply not being able to hear the message of the other person. In addition, too much distance can also disrupt an entire range of subjective factors, which are contested by many such as charisma, flair or chemistry.

Physical and psychological distance in communication do not rely on a concrete and objective operational equation. Talking to people and listening to them in return represents an everchanging paradigm requiring continuous adaptation and intuition dependant on temper, personality, contextual reasoning and even mood.

An evolving sense of awareness of distance management, as they relate to communicational undertakings, shall instruct us to intuitively assess a situation and make the best possible decisions as effectively and naturally as possible. Establishing visual contact, the use of facial features in negotiation promotes a substantial force of

Manifolds of Communication: Negotiating Social, Political and Economic Constructs

nonverbal messaging. An effective act of communication would entail that both communicators make direct eye contact for approximately half the conversation. Any figures that are lower or higher than that can elicit negative undertones. Avoiding eye contact may be misconstrued as deceptive, as if you are trying to hide something, viewed as a sign of lying. Overusing eye contact can also be deemed as aggressive and intrusive behaviour, separating procedures and protocols from the society-accepted norms.

The way in which we carry our bodies can act as gestures of separation with respect to our willingness to get close to our partner. Certain rigid postures can challenge communicational partnership and bring forth arrogance and vanity. Being too tense or shaking will betray weakness, fear and vulnerability or a negative hidden agenda that is putting obvious pressure on the psyche. Posture can establish dominance or respect, and it is up to us to decide how we control our bodies in order to use the meta-verbal so as to influence a discussion or a negotiation with our peers.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, each person communicates in their own rhythm or personal style but this individual touch is always governed and regulated by robust social rules and prerequisites. Bearing in mind that we are ultimately social animals it is important for us to learn to respect each other, be aware not only when to speak, but also when and how to listen. The rules of civilised society dictate that the purpose of communication is not only to understand the message, but also to understand and respect that person and his or her values. When we listen, we should use more than our ears alone, we should use our soul, our empathy and negotiate new ways of personal and collective self-improvement. Last but not least, every discussion, every negotiation should start and end with a smile. If the eyes are the windows of the soul, then a smile is that very soul reaching out to capture the affections of another, to express emotions of humanity and empathy, to shout out not just a message of love, but also a willingness to listen and understand, to ensure the fact that we need not negotiate out of fear, but must never fear to negotiate in the name of our shared humanity and sentimental social likeness.

References:

- Boncea, I. J. (2020). Using Visual Materials in ESP Classes. In *In memoriam Elena Petre - Volum omagial*. Craiova: Ed. Sitech, pp. 71-80.
- Burtea-Cioroianu, C.E. (2020). Problems of Social Integration and Correct Expression of Foreign Students in Romania. *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques*, 66, 140-149.
- Cross, J.G. (1997). Negotiation as a Learning Process. In *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 21(4), 581-606.
- Gardani, F. (2017). Business Negotiations. In Mautner, Gerlinde and Rainer, Franz (eds.), *Handbook of Business Communication: Linguistic Approaches* (Handbooks of Applied Linguistics 13), Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, pp. 91-110.
- Kim, P.H., Pinkley, R.L. and Fragale, A.R. (2005). Power Dynamics in Negotiation. In *The Academy of Management Review*, 30(4), 799-822.
- Marcu, D. (2013). Business Negotiations in ESP Classes. In *Analele Universității din Craiova, Științe Filologice, Limbi Străine Aplicate*, 1, 69-75.
- Scortan, D. (2019). The Economic Speech in The French Press. *Journal of Social Sciences*. 2(2), 55 – 60

- Stoian, A. M. (2019). Education, Social and Media Communication. *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques*, 62, 125-135.
- Thompson, L. (2000). *The mind and heart of the negotiator* (2nd ed.), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- West, T. (1997). Differencing Negotiation. In *Composition Studies*, 25(2), 7-18.
- Yuxian, Z. (2013). The Politeness Principles in Business Negotiation. In *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 9(4), 50-56.

Article Info

Received: November 26 2021

Accepted: December 02 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Consequences of corruption in the proper exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Mihail Gorincioi¹⁾

Abstract:

This paper aims to highlight some perspectives on the interference of corruption in the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, perspectives that are often consequences of the communist regime. Corruption affects a multitude of human rights and thus it reduces the ability of a state to fulfill its positive obligations under international conventions and treaties. Corruption affects not only the individual as a holder of rights and obligations but also the state as a subject of international law. More fundamentally, the relationship between human rights and corruption refers to the substantial depletion of public resources. The bid rigging in public procurement or the fraudulent management of public money by enticing resources in favor of state representatives, consistently contributes to reducing the financial capacity of the state which would naturally have been focused on guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms. Obviously, corruption affects human rights when it is imminent and may facilitate actions that are restricted or even prohibited by law. Apparently, this hypothesis would only have some negative impact on the legal relations between the parties directly concerned, but the maintenance and supply of a human trafficking network by certain officials, for example, could be qualified as a crime against humanity. In the same context, we can frame the violation of the political rights of citizens by buying votes or bribing electoral officials to facilitate an electoral fraud. We, humanity, shall exist free of corruption so that we can talk about guaranteeing the protection of fundamental rights. This is a principle that needs to be set and promoted by major international legal actors.

Keywords: *Corruption offenses; fundamental rights and freedoms; human rights protection; European Court of Human Rights; European Convention on Human Rights.*

¹⁾ Phd Student, Doctoral School of the Faculty of Law, University of Craiova, Romania, Email: av.gorincioi@gmail.com.

1. Corruption and human rights – general considerations

Fundamental human rights and freedoms have been explored in recent decades mainly in terms of protecting the interests of the individual after an imminent violation. Practitioners have given preference to certain approaches to the compensation of the subject whose rights have been violated and to the guarantee of rights in criminal proceedings. National and international legislation regulates the protection of human rights and freedoms, establishing both constitutional principles that provide a high degree of protection and regulating offences that punish subjects liable to criminal liability who have infringed the rights of another person. National case law establishes certain rules designed to provide additional protection for the guarantee and respect of individual rights, but also to anticipate certain practices that threaten to undermine them. The case-law rules developed by the European Court of Human Rights have been designed to make certain mechanisms for the protection of fundamental freedoms more rigid and to create new rules in line with the development of communities and the emancipation of democratic processes.

The study of human rights needs to be complemented by a comprehensive analysis of the root causes that generate systemic processes designed to undermine both human rights protection mechanisms and human rights in general. We conclude that one of the main causes, investigated in most contexts as a separate notion, relates to corruption. Corruption is examined as one of the most dangerous crimes against state order, against democracy and the rule of law but also against citizens within the circumscription of a constitution, we will see in the course that some acts of corruption may even have international implications. An intrinsic effect of the commission of offences covered by the general term of corruption concerns the impact of this phenomenon on the respect and guarantee of human rights.

The configuration of the intersection between corruption and human rights could be characterized by two legal-practical directions: in the first instance, these two notions could coexist when speaking of the negative effects of corruption on the violation of human rights; and the second perspective would present some instances of interference of these notions through the analysis of the aspects concerning the restriction of the rights of the person who is accused in corruption cases. Although they represent two diametrically opposed directions in terms of their legal essence, they should, at times, be analyzed cumulatively. The jurisprudential tendencies of most states in the fight against corruption are determined by putting the interests of the state before the interests of the individual, but we will conclude later that such an approach cannot take place in a state governed by the rule of law.

The commission of any corruption offence will first and foremost have implications for human rights and freedoms. The problem of a legal approach is primarily related to the factor that the commission of a corruption offence does not only affect the rights of the actors who have directly participated in the commission of these offences, but rather the effects of these offences are felt by society in general, affecting relations between the state and the citizen and even between states in certain international contexts. By studying both national and international jurisprudence, we will underline that the courts have not given enough space to explain the implications of corruption on human rights, devoting only certain procedural approaches to the subject when it comes to respect for the right to a fair trial. These motivations are primarily in the nature of prevention of procedural violations which should concern all criminal trials

Consequences of corruption in the proper exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms

not necessarily those related to corruption cases. In a society based on the principles of the rule of law, with corruption representing an imminent danger to these principles, the motivation of court decisions, including the interference of corruption offences with fundamental rights and freedoms, should be a priority.

Another side of the intersection of these two notions will describe a perspective that can highlight the ways in which the rights of subjects who are indicted in corruption cases are restricted. We will conclude that in the case of investigation of corruption offences, given the social danger but also the increased pressure from the community, some of the subjects' rights may be infringed already in the first phase of investigation. The disproportionality of some restrictive measures implemented by prosecution bodies creates more and more premises to emphasize the putting of general interests above individual interests. Abusive searches, the interception of telephone conversations without due process of law, some abuses committed by undercover investigators, including in terms of instigating the commission of a corruption offence, reinforce the idea that the fight against corruption is a basic objective of states, but this objective is in very many cases put before the positive obligation of the state.

The aim of this research is to highlight the main legal aspects that are sometimes related to each other and that are guided by the case law of the ECtHR in the field of human rights and freedoms by analyzing their interference with the effects and implications of corruption. Distinguishing some novel elements in the matter will strengthen the link between the two dimensions of the law that seem to encompass distinct branches, but at the same time present an accumulation of effects that are primarily based on the obligation to respect and guarantee the fundamental rights and freedoms of the subjects of law.

Human rights and freedoms are governed by a number of principles laid down in international conventions, which have also been transposed into the national legislation of the States which have ratified these conventions. We will see that the phenomenon of corruption is above all an attack on the principles of human rights: the principles of universality, indivisibility, non-discrimination and transparency. These principles can become fragile when, through certain corruptible practices, some subjects of the law are placed higher before the law than others, so that the consequences of these actions will be felt not only by certain subjects but by all citizens, who are above all equal before the law.

The European Court of Human Rights tangentially described in its judgments what would be the interference of corruption offences and human rights violations. Analyzing the case law of the Court, we can affirm the existence of several areas in which the violation of human rights regulated by European law can be linked to the commission of certain corruption offences. The offences of bribery, taking bribes and influence peddling in most contexts affect the right to an impartial and independent tribunal (referred to in Article 6 ECHR) or the right to be brought promptly before a judge or magistrate empowered by law to exercise judicial power (Article 5(3) ECHR).

Judicial independence is an imminent requirement to guarantee the dispensation of justice in terms of fairness, impartiality and non-involvement of political and economic factors in the process of adopting a decision. In most cases, the vulnerability of some decision-makers, including as a result of corruption offences, can have a harmful influence on the issuing of a decision which should be based on the rules in force and on the guarantee of human rights and freedoms.

Mihail GORINCIOI

The right to a fair trial confers on the individual certain guarantees which are essential to the administration of justice. Any attempt to undermine a judge, prosecutor or official in the course of criminal proceedings by committing certain corruption offences is a serious offence with devastating consequences (on the one hand, a punishable offence is committed and, on the other, fundamental human rights, in particular the right to a fair trial, are infringed).

An impartial court can also be influenced by certain practices, often found in underdeveloped countries, which involve the transfer of money or other benefits through intermediaries who also work in certain legal professions. These practices contradict the basic notions that characterize a legal system.

Analyzing the role of the courts in the meaning of Art. 5 paragraph 3 ECHR, we conclude that any corrupt action that diminishes the authenticity of the notion of a magistrate is a violation of human rights, and the judge - although he/she has been given judicial powers by law - cannot be influenced by any manifestation of corruption. On the other hand, another equally important aspect concerns the delay of certain procedural actions which, being fueled by certain corruptible elements, lead to the restriction of human rights and freedoms, and the Convention has provided in Article 5 for the immediate presentation of the right holder before a court.

In a state governed by the rule of law, corruption resulting in the violation of human rights, committed by a judge who has been given special law enforcement powers to enforce human rights, could be classified as a crime against humanity.

While combating corruption is a priority for European states, it should be consistent with respect for human rights and freedoms. All mechanisms and policies to combat and prevent corruption must be based as a matter of priority on the need to protect the subject of the law, as the consequences of violating human rights in relation to combating corruption are exceptionally serious.

The practice of some countries that have started the fight against corruption has shown that often preventive detention measures as well as convictions for certain corruption offences have been accompanied by several violations of human rights: the right to life, the right to a fair trial, the right to liberty and security, etc.

Human rights and freedoms have been explored over time from legal, social, administrative and economic perspectives. We would point out that respect for human rights and freedoms is an obligation of the state which is constitutionally regulated and provides all subjects with a minimum of guarantees regardless of nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, gender, etc. The detailed study of fundamental freedoms has led to quite diligent practices and approaches on the part of states to guarantee and respect them and to prevent legal phenomena which attempt to restrict rights. The causes that generate destructive effects on fundamental rights and freedoms may be predominantly legal, but the effects of these causes certainly spill over into all social and economic areas, etc.

Human rights and freedoms can be seen as privileges enjoyed by the subject of law, privileges which are indispensable to human nature and without which man cannot enjoy the characteristics of his life. The incorporation of these rights in constitutional texts and other special laws gives them the status of fundamental rights (Bîrsan, 2005: 14). This reveals an imperative obligation for all authorities overseeing legislative processes to bring all legislative objectives into line with respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. The same obligation, in a society based on the rule of law, should also be incumbent on the actors who contribute directly to the implementation of the law. Any

Consequences of corruption in the proper exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms

substantial derogation, without reasons guided by certain exceptional situations restricting rights, should be prohibited.

At the international level, an important catalyst for the recognition and establishment of a common multilateral objective among United Nations states to respect human rights can be seen as World War II. On 26 June 1945, the United Nations States, in the preamble to the UN Charter, committed themselves to the absolute will of the subjects of international law to reaffirm "confidence in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and in the creation of conditions necessary for the maintenance of justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other instruments of international law". While this document aimed at a firm commitment by states to guarantee human rights, in 1948, on 10 December, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this time with the individual as the main beneficiary and the holder of an exhaustive list of rights. This document was treated and appreciated by international subjects as a resolution of the UN Assembly without any legislative power imposing a certain conduct on states. Although it does not have the force of a treaty or convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is still an important landmark in national and international law-making. At the global level, the Declaration inspired the development of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. At the European level, the Declaration was a substantial prerequisite for the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and has had sufficient repercussions on the construction of certain international documents on other continents: the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Arab Charter on Human Rights.

With regard to the interference of corruption and respect for fundamental freedoms, we conclude that it is virtually impossible to identify any right enshrined in national or international law that cannot be directly or indirectly affected by corruption. Given that this phenomenon has such a considerable impact on all human rights and that the study of all the implications would require endless analysis, we will describe only a few legal aspects that define the interference of these two subjects.

2. Corruption - conceptual delimitations

Corruption has never been strictly defined by doctrine or by the jurisprudence of national and international institutions. The trends of the last decades are based on the idea that several legal acts, both foreseen and unforeseen in the legislation, some of them having the status of an offence under criminal law or a special law, others not generally regulated, are included in the general term of corruption.

Analyzing the intentions of the legislator on the one hand and the general perception of the community on the other, we can conclude that this term can describe certain acts which are characterized by bribery of officials in exchange for consideration or services. Some practitioners refer to corruption when only actions committed by some public officials or representatives of state institutions are imminent, while the same legal frameworks, which concern the private domain, are sometimes considered to be of a lower degree of danger (Bacio-Terracino, 2008:5).

Both national criminal law and international criminal law do not directly criminalize corruption as a separate offence. In this respect, criminal laws establish an exhaustive list of offences that fall within the category of corruption offences, leaving

the term to the legal and practical interpretation of the masses. One of the first fairly concise definitions of the term corruption was presented and outlined by Transparency International, which defines corruption as an abuse of entrusted power for personal gain. Another definition, this time much more circumstantial, is provided by Article I of the South African Joint Development Protocol against Corruption which states that: the term corruption means "*any act referred to in Article III and includes bribery or any other behavior in relation to persons entrusted with responsibilities in the public and private sectors which violates their duties as public officials, private employees, independent agents or other relationships of that kind and aimed at obtaining undue advantage of any kind for themselves or others*" (SADC, 2001:2).

The United Nations Convention against Corruption, but also other international documents, gives states quite wide latitude in criminalizing certain actions that may fall under the notion of corruption without providing an exhaustive list of these offences. Article 5(3) of The United Nations Convention against Corruption merely provides States with a recommendation that "*each State Party shall endeavour to periodically evaluate relevant legal instruments and administrative measures with a view to determining their adequacy to prevent and fight corruption*" (UNODC, 2004:9).

The most common forms of corruption are prescribed in the giving and receiving of bribes, influence peddling, abuse of power, embezzlement of public resources, illicit enrichment, etc.

Bribery takes the form of promising, offering or giving money or other benefits, conditional on the existence of a link with the performance, non-performance, urgency or delay in the performance of an act falling within the official's official duties or in connection with the performance of an act contrary to those duties.

Abuse of authority is also an extremely dangerous form of corruption and takes the form of the performance or non-performance of acts by an official, contrary to the law, with the clearly defined aim of obtaining advantages for oneself or for third parties.

The misappropriation of public resources contributes to a considerable extent to the inability of states to ensure the implementation of the positive obligation to guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms. While bribery, influence peddling or abuse of power directly concern a narrow set of limitations on human rights, depending on the sphere of activity of the official or representative of the legal person, the misappropriation of public resources can affect all human rights and freedoms.

A final aspect, not regulated by Romanian legislation but quite present in the legislation of many countries, refers to illicit enrichment, which also represents a factual situation that can be easily classified as a corruption offence. Some authors have provided a factual description of these types of offences, which have been described as follows: "*harmful act expressed in the act of holding property where the value of the property substantially exceeds the means acquired and it has been established, on the basis of the evidence, that the property could not have been obtained lawfully*" (Brinza&Mares, 2020).

We will initially consider that all freedoms could be affected by corruption in different proportions. Below we will review just a few forms of corruption's impact on fundamental rights and freedoms.

3. The direct consequences of corruption on human rights

The most common legal scenario in which corruption directly affects human rights is characterized by the power of an official to demand certain improper benefits in

Consequences of corruption in the proper exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms

order to give the individual access to his or her rights and freedoms. In this context, the individual is required to "purchase" possible access to his or her own rights enshrined in both national and international law. Such situations can be characterized by actions whereby officials demand a bribe for the granting of a procedural right or for the guarantee of a right which should naturally be guaranteed in a state governed by the rule of law (e.g. the provision of a translator, the provision of a court-appointed lawyer, etc.). Very common in developing countries is the practice of representatives of medical institutions demanding certain goods, including money, in order to facilitate access to medical services for individuals. The most serious, by virtue of the parallel described above, may be considered the experience of teachers who demand certain benefits in order to offer privileges to their students or to offer additional courses to cover curricular material deliberately omitted from seminars. Remarkably, these situations not only strike at the direction of an expressly envisaged right (the right to education, the right to healthcare, the right to a fair trial), but have negative consequences on the rights of the community in general, thus attacking the principle of equality and non-discrimination. The intertwining of the multitude of rights affected by corruption has features that are likely to reduce a state's ability to fulfil its positive obligations under international conventions and treaties. Thus, corruption affects not only the individual as a holder of rights and obligations but also the state as a subject of international law.

Another conjuncture that illustrates the relationship between human rights and corruption concerns the substantial depletion of public resources. The manipulation of public procurement processes or the fraudulent management of public money by luring resources in favor of state representatives, contributes consistently to the reduction of the state's financial possibilities which would naturally have been concentrated in the direction of guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms. These rather superficial forms of corruption, which are dealt with in legislation and by the judicial authorities, especially in developing countries, are extremely dangerous when we consider the importance of measures to protect human rights.

Human rights can also be affected by corruption when corruption becomes imminent in order to facilitate actions that are restricted or even prohibited by law. These forms substantially reinforce the curtailment of fundamental rights and freedoms because they imply certain prospects of restricting human rights in exchange for money. Apparently, this hypothesis would only affect the legal relations between the parties directly concerned, but de facto, the maintenance and feeding of a human trafficking network by certain officials to promote slavery could be qualified as a crime against humanity. In the same context, we can also include the violation of citizens' political rights by buying votes or bribing electoral officials to facilitate electoral fraud.

Corruption can also threaten judicial independence in several ways. In the process of selecting, appointing and promoting magistrates, corruption can influence the fairness and transparency of these processes from the outset. The interference of political factors in the work of the judiciary, in situations where certain interests are promoted through discussion platforms by directly influencing magistrates, is also a visible way in which the two areas under investigation interfere. Political interference also occurs when all aspects directly linked to the exercise of the judicial profession, issues relating to salaries, working conditions, bonuses, social aspects, are used by decision-makers to put substantial pressure on judges. An important lever of interference by political factors in the work of the judiciary, with direct implications for the phenomenon of corruption,

refers in particular to the promotion of laws that offer exaggerated immunities to corrupt judges and, on the contrary, disfavor transparent and fair behavior.

A very important consequence of corruption on the impartiality and transparency of the judiciary is, in addition to the above, a component that is rather complicated to quantify. This component relates to the quality of the act of justice. Justice must be able to provide the subjects of law with optimum guarantees of respect for their rights and freedoms. The ability of the judicial system to respond to all social relations and to provide balanced and fair decisions depends on several factors. In addition to the traditions and customs in this area, the ongoing process of improving the legislative framework, the electronic methods of ensuring impartiality through random selection of cases, and the tools for training future judges, aspects relating to the removal of corruption from the procedures for promoting and selecting judges must also be taken into account. Corruption could have negative consequences on the quality of the judicial process if certain actors are promoted according to non-transparent criteria. The quality of justice can be compromised in the medium and long term by the immediate consequences of corruption, and ultimately the right to a fair trial becomes very difficult to ensure.

Research on the interference of corruption and the field of human rights becomes very important when we consider the importance of the positive obligation of states to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all individuals. An extremely important means of guaranteeing respect for the rights of all subjects in a state concerns the adoption of a legislative framework that is consistent with the principles of the rule of law but also with the principles governing the field of fundamental rights and freedoms. The analysis of a law-making option from the perspective of anticipating some of the consequences of corruption on human rights could influence public attitudes towards the phenomenon of corruption on the one hand and the importance of fighting corruption on the other. The most difficult approach to this option relates to the legislator's will and intention to demonstrate that by committing corruption offences, fundamental rights and freedoms are primarily violated. In order to be able to demonstrate this hypothesis, we will insist on some basic directions that argue the importance of analyzing the impact of corruption on human rights in the stages of building the legislative framework.

A human rights approach focuses attention on people at particular risk, providing a gender perspective and certain measures, including legislative measures aimed at designing and implementing effective anti-corruption policies. If corruption offences are shown to violate human rights, this will influence public attitudes. When subjects become more aware of the damage that corruption does to the public, individual interests and the damage that even minor corruption can cause, they become more likely to support prevention campaigns and programs. This is particularly important because, despite strong rhetoric, the political impact of most anti-corruption programs has been low. Identifying specific links between corruption and human rights can persuade certain decision-makers - public officials, parliamentarians, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, businessmen, bankers, accountants, the media and the general public - to take a stronger stand against corruption.

Other costs of corruption include more intangible effects, such as loss of trust in public institutions (Gathii, 2009:147). Corruption can also undermine the rule of law, tax compliance, contract enforcement, civil order and security, and ultimately the legitimacy of the state itself. In this vein, we can add other costs, such as the degradation of public

Consequences of corruption in the proper exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms

life, the misallocation of public resources, distorted state priorities and the undermining of democracy (Johnson, 2004:139).

Recent empirical studies have shown that corruption is responsible for low economic growth, less foreign and domestic investment, high inflation, currency depreciation, low spending on education and health, high military spending, high income inequality and poverty, lower tax revenues and high infant mortality rates (Akçay, 2006: 46).

It is no exaggeration to say that corruption is one of the most complex problems in legal research today. Cutting across almost all the comfortable regimes of specialization of law, corruption is a problem for private as well as public law, civil law, criminal and international law, and administrative law. Moreover, the study of corruption involves economic, social and cultural dimensions in addition to legal implications. Until the 1990s, most studies of corruption were economic, political, social or cultural. Questions about how behavior affected productivity, why some regimes were more corrupt than others, how corruption at one level of society affected corruption at other levels, or how views of corruption vary across cultures are typical of these earlier studies of corruption.

Political scientists see corruption in the abuse of state power resulting from the absence of controls. Economists see corruption when assets are sold for personal gain or when public officials have a monopoly on the exploitation of economic resources. Sociologists will sometimes see corruption as an absence of socially accepted norms, occurring in countries where historical and socio-cultural conflict or certain conflicting values within social groups have resulted. When looking for an appropriate legal definition, it must first be made clear that the focus must be on the noun 'corruption' and not 'corrupt'; this has proven to be much more than a grammatical distinction (Spalding, 2014:1387).

Corruption was examined as an undesirable phenomenon for most - the costs were societal, while the benefits were individual. In the 1990s, the few legal studies of corruption that were conducted were usually examinations of the criminal legal aspects of corruption, attempts to analyze the problems of defining the crime of corruption for legislative purposes, enforcing legality, identifying evidence for prosecution or tracing stolen goods. Corruption has been examined as a technical legal issue, individualized to a particular case or legal instrument. In fact, the relationship between corruption and fundamental political rights has been seen as so close that the term 'control of corruption' has become one of the six 'dimensions' of a government's responsibility to the needs and rights of its citizens in the Worldwide Governance Indicators project's framework (Scheffer, 2010:399).

4. Conclusion

Research on the interference of corruption and the field of human rights becomes very important when we consider the importance of the positive obligation of states to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all individuals. An extremely important means of guaranteeing respect for the rights of all subjects in a state concerns the adoption of a legislative framework that is consistent with the principles of the rule of law but also with the principles governing the field of fundamental rights and freedoms.

Despite the economic and political interest in the corruption-human rights relationship, academic legal research on the impact of corruption on human rights is

fairly recent. Today, human rights scholars around the world conduct comprehensive examinations not only of the impact of corruption on human rights, but also of the effects of anti-corruption campaigns on the rights of individuals and society.

Acknowledgment:

„This work was supported by the grant POCU380/6/13/123990, co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectoral Operational Program Human Capital 2014 – 2020.”

References:

- Akçay, S. (2006). Corruption and Human Development. *The Cato Journal*, 26(1). Retrieved from: <https://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/serials/files/cato-journal/2006/1/cj26n1-2.pdf>.
- Bacio-Terracino, J. (2008). Corruption as a violation of human rights. *International Council on Human Rights Policy*. Retrieved from: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1107918.
- Birsan, C. (2005). *Convenția Europeană a Drepturilor Omului. Comentariu pe articole*, București: C.H. Beck.
- Brinza, S. & Mares, M. (2020). *Îmbogățirea ilicită – o analiză comparativă a legislațiilor din Republica Moldova și România*, Chișinău: Portal Juridice Moldova.
- European Convention on Human Rights, (1950). Retrieved from: https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/convention_eng.pdf.
- Gathii, J. T. (2009). *Defining the Relationship between Human Rights and Corruption*, 31 U. Pa. J. Int'l L. 125 (2009). Retrieved from: <https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/jil/vol31/iss1/3>.
- Johnson, R. A. (2004). *The Struggle Against Corruption: A Comparative Study*, UK, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Scheffer, K. N. (2010). Causation in the Corruption – Human Rights Relationship, RW – Heft 4. Retrieved from: https://www.nomos-elibrary.de/10.5771/1868-8098-2010-4-397.pdf?download_full_pdf=1.
- South African Joint Development Protocol against Corruption, (2001). Retrieved from: https://www.sadc.int/files/7913/5292/8361/Protocol_Against_Corruption2001.pdf.
- Spalding, A. B. (2016). Corruption, Corporations, and the New Human Right, 91 Wash. U. L. REV. 1365. Retrieved from: https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6100&context=law_lawreview.
- The United Nations Convention against Corruption, (2004). Retrieved from: https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/Publications/Convention/08-50026_E.pdf.

Article Info

Received: November 24 2021

Accepted: December 02 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Evaluating the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions Amongst Indian Gen Z investors Using Structural Equation Modeling

Kavya Clanganthuruthil Sajeev¹⁾, Mohd Afjal²⁾, Cristi Spulbar³⁾,
Ramona Birau⁴⁾, Ion Florescu⁵⁾

Abstract:

The aim of this research study is to investigate the relationship between behavioural finance and investment decisions amongst Gen Z (Generation Z) investors. A structural equation modeling is employed to analyse the behavioural biases such as financial literacy, risk attitude, herding, and information search to study the linkage. Analysing the behavioural factors with the decision making power of the Gen Z investors helps in taking strategic decisions and framing trading policies. The impact of the behavioural biases on Gen Z investors is studied through a sampling survey of 144 valid respondents consisting of Gen Z investors in Maharashtra (India). The survey conducted in between January 2021 to May 2021. By applying structural equation modeling (SEM) confirmatory factor analysis is conducted to check the validity measures and path analysis is performed on how behavioural finance and investment decisions are connected. The results indicate that the biases such as financial literacy, risk attitude and information search has a positive and significant impact on the decision making of investors while the trait herding has a very weak and negative relationship with investment decisions.

Keywords: *Behavioural Finance; Investment Decisions; Financial Literacy; Risk Attitude; Gen Z investors; Structural Equation Modeling.*

JEL Classifications: G14, E00

¹⁾ Independent Researcher, Mumbai, India, Email: kavyacsajeev@gmail.com.

²⁾ Amity Business School, Amity University Mumbai, India, Email: afzalmfc@gmail.com.

³⁾ University of Craiova, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Craiova, Romania
Email: cristi_spulbar@yahoo.com.

⁴⁾ University of Craiova, Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, Romania, & C-tin Brancusi University of Targu Jiu, Faculty of Education Science, Law and Public, Administration, Romania,
Email: ramona.f.birau@gmail.com.

⁵⁾ Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Craiova, Romania, Email: ionut.florescu2021@yahoo.com.

1. Introduction

Young individuals are prepping up their game to join to low-cost investment and trading businesses and showing themselves how to contribute. From simple venture products and all-cash exchanges to complex technology driven trading and online dealings, India has seen an ocean change in the investment sector, which calls for educated financial choices as opposed to simply leaving the cash in banks. The fast change in the procedure of financial dealings after demonetisation not just put the Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) and millennial (born between 1981 and 1996) day dreaming, even the technically driven more youthful age – Generation Z (born between 1996 and 2012) thinks that it is complex while at the same time strolls on independent way of managing their finances. When it comes to investing, Gen Z just need to access materials they require by means of the internet on their devices. They are not just confronting expanding intricacy in investment products, management and services, but also they are bound to bear financial risk later on.

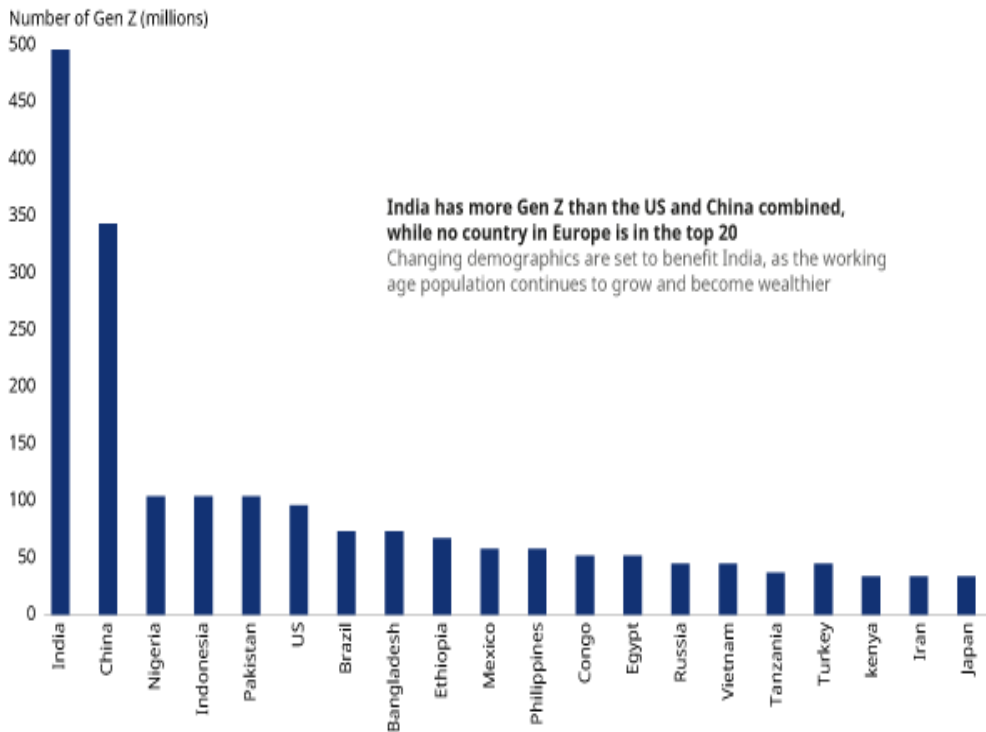


Figure 1: Number of Gen Z (Millions)

Source: UN (2021)

The Gen Z accounts to a population of 2.5 billion people all around the world and as per the consultancy Euromonitor set to fourfold throughout the following decade to around \$33 trillion. Critically, the vast majority of individuals from Gen Z live in Asia and other developing business countries (Schroders Wealth Management, 2021).

Evaluating the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions...

Gen Z accounts now for the largest population group in the world ranging around 2.5 billion people. And as per the consultancy Euromonitor they make quick and easy money in comparison to other groups and it is set to reach around \$33 trillion dollars by the end of the next decade.

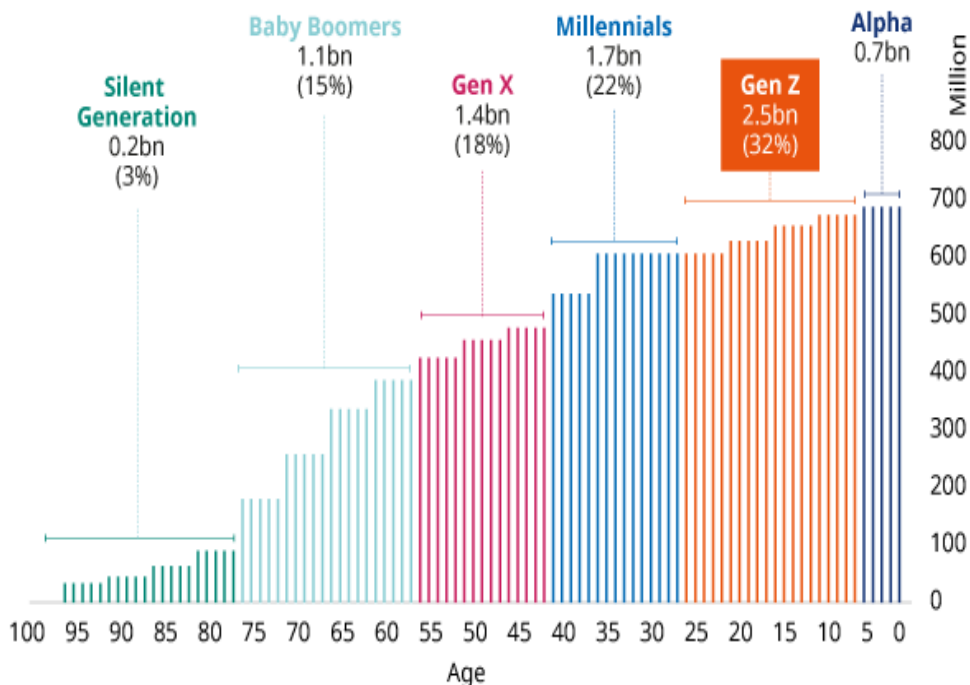


Figure 2: Gen Z's Global Population

Source: UN, Euromonitor

2. Literature review

Behavior of investors got popularised in academics on account of support of individual investors in the securities exchange has unexpectedly expanded lately. There are a few foundations for this increment. To begin with, the remarkable profit from the resources of the securities exchange, chances of bringing in cash work and accomplishing returns on invested cash. Then the high liquidity of monetary instruments which implies a financial investor could quickly change over to monetary market instrument into cash. Third, an assortment of monetary assets that implies a progression of monetary assets open to people, they can choose assets as per the targets of their venture (Akhtar and Das, 2019).

Ejaz et al. (2020) discussed about the strategy applied by global investors in the context of investment opportunities provided by international financial markets based on diversified portfolio while minimizing potential risks. Meher et al. (2020) analyzed the concept of sustainable investment considering the influence of ESG factors, such as: environment, society and corporate governance. Moreover, Spulbar et al. (2019) have conducted an advanced empirical study on volatility spillovers in certain developed stock markets, such as: USA, Canada, France and UK, concluded that financial market

volatility reacts and is permanently influenced by the buying and selling behaviour of traders and investors.

A financial investors behavioural and psychological factors impact their trading pattern (Pak and Mahmood, 2015; Sivaramakrishnan, et al., 2017; Tauni et al., 2017). The demeanour of people toward risk, impression of social impact and confidence decide the expectations of financial investors (Akhtar et al., 2018; Bali, et al., 2009) and goal shape the behavior of people. Studies back then has uncovered that risk taking behavior, social cooperation, feelings, religious faith and monetary information are the critical determinants of venture conduct and speculation choices (Korniotis and Kumar, 2011; Kumar and Goyal, 2016; Tahir and Brimble, 2011).

Shabgou and Mousavi (2016) analyzed the behavioural factors influencing choices of likely investors in Iran, for an example of 385 respondents. The discoveries uncovered that heuristic variables, prospect factors and market factors, crowding impact factors sway on investors dynamic. Cuccinelli et al. (2016) additionally inspected Italian clients and guides financial behaviour utilizing The Theory of Planned Behaviour. It was discovered that demeanor, SN and seen social control impacted monetary behavior, while past venture and monetary education didn't have any impact on investment behavior.

Trang and Tho (2017) researched the apparent risk and performance of investment on investment behaviour in Vietnam. The examination utilized a blended philosophy, including 50 meetings and 465 disseminated surveys. The research revealed that risk emphatically affected both performance of investment and goals. In any case, financial risk has a direct constructive outcome on speculation aim. Xiao (2008) contends monetary behavior research has advanced around portraying financial behavior, understanding financial behavior, anticipating financial behavior, changing financial behavior, and growing new financial behavior. Previous literature have likewise shown that mentalities towards risk can be related with investment behavior (Wood and Zaichkowsky, 2004; Funfgeld and Wang, 2009). Segment factors like age, instruction, pay and abundance have likewise been affirmed to affect financial investors mentality (Schooley and Worden, 1999; Barber and Odean, 1999; Riley and Chow, 1992 ;). Schooley and Worden (1999) found that investors with advanced education levels have higher level of price protections in their portfolios.

Mak and Lp (2017) studied about the performance of investment of individual investors in Hong Kong and Mainland China and attempted to differentiate the distinctions in investment performance and inclination between them. Factual strategies like Regression Analysis, Descriptive Statistics have been utilized for information investigation. The examination discovered the impact of sociological, mental furthermore, segment factors on investor's behaviour and encouraged the financial specialist organizations to make reasonable vital arrangements to direct the investors dependent on the comprehension of impacting factors.

2.1 Financial Literacy

Financial literacy can be described as the skill and knowledge that are essential to gather financial information and make financial decision regarding investment. As indicated by Klapper, Lusardi, and Van Oudheusden (2015), financial information is indispensable in the advanced period when there are assortments of complex financial products in monetary business sectors. Interestingly, financially educated individuals have better financial decision making abilities (Lusardi and Mitchell, 2014). These people diversify risk through circulation their investment in various monetary assets. Al-

Evaluating the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions...

Tamimi and Kalli, (2009) studied the financial literacy and investment decisions of UAE investors. Notably the findings revealed that a major difference was present when it comes to the financial literacy according to gender of respondents. Women have lower financial literacy level in comparison to the men. Sharma and Joshi (2015) has a similar opinion on the matter of financial literacy of women. It was found from the research that women are looking for some opportunities which helps them in empowering knowledge of finance and leads to a better decision making.

As per the survey conducted by National Centre for Financial Education in 2019 it was only 27% of Indians who are financially literate. BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange) achieved a seven crore registered users based on Unique Client Code (UCC). But the investor population was pretty less. In each of the, 62% of the investors are under 40 years old, of that 24% fall somewhere in the range of 20 and 30 years. As per BSE, the development has been driven by technically knowledgeable youthful clients, with an age profile of 20-40, who contributed 82 lakh of the one crore client augmentations from six crore to seven crore. It would be useful for the entire framework if the new participants come in with fundamental information on the structure squares of investment and the risks implied in investing (Business Line, 2021). So this study consolidated financial literacy in research system alongside the essential component of SEM to contemplate the investment behaviour and intention of individual Gen Z investors. Financial literacy and behaviour of the investors directly connects with each other.

2.2 Risk Attitude

Past Literature has revealed a critical positive connection between risk resistance and investors intention towards investment. Behavioural intention is a factor that inspires people to include specifically investment behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1977). Grable and Lytton (2003) found that there is a positive and significant relationship between the risk averse attitude and bond holdings of an investor. Alternately, it is noted that those individual investors, who need long term development of their capital and bigger profit from capital, put resources into stocks. The danger taking behavior of people persuade them to put resources into shares (Clark-Murphy and Soutar, 2004).

Shefrin and Statman (1985) propose that investor's aversion to bear the pain of disappointment related with a misfortune. Consequently, they will in general concede understanding their loss while booking their benefits consistently and term this the Disposition Effect. This hypothesis contends that investors are inclined to holding failures excessively long and selling winners too soon. The discoveries of MacCrimmon and Wehrung (1986) define the risk propensity as the willingness of people to take risk because most of the investors have a fear of loss in investment and are very likely sensitive to risk. Singh (1986) uncovered the essential guidelines for the investment in the organization. The basic measure in investment is understanding and estimating return and risk. Many of the investors are risk averse but in order to get a better yield the investor needs to confront more risks.

Gen Z investors are ready to more risk than they have previously, as indicated by new information from E*Trade, a Yahoo! Money article. The organization's quarterly financial investors overview tracked down that majority these majority of young investors showed that their risk resilience has expanded since Covid, far higher. E*Trade's review, which surveyed 873 investors, tracked down that 51% of Gen Z have expanded danger resistance out of all the population (ETF TRENDS, 2020).

2.3 Herding

Herding according to academics alludes to the lemming-like behaviour of investors glancing around, seeing what each other is doing, and traveling toward that path. It addresses the inclination of people to mirror the activities of a bigger gathering. Chiang et al. (2012) explored the herding behaviour of investors in Pacific Basin business sectors and found that herding is emphatically connected with stock returns and adversely connected to showcase unpredictability. MoatemriOuarda et al., (2012) investigated the impacts of herding when it comes to returns, unpredictability and volume of exchange and uncovered presence of herding in both bullish and negative stages, expanded herding propensities related with higher exchanging volume and more prominent instability for the most part because of expanded action of transient investors. Likewise it was discovered that return misfortunes on stock costs highlighted destabilizing effect of groups temporarily.

Some other researchers such as: Graham (1999), Devenow and Welch (1996) highlighted the herding behaviour by defining it as people mimicking something which is not their own. As per Liem and Sukamulja (2017) herding is a subsequent conduct that a single investor follows another investor for different reasons and conditions. This behaviour is the most well-known misstep wherein investors will in general follow the greater part in settling on choosing their investment. The impact of individuals around them is the principle reason an investor has herding behaviour. An individual with herding behaviour is effectively affected by others' choices and affects changes in their investment patterns (Gozalie and Anastasia, 2015).

Kumar and Bharti (2021) explored the herding behaviour of market-wide grouping in the Indian value market during the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. The outcomes got uncover huge herding in the Indian equity market that is affected by market unpredictability. Gupta and Kohli (2021) has a similar result on their study on herding behaviour during post and pre financial crisis in Indian stock market. The evidence revealed that there is a presence of herding during post financial crisis, but not during the pre-financial crisis. This behavioural aspect of an investor becomes valuable when looked from the perspective of a financial institution.

2.4 Information Search

Information search has been demonstrated to be identified with shifting degrees of contribution. As a general rule, as the individual relevance of a decision undertaking builds, increment in involvement. Profoundly purchasers have been found to seekproduct data not exclusively to increase item information during a choice, yet in addition to encounter the happiness of managing a most loved item (Petty et al., 1983). However an investors enduring involvement is viewed as low for most items, one might encounter high contribution with a few items on a continuous premise. The investor who has the tendency to invest on a continuous basis, has a high enduring involvement with the financial exchange.

Wynes et al, (2020) through his study found that there is a significant differences in the amount of time an investor spends for learning additional information regarding investment and the capability of the investor to recite the details about those information. Loibl et al. (2009) in their study regarding the investment behaviour of US investors were able to discover higher-instructed male investors with higher income bound to follow a high-information search methodology, affirming past investigations.

Lin and Lee (2004) recognized the variables that influenced the investor's information search behaviour towards making investment choices. Utilizing the 2000 to

Evaluating the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions...

2001 Macro Monitor informational index, Scholars found down that abstract information, measure of investment, risk resilience, age, and pay affected both the degree of information search and the utilization of explicit data sources, including writing, media, the Internet, companions/ family, and expert administrations. Schwarzkopf (2007) investigated the source validity to investors by giving understanding into investors insight furthermore, utilization of normal information sources. The authors found no critical contrasts in the rankings among more and less experienced investors. Respondents were found to credit responsibility or on the other hand freedom to specific sources without warrant. Shockingly, lower amount of investors was accounted for utilizing the examiner's report and fiscal summary notes in blend with fiscal summary information.

The importance of relevant information search is a must when it comes to making viable investment decisions. Even though the importance of information search is the core of an investor behaviour, there has not been that many studies which has incorporated to analyse the behaviour of investors. So this study makes use of information search as a variable to study the investor behaviour of Gen z as they has grown surrounded by technology and innovation where information of all kind is accessible. Magnify Money found that just about 6 of every 10 Gen Z investors are individuals from speculation networks or discussions, like Reddit, and almost half have gone to online media in the previous month for contributing research. YouTube channel is the top hotspot for information search among youthful investors, with 41% going to the webpage in the previous month. Other online media stages that investors visit for related information incorporate TikTok (24%), Instagram (21%), Twitter (17%), Facebook groups (16%) and Reddit (13%). Taking all things together, 46% of Gen Zers and recent college grads have utilized web-based media for putting information in the previous month (Cision PR Newswire, 2021).

2.5 Investment Behaviour

Investment behaviours are defined as how the investors judge, predict, analyze and review the procedures for decision making, which includes investment psychology, information gathering, defining and understanding, research and analysis. The whole process is "Investment Behavior" (Slovic, 1972; Alfredo and Vicente, 2010).

Kansaland Singh (2013) analysed investment behaviour on the basis of gender biasness. This outcome is anyway not in the line of past examinations which say that the investment behaviour of men and women have a critical distinction. Women also was found to be managing and taking high valued investment decisions just as men. The authors reasons that it might be the new monetary unrest because of which a critical change has happened in the investment practices of men and women.

Chaudhary (2013) looks at the significance of behavioural finance and its application in investment. He has additionally examined some trading approaches for investors in stocks and bonds to help them in showing and controlling their mental detours. Ngoc (2013) intend to explore behavioural factors affecting the choices investors at the Securities Companies in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He suggests that investors ought to consider cautiously before investment, however should not be excessively concerned the earlier loss for later investment.

2.6 Investment Decision

Jagongo and Mutswenje (2014) contemplated the variables affecting investment decision in the Nairobi Stock Exchange, Kenya. The discoveries showed that the most significant variables that impact investment decision incorporate the firm's image,

company's status in the business, anticipated corporate income, benefit and state of the assertion, past performance of the organizations' stock, the cost per share, feeling about the economy and expected dividend by investors. Sondari and Sudarsono (2015) additionally investigated the Indonesian financial investors behaviour expectation utilizing TPB. The discoveries from information investigation utilizing PLS (Partial Least Square) showed that behaviour towards investment have altogether affected the expectation to invest, while self-viability neglected to show a critical impact on investment intention.

Alshamy (2019) investigated the factors affecting the investment decision making. The study utilised six variables consisting of heuristics, financial information, corporate governance, risk aversion, and experience were independent variables while investment decision making was dependent variable while age, gender and financial education were moderating variables. The results declared that Heuristics, Risk Aversion, Financial Information, Corporate Governance and Experience has the highest degree of influence over investor decision making process. Investors response to market factors, that is, stock price changes and past market patterns, is additionally essential for an investment decision and investment performance (Phan and Zhou, 2014; Waweru et al., 2008). The developed markets are well established and show whole market data, though the developing markets are questionable and displaying lopsided data. Consequently, investors in developing markets are more reliant on behavioural prejudices than the developed markets.

The main purpose of this research study is to dissect the significance of behavioural finance on investment decisions and intention of Gen z investors. The focal point of the discussion in this examination is to quantify the impact of financial literacy, attitude towards risk, herding, information search and investment decision on Gen Z.

3. Data collection and research methodology

India has the largest population in Gen Z than any other country in the world. It has more Gen Z population than the US and China combined and this leads to the aim to conduct a study on the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions amongst Indian Gen Z. The impact of the behavioural biases on Gen Z investors is studied through a sampling survey of 144 valid respondents consisting of Gen Z investors in Maharashtra (India). The survey conducted in between Jan 2021 to May 2021. The survey utilized a five-point Likert scale ranking from 1 denoting strongly disagree, to 5 meaning strongly agree. The study was divided into 6 independent variables while 4 of the independent variables consisted of 5 constructs, and the dependent variable had 3 constructs which is given below.

Financial Literacy

1. I have proper knowledge of how to invest my money.
2. I maintain a regular budget on my income and expenditure.
3. I have the knowledge and ability on how to make my monthly budget.
4. I implement technical analysis while making investment decisions.
5. I implement fundamental analysis while making investment decisions.

Risk Attitude

1. I am willing to take huge risk in return for a greater profit.
2. I feel anxious and stressed when I invest my money in risky stocks.
3. I keep the shares with lower value in my portfolio and sell those with higher value.

Evaluating the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions...

4. I feel sad when I keep the lower value stocks and sell the higher value stocks.
5. I take investment decisions separately for my each shares/stocks.

Herding

1. I follow the directions of changes in the investor's decision in the stock market and implement the same.
2. The investment decisions I make is heavily influenced by more sophisticated respondents.
3. When I imitate the decisions of other sophisticated investors it makes me feel less worried.
4. When there is bullish trend in the market, I mostly follow other investors while making investment decisions.
5. When there is bearish trend in the market, I mostly follow other investors while making investment decisions.

Information Search

1. I discuss about my investment decisions with others.
2. I seek professional financial advisors help before making investment decisions.
3. I seek suggestions from my family and friends help before making investment decisions.
4. I search internet and social media networking sites before taking investment decisions.
5. I would like to search about the firm's expected earnings from magazines and other mediums before investing.

Investment Decisions

1. I invest in the market to earn profits quickly.
2. Past performance of firm's stock plays an important role in my investment decision.
3. Price per share influences my investment decision.

The questionnaire was distributed among the 150 Gen Z investors in Maharashtra whom falls under the age group of 17-22. 6 out of the questionnaires had incomplete answers, they were discarded. Rest of the 144 questionnaires were used for analysis. Structural Equation Modeling was applied to look analyse the hypothesis and it was conducted on the basis of two steps modeling approach to the estimation model and structural equation model.

3.1. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) - A brief approach

According to Spulbar et al. (2021), structural equation modeling or simply the acronym SEM represents a multivariate statistical analysis technique which is applied in the analysis of structural relationships, while it also represents a compound of factor analysis and multiple regression analysis. Bai Gokarna et al. (2021) conducted an empirical study using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling also known as the PLS-SEM algorithm in order to complete data analysis.

The analysis utilizes structural equation model (SEM) to assess and investigate how the behavioural biases and investment decisions of Gen Z investors are related. The theoretical model is proposed and investigated with the SPSS AMOS statistical package. Over 90 years prior, the evolutionary biologist Wright (1921, 1934) fostered the estimation of direct, indirect and overall effects stem andalso, path diagram from the procedure of path analysis. As per Beauty et al. (2010), the main benefit that recognizes SEM from most other approaches is its unmistakable quality on assessing causal effects through the examination of path relationships. SEM, frequently called LISREL models:

Linear Structural Relations, is essential for the secondgeneration multivariate information examination strategy, which can evaluate latent variables and direct causal models (Kline, 1998; Nachtigall et al., 2003; Kaplan, 2008). One of the best benefits of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is the capacity to incorporate latent variables in causal models (Edwards and Bagozzi, 2000). Others benefits of SEM over regression methods is: ability to survey indispensable causal relationship networks at the same time (Lowry and Gaskin, 2014); and ability to incorporate other multivariate regression models.

4. Empirical findings

This research study attempted to measure the linkage between investment behaviour and investment decisions of Gen Z in India. The majority of the recent research studies on behaviour finance have proposed multiple factors which affect the behaviour of investors. However, there is comparatively less number of studies focusing on the Gen Z investors response were used by applying Likert scale where 5 denotes for strongly agree, 4 for agree. 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. The findings for the study is given below. Thusly, appropriate screening of the gathered essential information is done and factual methods are applied for information investigation reason. Exploratory Factor Analysis has been applied on previously mentioned 38 variables. Prior to applying Exploratory Factor Analysis on these factors, the reliability has been checked with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics Software, Version 26.

Table 1: Validity measurement for the model and Output of CFA

Model Fit Indicators	Measured Values
CMIN	2.28
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.968
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	.972
Adjusted GFI (AGFI)	.776
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	.935
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.051

Source: Authors' calculation

Table 1 indicates the validity measurement of the model and the measures are near to the optimum range (Hoe, 2008). Moreover, table 2 shows the unstandardized measures of hypothesis testing results.

Table 2: Coefficient estimates of model parameters

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
FL	<---	InvBeh	1.325	.364	1.725	.025
RA	<---	InvBeh	1.468	.527	2.787	.005
H	<---	InvBeh	-.300	.180	-1.668	.095
IS	<---	InvBeh	2.361	.680	3.470	***
Inv Dec	<---	InvBeh	1.614	.287	3.572	***
FL5	<---	FL	1.539	.243	4.468	***
FL4	<---	FL	1.301	.334	3.890	***

Evaluating the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions...

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
FL3	<---	FL	1.724	.400	4.308	***
FL2	<---	FL	1.410	.343	4.105	***
FL1	<---	FL	1.336	.339	3.942	***
RA5	<---	RA	1.489	.287	2.874	***
RA4	<---	RA	.733	.344	2.127	.033
RA3	<---	RA	1.247	.432	2.884	.004
RA2	<---	RA	1.153	.432	2.669	.008
RA1	<---	RA	1.505	.493	3.050	.002
HD5	<---	H	1.249	.648	2.975	.019
HD4	<---	H	1.633	.701	2.330	.020
HD3	<---	H	3.268	1.368	2.388	.017
HD2	<---	H	2.163	.886	2.442	.015
HD1	<---	H	1.096	.555	1.976	.048
IS5	<---	IS	.547	.124	2.507	***
IS4	<---	IS	.983	.196	5.004	***
IS3	<---	IS	.627	.172	3.648	***
IS2	<---	IS	.827	.190	4.351	***
IS1	<---	IS	.722	.169	4.281	***
ID1	<---	InvDec	1.000	.485	1.986	***
ID3	<---	InvDec	2.594	.705	3.678	***
ID2	<---	InvDec	2.216	.623	3.556	***

Source: Authors' calculation

Two phases are conducted in the Structural Equation modeling, specifically the measurement model assessment (MMA) and the structural model assessment (SMA). The MMA under AMOS is embraced to guarantee that the data fit the model and that the model is liberated from issues brought by reliability and validity. The constructs are determined with the assistance of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) have been affirmed with the assistance of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) which is a multivariate statistical methodology that is utilized to test how well the variables address the number of constructs.

From the table 1 it is visible after 42 iterations were conducted, the structural model accomplished a good fit. Results showed that CMIN/DF was 2.280 (lower than 3), RMSEA was 0.051 (lower than 0.050), and SRMR was 0.049 (not exactly 0.08). It was likewise tracked down that the Chi-Square was 512.29 with a degree of freedom of 225. The meaning of the Chi-Square measurement was lower than 0.05 (p-esteem = 0.00) because of the enormous example size.

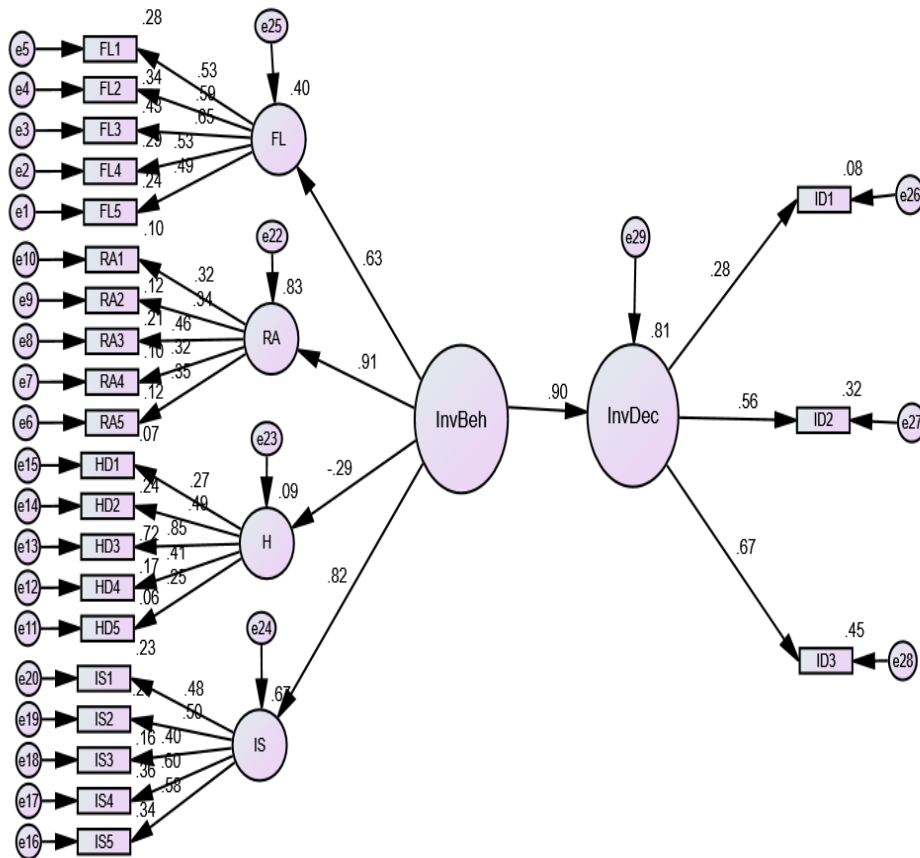


Figure 3: Path Analysis
Source: Authors' calculation

The respondents are asked whether they are actively involved in making investments or do they have any intention to make investments in the future. In this context investor's perception has been analysed through various behavioural factors that are being undertaken by the investors to take viable investment decisions. The investors are asked whether they are aware and literate enough to know about the investment products and prices in market; whether they calculate and manage the risk towards investment, whether they are influenced by peer groups before making a decision, how much of a professional financial help is need and finally the constraints that helps them in taking investment decisions.

The results from Figure 3 of the study indicates a significant and positive relationship between Investment Behaviour and Investment Decision. The model explained 31 per cent of the variance in Financial Literacy (FL), 83 per cent of the variance in Risk Attitude (RA), 67 per cent of variance in Information Search (IS) but a negative and weak relationship of 9 per cent variance in Herding (H).

The Gen Z investors are asked about their ability on creating budget and managing their money, fundamental and technical analysis implemented by them while

Evaluating the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions...

making investment decisions. Results revealed that they do have proper knowledge of how to invest (loadings= 56 per cent) their money and maintain a regular budget (loadings = 59 per cent) on their income and expenditure. They have the knowledge and ability on how to make their monthly budget (loadings = 65 per cent). The generation of today has learned on how to do budgeting starting from their school days. The importance of maintaining a budget is included in most of the school curriculum nowadays. Since most of the respondents belonged to students from business school they displayed sufficient technical and fundamental analysis (loadings = 49 per cent) capable for taking investment decisions.

When the respondents were asked about their attitude towards risk in the stock market, many of them are willing to take huge risk (loadings = 32 per cent) for a huge return. At the same time the investors tend to be worried (loadings = 34 per cent) if they are making risky decisions. They tend to make decisions such as to keep shares with lower value (46 per cent) while sell the shares with a higher value and during those times they feel sorrow (loadings = 32 per cent). They find taking investment decisions separately for each share (loadings = 35 per cent) more suitable than a unanimous decision for all the shares in the portfolio. At these times the investors tend to look more risk averse than they are willing to take risk.

When asked about the influence their peer groups have on their investment decisions, not many have much a tendency to follow others (loadings= 27 per cent). Rather they tend to follow the more experienced investors (loadings = 40 per cent) in the market and it makes them less worried (85 per cent). During the period of bullish (loadings = 41 per cent) and bearish (per cent) following the decisions of other investors is best chosen by the respondents. This could be because it is easier to follow the group and buy the most popular stock.

Gen Z who is most advanced when it comes to gathering information through various medium had also positive attitude towards seeking help from others while making investment decisions (loadings = 48 per cent). Moreover they prefer help from financial advisors (loadings = 50 per cent) than that of family and friends (loadings= 40 per cent). A higher number of Gen z investors make avail the use of internet (loadings = 60 per cent) for information searching and they also study the firm's image and earnings (loadings = 58 per cent) before making a decision.

The findings indicate that financial literacy (loadings = 63 per cent) because since Gen Z is well advanced in the field of literacy they search for mediums to increase their knowledge. The risk attitude of investors (loadings = 91 per cent) could be because the overconfident investors tend to overestimate the data available and engage in a more aggressive trade and regardless of whether their stocks have performed well or not their risk attitude has consistency and Information search (loadings = 82 per cent) of Gen z investors always increases because they are finding mediums to increase the profit. All these factors have a significant and positive impact while herding (loadings = -29 per cent) has a negative impact on Investor behaviour.

This may be because the investors may be looking for alternatives to increase their wealth with a long term view by avoiding the crowd. The investor behaviour positively affects the investment decision (loadings = 90 per cent) taken by the investors. Along with it, factors such as motivation to earn profit quickly (loadings = 28 per cent), image of the firm (loadings = 56 per cent) and price of the shares (loadings = 67 per cent) also has a significant impact of the investment decision of the investor. Thus this

findings indicate that the decision making power of Gen Z investors are influenced by behavioural factors.

5. Conclusions

The research study tried to fill the research gap of linkage between investment behaviour and investment decision of Gen Z investors in India. In the light of above findings, it may be stated that the behavioural biases play a huge role in the decision making of the investors. There is higher degree of financial literacy, risk attitude and information search among the Gen Z investors while a weak negative relationship in the case of herding. The knowledge that the investors could have various assessments to safeguard their self-appreciation character concerning investment might appear to be odd in a financial setting, but would not be bewildering to a few social analysts. Behavioural finance has explored numerous parts of investors conduct, and we make use of this to understand the perception of investors around us. Thus it may be useful for the financial advisors, brokers, government, organisations who can plan their own strategies to incorporate the preferences of Gen Z investors in their investment products. The research may be useful for financial education planning and organisations.

There are also some limitations of the study. Moreover, the limitation of the study can also be taken as a recommendation for future research. The study covered only a limited number of Gen Z population in Maharashtra (India). This can be extended further to rest part of the India. It is also possible the respondents have stated their preferences which differs from that of actual behaviour.

APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRE

India has the largest population in Gen Z than any other country in the world. It has more Gen Z population than the US and China combined and this leads to the aim to conduct a study on the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions amongst Indian Gen Z. The survey utilized a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 denoting strongly disagree to 5 meaning strongly agree. The study was divided into 6 independent variables while 4 of the independent variables consisted of 5 constructs, and the dependent variable had 3 constructs.

Name:

Age:

Gender:

A. Financial Literacy

- a. I have proper knowledge of how to invest my money.
- b. I maintain a regular budget on my income and expenditure.
- c. I have the knowledge and ability on how to make my monthly budget.
- d. I implement technical analysis while making investment decisions.
- e. I implement fundamental analysis while making investment decisions.

B. Risk Attitude

- a. I am willing to take huge risk in return for a greater profit.
- b. I feel anxious and stressed when I invest my money in risky stocks.

Evaluating the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions...

- c. I keep the shares with lower value in my portfolio and sell those with higher value.
- d. I feel sad when I keep the lower value stocks and sell the higher value stocks.
- e. I take investment decisions separately for my each shares/stocks.

C. Herding

- a. I follow the directions of changes in the investor's decision in the stock market and implement the same.
- b. The investment decisions I make is heavily influenced by more sophisticated respondents.
- c. When I imitate the decisions of other sophisticated investors it makes me feel less worried.
- d. When there is bullish trend in the market, I mostly follow other investors while making investment decisions.
- e. When there is bearish trend in the market, I mostly follow other investors while making investment decisions.

D. Information Search

- a. I discuss about my investment decisions with others.
- b. I seek professional financial advisors help before making investment decisions.
- c. I seek suggestions from my family and friends help before making investment decisions.
- d. I search internet and social media networking sites before taking investment decisions.
- e. I would like to search about the firm's expected earnings from magazines and other mediums before investing.

E. Investment Decisions

- a. I invest in the market to earn profits quickly.
- b. Past performance of firm's stock plays an important role in my investment decision.
- c. Price per share influences my investment decision.

References:

- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1977). "Attitude-behavior relations: A theoretical analysis and review of empirical research". *Psychological Bulletin*, 84(5), 888-918. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.84.5.888>.
- Akhtar, F., & Das, N. (2019). "Predictors of investment intention in Indian stock markets". *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 37, 97-119.
- Akhtar, F., Thyagaraj, K., & Das, N. (2018). "The impact of social influence on the relationship between personality traits and perceived investment performance of individual investors: Evidence from Indian stock market". *International Journal of Managerial Finance*, 14(1), 130-148.
- Alfredo, M.O., Salas-Fumas, V. (2010). "I.T. Investment and Intangibles: Evidence from Banks", *SSRN Working Paper Series*.
- Bai Gokarna, V., Suhan, M., Hawaldar, I.T., Spulbar, C., Birau, R., Nayak, S. & Manohar, M. (2021) Exploring the antecedents of institutional effectiveness: a case study of higher education universities in India, *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, DOI: 10.1080/1331677X.2021.1959367.
- Bali, T. G., Demirtas, K. O., Levy, H., & Wolf, A. (2009). "Bonds versus stocks: Investors' age and risk taking". *Journal of Monetary Economics*, 56(6), 817-830.

- Barber, B., & Odean, T. (1999). "The Courage of Misguided Convictions", *Financial Analysis Journal*, 55: 41-55.
- Căzilia, L., Hira, T.K. (2009). "Investor information search", *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 30, (1), 24-41.
- Chaudhary, A. K. (2013). "Impact of behavioral finance in investment decisions and strategies – a fresh approach". *International Journal of Management Research and Business Strategy*.
- Chiang, T.C., Zheng, D. (2010) "An empirical analysis of herd behavior in global stock markets", *Journal of Banking & Finance*, 34(8), 1911-1921.
- Clark-Murphy, M., & Soutar, G. N. (2004). "What individual investors value: Some Australian evidence". *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 25(4), 539–555. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-4870\(03\)00056-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-4870(03)00056-4).
- Cucinelli, D., Gandolfi, G., & Soana, M.-G. 2016. "Customer and advisor financial decisions: the theory of planned behavior perspective". *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 7(12), 80–92.
- Devenow, A., & Welch, I. (1996) "Rational Herding in Financial Economics," *European Economic Review*, 40, 603–15.
- Edwards, J.R., & Bagozzi, R.P., (2000). "On the nature and direction of relationships between constructs and measures". *Psychol. Methods* 5 (2), 155–174.
- Ejaz, A., Birau, R., Spulbar, C., Buda, R., & Tenea, A.C. (2020) "The impact of domestic portfolio diversification strategies in Toronto stock exchange on Canadian textile manufacturing industry", *Industria Textila*, 71, 3, 215–222, <http://doi.org/10.35530/IT.071.03.1696>.
- Fünfgeld, B., & Wang, M. (2009). "Attitudes and behaviour in everyday finance: evidence from Switzerland". *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 27, 108-128.
- Gozialie, Stephanie and Njo Anastasia. (2015). "The Influence of Heuristics and Herding Behavior on Residential Property Investment Decision Making". *FINESTA*. Vol 3. No 2. Pg 28-32
- Grable, J. E., & Lytton, R.H. (2003). "The development of a risk assessment instrument: A follow-up study". *Financial Services Review*, 12, 257-274.
- Grace, J.B., Anderson, T.M., Olf, H., Scheiner, S.M. (2010). "On the specification of structural equation models for ecological systems". *Ecol. Monogr.* 80 (1), 67–87.
- Graham, J.R. (1999) "Herding among Investment Newsletters: Theory and Evidence," *Journal of Finance*, 54, 237–268.
- Gupta, P and Kohli, B (2021). Herding Behavior in the Indian Stock Market: An Empirical Study. *Indian Journal of Finance*.
- Hassan Al-Tamimi, H.A., Anood Bin Kalli, A. (2009). "Financial literacy and investment decisions of UAE investors", *Journal of Risk Finance*, Vol. 10 No. 5, pp. 500-516.
- Hernandez. B. (2020). "Millennials, Gen Z Prefer to Turn on the Risk When It Comes to Investing". *ETF TRENDS* .<https://www.etftrends.com/thematic-investing-channel/millennials-prefer-to-turn-on-the-risk-when-it-comes-to-investing/>.
- Hoe, S. L. (2008). "Issues and Procedures in Adopting Structural Equation Modeling Technique". *Journal of Applied Quantitative Methods*, 3, 76-83.
- Icek, A. (1991) "The theory of planned behaviour", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179-211, ISSN 0749-5978.
- Jagongo, A., & Mutswenje, V.S. (2014). "A Survey of the Factors Influencing Investment Decisions: The Case of Individual Investors at the NSE". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4, 92-102.
- Kaplan, D., 2008. "Structural Equation Modeling: Foundations and Extensions." 10 *Sage Publications*.

Evaluating the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions...

- Kansal, P., & Singh, D. (2013). "Investment Behaviour of Indian Investors: Gender Biasness". *Sustainability & Economics eJournal*.
- Klapper, L., Lusardi, A., & Van Oudheusden, P. (2015). "Financial Literacy around the World". *Washington DC: Standard & Poor's Ratings Services Global Financial Literacy Survey*.
- Kline, R.B., (1998). "Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling". *The Guilford Press, New York*.
- Korniotis, G. M., & Kumar, A. (2011). "Do older investors make better investment decisions?" *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 93(1), 244-265.
- Kumar, A. (2021). "Exploring Herding Behaviour in Indian Equity Market during COVID-19 Pandemic: Impact of Volatility and Government Response". *Millennial Asia*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09763996211020687>.
- Kumar, S., & Goyal, N. (2016). "Evidence on rationality and behavioural biases in investment decision making". *Qualitative Research in Financial Markets*, 8(4), 270-287.
- Liem, W. K. A., & Sukamulja, J. S. (2017). Perilaku Herding pada IndeksSektoral dan Saham-Saham Terpilih. *Mycological Research*, 113(2), 207–221.
- Lin, H.F. and Lee, G.G. (2004), "Perceptions of senior managers toward knowledge-sharing behaviour", *Management Decision*, 42(1), 108-25.
- Lowry, P.B., Gaskin, J., 2014. "Partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modelling (SEM) for building and testing behavioral causal theory: when to choose it and how to use it" *IEEE Trans. Prof. Commun.* 57 (2), 123–146.
- Lusardi, A., Mitchell, O.S. (2014). "The Economic Importance of Financial Literacy: Theory and Evidence." *Journal of Economic Literature*, 52 (1): 5-44.
- Mak, M. K., & Ip, W. (2017). "An exploratory study of investment behaviour of investors". *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1847979017711520>.
- MacCrimmon, K.R., & Wehrung, D.A. (1986). "Assessing risk propensity. In L. Daboni, A. Montesano, & M. Lines (Eds.), Recent developments in the foundations of utility and risk theory" (pp. 291-309). *Dordrecht: Reidel Press*. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-009-4616-3_19.
- Meher, B.K., Hawaldar, I.T., Mohapatra, L., Spulbar, C., & Birau, R. (2020) "The Effects of Environment, Society and Governance Scores on Investment Returns and Stock Market Volatility", *International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy*, 10(4), 1-6, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32479/ijeeep.9311>.
- Narayanan B. (2021). "Financial literacy: Catch them young". *The Hindu Business Line*. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/markets/stock-markets/financial-literacy-catch-them-young/article34792263.ece>.
- Nachtigall, C., Kroehne, U., Funke, F., Steyer, R. (2003). "Pros and cons of structural equation modelling". *Methods Psychol. Res.* Online 8 (2), 1–22.
- N.A. (2021). "66% of Investors Regret Impulsive or Emotional Investing Decisions, While 32% Admit Trading While Drunk". *Cision PR Newswire*. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/66-of-investors-regret-impulsive-or-emotional-investing-decisions-while-32-admit-trading-while-drunk-301351321.html>.
- N.A. (2021). "What investors need to know about Gen Z". *Schroders Wealth Management*. <https://www.schroders.com/de/ch/wealth-management/insights/markte/what-investors-need-to-know-about-gen-z/>.
- Ngoc, L.T. (2013). "Behavior Pattern of Individual Investors in Stock Market". *International Journal of Biometrics*, 9, 1.

- Ouarda, M., Bouri, A., Bernard, O. (2012) "Herding Behaviour Under Markets Condition: Empirical Evidence on the European Financial Markets", *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 3(1), 214-228.
- Pak, O., & Mahmood, M. (2015). "Impact of personality on risk tolerance and investment decisions: A study on potential investors of Kazakhstan". *International Journal of Commerce and Management*, 25(4), 370-384.
- Phan, C. K., & Zhou, J. (2014). "Factors influencing individual investors' behavior: An empirical study of the Vietnamese stock market". *American Journal of Business and Management*, 3(2), 77-94. <https://doi.org/10.11634/216796061706527>.
- Petty, R.E., Cacioppo, J.T., Schumann, D. (1983) "Central and Peripheral Routes to Advertising Effectiveness: The Moderating Role of Involvement", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10(2), 135-146, <https://doi.org/10.1086/208954>.
- Riley, W., Chow, K.V. (1992). "Asset Allocation and Individual Risk Aversion", *Financial Analysts Journal*, 48(6), 32-37.
- Ryan, W. & Zaichkowsky, J.L. (2004). "Attitudes and Trading Behavior of Stock Market Investors: A Segmentation Approach", *Journal of Behavioral Finance*, 5(3), 170-179, DOI: 10.1207/s15427579jpfm0503_5.
- Salam, A.A. (2019). "Factors Affecting Investment Decision Making: Moderating Role of Investors Characteristics," *The Journal of Social Sciences Research, Academic Research Publishing Group*, 5(4), 965-974.
- Schooley, D., D. Worden, (1999). "Investors' Asset Allocations versus LifeCycle Funds", *Financial Analysts Journal*, 55, 37-43.
- Schwarzkopf, L., David (2007), "Investors' attitudes toward source credibility", *Managerial Auditing Journal*, 22(1), 18-33.
- Shabgou, M., Mousavi, A. (2016) "Behavioral Finance: Behavioral Factors Influencing Investors' Decisions Making". *Advanced Social Humanities and Management*, 3, 1-6.
- Shefrin, H., & Statman, M. (1985). "The Disposition to Sell Winners Too Early and Ride Losers Too Long: Theory and Evidence". *The Journal of Finance*, 40, 777-790. doi:10.2307/2327802.
- Sharma A., & Joshi, B. (2015). "Financial literacy of women and its effect on their investment choice decision". *Global Journal for Research Analysis*, 4(7), 190-192.
- Singh (1986) investment Management, *Himalaya Publishing House*, Bombay Nagpur and Delhi.
- Sivaramakrishnan, S., Srivastava, M., & Rastogi, A. (2017). "Attitudinal factors, financial literacy, and stock market participation". *International journal of bank marketing*, 35(5), 818-841.
- Slovic, P. (1972). "Psychological Study of Human Judgment: Implications for Investment Decision Making", *Journal of Finance*, 27(4), 779-799. Websites: <http://newmops.tse.com.tw/http://www.cepd.gov.tw/>.
- Sondari, M. C., & Sudarsono, R. (2015). "Using theory of planned behavior in predicting intention to invest: Case of Indonesia". *International Academic Research Journal of Business and Technology*, 1(2), 137-141.
- Spulbar, C., Ehsanifar, M., Birau, R., Babaie, A., & Doagă, D. I. (2021). "Advanced empirical research based on structural equation modeling (SEM) regarding the impact of tax revenue on GDP dynamics at EU-28 level", *Scientific Annals of Economics and Business*, 68(3), 285-307, <https://doi.org/10.47743/saeb-2021-0017>.
- Spulbar, C., Trivedi, J., Birau, R., Tenea, C.A., & Ejaz, A. (2019). "Estimating volatility spillovers, dynamic causal linkages and international contagion patterns between

Evaluating the linkage between Behavioural Finance and Investment Decisions...

- developed stock markets: An empirical case study for USA, Canada, France and UK”, *Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu Jiu, Economy Series*, „Academica Brâncuși” Publisher, 3/2019, 44-62.
- Tahir, I., & Brimble, M. (2011). “Islamic investment behaviour”. *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management*, 4(2), 116-130.
- Tauni, M. Z., Fang, H., Mirza, S. S., Memon, Z. A., & Jebran, K. (2017). “Do investor’s Big Five personality traits influence the association between information acquisition and stock trading behavior?” *China Finance Review International*, 87, 248-255.
- Trang, P., Minh, T., & Nguyen, H.T. (2017). “Perceived Risk, Investment Performance and Intentions in Emerging Stock Markets”. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 7: 269–78.
- Waweru, N. M., Munyoki, E., & Uliana, E. (2008). “The effects of behavioural factors in investment decision making: A survey of institutional investors operating at the Nairobi Stock Exchange”. *International Journal of Business and Emerging Markets*, 1(1), 24–41. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJBEM.2008.019243>.
- Wright, S. (1921). “Correlation and causation”. *J. Agric. Res.* 20, 557–585.
- Wright, S. (1934). “The method of path coefficients”. *Ann. Math. Stat.* 5, 161–215.
- Wynes, S., Zhao, J. & Donner, S.D. (2020). “How well do people understand the climate impact of individual actions?”. *Climatic Change* 162, 1521–1534, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-020-02811-5>.
- Xiao J.J. (2008). “Applying Behavior Theories to Financial Behavior. In: Xiao J.J. (eds)”*Handbook of Consumer Finance Research*. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-75734-6_5.

Article Info

Received: October 18 2021

Accepted: October 22 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Scientific and traditional methods used in the process of conservation-restoration of works of art after the post-communist period in Romania

Alexandrina Bădescu¹⁾

Abstract:

The transition from communism to democracy produced major changes both in the situation of monuments in Romania and in the methodological process of conservation-restoration of cultural heritage assets. It was thus observed that, in addition to the traditional methods of conservation-restoration, modern investigative materials and techniques were introduced in this methodological process, as well as scientific methods for researching works of art. The purpose of these methods was to preserve the authenticity of cultural assets and to transmit heritage values in full integrity to future generations.

Keywords: *conservation; restoration; works of art; scientific methods; communism.*

¹⁾ Senior Lecturer, Ph. D., Faculty of Theology, Visual Arts Department, University of Craiova, Romania, Phone: 0763778967, Email: alexandrina.badescu@edu.ucv.ro.

Scientific and traditional methods used in the process of conservation-restoration...

The national cultural heritage must be seen as a set of testimonies based on which can be known and supported the socio-economic history, political history, technical-scientific development and cultural-artistic activity in Romania, from ancient times up to the present.

The goods having historical, documentary and artistic value, created and restored, represent the material and reference source, regarding the interpretation of events and the understanding of various aspects of existence and evolution of the Romanian people, in the various planes of human activity.

In Romania, communism had a special role in shaping religious life, and in order to regain religious freedom, a fierce struggle against oppression and official atheism inflicted by the state was imposed. The persecutions were directed against the church and religion because they encouraged beliefs, but also limited the role and authority of the state, thus affecting the liturgical cult, cult monuments and all cultural goods of religious art. (Gheorghîță, 2015: 9). During the communist period, many religious heritage monuments were destroyed, and restoration sites and specialized institutions were suppressed by the authorities.

Many of Romania's valuable masonry and wood churches disappeared in the last half of the 20th century. Some perished due to people's negligence, being burned by flames, others were demolished to make way for urban constructions or new churches, way more spacious. In some cases, some wooden churches, although preserved near the new buildings, have deteriorated irreparably due to lack of interest in conservation-restoration and lack of funds for structural repairs of monuments (Mardale, 2014: 96).

Also, the rapid development in the twentieth century of the paint industry and that of building materials, made available to painters and restorers, ranges of complex products often used anarchically, without respecting the principles of scientific intervention. In the effort to recover the 19th century heritage, the research and knowledge of these materials is a major component without which any approach to the work of art can only be empirical. The ensembles of artistic components have undergone over time interventions from the most diverse, many monuments or paintings being often retouched or repainted in full.

In contemporary society, the protection of the national cultural heritage has involved numerous scientific researches, studies, as well as various actions of conservation-restoration and capitalization of cultural assets with historical and artistic value.

Saving heritage objects affected by the passing of time and various degradations, increasing their resistance, bringing them to a condition, shape, color and appearance as close as possible to the original one can be done through restoration actions on a scientific basis.

The restoration operation is an activity dominated by artistic and technical problems, and it must be carried out in a unitary framework, in the light of scientific principles and technologies, generally accepted and rigorously controlled to prevent interference and undesirable accidents.

By the conservation-restoration intervention we understand the restoration in its efficiency of a product of human activity. If the product is considered a work of art, the functionality of the object is only a secondary aspect. Restoration is the methodological moment of recognizing the work of art, in its physical consistency and in its double aesthetic and historical polarity, in order to transmit it in the future (Brandi, 1996: 18).

The term conservation refers to a complex of actions designed to care for and treat valuable cultural artefacts, both movable and immovable. Conservation must be transformed into a series of concrete actions and multiple achievements, and the restoration represents the continuation of the conservation process, the purpose of the restoration being to restore the potential unity of the object. (Ionescu, 2010: 8)

The degradation of the work of art is an effect of some processes with uncontrolled evolution, which have various causes. There is an interdependence between these causes, one creating favourable conditions for the action of the other, but in some cases, the effect may appear later after the action of the cause and sometimes may last a long time after its elimination (Bădescu, 2018: 444). For this reason, it is necessary to carry out a technological analysis and at the same time a history of the chain of causes and effects over time that have generated the current degradations. The analysis of the changes suffered, in time, by the art work is necessary in order to be able to decide the treatment and then to act effectively on the causes, and by reducing them, the long-term protection of the monument or object is also ensured.

In order to be able to make a correct diagnosis of any type of object involved in the conservation-restoration process, such as monuments and cultural heritage assets, several types of analyses and laboratory tests are needed, all these being decisive in knowing the basic material of the support as well as the main issues of the work of art.

For this reason, the first, but also the most important action performed in order to treat the work of art, is the scientific documentation, containing analyses, tests, written, photographic and drawn documentation. In general, all types of documentation are needed to highlight the technological aspects, the state of conservation of the objects under study, as well as evidence of the evolution of the interventions performed (Ionescu, 2010: 8).

Each intervention must be the optimal and achievable according to the principles of conservation - restoration and it must be based, first of all, on the most extensive and substantiated scientific argumentation considered, as the first activity.

Restoration must aim at restoring the potential unity of the work of art, as far as possible, without committing an artistic forgery or a false history and without removing the traces of the work of art passing through time (Brandi, 1996: 39). Thus, the respect of the physical integrity of the object, of all the elements that confer the particularity of the work, such as the documentary, artistic, scientific, cultural and historical value, must be taken into account.

Another principle that must be taken into account in the conservation-restoration process is that of the reversibility of materials. Any material used in the restoration process must be able to be removed at the time of its aging without producing negative effects on the work, and the materials used, with relative mechanical and chemical resistance, can be easily removed by non-destructive means for the work of art.

By knowing closely the structure of materials and the techniques of execution of heritage objects, compatible materials will be used in the restoration process, which form a common body with the original materials. Therefore, the materials introduced in the original works must be sufficiently well known, tested in the laboratory, researched, and the research results, correctly interpreted. In the restoration process, the intervention materials must be easily traceable, so that what was introduced in the work can be clearly distinguished from what existed when the work entered the restoration laboratory.

Scientific and traditional methods used in the process of conservation-restoration...

Each work of art is unique and has particularities that must be identified in order for the intervention on it to be beneficial and not harmful. The indissoluble link between restoration and the work of art must be recognized by the fact that the work of art conditions the restoration and not the other way around (Brandi, 1996: 36). Lack of knowledge in this area will lead to erroneous treatments that may jeopardize the integrity of the work. The use of insufficient solutions or treatment methods based on scientific analysis can often lead to new degradations in addition to the already existing ones.

Of particular importance in the final aesthetic presentation of the restored objects is the cleaning operation. This operation raises many problems, due to the diversity of deposits and accumulations on the surface of cultural assets. Cleaning is an irreversible operation in a restoration, which is guided by the principle of reversibility, and the purposes of cleaning are to remove: layers of adherent deposits, aged varnishes and total or partial repainting.

After the communist period, in Romania there were major changes in the methodological process of conservation-restoration of cultural heritage assets, as there were introduced modern materials and techniques of investigation, as well as new scientific methods for researching works of art.

Scientific research in the field of restoration and conservation of heritage assets, whether they are monuments, objects from museums or private collections, requires interdisciplinary collaboration. These investigations have as objectives the knowledge and determination of the technique and manner of work, in the realization of the cultural good, the discovery of the interventions subsequent to the creation, the detection of the false reality, the characterization of the behaviour of the constitutive materials of the cultural goods, depending on the problems it raises (Marincaș, 2003: 7).

Scientific research is a set of methods and procedures of a physical, chemical or biological nature applied to a cultural asset in order to obtain information on: physical-chemical and biological parameters (characterization of conservation status), structure of the cultural asset, history of its realization (painting, repainting, subsequent conservation-restoration interventions with materials identical to the original or different ones) as well as its antiquity (Marincaș, 2003: 9).

Cultural assets are irreplaceable, they are important from an artistic, historical, economic point of view and also have a social function. Therefore, before carrying out the conservation-restoration operations of such an object, specialized scientific investigations must be carried out. Thus, with the development of society and openness to the West, many diagnostic techniques began to be used in Romania in the field of conservation and restoration of monuments and cultural assets. From the category of non-destructive diagnostic techniques, visual and image analysis techniques, X-ray radiography and X-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF) were used.

Destructive scientific investigations represent the set of techniques and methods in which it is necessary to take and destroy a fragment of the cultural good or which modifies this fragment irreversibly. The main techniques are classified in physical, physical-chemical and chemical analyses, and the most used one was the FTIR technique - Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (Marincaș, 2003: 61).

Currently, in the field of restoration and conservation of heritage assets, in addition to conventional restoration methods, many non-contact, non-invasive or micro-invasive research methods are used, without the need for sampling, with real-time response to investigation and diagnose. Thus, in addition to the non-destructive scientific investigation methods used in restoration, 3D scanning for sculptures and monuments,

UV and IR reflectography, optical microscopy, electron microscopy (SEM-EDAX), radiography, X-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF), Fourier transform IR spectroscopy (FTIR), gas chromatography, thin layer chromatography (TLC) and X-ray diffraction (XRD) have also started to be used.

In addition to the methods of scientific investigation, the traditional method of removing old deposits from the surfaces of cultural assets, began to use alternative methods such as gels, enzymes and more recently the method of laser cleaning. Although laser cleaning applications have been used on stone objects for over 30 years on the surface of polychrome artwork, the use of laser is relatively recent, being a non-contact method and having some advantages over other alternative methods of cleaning. (Bădescu, 2014: 124).

The most used restoration methods in the communist period, the post-communist period, as well as today, are the traditional methods, methods that do not involve many scientific tests and analyses, because they are based on cleaning deposits / repainting with different pure solvents or mixtures with different concentrations and mechanical cleaning with a scalpel. The operation of cleaning works of art involves removing adherent deposits from the surface of works of art without altering the painted layer, this operation being irreversible (Cremonesi, 1999: 7).

The restorer uses solvents to solubilize the resins and repaintings, to dilute and remove the varnishes and with them the layer of dirt deposited over time on the surface of cultural goods. Conservation-restoration interventions on works of art require the use of solvents (for the removal of adherent deposits, repainting and improper interventions, for the regeneration of varnishes, etc.), a chemical compound in a volatile liquid state (with a high fluidity) that has the ability to dissolve reversibly other substances, without causing chemical changes to the constituent materials of the objects (Leahu, 2006: 3). Solvents have affinities for some substances and thus act as diluents. It is the principle of chemical affinity - when the interaction forces of the solvent molecules are the same or similar to those of the solid, the solubilization will be better.

Some types of deposits existing on the surface of cultural goods cannot be completely solubilized, but only swollen, after which they are mechanically removed with a scalpel, in the form of a pellicle. The solubilizing agent infiltrates between the molecules of the deposition layer, solidly bound together, and separates them, and the saturated fatty acids, which were a type of plasticizer in the oil layer, are completely removed with deposits.

Other traditional methods used in the restoration process are pastes and pickling gels, which are composed of one or more solvents whose viscosity is increased by a gelling agent. These pastes and gels do not solubilize old varnishes or repaintings, but they only swell the surface on which they are applied, and the removal will be done by mechanical means, by rubbing or using a scalpel. Gelling agents are dangerous precisely because they prevent the rapid evaporation of solvents, and at the end of the operation the mechanical removal is aggressive. For this last reason, emulsions with wax, paraffin and cellulose ethers (CMC) are used that are easier to handle (with a brush) and easy to remove. Gels and pastes can be replaced with different types of compresses in the methodological process of conservation-restoration.

Due to the high degree of toxicity and sometimes the too strong and difficult to control effect of solvents, in the post-communist period some substitutes were sought, new and alternative methods of cleaning deposits. Thus, laser cleaning and enzyme cleaning began to be used much more often. Instead, these types of non-invasive

Scientific and traditional methods used in the process of conservation-restoration...

cleanings have involved tests and analyzes of the most varied and complex ones, because without the information they bring, both laser and enzymes, cannot be used in the operation of cleaning deposits / repaintings in a safe and efficient way for the restored object.

Romania was the fourth country in the world where lasers were made, following research undertaken by Ion I. Agârbiceanu, physicist, researcher and inventor in the technique of laser and polarized light. Under his leadership, on the line of research initiated in the field of quantum light amplification, was made, in 1962, the first gas laser (helium-neon) with infrared radiation.

The foundations of laser cleaning were laid by John Asmus and his colleagues (1972), who recorded holograms of Venetian statues using a ruby laser, observed that when the laser beam touched the stone the impurities were removed without affecting the substrate. Asmus has continued his research into laser artwork cleaning, laying the groundwork for the development of a range of cleaning techniques, in particular the use of ruby and Nd: YAG pulsed lasers. He concludes that laser removal is based on two physical principles: washing and ablation. During cleaning, a selective vaporization of the deposits takes place and the absorption coefficient must be followed, both of the deposits and of the substrate, in order to achieve a safe cleaning for the works of art (Warkins, 1997: 8).

Although research in this area stagnated until the 1990s, laser cleaning developed rapidly, becoming a reliable technique that gave the conservator and restorer a high level of precision and control. The use of lasers in conservation and restoration increases with the dissemination and awareness of the benefits of photonic techniques (Rava, 2007: 101).

Laser techniques have proven to be promising diagnostic and restorative applications for artifact preservation. In the last decade, Romania's growing interest has made it possible to test and validate this unique approach for various purposes: laser cleaning of stone, metal, painting, paper; structural laser diagnoses on frescoes, art objects, as well as environmental monitoring (Bonsanti, 2007: 122).

Laser beam cleaning has been used to remove adherent layers such as: sulfurous black layers deposited on marble, lime and terracotta, silver deposits in textile fabrics, calcareous deposits on vessels, corrosion on bronze and aluminum objects, deposits from stained glass, graffiti, polluting deposits from old buildings, decorative objects from ivory or bone, from paper, leather and parchment (Zendri, 2007: 128).

In Romania, INOE promoted the laser cleaning technique and performed the first stone cleaning of a historic building (Biserica Doamnei - Lady's Church in Bucharest, 1675) with the approval and supervision of the Directorate of Historical Monuments and Museums of the Romanian Ministry of Culture and Cults. Climate parameter monitoring systems, designed within this department, were established at Bran Castle and the National Museum of History in Bucharest (INOE, 2002).

Currently, in our country, research from INOE involves the application of advanced techniques in restoration. The activity developed in the field refers to: laser systems and methods for cleaning the surfaces of art objects; investigation and diagnosis, by optoelectronic means, in order to restore the artifacts (LIBS, LIF techniques, thermography, high resolution multispectral analysis); monitoring microclimate conditions and air quality in museum premises, archives, galleries and storage spaces for works of art (Salimbeni, 2004: 53)

Research in recent years has increased interest in unconventional cleaning methods used on sculpture and sculptural elements of various historic buildings, on metal, paper and paint layers. Thus, the YAG: Nd laser is one of the most used lasers in the conservation and restoration of works of art.

Another non-invasive method applied in the restoration of cultural property for the removal of superficial and dirty deposits, since the communist period, and which is still used today, is the method of cleaning with enzymes.

Since 1970, enzymes that could be isolated in a stable form and easily purified have also been applied in restoration, consolidation operations and cleaning works of art. The positive experiments that have taken place in these years, demonstrate that these methodologies have positive results and can be used in the practice of restoring polychrome works of art. The first applications with enzymes in restoration were made in the restoration of books, and later on polychrome works, on canvas and wood. This method has been and is still used in cultural assets within the movable heritage (Knut, 1998: 96).

In Europe, Italian restoration laboratories have for many years used enzymes in the operation of cleaning adherent deposits of various kinds on the surfaces of works of art, but this was preceded by a slow transfer of knowledge, acquired mainly from the United States, where as early as the 1970s these systems were experimented with and introduced into common use. Numerous toxicity studies have been performed over time on amylases, lipases and proteases, being classified as non-toxic.

The enzymes were used in the field of paper restoration, where the main objective was to decompose old adhesives to peel off the paper mounted on the supports. Recently, enzymes have been isolated to be used in the bleaching process, in the production phase, enzymes that are very selective, attacking only lignin in a fairly short time. Regarding the wood and canvas painting restoration sector, the development of the enzymatic cleaning process has been slow and tiring, as the enzymes are difficult to use due to the difficulty of controlling the pH, temperature and repeated removal interventions. Despite these disadvantages, the use of enzymes to remove polymeric substances present in the paint layer is a real alternative to the use of organic solvents (Cremonesi, 1999: 40).

From the category of enzymes, in the operations of restoration of cultural goods that have a pictorial layer, artificial saliva is also used. It contains organic compounds, albumin, globulins, mucins, acids, phenols, as well as inorganic compounds such as sodium, potassium, magnesium, calcium salts (chlorides, phosphates), whose heavy cleaning action can remove superficial deposits from the surface of the objects of art.

In an age of speed, it is hard to imagine that the cleaning time of a work of art would be doubled, tripled or even more in the case of enzymes and artificial saliva, compared to the almost immediate action of solvents and lasers. However, the use of enzymes in the restoration of a work of art also needs to be considered. Properly applied, the enzymes can successfully remove some deposits, and the time of exposure to the action of solvents in the human body would be reduced.

The optimal method of removing deposits from the surface of a monument or a work of art will be proposed on a case-by-case basis, following tests, analyses and scientific investigations, taking into account the principles of restoration and the need not to bring damages to patrimonial goods.

Cultural assets are important and irreplaceable from the perspective of art and history. They also fulfil a social function and therefore when it comes to preserving or

Scientific and traditional methods used in the process of conservation-restoration...

restoring such an asset, it is important to take all precautions and act critically and carefully so as not to destroy or further damage the asset. Taking into account all this, scientific and innovative methods must be correlated and used together with traditional methods of conservation-restoration, in order to ensure the permanence of the values of the national cultural heritage.

Bibliography:

- Bădescu, A. (2018). *Colecția de icoane pictate pe lemn datând din secolele XVII-XX a Mănăstirii Jitianu (Județul Dolj)*, Craiova: Editura Mitropolia Olteniei.
- Bădescu, A. (2014). *Metode alternative de solubilizare și îndepărtare a straturilor de depuneri vechi de pe suprafața ușilor de intrare ale Bisericii Stavropoleos*. Revista Restitutio. Realități și soluții ale specialiștilor în domeniul conservării și restaurării patrimoniului din România anului 2014, 8, 124-131.
- Brandi, C. (1996). *Teoria restaurării*, București: Editura Meridiane.
- Bonsanti, G. (2007). *Considerazioni sul laser*. APLAR. Applicazioni laser nel restauro, Vicenza, Ed. Il Prato, 121-123.
- Cremonesi, P. (1999). *L'uso degli enzimi nella pulitura di opere policrome*, Padova: Ed. Il Prato.
- Gheorghiuță, V. (2015). *Religie și religiozitate în România*, Craiova: Editura Sitech.
- Ionescu, A.G. (2010). *Conservarea și restaurarea icoanelor din Colecțiile Muzeului "Astra"*, Sibiu: Editura "Astra Museum".
- Knut, N. (1998). *The restoration of paintings*, Köln: Ed. Könemann, Germania.
- Leahu, M. (2006). *Substanțele chimice și materialele utilizate în restaurarea bunurilor culturale*, București: Editura CPPC.
- Mardale, A. G. (2014). *Catapeteasma. Biserici de lemn din județul Hunedoara*, Timișoara/Oradea: Editura Artpress/Editura Muzeului Țării Crișurilor.
- Marincaș, O. (2003). *Investigații științifice aplicate bunurilor de patrimoniu*, Iași: Editura Performantica.
- Rava A., Ferriani B. (2007). *La pulitura laser delle opere di Arte Contemporanea*. APLAR. Applicazioni laser nel restauro, Vicenza, Ed. Il Prato, 99-108.
- Salimbeni, R., Zafirooulos, V., Radvan, R., Verges-Belmin, V., Kautek, W., Andreoni, A., Sliwinski, G., Castillejo, M., Ahmad, S.R. (2004). *The European Community Research Concerning Laser Techniques in Conservation: results and perspectives*. Coalition – CSIC Thematic Network on Cultural Heritage, Newsletter no.9, 49-58.
- Warkins, K.G. (1997). *A review of materials interaction during laser cleaning in art restoration*. LACONA I, Vienna, 7-15.
- Zendri, E. (2007). *Alcune note sull'intervento di pulitura e sull'impiego del Laser nella conservazione dei Beni Culturali*. APLAR. Applicazioni laser nel restauro, Vicenza: Ed. Il Prato.
- INOE 2000 – Institutul Național de Cercetare-Dezvoltare pentru Optoelectronică - <http://inoe.inoe.ro/ianus/INOE.htm> - Bujoreni, August 2002.

Article Info

Received: November 20 2021

Accepted: November 29 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Gender equality in the European Union. From strategic engagement to achievements

Alexandra Porumbescu¹⁾, Livia Dana Pogan²⁾

Abstract:

Gender equality has always been regarded as one of the main objectives of the European Union, enshrined as a fundamental principle in the Treaties (Articles 2 and 3 (3) TEU, Article 8 TFEU). Equal pay for men and women is included in art. 157 TFEU and transposed into a laborious European legislation. The first part of this paper will focus on presenting how, over time, legislation and changes to the Treaties have contributed to strengthening this principle and its implementation throughout the European Union. The second part of the article consists of an analysis of the achievements of the Member States in the matter of gender equality, based on statistical data regarding the pay gap between women and men, education, employment, or equality in decision-making positions. The conclusions of our research reveal the fact that, although the factors responsible for inequality between women and men are multiple, being conditioned by economic, social, cultural and historical factors, including the policies of the Member States, the progress of the European Union is remarkable, representing a positive model in this matter.

Keywords: *Gender equality; European Union; policy; wage difference.*

¹⁾ Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Romania, Phone: 004 0740364309, Email: alexandraporumbescu@yahoo.com.

²⁾ Assistant Professor, PhD, “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Department of Social Work, Journalism, Public Relations and Sociology, Chair of Sociology and Social Work, Romania, Email: livia.pogan@ulbsibiu.ro.

Gender equality in the European Union. From strategic engagement to achievements

1. The context

“The gender issue” is a core subject at European and national level and several strategies are targeting gender equality. A rather recent theme for the public arena, gender equality didn't capture attention until the last years, as the distinction between what men and women do or can do was clearly established and consolidated due to biological differences. For centuries, women were assigned domestic roles, child upbringing, housekeeping and provided care for the old or in need family members. Man, the breadwinner, generally had his own responsibilities, outside the house. From a sociological perspective this segregation was seen as two separated spheres (Goode, 1960) that sustained family functioning as the two different sets of roles were performed by husbands and wives.

This functionalist model diminishes its applicability nowadays, in western cultures, as the boundaries from the above-described spheres become blurrier, due to technological, economic and social changes. Women are part of the workforce, different institutions are now responsible for some of the roles that were previously assigned to family members, different equipment ease the work both at home and in factories, and public opinions regarding the roles of men and women also changed.

Following this social trend, the issue of gender equality became a mainstream topic in modern societies, thus it became mandatory for the legal frame to be adjusted to these requirements. In the context of European integration, the need to ensure equal treatment for men and women was reflected in common normative provisions, as well as, according to the subsidiarity principle, in national legislation. “As explained through the lenses of the European integration theory, subsidiarity is regarded as a tool, meant to highlight the fact that the European Communities and the European Union should only act, apart from their exclusive competencies, only when the common solutions that are to be adopted at the common, supranational level, are more effective than if they were to be undertaken by each Member State or region.” (Porumbescu, 2019: 182).

In the following sections, we will present the relevant European legislation and strategic engagements regarding gender equality in the European Union, followed by data analysis on several key indicators in the field.

2. European Legal Provisions

Within the European Union, the idea of gender equality is a common value, contributing to the creation of a space of social equity and respect for the fundamental rights and freedom of people. Thus, this principle is enlisted in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 3 “It shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child” (TFUE) and Article 8 “In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women” (TFEU). Furthermore, the Agreement on Social Policy attached to the Treaty of Maastricht (TEU) states that “the Community shall support and complement the activities of the Member States in the following fields: (...) equality between men and women with regard to labor market opportunities and treatment at work” (TUE, 1992: 197).

Among the first attempts to address gender discrimination was the adoption of *Directive 79/7/CEE of the Council of December 19th 1978, on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security*. The Directive was meant to be applied to the people involved in the

work field, who are in the position of having to interrupt their activity due to “illness, accident or involuntary unemployment and persons seeking employment — and to retired or invalidated workers and self-employed persons”.

But the idea of equal rights between men and women is not specific only to the democratic regimes and the traditional EU Member States, but, as some authors explain, “the value of gender equality may be the only value that was shared by political actors on both sides of the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. This value, that equal pay should be given to men and women for equal work, was one of the founding principles of the ‘statist feminist’ communist states in Eastern Europe guaranteed by the Stalinist constitutions.” (Peto and Manners, 2006: 163-164). In this context, having it enlisted among the fundamental values of European integration appears as a natural consequence, and provides an explanation for the tendency to set a rather high standard in the matter when it comes to common legislation. Furthermore, “women’s labour market participation in the west and the collapse of communism in the east have undermined the systems and assumptions of western male breadwinner and dual worker models of central and eastern Europe” (Pascall and Lewis, 2004: 373) thus opening the path for the emergence of new gender related debate.

Later on, the year of the Treaty of Maastricht also brought along the *Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992*, meant to introduce measures aimed at encouraging the adoption of several improvements regarding the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding, thus creating a secure work environment for recent mothers, and, consequently, enabling them to return to their jobs while also attending the needs of their babies. In 2004, the Council adopted *Directive 2004/113/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services*. The aim of this document is to ensure equality of treatment between men and women, as a fundamental principle of the European Union and refers to Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which prohibit any discrimination on grounds of sex and require equality between men and women to be ensured in all areas. In addition to defining several types of discrimination, this legal document also creates efficient tools meant to help the Member States and the European union to reach the purpose of laying down a “framework for combating discrimination based on sex in access to and supply of goods and services, with a view to putting into effect in the Member States the principle of equal treatment between men and women”.

In 2006, *Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation* repealed other previous provisions in the matter of sexual discrimination. This directive defines direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment. The directive also encourages employers to take preventive measures to combat sexual harassment, strengthens sanctions for discrimination and ensures the establishment in the Member States of bodies responsible for promoting equal treatment between men and women. The European Parliament sought a revision of this directive as regards the provisions on equal pay and adopted an implementation report based on several studies commissioned by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). In order to accomplish its purpose, the Directive refers to the implementation of the principle of equal treatment regarding access to employment, including promotion, and to vocational training; working conditions, including pay, and occupational social security schemes.

Gender equality in the European Union. From strategic engagement to achievements

Furthermore, it designs procedures meant to ensure that such implementation is made more effective.

Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council regards the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity, and repeals Council Directive 86/613/EEC. This Directive creates the legal context for better application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity, or contributing to the pursuit of such an activity, and is meant to protect “self-employed workers, namely all persons pursuing a gainful activity for their own account, under the conditions laid down by national law”. It also refers to “the spouses of self-employed workers or, when and in so far as recognised by national law, the life partners of self-employed workers, not being employees or business partners, where they habitually, under the conditions laid down by national law, participate in the activities of the self-employed worker and perform the same tasks or ancillary tasks”.

In 2011, the European Parliament and the Council issued *Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA*. This Directive establishes rules for the harmonization of sanctions for human beingstrafficking in the Member States, as well as victim support measures, and requires Member States to consider the use of the services provided by a victim (of trafficking) a criminal act and punish it accordingly. The Directive also creates the Office of European Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, and, in order to evaluate the results of its activity, “the Union should continue to develop its work on methodologies and data collection methods to produce comparable statistics”.

Apart from the normative provisions concerning the issue of gender discrimination approached in these Directives, the common European institutions also issued a series of strategic engagements and political documents meant to state a clear commitment to reaching the goal of creating a space where all citizens benefit from real equality of rights and treatment. Such are the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020) and the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality (2016-2019), which also design procedures and instruments aimed at achieving the common objectives on EU and Member State level. Furthermore, each year the European Commission issues a "Report on Equality between women and men", analyzing the progress made in the field of gender equality across the European Union. For the 2020-2025 period, the Gender Equality Strategy was designed, and its main provisions are to be presented in the following section.

3. A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025

The European Union is often regarded as a standard in matters related to the promotion of gender equality, as it has designed a very effective institutional and normative system and applied it across the 27 Member States. Thus, “at the turn of the twenty-first century, EU gender equality policy was considered by all observers as being “exceptional” or “singular” when compared to other European policies involving social regulation” (Jacquot, 2020).

Despite critics claiming that after a period of significant achievements regarding equality between women and men, the European gender policy is currently facing the risk of becoming less relevant, in March, 2020, the European Commission issued a Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and

Social Committee and the Committee of The Regions regarding a Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

The strategy is based upon the principle that “in all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women” (European Commission, 2020: 2). The key objectives of the Strategy are to eradicate gender-based violence and combat gender stereotypes, reduce gender disparities in the labor market and the gender pay and pension gap, and achieve gender balance in decision-making and political representation. The novelty is that the Strategy will be implemented using intersectional character - the combination of gender elements with other personal characteristics or identities and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination - as a cross-cutting principle.

Following the adoption of the proposal, the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, in a draft report on the EU's Gender Equality Strategy, emphasized that gender inequality and structural discrimination have been exacerbated by the current pandemic. Furthermore, EU economic, social and employment objectives can only be met if full gender equality is achieved, and, therefore, gender equality must be considered a universal goal of strategic importance. To sum up, as the Commission's strategy has been designed with the possibility of continuous change, the European Parliament will constantly monitor it and propose further actions and measures (European Parliament, 2021).

The Strategy addresses the key domains in which gender equality is meant to be achieved, and designs effective measures to reach this goal. It also calls on the Member States to “support civil society and public services in preventing and combating gender-based violence and gender stereotyping, including with the help of EU funding available under the “citizens, equality, rights and values” programme” (European Commission, 2020: 7).

In order to put in practice the initiatives introduced by this Strategy, the European Commission calls on all EU institutions, Member States and EU agencies, in partnership with civil society and women’s organizations, social partners and the private sector, to work together and incorporate the provisions regarding equal treatment for women and men in all their policies and actions.

4. Data Analysis

Slightly outnumbering men, women represent 51% of the European population, 229 million inhabitants of the Union being female. While Latvia has the greatest share of women among the member states, with 54%, Malta is situated at the opposite pole, here men being more numerous, as female citizens represent 48% of the total population of the country (Eurostat, 2018).

Beyond these basic demographic data, the two genders are compared regarding different criteria, such as education, employment, management status or pay, and Eurostat provides valuable data. Information concerns each member state, following the above-mentioned aspects and a general view of the European union is also presented, through a series of gender statistics updated yearly or at every two years. Such data foster both comparisons between countries and longitudinal analysis.

Frequently, when studying such gender issues, “gap” emerges as a core descriptor (Pogan, 2019). A sustainable development, as targeted by United Nations and transposed at the European Union level, mentions, among the Sustainable Development Goals, “gender equality” (Eurostat 2021, p.1). According to the document issued by the

Gender equality in the European Union. From strategic engagement to achievements

EU, gender equality is operationalized as “ending all forms of discrimination, violence and any harmful practices against women and girls in the public and private spheres. It also calls for the full participation of women and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of political and economic decision-making” (Eurostat 2021, p.1).

In the following lines we will bring to front each of the above-mentioned domains – education, housework and childcare, employment, pay/earnings – and try to analyse the differences concerning men and women, at an aggregate, European level and also at country level, as different patterns among the Member states persist.

Education is a core domain, capturing analysts’ attention, as is both a valuable indicator for a country’s sustainable development and also a variable impacting future growth at personal and societal level. When speaking about women’s education, associations with greater inclusion in the work force rates are obvious, better work opportunities, reduced risks of exclusion or poverty.

Life courses of men and women are defined by different educational trajectories, patterns changing according to the education level. When analyzing primary and lower secondary education, data show that approximately 22% of both men and women aged 25 to 64 attained this level of education, on average, at European level (Eurostat 2019). In Romania the share of women outnumbers the one of men (23,9% versus 20,3%) (Ibidem). Figure 1 offers more details for each member state regarding primary and lower secondary education.

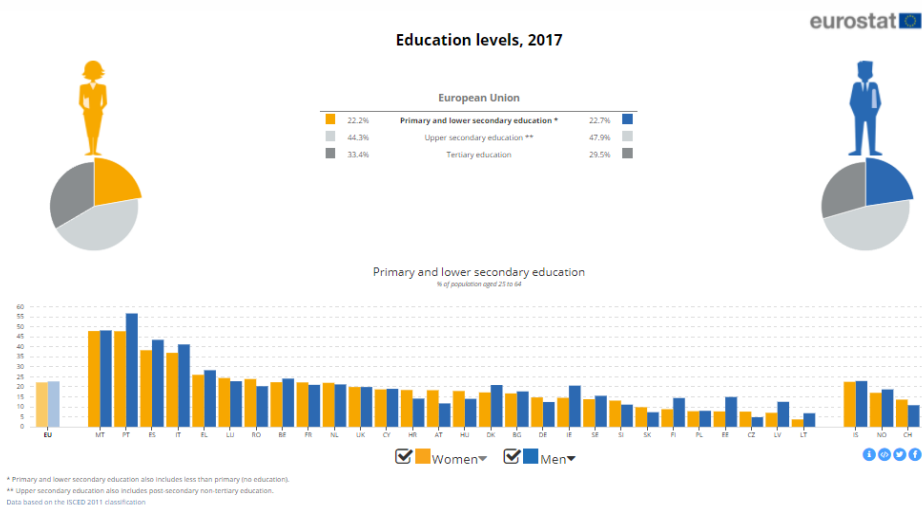


Figure 1. Education levels - Primary and lower secondary education for EU countries (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/womenmen_2018/bloc-2a.html?lang=en)

In terms of upper secondary education, for the same age category, the balance is greatly in favour of men, for almost all European countries, with a difference of 3.6 percent on average (47,9% of men and 44,3% of women) (Eurostat 2019). Germany and Switzerland are defined by a greater share of women with upper secondary education. Here 59,6% respectively 48,5% of women and 56% respectively 42% of men attained at most this level of education. For other countries, as Portugal, Spain, Italy or Malta differences are inexistent or insignificant.

When shifting our attention to tertiary education, the picture changes for the entire European Union, excepting for Germany and Austria. The share of women that

attained tertiary education exceeds the one of men at European level (33,4% versus 29,5%). Finland, Ireland and Estonia lead the ranking, with differences of about 20 percent, while Romania is situated far below the EU average. Here, only 18,7% of women and 16,4% of men aged 25 to 64 have attained tertiary education. The gender gap is among the smallest regarding tertiary education in Romania, compared to the other European countries. The next figure (number 3) suggestively presents data distribution and analysing it in relation with Figure 1 reveals different patterns regarding the proportion of men and women attaining primary or tertiary education and different hierarchies when studying the countries.

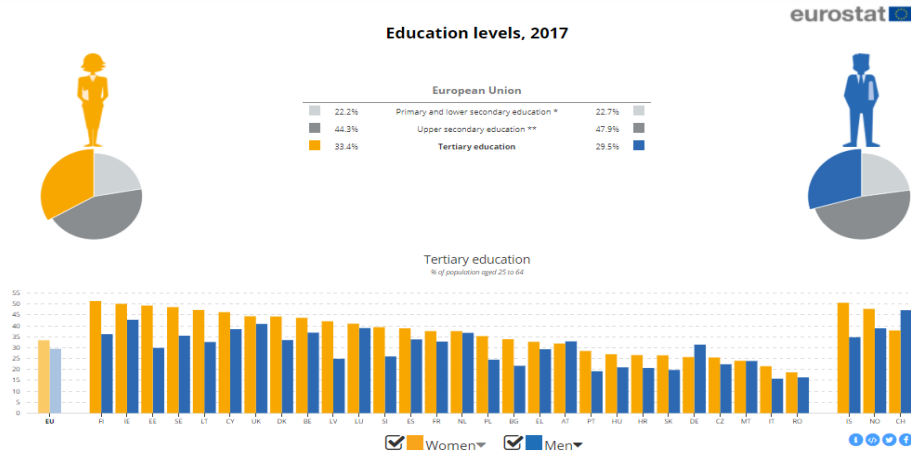


Figure 2. Education levels - Tertiary education for EU countries (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/womenmen_2018/bloc-2a.html?lang=en)

Another domain frequently examined when studying gender issues regards family roles, as housework and childcare. The most recent Eurostat data show us that on average, at European level, 9 out of 10 women with children under 18 take care of them on a daily basis, while almost 7 out of 10 men aged 25 to 49 have the same responsibilities. For some countries the differences increase, as is the case of Greece and Malta, where 95% of women do childcare and slightly more than half of the men (53% and 56%). Romania follows on the third position in terms of gender gap, with 89% of women and 55% of men doing childcare activities.

While for childcare Romanian adults' roles are characterized by larger differences than the European average, data show that housework and cooking activities could be described as more egalitarian, if compared to other Member States (75% and 41%). Nevertheless, the difference between the share of women and men is the same in Romania (34 percentual points) for both types of activities (Eurostat 2018).

In other countries, like Sweden and Slovenia, the differences between the two sexes regarding childcare are smaller. In Sweden 96% of women and 90% of men are involved in this type of activities on a daily basis and in Slovenia the share of women is around 88 percent while for men is about 82%. Sweden is also leading the ranking in terms of egalitarian share of housework and cooking activities, with 74% of women and 56% of men having such duties. Concerning this category of responsibilities, a much larger share of women than men do domestic duties at European level. Thus, the proportion of men that do housework or cooking represent less than half of the

Gender equality in the European Union. From strategic engagement to achievements

proportion of women, with 34 percent versus 79%. Again, in the case of Greece are noticed the largest imparities, as here 85% of women employ this type of activities and only 16% of men.

Family roles are undoubtedly linked to the professional ones, as domestic responsibilities, lack of facilities for child or elderly care are mentioned among the causes restricting women from working (Olah and Fraczak, 2013) or are associated with part-time working arrangements (idem). Moreover, national legislation of the Member States may foster, or on contrary, discourage women presence in the workforce through numerous mechanisms and policies aiming greater inclusion rates for women, facilities for those with families, children or other dependent persons to take care of. Measures may also target men's involvement in family roles, as is the case of paternal leave for children upbringing. In Romania, for example, since 2012, fathers must spend at least one month on parental leave for children aged under 2 (Government Decision 57/2012).

The International Labour Organization considers that employment rates for women represent an indicator regarding societies' attitudes towards women in the labour force, family structures in general (International Labour Organisation 2015, p. 17). At European level, the percent of men working outnumbers the one of women, for all countries, with varying patterns depending on the number of children and between Member States (Eurostat, 2018). Females are also more often working part-time than men (Ibidem).

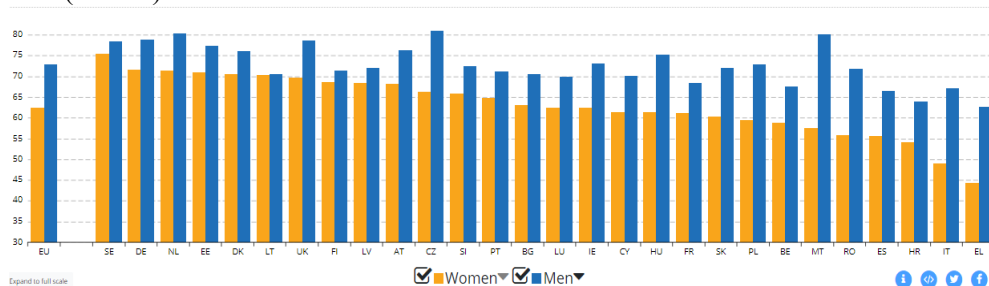


Figure 3. Employment rate for working age population 15-64, 2017 (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/womenmen_2018/bloc-2b.html?lang=en)

Figure 3 allows for a clearer view regarding employment rate in general, without considering the number of children. As it shows, the European average is situated at 73% for men and 62% for women. For countries as Sweden, Germany, Netherlands or Estonia employment rates for both sexes are greater than the European average and the differences between men and women presence in the workforce are smaller. Lithuania could be seen as the most egalitarian from this perspective, with about 70% employment rate for both sexes. Romania is situated under the European average, as here data show that 71,8% of men and 55,8% of women are part of the work force. As noticeable, the difference between the share of females and the one of males is greater than in other Member States and the European average of about 11 percental points.

When shifting our attention to part-time working arrangements, data for the European Union show that 31,7% of women and 8,8 percent of men work part time, on average. Netherlands leads the ranking for both sexes, although with a considerable gap between men and women. More than a quarter of employed men benefit from part time schedules, while over three quarters of women (75,8%) are engaged in part-time

working arrangements. In Austria, Germany and Belgium more than 4 out of 10 women work less than 8 hours a day. For Romania Eurostat data display a more balanced distribution between the two sexes, with 6.9% of women and 6,7% of men in employment working part time.

Part time working arrangement represent an adjustment considered to reconcile family and professional roles. The analysis of the share of this type of contracts could be enriched if we add the discussion of employment rate seen in relation with the number of children. The same data provider, Eurostat, displays increasing employment rates for men with more children, from 74% for those without children, to 86% for those with one child, 90% for those with two children and men with three or more children have an employment rate of 85%. For women the pattern is not similar to the one for men. Thus, employment rates for women vary from 66%for those without children, to 71% for those with one child, 72%in the case of mothers of two children and decreases considerably for the mothers of three or more, reaching 57%.

Leadership is also addressed when assessing gender issues at an aggregate level. “Glass ceiling” and other metaphoric phrases are met when trying to understand women presence in decision position, as leaders or managers (Macarie,2011). In all Member States men occupy more frequently than women management positions. Approximately a third of European managers are women, with shares above average in Latvia (46%), Poland (41%), Slovenia (41%) and Hungary(39%), as seen in Figure 4 (Eurostat 2018).

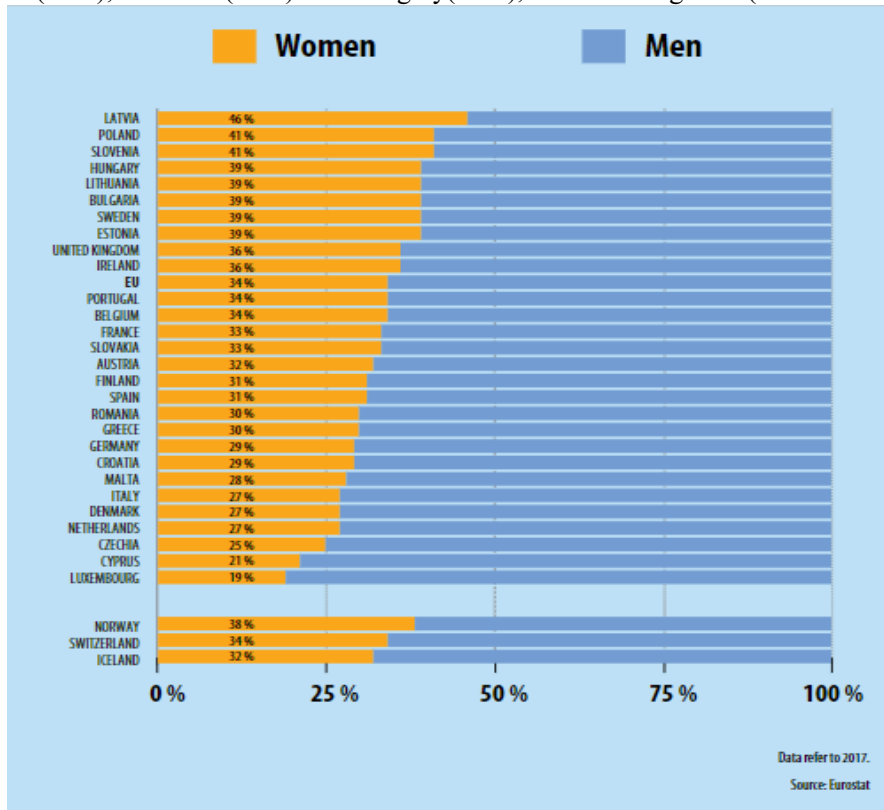


Figure 4. Distribution of men and women managers 2017(https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/womenmen_2018/bloc-2c.html?lang=en)

Gender equality in the European Union. From strategic engagement to achievements

Regarding earnings, management was the sector with the greatest pay gap between women and men, with a 25 percent difference. In terms of pay gap, a longitudinal perspective brings an optimistic view, as Eurostat data show us that this gap decreased constantly for the last years, from 15.7 to 14.1 (Eurostat 2021). These data refer to the European average and is reported to the gross hourly earnings, as seen in the next figure.

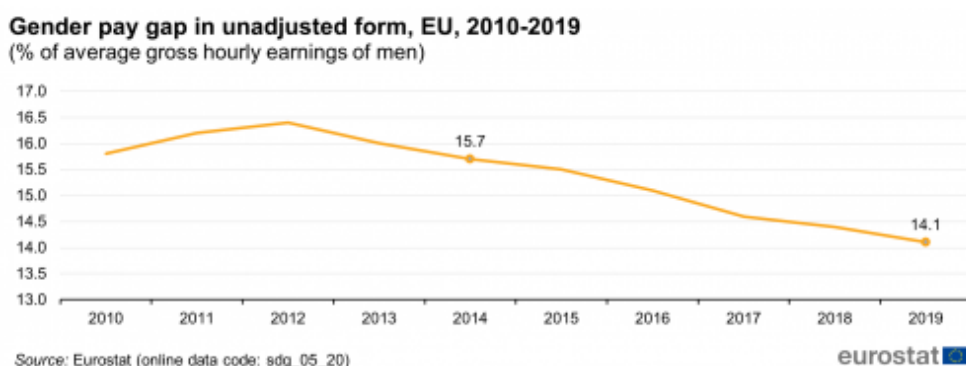


Figure 5. Gender pay gap – evolution between 2010-2019
(<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/>)

6. Conclusions

The European Union may be regarded as a space of social justice, where human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as non-discrimination policies, are fostered and enforced. As previously explained, the organisation along with the Member States, have designed a functional legal frame in the matters of gender equality, but, as the data shows, there are still aspects in which further steps need to be performed in order to prevent gender discrimination. As Pascall and Lewis assert, “while EU gender policy has been admired as the most innovative aspect of its social policy, gender equality is far from achieved: women's incomes across Europe are well below men's; policies for supporting unpaid care work have developed modestly compared with labour market activation policies” (Pascall and Lewis, 2004: 373).

Thus, we can state that, despite the normative accomplishments of the past decades, and the numerous policies in the matter, gender based non-equal treatment still persists across the European Union, being reflected in the inappropriate use of women's talents and skills, and, overall, delay in creating a space of social justice and equality *de facto*. Being given the challenges imposed by the on-going pandemic, the steps in the direction of equality of treatment and protection for men and women are seriously threatened, as several studies reveal the fact that the periods of financial recession or political crisis also have an impact on the measures aimed at reducing gender inequality (Leschke and Jepsen, 2011).

In this context, according to the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, both the European institutions and the Member States should encourage further involvement of the social partners in the public and private sector and other agencies, both at communitarian and national level, in designing, enforcing and evaluating the gender equality programs that are currently being developed. Such a common approach and

joint efforts of all the involved stakeholders and actors in addressing gender discrimination have the potential to strengthen the position of the European Union as a global leader in the field of human rights protection and ensuring equal and equitable treatment for all its citizens.

References:

- *** (1992). *Treaty on European Union*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- *** (2012). *Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*, available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>, retrieved on 01.11.2021.
- European Commission (2020). *Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of The Regions regarding a Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025*, available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2020:152:FIN>, retrieved on 25.10.2021.
- European Parliament (2021). *European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2021 on the EU Strategy for Gender Equality*, Available online at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0025_EN.html, retrieved on 06.08.2021.
- Eurostat (2018). *The life of women and men in Europe - a statistical portrait, 2018 edition*, Available online at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-digital-publications/-/KS-01-18-904?inheritRedirect=true&redirect=%2Feurostat%2Fweb%2Fmain%2Fpublications%2Fdigital-publications>, retrieved on 12.03.2021
- Eurostat (2019). *The Life of Women and Men in Europe. A statistical portrait, 2019 edition*. Available online at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/infographs/womenmen/bloc-3d.html?lang=en>, retrieved on 20.03.2021.
- Eurostat (2021). *SDG 5 - Gender equality - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Statistics Explained*. Available online at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/>, retrieved on 06.08.2021.
- Goode, W. (1960). A theory of role strain, *American Sociological Review*, 25: 283-296. (Online) available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2092933>, retrieved on 10.06.2021.
- Government Decision 57/2012. Chapter II, Art. 4, available online at egislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocumentAfis/134912, retrieved on 05.04.2019.
- International Labour Organisation (2015). *Key Indicators of the Labour market: Full report*, Ninth Edition, International Labour Office, Geneva.
- Jacquot, S. (2020). European Union Gender Equality Policies Since 1957, *Encyclopédie d'histoire numérique de l'Europe*, available online at <https://ehne.fr/en/encyclopedia/themes/gender-and-europe/gender-citizenship-in-europe/european-union-gender-equality-policies-1957>, retrieved on 05.11.2021.
- Leschke, J. and Jepsen, M. (2011). *The economic crisis – challenge or opportunity for gender equality in social policy outcomes? A comparison of Denmark, Germany and the UK*, Brussels: ETUI Printshop.
- Macarie F. C. (coord.).(2011). *Politica de gen în organizațiile publice*. Cluj Napoca, Eikon.
- Official Journal of the European Union (1978). *Directive 79/7/CEE of the Council of December 19th 1978, on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security*, available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/ALL/?uri=celex:31979L0007>, retrieved on 01.11.2021.

Gender equality in the European Union. From strategic engagement to achievements

- Official Journal of the European Union (1992). *Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding*, available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:31992L0085&from=RO>, retrieved on 01.11.2021.
- Official Journal of the European Union (2004). *Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services*, available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32004L0113&from=RO>, retrieved on 03.11.2021.
- Official Journal of the European Union (2006). *Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation*, available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32006L0054&from=RO>, retrieved on 03.11.2021.
- Official Journal of the European Union (2010). *Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity*, available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32010L0041&from=RO>, retrieved on 03.11.2021.
- Official Journal of the European Union (2011). *Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and the Council on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA* available online at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32011L0036&from=RO>, retrieved on 05.11.2021.
- Olah, L., Fratzak, E. (2013). *Childbearing, Women's Employment and Work-life Balance. Policies in Contemporary Europe*. Palgrave, Macmillan.
- Pascall, G., Lewis, J. (2004). Emerging Gender Regimes and Policies for Gender Equality in a Wider Europe. *Journal of Social Policy*, 33(3), 373-394.
- Peto, A., Manners, I. (2006). The European Union and the value of gender equality. In Manners, I., Lucarelli, S. eds. *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy*, London, New York: Routledge, pp. 163-191.
- Pogan, L. (2019). Gap and convergence in the gendered division of labour. *Analyze – Journal of Gender and Feminist Studies*, No. 13, pp. 7-22.
- Porumbescu, A. (2019). Subsidiarity, regions and cohesion in the European Union. *C.S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor” – YEARBOOK/ANUARUL*, vol. XX, pp. 181–190.

Article Info

Received: November 18 2021

Accepted: November 26 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Media discourse on epizootic epidemics - a diachronic analysis

Valentina Marinescu¹⁾, Ines Razec²⁾, Teodor Dumitrache³⁾

Abstract:

This paper deals with both general and specific aspects of the manner in which Romanian media covered the epizootic epidemics between 2015 and 2020. The analysis was mainly based on the general ground of media framing theory. The media tone used in reporting these animal-specific diseases complies with the pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis stages as identified by the literature. It should be emphasized that, in general, animal diseases and epidemics have been insufficiently covered by the media, the Romanian media making no exception. Our analysis also indicated that the main frames of Romanian coverage for epizootics are: economic repercussions, leadership, medical and scientific issues, political and legal matters. These frames indicate a detached approach of the subject, with interesting variations regarding the connections between information units and the general norms of media coverage. This research indicates a few remarkable aspects suggesting current changes in the journalistic paradigm. The research also draws attention to the need for an increased awareness for the further communication crisis concerning animal diseases and epidemics.

Keywords: *Epizootic diseases; mass media; animals; media frames; Romania.*

¹⁾ Professor, PhD, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, Romania, Phone: +40720024813, Email: vmarinescu9@yahoo.com.

²⁾ PhD Student, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, Romania, Phone: +40723166229, Email: inesrazec@yahoo.com.

³⁾ PhD Student, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, Romania, Phone: +40723379966 Email: teddy.dumitrache@gmail.com.

Media discourse on epizootic epidemics - a diachronic analysis

Introduction

The subject regarding the media coverage of public health crises has often been debated in the specialized literature. Glik (2007), Yu, Frohlich, Fougner, and Ren (2011) showed that, during a public health crisis, the media plays a key-role in the public communication. Moreover, journalists make serious efforts to effectively communicate the risks implied by the epidemics by looking for comprehensive ways to present complex material, that is filled with confusion and uncertainty, thus making it difficult to understand by an ordinary audience (Calman, Bennett & Corns, 1999 ; Berry, 2004).

In general, the specialized literature associates epizootic diseases and zoonosis with the existence of major public health crises (Fink, 1986; Mitroff, 1994; Birch, 1994; Mitchell, 1986; Woodcock, 1994; Ungar, 1998). The cycle of a crisis can be classified in various ways. According to Fink (1986), there are four stages in the life cycle of any crisis: prodromal, acute/crisis break out, chronic, resolution. In an alternative classification, Mitroff (1994) distinguishes five stages in any crisis: signal detection, probing and prevention, damage containment, recovery, learning.

In his classic study regarding the stages of outbreak and spread of an infectious disease, Ungar (1998) considers that there are three phases to any unfolding epidemic scenario, such as: the "alarm" stage, during which fearful claim making prevails; the "mixed messages" stage, during which the threat continues, being moderated by reassurance elements; the "hot crisis and containment" stage, which highlights the efforts to undo the most frightful elements of the pandemic interpretive packages. As far as the media is concerned, in order to become newsworthy, according to Moeller (1999), any disease must satisfy certain standards called "Ebola standards" - defined by: sensationalism, prominence, novelty, controversy, emotional appeal, significance and proximity. In general, the media is interested the problematic of diseases and covers not only human public health crises, but also those of a zoonotic nature (Peters et al., 2006; Roche & Muskavitch, 2003).

Any public health crisis (including epidemics) leads to complex, non-linear interactions between social, political, psychological systems (Seeger and Reynolds, 2008). In an environment characterised by rapid change, such as the epidemics, communication raises a number of challenges for both the public and the media (Coombs, 1999). This is because, as Roche and Muskavich (2003) point out, much of the public's understanding of infectious diseases comes from information provided by the media. Moreover, when people want to learn about disease prevention, they seek medical and health-related information from non-medical sources such as the media (Lewis et al., 2012; Ramirez et al., 2013).

The analysis on the media coverage of public health crises has been primarily based on the general media framing theory (Entman, 1993, 2007; Iyengar, 1994; Semetko & Walkenburgh, 2000). Simultaneously, over time, some studies have developed special categories of frames dedicated to the analysis of media coverage of crises. A typology of frames (consequences, action, uncertainty, reassurance, conflict, new evidence) was used by Birnbrauer, Frohlich and Treise (2015) and Liu and Pennington-Gray (2015) in their studies. A typology of crisis-oriented frames (scientific dishonesty, scientific explanation, criminal activity, political advocacy) was proposed by Bowe, Ohita, Terracina-Hartman and Chao (2014). In his attempt to interpret the stages of crisis as frames, Harris (2016) formulated a typology comprising three categories of frames: pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis. In terms of how diseases have been categorized

by the media, the specialized literature shows that dominant health-related frames have a wide variation, ranging from social responsibility, to conflict, to medical discoveries, causes, prevention and treatments (Andsager & Powers, 1999; De Vreese, Peter & Semetko, 2001; Park & Reber, 2010; Viswanath & Emmons, 2006).

Even in the case of a single epidemic, the type of media coverage can influence the ways in which the disease is presented. Thus, according to Gao, Zhang and Sadri (2011) in the US, the H1N1 outbreak was pictured by traditional media and blogs using the following frames: blame and responsibility, action, economic consequences, new evidence, conflict, severity, reassurance. In Singapore, according to Lee and Basnyat (2013), the same disease (H1N1) was covered by the media using the following main frames: basic information, preventive information, treatment information, medical research, social context, economic context, political context, personal story and others.

In recent years, a number of studies have been concerned with the media coverage on topics related to agriculture, food safety and farming. This is the case for studies devoted to biotechnology, EColi infection, or analysis of the way in which a number of food-borne or zoonotic diseases have been presented in the media (Smith, Young & Gibson, 1998; Nisbet & Lewenstein, 2001; Ten Eyck, 2000; Fisher et al., 1994). Media's interest in these topics is strictly related to the fact that the audience members feel as insecure in case of a food-related or zoonotic disease as they feel in case of a strictly human-transmitted disease. In addition, information about agricultural crises or of a zoonotic nature are far more ambiguous (Mitchell, Bakewell, Jackson & Heslin, 2015). At the same time, analyses of media coverage of zoonotic diseases show that the media (especially the newspapers) have not fully reported the risks associated with these diseases (Dudo, Dahlstrom, & Brossard, 2007; Roche & Muskavitch, 2003).

The media coverage of public health crisis epidemics of an epizootic and zoonotic nature differed very much, depending on a number of political and geographical factors. As far as the media coverage of health is concerned, some researches show that the use of a negative tone is commonplace in the presentation of news stories and more than half of health-related news stories have a negative tone (Brodie, Brady & Altman, 1998; Marcantoni et al., 2011). The negative nature of health-related news either implies a discourse in which governments are blamed for the crisis (Kuttschreuter et al., 2011) or involves news delivered by journalists in a purely sensationalist tone, focused on words such as: "deadly", "scare", "panic" (Carslaw, 2008). Zoonotic outbreaks have thus often been analysed as dramatic events (Grabe, Zhou, & Barnett, 2010; Vettehen et al., 2005; Dudo, Dahlstrom, & Brossard, 2007). However, it is unclear whether this type of media presentation is also specific to diseases of an epizootic nature, given the extremely low number of studies of this type.

A second direction that we identified in the analysis of specialized literature is the lack of clear results regarding the relationship between textual information and the formal features of the media coverage (images, language, personalized narratives included in media presentations or photographic effects) (Klemm, Das & Hartmann, 2016). As far as the media coverage of epizootic diseases is concerned, we considered such an analysis essential because the two families of textual elements influence risk perceptions both in terms of information processing and subsequent assessment of the situation (Vischers, Meertens, Passchier, & De Vries, 2008; Zillmann, 2006). By using the already existent analysis on epizootic diseases, the present article aimed to discover the specific aspects of the way in which the Romanian media presented diseases of a strictly animal nature between 2015 and 2020.

Media discourse on epizootic epidemics - a diachronic analysis

Methodology

Given the lack of previous studies related to the way in which epizootic diseases have been presented by the media, our study focused on an inductive approach of the topic. The advantage of this perspective lies in the ability to capture the diversity of ways to present animal diseases that can be identified in the sample of analysed articles. The research focused on the following question: "What were the particularities of the way in which the Romanian media covered epizootic diseases during 2015 and 2020?"

In our analysis, we included all the online media articles that addressed the issue of epizootic diseases in Romania and were published during January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2020. Unlike other studies (Roche, 2002; Hellsten & Nerlich, 2010; Shan et al., 2013; Rim, Hong Ha & Kioussis, 2014), in analyzing the Romanian media, we did not have access to Lexis Nexis Academic. Therefore, like in other studies (Birnbauer, Fröhlich & Treise, 2015; Meisner, 2017), we used the Google Chrome search engine to identify articles by using keywords. As keywords, we had the epizootic diseases included in the official documents of the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, such as: "Foot and mouth disease (FMD)"; "Classical swine fever (CSF)"; "African swine fever (ASF)"; "Swine vesicular disease (SVD)"; "Newcastle disease (ND)"; "Bovine fowlbrood"; "Peste des petits ruminants (PPR)"; "Vesicular stomatitis (VS)"; "Blue tongue disease"; "African horse sickness (AHS)"; "Equine viral encephalomyelitis"; "Teschin disease"; "Avian influenza"; "Sheep and goat pox"; "Lumpy skin disease"; "Rift valley fever"; "Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia" (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, 2002).

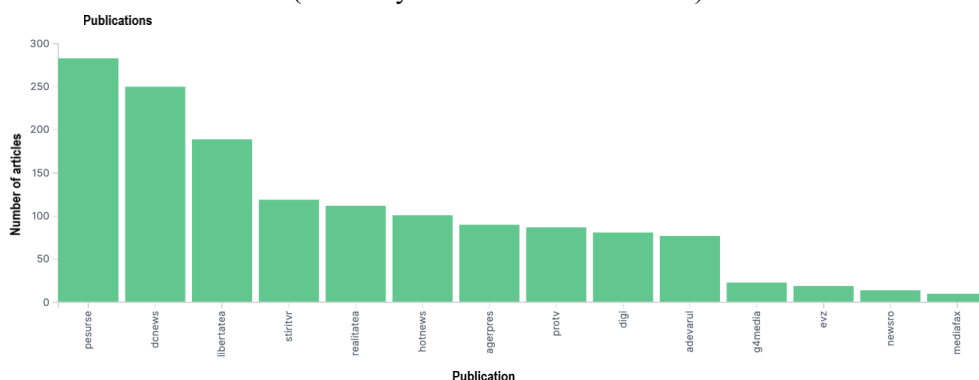
Sample

Our analysis consisted of 1455 articles published in the Romanian online media during January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2020.

Data analysis

According to our analysis, the highest number of articles related to animal diseases were published by the "Stiri pe surse" website, followed by an adjacent website - "DC News" - and the "Libertatea" newspaper (See Figure 1).

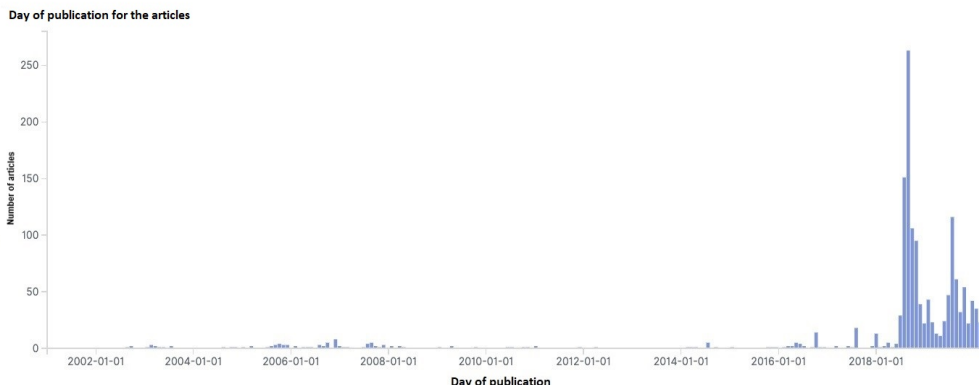
Figure 1. Frequency of epizootic disease coverage by different Romanian media (1 January 2015-31 December 2020)



Regarding the period of time during which the Romanian media published articles on epizootic diseases, the dataset indicated that during 2015 and 2017, the

frequency of their appearance was extremely low, with the number of press materials reaching its peak during 2018 and 2019 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Time period during which the Romanian media published articles on animal diseases (1 January 2015-31 December 2020).



The African swine fever epidemic was the main reason for an exponential increase in the number of articles published by the Romanian media regarding the epizootic diseases, at the end of the analysed period (2018-2019). This had direct consequences on the number of pigs in peasant households and Romanian farms as well as major economic and social implications. In our analysis, we were also interested in identifying the main terms used in the titles of articles on epizootic diseases. The results thus indicated that the phrase "food safety" appeared with the highest frequency, being followed at a great distance by the names of cities ("Subpadure", "Craiesti"; "Paucisoara"; "Abus"" etc.) or by the names of politicians ("Sorina Pintea"; "Ludovic Orban") (See Figure 3).

Figure 3 - Frequency of occurrence of certain words or phrases in the titles of articles on epizootic diseases (1 January 2015-31 December 2020)

Frequency of occurrence of certain words in the titles of the articles



A question that we also sought to answer through our analysis was: "What was the vocabulary used in these articles?". According to the collected dataset, the most

Media discourse on epizootic epidemics - a diachronic analysis

frequent words encountered in media materials related to epizootic diseases were "DSVSA" (acronym for "Veterinary Health and Food Safety Directorate"), "ANSVSA" (acronym for "National Veterinary Health and Food Safety Authority") and "ASF" (acronym for "African Swine Fever") (See Figure 4).

Figure 4- Frequency of occurrence of certain words or phrases in articles related to animal diseases (1 January 2015-31 December 2020).

Frequency of occurrence of certain words in articles



Discussions

From a current, broad social perspective, epidemics are not a problem that strictly subscribes to a crisis in public health, but can, and should be decoded as a specific narrative based on the iconic image of the medieval plague (Alcabes, 2009). In the case of the zoonotic epidemics (as was the case of the mad cow epidemic), Ten Eyck (2000) shows that the link between a disease that is deadly to humans and food seems to make this type of disease an ideal media story even in the absence of clear scientific evidence of virus transfer from animals to humans. This also becomes obvious in the case of the sample included in our analysis where "food safety" has had the highest use in the Romanian media headlines as these diseases, by excellence, manifest themselves mainly in animals without being transferred to humans.

On the other hand, as some studies show (Powers & Gong, 2008; Wallis & Nerlich, 2005), the media covers diseases in different ways, these differences being conditioned by political, economic, social and geographic factors. For example, SARS has been pictured as a Hong Kong government failure, and blame has been placed on human agents (Powers & Gong, 2008). However, in the UK, it was portrayed as a "killer", a deadly and uncontrollable force of nature (Wallis & Nerlich, 2005). In our case, there is a clear imbalance in the presentation of diseases of an epizootic nature, with the impact of African swine fever taking way bigger proportions compared to other animal-specific diseases.

Conclusions

As Reynolds and Seeger (2014) show, during epidemics, mass communication is the main source of information for the public. In the event of an epidemic, the media plays the role of a risk amplifier (Kasperson, Kasperson & Pidgeon, 2003). Moreover, from a communicational point of view, epidemics tend to become newsworthy because they are mysterious, dramatic, spread rapidly, lead to a high number of deaths, and have the capacity or potential to create economic and political catastrophes (Lee, 2008).

Infectious diseases are increasingly important to both scientists and the public, especially the zoonosis (Wobeser, 2006). In a study conducted on 335 infectious disease events between 1940 and 2004, Jones et al. (2008) found that 60.3% of them had a zoonotic origin, out of which 71.8% originated in wild animals (such as SARS and Ebola). The increased incidence of these diseases over time is due to a number of factors, out of which the most important being the following: the demographic explosion, an increased frequency of natural movements of humans and animals, the destruction of natural habitats for wild animals due to urban development (Chomel, Belotto, & Meslin, 2007; Wobeser, 2006).

From the point of view of the relationship between zoonotic crises and the agro-food industry (Ashlock, Cartmell & Kelemen, 2006; Caplan, 2000; Miller, 1999), the negative impact of the animal-borne diseases topic is emphasized as an industry crisis. For example, as the UK studies show, the media coverage of the BSE crisis contributed to a decrease in beef consumption (Caplan, 2000), with a reduction of 28% in 1990 and of 40% in 1996 (Miller, 1999).

As far as our analysis is concerned, it is obvious that the frequency of media coverage of epizootic diseases in Romania has depended on the occurrence and manifestation of these phenomena in the real world, and the majority of press materials on the subject were published along with the outbreak of African swine fever epidemic in our country (2018-2019). At the same time, the vocabulary used in the articles included in the studied sample was focused on the impact of epizootic diseases on humans and less on animals.

The structural ambiguity of media coverage of agriculture-related crises partly derives from the specifics of the work that was conducted by professionals in the field. Thus, in the US, the studies conducted by White & Rutherford (2009) and King, Cartmell and Sitton (2006) show that most journalists have low levels of agricultural literacy, which influences the way they present information in the field. One possible outcome of this state of affairs that has not previously been explored in the specialized literature is the influence of this low level of agricultural literacy over biased or incomplete coverage of agricultural issues. Thus, in the case of epidemics directly related to the agricultural sector (e.g. Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy), research by Peters et al. (2006) and Roche and Muskavitch (2003) show that there has been a distortion and misrepresentation of information related to the public health crisis covered by the media.

In the case of our analysis we can observe that a future development in this direction can be done by conducting a study on the level of knowledge and understanding of epizootic diseases in the Romanian publishing houses.

Media discourse on epizootic epidemics - a diachronic analysis

References:

- Alcabes P (2009) *Dread: How Fear and Fantasy Have Fuelled Epidemics from the Black Death to Avian Flu*. New York: Public Affairs Books.
- Andsager, J., & Powers, A. (1999). Social or economic concerns: How newspapers and women's magazines framed breast cancer in the 1990s. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 76: 531–550.
- Ashlock, M. A., Cartmell, D. D., & Kelemen, D. B. (2006). The cow that stole Christmas: Framing the first U.S. mad cow crisis. *Journal of Applied Communications*, 90 (2): 29-46.
- Berry, D. (2004). *Risk, Communication & Health Psychology* (First edit., p. 184). Open University Press.
- Birch, J. (1994). New factors in crisis planning and response. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 39(4): 31-34.
- Birnbrauer, K., Frohlich, D. O., & Treise, D. (2015). Inconsistencies in reporting risk information: a pilot analysis of online news coverage of West Nile Virus. *Global Health Promotion*, 1757975915594603. doi: 10.1177/1757975915594603
- Bowe, B. J., Oshita, T., Terracina-Hartman, C., & Chao, W.-C. (2014). Framing of climate change in newspaper coverage of the East Anglia e-mail scandal. *Public Understanding of Science*, 23(2): 157–169. doi: 10.1177/0963662512449949
- Brodie M., Brady L.A., & Altman D.E. (1998). Media Coverage of Managed Care: Is There a Negative Bias? *Health Affairs* 17(1): 9-25.
- Calman, K. C., Bennett, P. G., & Corns, D. G. (1999). Risks to health: some key issues in management, regulation and communication. *Health, risk & society*, 1(1): 107-116.
- Caplan, P. 2000. Eating British beef with confidence: A consideration of consumers' responses to BSE in Britain. In Caplan, P. (ed.). *Risk revisited*. (pp. 1-29). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Carslaw N (2008) Communicating risks linked to food – the media's role. *Trends in Food Sciences & Technology* 19: S14–S17.
- Chomel, B. B., Belotto, A., & Meslin, F. X. (2007). Wildlife, exotic pets, and emerging zoonoses. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 13: 6-11.
- Coombs, T. W. (1999). *Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing, and Responding*. SAGE Publications.
- De Vreese, C. H., Peter, J., & Semetko, H. A. (2001). Framing politics at the launch of the Euro: A cross-national comparative study of frames in the news. *Political Communication*, 18: 107–122.
- Dudo, a. D., Dahlstrom, M. F., & Brossard, D. (2007). Reporting a Potential Pandemic: A Risk-Related Assessment of Avian Influenza Coverage in U.S. Newspapers. *Science Communication*, 28(4): 429–454. doi:10.1177/1075547007302211
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of communication*, 43(4):, 51-58.
- Fink, S. (1986). *Crisis management: Planning for the inevitable*. New York: AMACOM
- Fisher, A., King, R., Epp, D. J., Brown, J. L., & Maretzki, A. N. (1994). Evaluating alternatives for communicating about food risk. *Journal of Applied Communication*, 78(2): 1-11.
- Gao, F., Zhang, M., & Sadri, S. (2011). Newspapers use more sources compared to health blogs in H1N1/swine flu coverage. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 32(2): 89-96.
- Glik, D. C. (2007). Risk communication for public health emergencies. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 28: 33-54.
- Grabe, M. E., Zhou, S., & Barnett, B. (2001). Explicating sensationalism in television news: Content and the bells and whistles of form. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 45(4), 635-655.

- Harris, P. (2016). Achoo! Three Major US Newspapers Reporting on the Flu Before and After H1N1. Masters Theses. Retrieved from <http://commons.lib.jmu.edu/master201019/91>
- Hellsten, I., & Nerlich, B. (2010). Bird flu hype: the spread of a disease outbreak through the media and Internet discussion groups. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 9(3), 393-408.
- Iyengar, S. (1994). *Is Anyone Responsible?: How Television Frames Political Issues*. University of Chicago Press.
- Jones, K. E., Patel, N. G., Levy, M. A., Storeygard, A., Balk D., Gittleman, J. L., & Daszak, P. (2008). Global trends in emerging infectious diseases. *Nature*, 451: 990-993.
- Kasperson, J. X., Kasperson, R. E., & Pidgeon, N. (2003). The Social Amplification of Risk: Assessing Fifteen Years of Research and Theory. In N. Pidgeon, R. E. Kasperson, & P. Slovic (Eds.), *The Social Amplification of Risk*. (pp. 13-46). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- King, J.M., Cartmell, D.D., and Sitton, S. (2006). Newspaper coverage of the bovine spongiform encephalopathy outbreak in the United States: A content analysis. *Journal of Applied Communications*, 90(3): 33-47.
- Klemm, C., Das, E., & Hartmann, T. (2016). Swine flu and hype: a systematic review of media dramatization of the H1N1 influenza pandemic. *Journal of Risk Research*, 19(1), 1-20.
- Kuttschreuter M, Gutteling JM and de Hond M (2011) Framing and tone-of-voice of disaster media cover-age: The aftermath of the Enschede fireworks disaster in the Netherlands. *Health Risk & Society* 13(3): 201–220.
- Lee, A. Y. L. (2008). Internet freedom and online crisis responding: The role of news web sites in the SARS epidemic. In J. H. Powers & X. Xiao (Eds.). *The Social Construction of SARS: Studies of a health communication crisis* (pp. 69–90). John Benjamins Publishing.
- Lee, S. T., & Basnyat, I. (2013). From press release to news: mapping the framing of the 2009 H1N1 A influenza pandemic. *Health Communication*, 28(2): 119-132.
- Lewis, N., Martinez, L. S., Freres, D. R., Schwartz, J. S., Armstrong, K., Gray, S. W., Frazee, T, Nagler, R.H., Bourgoin, A. & Hornik, R. C. (2012). Seeking Cancer-Related Information From Media and Family/Friends Increases Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Among Cancer Patients. *Health Communication*, 27(4): 380–388. doi: 10.1080/10410236.2011.586990
- Liu, B., & Pennington-Gray, L. (2015). Bed bugs bite the hospitality industry? A framing analysis of bed bug news coverage. *Tourism Management*, 48: 33–42. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2014.10.020
- Marcantoni C, Bressanelli M, Orizio G and Gelatti U (2011) Health on front page: A content analysis of the main Italian newspapers in two months of 2009. *Annali di igiene: medicina preventiva e di comunita* 23(2): 115–124.
- Meisner, C. (2017). When Product Loss Minimizes Product Harm: The Reframed Narrative of Blue Bell Creameries' 2015 Listeriosis Crisis.
- Miller, D. (1999). Risk, science and policy: definitional struggles, information management, the media and BSE. *Social Science & Medicine*, 49(9): 1239-1255.
- Ministerul Agriculturii, Alimentației și Pădurilor (2002). *Ordinul nr. 580/2002 pentru aprobarea Normei sanitare veterinare privind controalele veterinare și zootehnice aplicabile comerțului României cu statele membre ale Uniunii Europene cu unele animale vii și produse de origine animală*. Available at: <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gm2tgnjq/ordinul-nr-580-2002-pentru-aprobarea-normei-sanitare-veterinare-privind-contrloalele-veterinare-si-zootehnice-aplicabile-comertului-romaniei-cu-statele-membre-ale-uniunii-europene-cu-unele-animale-vii->

Media discourse on epizootic epidemics - a diachronic analysis

- Mitchell, T. H. (1986). Coping with a corporate crisis. *Canadian Business Review*, 13: 17-20.
- Mitchell, V. W., Bakewell, C., Jackson, P., & Heslin, C. (2015). How message framing affects consumer attitudes in food crises. *British Food Journal*, 117: 2200-2211. doi: 10.1108/BFJ-01-2015-0015
- Mitroff, I.A. (1994). Crisis management and environmentalism: A natural fit. *California Management Review*, 36(2): 101-113.
- Moeller, S. D. (2002). *Compassion fatigue: How the media sell disease, famine, war and death*. Routledge.
- Nisbet, M., & Lewenstein, B. V. (2001). A comparison of U.S. media coverage of Biotechnology with public perceptions of Genetic Engineering 1995-1999. Paper presented to the 2001 International Public of Science and Technology Conference. Geneva, Switzerland.
- Park, H., & Reber, B. H. (2010). Using public relations to promote health: A framing analysis of public relations strategies among health associations. *Journal of Health Communication*, 15: 39–54.
- Peters, H. P., Brossard, D., De Cheveigné, S., Dunwoody, S., Kalfass, M., Miller, S., & Tsuchida, S. (2008). Interactions with the mass media. *Policy forum: Interactions with mass media. Science*, 321(5886): 204-205. doi: 10.1126/science.1157780
- Powers, J. H., & Gong, G. (2008). Hong Kong's Multiple Constructions of Sars'. In Powers, J. H., & Xiao, X. (Eds.). *The social construction of SARS: Studies of a health communication crisis* (Vol. 30). (pp. 17-31). John Benjamins Publishing. Amsterdam.
- Ramírez, A. S., Freres, D., Martínez, L. S., Lewis, N., Bourgoin, A., Kelly, B. J., Lee C.J., Nagler R., Schwartz J.S. & Hornik, R. C. (2013). Information Seeking From Media and Family/Friends Increases the Likelihood of Engaging in Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors. *Journal of Health Communication*, 18(5): 527–542. doi: 10.1080/10810730.2012.743632
- Reynolds, B., & Seeger, M. W. CDC. (2014). *Crisis+ emergency risk communication*. 2014 edition. Publication ID 221793. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from https://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/resources/pdf/cerc_2014edition.pdf
- Rim, H., Hong Ha, J., & Kioussis, S. (2014). The evidence of compelling arguments in agenda building: Relationships among public information subsidies, media coverage, and risk perceptions during a pandemic outbreak. *Journal of Communication Management*, 18(1): 101-116.
- Roche, J. P. (2002). Print media coverage of risk-risk tradeoffs associated with West Nile encephalitis and pesticide spraying. *Journal of Urban Health*, 79(4): 482.
- Roche, J. P., & Muskavitch, M. A. (2003). Limited precision in print media communication of West Nile virus risks. *Science communication*, 24(3): 353-365.
- Seeger, M. W., & Reynolds, B. (2008). *Crisis communication and the public health: Integrated approaches and new imperatives*. *Crisis communication and the public health*, 1.
- Semetko, H., & Valkenburg, P. (2000). Framing European politics: a content analysis of press and television news. *Journal of Communication*, 50(2): 93–109. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02843.x
- Shan, L., Regan, Á., De Brún, A., Barnett, J., van der Sanden, M. C., Wall, P., & McConnon, Á. (2014). Food crisis coverage by social and traditional media: A case study of the 2008 Irish dioxin crisis. *Public Understanding of Science*, 23(8): 911-928.
- Smith, A. P., Young, J. A., & Gibson, J. (1998, July). How now, mad-cow? Consumer confidence and source credibility during the 1996 BSE scare. *European Journal of Marketing*, 33(11/12): 1107 – 1122.

- Ten Eyck, T. A. (2000). The marginalization of food safety issues: An inter-pretative approach to mass media coverage. *Journal of Applied Communication*, 84(2), 29-47.
- Ungar, S. (1998). Hot crises and media reassurance: A comparison of emerging diseases and Ebola Zaire. *British journal of sociology*: 36-56. doi: 10.2307/591262
- Vischers, V. H. M., Meertens, R. M., Passchier, W. F., & De Vries, N. K. (2008). Audiovisual risk communication unravelled: effects on gut feelings and cognitive processes. *Journal of Risk Research*, 11(1-2): 207–221.
- Viswanath, K., & Emmons, K. M. (2006). Message effects and social determinants of health: Its application to cancer disparities. *Journal of Communication*, 56(suppl_1): S238-S264.
- White, J. M., & Rutherford, T. (2009). Impact of reporter work role identity on news story source selection: Implications for coverage of agricultural crises. *Journal of Applied Communications*, 93(3): 3.
- Wobeser, G. A. (2006). *Essentials of disease in wild animals*. Oxford, England: Blackwell.
- Woodcock, C. (1994, November 24). How to face crisis with confidence. *Marketing*: 8-10.
- Yu, N., Frohlich, D. O., Fougner, J., & Ren, L. (2011). Communicating a Health Epidemic: A Risk Assessment of the Swine Flu Coverage in US Newspapers. *International Public Health Journal*, 3(1 (Special Issue on “Health Risk Communication”): 63–76.
- Zillmann, D. (2006). Exemplification Effects in the Promotion of Safety and Health. *Journal of Communication*, 56(s1): S221–S237. doi:10.1111/j.1460

Article Info

Received: November 12 2021

Accepted: November 20 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Students' Integration in Target Communities of Practice: an ESP Perspective

Eleonora Olivia Bălănescu¹⁾

Abstract:

After the fall of communism, Romania witnessed the rapid increase in number of foreign companies that opened subsidiaries or started new businesses in the country, and subsequently needed local workforce. The demand for English speakers has steadily grown, hence the importance of teaching English for Specific Purposes for the benefit of future employees, employers and customers. The aim of this paper is to approach the issue of learners' needs with respect to the requirements of target communities of practice, and to propose a range of activities that teachers can use in Business English classes, in order to support learners' integration in those communities. The classroom activities are designed on the principles of Communicative Language Teaching, emphasising the social dimension of learning. As a method, we resort to researchers' considerations on needs' analysis, language and sociocultural skills in order to build the theoretical framework for the presentation of communicative teaching activities. The conclusion is that the shift from a linguistic to a communicative approach in language teaching has significantly changed ESP course design.

Keywords: *communicative competence; learning target; needs analysis; teaching; training gap.*

¹⁾ Associate Professor, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of Applied Foreign Languages, Romania, Phone: 0040723506212, E-mail: olivia.balanescu@edu.ucv.ro

Introduction

Back in the 1990s, Western investors became interested in Romania's economic potential sustained by qualified and fairly cheap workforce. Since then, the local market has accommodated an increasing number of foreign companies eager to employ Romanian specialists and further develop their businesses. At the same time, the West became professionally attractive for more and more Romanians who, since 1989, have opted to go abroad for work or/and studies. These phenomena greatly impacted the educational system that "started its curriculum reform" in order to adapt to "the challenges of the new, democratic, western-oriented market" (Marcu, 2020: 119). The reform included a greater emphasis on the study of foreign languages in general and English language in particular.

Given the growing importance of English for professional careers, it is widely acknowledged that "the design of any pedagogical curriculum should be dictated primarily by the long-term needs of its students" (Huckin, 1988: 61). In the case of students in business, the long-term needs are closely linked to the communities of practice to which they will belong. Therefore, the findings of a needs analysis should outline not only the Business English knowledge that students have to acquire, but also the specific requirements of future work communities. This approach echoes sociocultural studies which emphasise that learning is mediated by the social and semiotic context (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It is also in line with linguistic theories which state that the goal in language learning is the development of communicative competence, which takes into account both the linguistic aspect of the target language and sociocultural factors, that is, the context in which language will be used (Hymes, 1972). From this perspective, the challenge for teachers is to support students in constructing a community of learners that are trained in the practices, knowledge and language of the target communities, and to develop the students' communicative skills that will enable them to integrate in those communities.

In what follows, we shall first focus on learners' needs with an eye on the communities of practice within business organisations; then, present a series of classroom activities that teachers can use in order to create and develop students' communicative competence.

Determining the training gap

In terms of methodology, ESP teaching should not be regarded as a "product" which is different from other forms of language teaching, but rather as an "approach" directed by students' definable needs to communicate in English (Hutchinson & Waters, 1994: 18). Regarded as a data collection process (Nunan, 1988), needs analysis is linked to "the core mission of preparing students to use English in their target contexts" (Hyon, 2018: 3). It is therefore important for ESP teachers to identify their learners' key requirements in terms of skills and language use. In order to determine the needs, the teacher should find information related to the target situation (where the students need to be, or what they have to know) and the current situation (where the students are, or what they already know, as well as what their learning preferences and expectations are). The difference between the two is commonly referred to as *the training gap*, that is, "the gap between what the learners' actual needs are and what should be taught to them" (Brindley, 1989: 56). Once identified, the gap will form the basis of future teaching and learning.

Students' Integration in Target Communities of Practice: an ESP Perspective

General English methodologies present a series of methods or tools that can be used for gathering information in the classroom, such as questionnaires, placement tests, interviews, informal discussions, social events, observation etc. (Scrivener, 2005: 70). In the case of ESP, the needs analysis has to transcend the exchange of information between teacher and learners, and “go outside” the classroom. The investigation is broader and involves other sources and methods, such as readings of specialist subject books, ESP journals, methodology guides, or discussions with peers, supervisors, people who are in the target situation (they may work in a particular department, field, company), or even former students who can provide valuable information as to what extent the English courses helped them when they started working.

In order to determine learners' target linguistic requirements, which have long been considered as the “heart” of ESP (Munby, 1978), the target situation must thoroughly be investigated. This involves understanding *the communities of practice* in which learners will seek integration. Discussing communities of practice and their role in the process of learning, Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner point out that this relatively recent coined term refers to an old phenomenon of people working and learning together: “Communities of practice are groups of people who *share a concern* [domain] or a passion for something they do and *learn how to do it better* [practice] as they *interact regularly* [community].” (Wenger-Trayner, 2015: 1, our emphasis) The shared domain of interest, the community of members who work together, help each other and learn from each other, as well as the shared practice in the domain of interest are the main characteristics of a community of practice, and “it is by developing these three elements in parallel that one cultivates such a community” (Wenger-Trayner, 2015: 2).

Nowadays, communities of practice can virtually be found everywhere, connecting people within business, education, government, professional associations and other organisations. Business people were among the first who adopted this concept, because they understood the importance of knowledge creation and sharing, as well as the collective responsibility for managing the knowledge. Another important aspect of these communities refers to the fact that they create connections among practitioners that cross over hierarchical structures and geographical borders. The result is that:

“... the knowledge of an organisation lives in a constellation of communities of practice each taking care of a specific aspect of the competence that the organisation needs. However, the very characteristics that make communities of practice a good fit for stewarding knowledge – autonomy, practitioner-orientation, informality, crossing boundaries – are also characteristics that make them a challenge for traditional hierarchical organizations.”

(Wenger-Trayner, 2015: 4)

Starting from Lave and Wenger's theory, Taylor reiterates the idea that an ESP training classroom can function as a typical community of practice. Thus, the learners are gathered by a shared concern in the subject matters, participate in classroom activities, and learn to “negotiate and construct identities” by working and interacting with each other (Taylor: 2015, 150). According to Lave and Wenger, identities are “long-term, living relations between persons and their place and participation in the community of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 53). As the students legitimately take part in the community of practice, they undergo a process of change from being

“peripheral/novices” to full participants. This process, articulated by a mechanism of learning, enables students to acquire an identity in practice.

Learning in a community of practice is holistic, as it relies on the interdependence of the learner, the community, and the environment, or, as Lave and Wenger point out, it “implies emphasis on [...] the view that agent, activity, and the world mutually constitute each other” (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 32). Language is very important in this process, since the ability to communicate in the same way as the members of the community do is crucial to a practitioner’s recognition as a full member.

From a teaching perspective, to prepare students for participating in communities of practice within business organisations means to analyse the shared repertoire of the communities, that is, the way in which practitioners do things as they get to work together. It also implies adequate training in the discourse of these communities, characterised by specific genre which is discoverable through text analysis (Swales, 2008). Genre instruction can raise students’ awareness on the importance of understanding genre and its role or contribution to shared communicative purposes. John Flowerdew underlines the challenges posed by genre: “Someone participating in a genre who does not have a command of these specific patterns and the limits to their possible variability is quickly recognised as either incompetent or an outsider.” (Flowerdew, 2011: 124)

These sociocultural perspectives, which demonstrate that the domains of language, culture and socialisation are interconnected, have paved the way for an understanding of learning that goes beyond the classroom. According to Wenger-Trayner, “the class is not the primary learning event. It is life itself that is the main learning event.” (Wenger-Trayner, 2015: 5) By recreating the curriculum of practice in the school’s community of learners, teachers give students the opportunity to acquire the language and knowledge they need inside and outside the classroom.

Developing learners’ communicative competence

Noam Chomsky’s fundamental distinction between “*competence* (the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of his language) and *performance* (the actual use of language in concrete situations)” (Chomsky, 1965: 4) informed future theoretical considerations regarding effective language use and acquisition. Whereas Chomsky emphasised the role of form, structure and grammatical content in language learning, thus arguing that teachers should develop learners’ linguistic competence, Hymes asserted that the goal in language learning should be the development of communicative competence. This concept takes into account not only the linguistic component of the target language, but also the discourse and the context-related use of the language. The shift from a linguistic to a communicative approach in language teaching has shaped current teaching approaches and the design of courses and teaching materials. Hedge noted that:

“the concern with how learners can use and develop their communicative ability in addition to acquiring language knowledge of various kinds has led to the process approach to course design [...] the focus is not so much on *what* learners need to cover but on *how* they acquire language through performing it in the classroom.” (Hedge, 2000: 359)

Students' Integration in Target Communities of Practice: an ESP Perspective

ESP theory and practice have greatly benefitted from the emphasis on communicative competence, since learners' ability to communicate is the main condition of their participation in future communities of practice. As a result, classroom activities are meant to derive from the information offered by needs' analysis, and are designed as the actual or approximate versions of real activities. Ideally, the classroom should function as an extension of the world, yet, teachers should be aware that students' behaviour in communities of learning will always be different from those in a community of practice. The way they respond to ESP teachers and activities will not necessarily be the same to the way they would behave in front of instructors in a workplace (Beer, 2000).

In terms of practice, Communicative Language Teaching stresses the necessity of introducing "classroom activities that best facilitate learning" (Richards, 2005: 1). From this perspective, we shall present a series of classroom activities based on real-life communication through discussion, negotiations or debates. Irina Boncea points out that these communicative activities often "give rise to challenges that are impossible to anticipate" (Boncea, 2018: 43). This unpredictability of the outcome in terms of students' ideas, solutions and ways of managing debates or solving dilemmas turns communicative activities into a challenge not only for students, but also for teachers whose role is one of mediator. The interesting fact is that teaching is accomplished through practice, and thus both teachers and students are getting involved in a process of learning.

Talking about oneself

This seems to be an enjoyable activity, as students often like to speak about themselves, but do not often get the chance to do it. With new groups, it works well as an ice breaker because the students may not find themselves at ease to work together in pairs or groups unless they get to know each other a little first. Here are two sample activities that can be quickly organised.

1. *What we have in common*

The students are asked to work in pairs and find five things that they have in common. The advantage of such a task is that students are free to choose whatever topic they want, such as families, dwelling places, studies, daily routines, career plans, things they like or dislike etc. The partners are encouraged to ask questions and reply, and their findings should stress the things which bring them together.

2. *The interview*

Students need to be trained to talk about themselves because this is common practice at the beginning of job interviews or language proficiency tests. The activity can be organised as a role-play.

Student A

You are the examiner. Ask the candidate the following questions and take notes:

- What is your name?
- Where are you from?
- How old are you?
- What do you do?
- What are your favourite school subjects?
- What do you do in your free time?
- What do you plan to do in the future?

Student B

You are the candidate. Listen carefully to the questions and give complete answers in full sentences. Prepare to talk about:

- your name, age, birth place, family, studies;
- how you spend your free time;
- plans for the future.

Communication games

Communication games are based on information gaps. For example, students are divided into four large groups. Each group receives a different picture to study. Each picture is a graph showing sales revenue of different products as a percentage of a company's turnover in a particular year. There are four graphs for four different years. The teacher then collects the pictures and makes new groups of four students. In the new group, each student tells what his/her picture was about, and by discussing, the group has to find out about that company's financial situation. When they finish, each group is asked to present the situation to the class.

Discussion

Spontaneous discussion often develops in class when a student says something, another one reacts, others join in, and so on. Such discussions are usually lively and quite successful, but they are not planned. At the same time, there are cases when students say nothing or are reluctant to voice their opinions, either because the topic is too difficult, or because they are afraid to speak freely in English in front of the whole class. In order to avoid these situations and get students talking, the teacher needs to prepare the activity carefully, using the following techniques (Harmer, 2003: 124):

1. Give students time to prepare. When the teacher announces the topic, the students should be allowed some time to think about it, make notes, shape their opinions etc. In this way, they will feel confident when they join the discussion.
2. Let students work in groups first. When discussing in small groups, students feel less afraid to speak than in front of the whole class. They will be more willing to express their opinions and brainstorm ideas. The initial group discussion is also useful for the teacher who has the possibility to try and see if the topic is interesting enough to arouse students' interest and make them talk. If the topic is not suitable, the teacher can end the discussion there, without expanding it into a whole class session.
3. Give students a clear task. The discussion will be more efficient if students receive not only a topic for discussion, but also a task, such as:

Task: How important are the following aspects in showing a person's status in an organisation? Give each one a score from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important).

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| - a reserved parking space | - a personal business card |
| - an office with a window | - the size of your desk |
| - a uniform | - taking holidays when you like |
| - your name on your door | - flying business class |
| - a personal secretary | - a company credit card |
| - your own office | - having flexible working hours |
| - more than one seat in your office | - a uniform |
| - a company car | |

(Cotton, Falvy & Kent: 2018, 22)

Students' Integration in Target Communities of Practice: an ESP Perspective

The students will solve the task in pairs or in groups, and this works well as a warm-up activity and also as a preparation for any full-class session. For instance, in order to introduce a lesson on management, the teacher may choose a start-up up activity that involves group discussion. The students receive a list of skills and qualities that a good manager should have. Working in groups, they have to choose the six most important ones and discuss their choice.

To be a good manager you need to:

- be an expert.
- like people.
- enjoy giving orders.
- listen to others.
- make suggestions.
- control people.
- judge people's abilities.
- focus on tasks, not people.
- enjoy working with others.
- plan ahead.
- be older than your staff.
- be good with numbers.
- be good at managing conflict.

(Cotton, Falvy & Kent: 2012, 96)

Controversial statements are also good discussion provokers. The students are asked to form small groups and tell their opinions about the following statements:

1. At work appearance is more important than performance.
2. You should keep your private life totally separate from your work.
3. People don't change much during their working lives.
4. It is best to work for as few companies as possible.
5. Everybody should retire at 50.
6. People advance in their career if they use charm with superiors.
7. There are things that you can't plan for in your working life.
8. You should plan your retirement from an early age.

(Cotton, Falvy & Kent: 2018, 68)

Learners need certain skills to be able to handle discussions. Thus:

- they should clearly say what they think about the topic and why they think so;
- they need to listen carefully to what their colleagues have to say before they reply;
- they should ask their colleagues questions;
- they should be calm and polite if they disagree;
- they should finish the discussion by summarising their opinions.

Reaching a consensus

During this activity, students have to talk to each other and reach a consensus regarding a certain problem that they have to solve. This type of class activity encourages students to speak freely and express their own point of view. Here are two communicative activities that involve reaching a consensus.

1. Students are given several leaflets with cars advertisements. They are told that they are members of the Public Relation Department of a new cosmetics company. The company is expanding and it has been decided to purchase a new car for the use of the department. The car should be economical, easy to park, but it should also uphold the image of the company. Working in pairs, students should choose the car that they consider worth buying. When the pairs have reached an agreement, two pairs are joined together to negotiate a new choice. When they are ready, each group presents the car

that they have chosen and all the students discuss the options and decide which car to buy.

2. Another possible activity concerns moral dilemmas. Students are told that they have been offered a well-paid job by a rich employer, they badly need the money, but people have told them that the business is dishonest. The students are put in small groups and asked to brainstorm ideas in order to suggest possible, advisable or necessary courses of action. When they have finished, the groups have to justify their choices. Such a type of dilemma also gives students the opportunity to practise specific language items, in this case the use of modal verbs to express possibility, obligation and necessity.

Role-plays

Learners often enjoy “being” someone else, and in role-plays they have the chance to play a role which is given to them on a card. This type of activity has been very successful in ESP classes. Negotiations are quite appropriate in this case, as they prove to be interesting and challenging for students.

Task: Work in pairs, one of you playing the Sales Director of Amitta, the other playing the Chief Buyer of Magic World. Study your role-card and prepare to negotiate these points:

- different types of educational toys;
- delivery date;
- terms of payment;
- discount.

Student A

Sales Director, Amitta

Amitta, a medium-sized toy manufacturer in India, has some temporary cash flow problems. As Sales Director, you are eager to sign a contract with Magic World. It is October 1 and, because of your financial difficulties, you are behind schedule with your existing orders, and it would be difficult to make a wide range of toys in a short period of time. Your objectives are to:

1. sell Magic World 10 types of educational toys;
2. deliver by December 1;
3. get payment at sight;
4. offer 1% discount or no discount.

Student B

Chief Buyer, Magic World

Magic World is a major UK toy retail chain, based in London. As Chief-Buyer, you were impressed by the quality and diversity of Amitta’s latest toy releases, and want to place an order for 10,000 toys. You have been quoted a unit price of £100, including the cost of shipping. It is October 1, and you need to have your shops well-stocked six weeks before Christmas. Your objectives are to:

1. buy 20 types of educational toys;
2. receive goods by November 15;
3. pay by irrevocable letter of credit: 30 or 60 days presentation;
4. get 4% discount.

Students' Integration in Target Communities of Practice: an ESP Perspective

Dilemmas also provide good material for role-plays. The situation presented as an example of reaching a consensus activity can be role-played. Thus students are divided into small groups: one of them is the person with the problem, that is, the person who is offered the well-paid but dishonest job, the other members of the group are the counsellors.

Simulations

Simulations are similar to role-plays, with the difference that, in simulations students are not playing any roles, they are themselves. The more realistic the simulations are, the more enthusiastic the students will be to take part in the activity. The idea of a simulation, as in the case of role-plays, is to recreate a real world situation in the classroom. For this type of activity to work, students must accept a certain function and see themselves not as language learners, but as the real people in the simulation. They must also accept a simulated environment, such as a meeting room or an airport (Harmer, 2003: 133). For instance, the students are told that the university has decided to stop the Erasmus exchange programme for students because of lack of funds. As members of the students' union, they have to meet in a conference room and come up with suggestions of what can be done for the exchange to continue. Initially, they are asked to work in groups of four and make a list of their ideas, and then they compare their suggestions with the rest of the students. The teacher may take part in the simulation as a participant (in this case, as a member of the students' union), or he may act as a prompter, making suggestions and helping the students during the activity.

Once the simulation is finished, the teacher needs to organise a feedback session in order to establish which decisions were reached and why, whether the activity was successful or not, whether all students got involved or not etc. The feedback is more efficient if the teacher records the whole activity. In this way, the students can see how effective their communication was, what mistakes they made, and also how linguistically accurate they were.

Problem solving

This type of activity encourages students to work together in order to solve a problem. It also involves reaching a consensus, since problems often have several possible solutions. The students are initially given some background information about the problem that they have to solve.

Background

Doré, a well-known brand of coffee, is owned by a company based in France. It is an exclusive product for customers who appreciate the taste of flavoured ground coffee, and who are willing to buy this product which costs more than other similar types of coffee on the market.

Problems

In the past 18 months, Doré's market share has declined by 25%. There are several factors which have led to this situation:

1. *Price*: There are similar products on the market sold at a considerably lower price, especially in supermarkets.
2. *Brand loyalty*: As the market offers a large variety of products, consumers are no longer attached to one particular brand.
3. *Brand image*: Doré no longer looks an attractive and up-to-date brand.

Possible solutions

- a. Enlarge the target market. Bring some changes to the product (taste, quality, logo, label etc.) so that it could appeal to other market segments.
- b. Reduce the price by 20-30%.
- c. Come up with a new product, such as a decaffeinated one or an instant coffee under the Doré brand.
- d. Stretch the brand by selling cafetieres or coffee machines under Doré's name.
- e. Make deals with important hotel chains or restaurants to sell the coffee.
- f. Relaunch the brand using a new advertising campaign. Consider having the brand endorsed by a celebrity.

Task: Work in groups of four. You are all members of the marketing team. Discuss Doré's case, considering the advantages and disadvantages of each solution. Decide what to do in order to solve the problem, that is, to increase the brand's market share and its profits.

In order to be successful and encourage speaking, communicative activities need to be well prepared. Apart from the "thinking" time that students should be allowed, preparation also involves physical arrangements into pairs or groups, or it may involve sitting or standing, or even the possibility of students talking secretly.

Conclusion

The concept of community of practice has changed the perspective on knowing and learning, and influenced theory and practice in many domains. In the field of ESP, it has broadened the area of investigation covered by needs' analysis by directing the research outside the classroom, in the real world of work. Sociologists' emphasis on the significant role of sociocultural factors in the process of learning parallels linguistic concerns with discourse features and the context in which language is used.

In the light of these theoretical considerations, teaching approaches have shifted their focus from competence to performance, that is, from "knowing" the language to "doing" something with the language. In the ESP class, students' communicative competence can be developed through a wide range of activities which are conceived as "mirrors" or "extensions" of real-life situations. Teachers have to conduct the activities in such a way as to ensure a high-degree of knowledge transfer and an efficient team work. In the end, the classroom itself functions as a community of practice in which learners negotiate their roles and acquire lifelong learning skills.

References:

- Beer, A. (2000). Diplomats in the Basement: Graduate Engineering Students and Intercultural Communication. In Dias, P., Paré, A. (editors), *Transitions: Writing in Academic and Workplace Settings*. Cresskill: Hampton Press, pp. 61-88.
- Boncea, I. J. (2018). Teaching and Training Approaches during Technical English Classes. *Analele Universității din Craiova*, [1/2018], pp. 37-45.
- Brindley, G. (1989). The Role of Needs Analysis in Adult ESL Programme Design. In Johnson, R. (editor), *The Second Language Curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 43-78.

Students' Integration in Target Communities of Practice: an ESP Perspective

- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Cotton, D., Falvey, D., Kent, S. (2012). *Market Leader. Pre-Intermediate Business English Course Book*. Harlow: Pearson.
- Cotton, D., Falvey, D., Kent, S. (2018). *Market Leader. Intermediate Business English Course Book*. Harlow: Pearson.
- Flowerdew, J. (2011). Reconciling Contrasting Approaches to Genre Analysis: The Whole Can Equal More Than the Sum of the Parts. In Belcher, D., Johns, A. M., Paltridge, B. (editors), *New Directions in English for Specific Purposes Research*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, pp. 119-144.
- Harmer, J. (2003). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Harlow: Longman.
- Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Huckin, T. N. (1988). Achieving Professional Communicative Relevance in a 'Generalized' ESP Classroom. In Chamberlain, D., Baumgarden, R. J. (editors), *ESP in the Classroom: Practice and Evaluation*, Oxford: Modern English Publications in association with the British Council, pp. 61-71.
- Hutchinson, T., Waters, A. (1994). *English for Specific Purposes. A Learning-centred approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hymes, D. H. (1972). On Communicative Competence. In Pride, J. B. and Holmes, J. (editors), *Sociolinguistics. Selected Readings*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp. 269-293.
- Hyon, S. (2018). *Introducing Genre and English for Specific Purposes*. London: Routledge.
- Lave, J., Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Marcu, D. (2020). The Post-communist Era: "the bloom" of ESP in Romania. *Revista de Științe Politice*, [66], 117-126.
- Munby, J. (1978). *Communicative Syllabus Design: A Sociolinguistic Model for Defining the Content of Purpose-Specific Language Programmes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (1988). *The Learner-Centred Curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (2005). *Communicative Language Teaching*. Singapore: SEAMEO, RELC.
- Scrivener, J. (2005). *Learning Teaching*. Oxford: Macmillan.
- Swales, J. M. (2008). *Genre Analysis. English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, P. (2015). Communities of practice: Identity in a workplace English for Specific Purposes classroom in Thailand. *International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning*, [7], 149-169.
- Wenger-Trayner, E. & B. (2015). *Communities of practice. A brief introduction* [online, accessed: 28.10.2021]. Available: <https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>

Article Info

Received: November 05 2021

Accepted: November 14 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Challenging Creativity in Business English Classes

Cristina Maria Andrei¹⁾

Abstract:

Teaching Business English is intimidating for the inexperienced teacher because of the huge quantity of professional terms that need to be introduced in the lesson and of the difficulty to grasp the real meaning and use in various contexts. Numerous materials and textbooks which have recently appeared on the market due to the globalization of the business world are extremely useful and seem to offer great support, facilitating the teacher's work and creating a feeling of comfort and relief. In fact, it is a matter of teaching students to deepen their language skills in order to use them successfully in business contexts, not about teaching Economics in English. However, at a certain moment, students may get used to the comfort of being “trapped” in this “business English routine” and may react surprisingly when asked to get out of this warm atmosphere. Students in business are not mentally structured to explore their imaginative skills; they are rather centered on the practical side of the issues they have to solve. Therefore, learning how to think outside the box is a matter of effort and dedication. For the teacher, it is mainly a struggle to make students understand the importance of developing the creative aspect, of generating original and exciting ideas. It's not common to demand creativity from technical English students but it's surely a challenge which needs to be dealt with great care. The present paper is about attempting to exceed some limits and see the reactions and feedback.

Keywords: *creativity; business; limits; challenge; opportunity.*

¹⁾ Senior Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Department of Applied Modern Languages, Romania, Phone: 0040745704884; Email: cristina_ndr@yahoo.com

Challenging Creativity in Business English Classes

Creativity- definition of the concept

Creativity is a large term which includes special skills and features that a person possesses. It refers to the ability to produce ideas and generate solutions to problems by following the inner thoughts. According to Xerri & Vassallo, "being creative means daring to do things differently, thus expanding the boundaries of what we know about teaching and learning in order to discover new worlds within the confines of our classroom". (Xerri & Vassallo, 2000: 3). Creativity is basically the ability to cross the limits of our reasoning and enter the realm of imagination.

Is Creativity Important in Business English Classes?

Creativity is such a difficult concept to consider in the current technological world and pattern of education. In the case of Business English students, it is even harder to imagine since learners' main interests are especially related to well-defined objectives that are realistic and quite well specified. Business students are focused on developing language skills that would offer them the chance to become successful communicators in business contexts such as: telephoning, meetings, emails, memos, reports and s.o, skills that would meet the expectations of the actual business world. It is no wonder that the English teacher is somehow bound to conceive a course that would apply to the needs of the learners relying on authentic materials and situations that are adapted and connected to the present labor market. The English teacher needs to adopt a professional approach, working on mastering a wide range of skills and techniques. Just as Swiggett concludes : "it is the function of business English to be "business like," i.e., to issue orders, to state facts, to communicate decisions, to report actions. The chief ends therefore to be aimed at in business English are: (1) Objectivity in presentation of facts. The elimination of the personal, the subjective, the bias of wish; in short, the imaginative light (...) which has no place in a businesslike presentation of fact. (2) Accuracy of statement. (...) Business English requires clearness of definition, sharpness of outline, distinctness of detail. (3) Precision of form. (...) Business English must be compact, precise, concise. (...) In Business English there is no room for the play of idiosyncrasy of expression (...)." (Swiggett, 1922: 9)

There is not much room for creativity in such a realistic oriented class; better said there is a narrow path for imagination that could be used, but, following it, requires a great deal of effort and involvement from the part of the teacher; moreover, students need to find a certain amount of satisfaction and enjoyment in order to be ready to become part of a creative practical task.

Although creativity seems to be a point of interest for Humanistic students, it is of vital importance for technical students as well. Developing a sense of creativity is not as easy as it seems, it needs practice to stimulate creative thinking and exercise to identify solutions to problems. Stimulating imagination at the right point and time will lead to a positive attitude and will foster future implication and courage to express opinions, conceptions, personal thoughts, etc. Developing it, may enhance their ability to be open-minded in their future careers (accepting and generating ideas), to analyze situations, to provide multiple solutions to problems which may arise, to structure business plans in an appropriate way and to formulate relevant questions and answers. Companies generally look for people who can come up with new perspectives and can stimulate the employees with a modern mentality and a fresh attitude.

The teacher is the one that plays the main role in generating imaginative tasks. He/she is the “manager” of his/her own class. He/she cannot pretend students to be creative in the class unless he/she is prone to be creative. Gregerson, Snyder&Kaufman point out that: “(...) teachers who want to enhance creativity in their students should serve as role models. In this way, the definition of creative assignments from the perspective of the teacher is important. I try to model creative thinking in my development of assignments in multiple ways, such as by being flexible and open to new ideas, taking risks and “thinking outside the box”. (Gregerson & Snyder & Kaufman, 2013: 171).

However, being a highly imaginative teacher is not enough to stir the students’ interest. A teacher should be well prepared in advance, should have confidence in himself/herself and at the same time generate confidence among students. One relevant step is to organize everything carefully, by selecting enjoyable activities and providing good explanations regarding the target that should be attained.

Interesting materials accompanied by a proper method of approach can lead to an increase of interest and may be engaging for students. Once they discover the beauty of creativity, they will be more than willing to be get involved and may even come with their own suggestions, thus contributing to the design of the lesson. Creativity is a matter of practice; the more you exercise, the better you become. It may appear impossible, at least at the beginning, to come up with ideas, solutions and imaginative skills but, in time, business students can learn how to deal with such situations. They may discover the bright side of such tasks and may use their intelligence to provide excellent answers. Even later on in their work life, business people will be more than eager to be involved in all kinds of activities that will put their mind to contribution. Regardless of the level of difficulty of the tasks, they will never step back in front of a new and fresh activity. The key obstacle is to overcome the embarrassing aspects of not mastering the language properly or the fear of being laughed at. Once they surpass it, they will embrace the opportunity with great enthusiasm. After all, business people are used to being in control of things and they will prove their abilities to master the unpredictable. Ellis Johnson emphasized that:

“used to being in control and making decisions, senior managers will probably take an assertive role in their own training. Most will be confident but if they feel that their language skills are relatively poor, they may be somewhat sensitive and embarrassed on this point. As intelligent people, they will not wish to be talked down to, given activities which seem facile, or given materials that lack credibility. The approach that will work best with most senior managers is to enable them to demonstrate their expertise by giving them the opportunity to explain what happens in their company, to express their own ideas, and to discuss problems at a high conceptual level. They will want to be challenged by tasks which are demanding and require imagination”. (Ellis & Johnson, 1994: 58).

Reasons for Introducing Creativity to Business English Students

a) enhance fluency development

The central point for introducing creativity to business English students is to generate fluency in the sense of using the language in an corresponding way when working in a team. Fluency is mainly connected to speech but writing is also included. It is one of the central targets of any learner and it is a hardworking, complex and long term process. It develops gradually and requires patience and practice. Just as in the case

Challenging Creativity in Business English Classes

of children, there is a tight link between speaking and writing and fluency in writing may be performed by speaking first. Research has shown that: “the relationship between talk and writing has been demonstrated repeatedly, showing that both underachievers and high achievers benefit from opportunities to talk before, during and after writing.(...)Through talk at the initial stages of the writing process, children generate and share ideas, playfully experiment with options and capture, shape and consider what it is they might want to say. (...)Furthermore, through developing confidence in playful and creative oral contexts, children learn to take risks with ideas, words and images, and this supports their fluency with ideas and enables them to make more divergent connections. Improvisation and playful engagement play a largely unrecognised role in the compositional process, and yet they are the heart of developing creatively in writing.” (Cremin & Reedy & Bearne & Dombey, 2015: 88)

When it comes to business students, besides oral practice, listening may also be used as a tool of generating fluent writing; the teacher may play a listening material about a company employee who describes a pie chart or a graph regarding the sales of the company. On the basis of the audio script, students are handed key expressions which are generally used in such situations and the stages of the presentation; divided into pairs, students may be asked to present a slide to his/her partner paying attention to the previously given information. Hence, students know they have to follow a certain path by inserting the notions acquired; however, this way they are unconsciously directed towards fluent speech but also towards creativity since they are stimulated to add their own chunks of sentences. Fluent and creative writing could be generated by providing similar visual materials on which students are supposed to produce presentations. Presentations, whether oral or written require a great deal of creativity because they need to be adapted to the needs of one particular customer, to provide explanations and to motivate them.

Thus, the materials which are used to generate creative ideas may include certain expressions which are meant to widen the vocabulary knowledge and may stimulate the students to place them in various contexts. Such contexts may also be provided as a visual and audio support before proceeding to the actual imaginative situation. In the case of business, they may be in the form of phone conversations, case studies, presentations, negotiations, etc. Moreover, business cultural aspects should be part of the English lessons since business people travel a lot these days and have to attend online meetings with people from all over the world; getting familiarized with the cultural differences will support them in adopting a correct professional attitude and will prevent them from making cultural mistakes.

b) stimulates teamwork and develops leadership skills

Teaching business students to cope with their imaginative skills in pairs or groups, will develop their strategic skills of working in a team and will lead to a better understanding of each other’s needs; it also helps to consolidate relationships and to do networking. This type of interaction is beneficial for increasing self-confidence and make others become confident. On the other hand, some students may find out that they possess leadership skills and may try to guide the group towards achieving success. Putting their mind to contribution in order to generate constructive and smart ideas will sharp their instincts of managing an activity.

However, not all participants in the class may find the creative exercises attractive. Being somehow more tempted to assign a practical side to the tasks they have to accomplish, they will reject the idea from the start. They can come up with all sorts of

excuses such as the lack of interesting ideas or the boring aspect of having to conceive something which is not of any particular interest to them or that they cannot see the real efficiency of the exercise. Therefore, before proceeding to the activities, the teacher should think of ways to attract and stimulate active participation. He/she is the center of the teaching process, he/she is the voice of the class, the leader of the groups, the coordinator of everything that happens during the lesson. The tone of the voice, his/her expressiveness and clarity when giving instructions, the stress, the accent, proper encouragement and positive approach of the imaginative topic are just a part of the behavior features which diminish the level of stress in class.

It is also highly vital for the teacher to adapt the content of the English book or to come up with additional resources which could offer the possibility to practise creativity. Sticking to the information which could be found in the pages of the lesson will not be useful and will leave the students the impression of a “mechanical” act of teaching; they will get used to it and any further attempt to cross the limits of the coursebook will take the students out of their comfort zone and will make them feel reluctant to speak. Thus, coursebooks should be used only to support the teaching act and should frequently be accompanied by extra materials. As the subsequent website points out: “Most language teachers still rely on coursebooks to provide the activities they will use in the classroom and most coursebooks do not typically provide activities which foster creativity (<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/ideas-using-coursebook-creatively>). It is therefore important that teachers make use of their coursebook as a resource rather than follow it as a script and they develop the confidence, awareness and creativity to adapt coursebooks activities in ways which can foster creativity”.

The advantages of using creativity in classes are more than just expressing ideas and raising the freedom of expression; it’s about collaboration with classmates, integration and adaptability. The entertaining side is an additional “bonus” which redresses stress and contributes to a pleasant classroom environment. Accordingly, Kulkarni mentions that: “Creativity is something which has originality in thinking and implementation of its ideas in action. In simple words, it is a logical and disciplined process of rationalizing, evaluating, analyzing the given information or a situation. (...) Benefits of creativity are excellent team building and team work, increased engagement and interaction, improved ability to attract attention, increased fun, happiness and sense of achievement.” (Kulkarni, 2020: 108).

Unfavorable Aspects for Creativity

a) The number of students in the class could be problematic for a teacher no matter the type of materials intended to be taught. Outnumbered classes, or, on the contrary, small size classes are a real issue for activities which are connected to creativity. However, having the right number of students in the class is, in most cases, difficult to achieve. The main drawback of numerous participants is the difficulty to coordinate them and to offer the same amount of attention. Working in big groups also means less participation for some members and restrictive time to expose their ideas. Some students in the class may find the idea of taking part in activities which involve imagination, discouraging. They may feel the pressure of having to produce more than they are ready to do, of having the eyes of the teacher on them and they may give up on collaborating from the start.

Challenging Creativity in Business English Classes

Another aspect to be taken into consideration is the students' focus on preparing for the final exam. Business students expect to receive practical tests based on business notions and less on the creative side. Their principal point of interest is when the teacher points out notions that will be part of the exam and that could help them obtain high marks. Such an attitude could really prevent them from exploring their imaginative skills when handed in a task of such type. Lessons which strictly rely on exam topics will "kill" all productive ideas and will only support the mechanical acquisition of the language. It would be a sort of a "technical" approach of language teaching that could lead to an automatic acquisition of the language. In this sense, language acquisition is no longer a flexible process, but a rather "stiff" one whose main goal is "practicability".

"Techno" teachers enjoy great appreciation when it comes to the new generations. Technology is a wonderful way of transferring knowledge into a world full of colors, sound and adventure. The great adventure of teaching may find its pillars in all the gadgets available on the market: laptops, tablets, projectors, smart boards, etc and in the great variety of online resources: educational podcasts, blogs, technological applications. Traditional English classes are no longer a viable source of information for the young students who are in touch with technology all the time. Still, technology mustn't be perceived as an instrument designed to replace the teacher. It has to be seen as a creative tool conceived to facilitate the teaching act and enhance students learning process in an easier and funnier modality. It brings authentic situations closer to the learners and creates a tight connection between the teacher and the students who are familiarized with computer skills and eager to use them on all occasions. For teachers, technology means power and freedom to put into practice their knowledge in such a way that students become attracted to the lessons and understand the positive side and benefits of it. Basically speaking: "it's important to remember that technology is just a tool. It can be an important tool that can have a major positive impact on language learning, but great teaching and learning can certainly happen without it. In fact, like any other tool, its effect depends on how it's used (...) as a way to reinforce what has already been learned, as a strategic vehicle through which to heighten student engagement, as a way to help students develop and deepen face-to-face relationships, can result (...) in significant student learning gains. If it is viewed, as a (...) time for teachers to do prep work (...) or as an opportunity to get by without thinking through a lesson plan, then it can actually result in a negative learning impact". (Ferlazzo&Sypniewski, 2012: 266)

A current tendency, which is more and more commonly met, is that of studying English just to have a better employment prospect. Business students are more interested in mastering the language skills which are requested on the labor market and tend to leave aside the pleasure of simply acquiring a new language and using it in other contexts which are not connected to the workplace.

Following the strict line of a coursebook, teachers become limited when it comes to creativity. Choosing to do that will make students obey the structure of the lessons and "be afraid" to exceed its boundaries. The teacher cannot foster creativity if he/she is not a creative person.

b)The noise inside or around the class is the first factor to hinder creativity. No matter how powerful the sound may be, it is a stress matter that will affect productivity in the class. Creativity under such circumstances is out of the question. Sometimes it is impossible to predict such a situation. It may happen for the teacher to prepare an activity related to imagination and creativity and to be impossible to put it into practice

because of people working in construction somewhere close to the class or some repair works done inside the building. External noise is an unfortunate event and not much can be done about it but to always have additional materials to overcome such an embarrassing situation. When it comes to the noise inside the class, there are all sorts of ideas and solutions that could be used to keep the students focused and active. In this case, the teacher has the power in his/her hands to stop sound pollution. One possible disturbance factor may be the use of mobile phones, which could distract attention, students who are late for classes or those who ask for the permission to leave the classroom for different reasons. Eating or drinking something during activities represent another potential disturbance elements.

c) Misconceptions. Removing misconceptions of the type: “I am not good at initiating a conversation”, “I am not capable of imagining things”, “I cannot talk in front of my classmates”, “I don’t have a good English level”, etc. is a crucial element before initiating any creative activity. Low self-esteem will diminish and even “cancel” the success of the teacher’s proposition. In the case of Business English students who are not used to spending time performing imaginative tasks, this negative perspective is, unfortunately, quite common and not easy to solve. The teacher needs to prove flexibility in delivering tasks, softness in voice and action; clear explanations, new ideas, a correct distribution of students in groups, a well sketched strategy, open mindedness with regard to the students’ thoughts are only some of the qualities that could help students remove mental barriers and plunge into the realm of imagination.

Creative Activities in Business Classes

Although, creativity doesn’t seem to play a significant role in the business environment, it is present in a great deal of situations. Teachers should be aware that developing student’s creativity during the English class will be extremely useful for their future careers. It is well-known that: “In the economic and labour market contexts (...) creativity generally refers to “coming up with new ideas and solutions. Creativity is about producing new business solutions , new companies and new technical solutions”. (Lancrin, S. V., Gonzales-Sancho, C., Bouckaert, M., Fernandez Barrerra, M., Jacotin. G., Urgel, J., Vidal, Q., 2019:54)

Creativity is, in fact, the ability to produce new ideas and solutions to problems. It is about the courage to look for other perspectives, to evaluate the novelty of the selected solution, to foresee its outcome. Critical thinking is a different concept which is meant to assess ideas or solutions. It is about multiple perspectives of the same business issue, about suppositions and alternatives. Both creativity and critical should be part of the teaching process because the former contributes to teaching students how to come up with new ideas or products while the latter is centered on expressing judgment on a particular aspect.

Business students need to have in view that creativity and critical thinking are present in the business environment at all levels and they should be willing to “educate” their mind to respond positively to these challenges which are meant to enhance deeper expertise in their field of knowledge as well as deeper learning. Therefore, it is common practice for :“creative managers to regularly conduct brainstorming sessions with their teams to develop new ideas. Beforehand, it has to be made absolutely clear that such meetings proceed devoid of restrictions, negativity, assessments and criticism.” (VV.AA, 2000:15)

There is a wide range of activities which could be inserted along the English lessons and that could foster creativity but, just as in the above mentioned quotation,

Challenging Creativity in Business English Classes

they have to be exercised in a “safe” environment. Better said, mistakes should be approached with a “soft” attitude in such a way that they are perceived as a chance for improvement and progress, not as a failure. Once this condition is fulfilled the teacher can proceed to the initiation of the activities: On <https://www.teflcourse.net> there are mentioned seven ways of transforming the English class into an interactive one, exercising creativity and having fun at the same time: negotiations (students role play a negotiation having some lists with demands and concessions), telephone call role-plays (on different topics) , yearly comparison information gap (students are handed some sheets of paper containing information about the performance of the company during the current year and the previous year; both sides have some information gaps which can be filled in on the basis of the questions they ask), business diaries-arranging a meeting (students are given different diaries with appointments for the following week and they have to formulate questions to find a common free period of time when they can meet), Dragon’s Den/Shark Tank (some students are offered sheets of paper with descriptions of newly invented products on the market and others receive question sheets where a certain amount of money is written in order to play the role of investors; in turns they have to pitch their products and to ask questions to decide which is the best product to invest money in), tell me about your company (the teacher distributes some brochures which contain information about a company and students rely on it to describe it) and analyzing charts and graphs (students get charts and graphs from the teacher and after analyzing them, they have to present them to their classmates by pointing out the trends).

Students who, despite the encouragement of the teacher and peers, can’t spot a different perspective on a given situation may be guided by following some tips. In Macmillan life skills ([***www. macmillanenglish.com](http://www.macmillanenglish.com)), there are mentioned five skills which could be efficient in becoming more creative in finding solutions to problems:

1) Look around you – is a phase in which you can consider that everything around you is problematic so all the things are seen as challenges; the students are stimulated to think of questions about all the objects around them.

2) Avoid traps along the way- this stage refers to having multiple perspectives on an issue and not just stick to one; being flexible in analyzing a situation and making decisions is essential for developing the creative side.

3) Look at causes is, in most cases, more important than the problem itself and, that is because, sometimes, the “root” of a problem may lead to a deeper and more serious problem than the one that is under analysis.

4) Take a step back is recommended in order to get a different angle; “tough” matters require some time to be solved and it is advisable to “delay” a little bit the answer so as to find the most suitable one. Being preoccupied to find a quick clarification, some aspects may be overlooked. It is therefore necessary to take a step back and just have a pause doing something completely different. The period of time spent away from the problem will allow the brain to function better, to obtain a “clearer” view and make a wiser decision.

5) Generate ideas- working in groups is a positive experience because all the members may bring their contribution; it is obvious that not all ideas will be good but none of them should be rejected. Some members may find a source of inspiration in such “weak” ideas for bringing to light interesting reactions.

Conclusions

In conclusion, I strongly believe that developing creativity in the English classes should not be limited to non-technical faculties. On the contrary, teachers should try to make use of any opportunity to set the context for creating a situation which puts the students' imagination at work and develops their sense of "freedom"; "freedom" should not be understood in the concrete sense, that of doing whatever they want in class but in the sense of feeling comfortable to express thoughts and ideas without feeling ashamed to do that; by intervening in debates without thinking of the possibility of being "assessed" by others; by simply taking part in all the activities generated by the teacher not having a slight concern about possible errors or judgment of any kind. It is the teacher's responsibility to correct inappropriate behavior in class or to "put out" conflicts when certain discussions overcome some limits or disagreement appear.

Above all, teachers should "eliminate" the possible misconceptions about creativity. Some students may possess a certain amount of "fear" in speaking their mind, in analyzing a situation, in sharing ideas, etc. This is because there is a tendency to believe that not all people have a creative mind. This is, for sure, an incorrect conception. There is a dose of creativity inside each of us, only that it may manifest in different directions or in various contexts. However, with a little bit of practice, students may discover and develop their sense of creativity. In conclusion, it is important to be aware of the fact that:

"All pupils have creative abilities and their creativity takes a wide variety of forms. Each individual has a wide range of ideas, perceive things in a personal way and, at times, shows insight and inventiveness. Some pupils demonstrate high levels of creativity in particular areas (...). Others may be creative in the range and quality of ideas and words that they use in language (...). Some pupils may not be creative in one particular area but show creativity in a range of contexts across the curriculum". (Sheir, A., Alodwan, T., 2010: 53).

References:

- Cremin, T., Reedy, D., Bearne, E., Dombey, H., (2015). *Teaching English Creatively*, Routledge Publishing, London
- Dunsmore, Linda (2019). 7 Awesome Ideas for Business English Classes. Retrieved from: <https://www.teflcourse.net/blog/7-awesome-ideas-for-business-english-classes-ittt-tefl-blog/>
- Ellis, M., Johnson, C., (1994). *Teaching Business English*, Oxford University Press
- Ferlazzo, L., Sypniewski, K.H. (2012). *The ESL/ELL Teacher's Survival Guide*, Jossey Bass Imprint, USA
- Gregerson, M.B., Snyder, H.T., Kaufman, J.C. (2013). *Teaching Creatively and Teaching Creativity*, Springer Science+Business Media, New York
- Kulkarni, S., (2020). *Empowering Gurus*, One Point Six Technologies Pvt.Ltd. India
- Lancrin, S. V., Gonzales-Sancho, C., Bouckaert, M., Fernandez Barrerra, M., Jacotin. G., Urgel, J., Vidal, Q., (2019). *Fostering Students' Creativity and Critical Thinking*, OECD Publishing, Paris
- Maley, A., Peachey, N., (2015). *Creativity in the English language classroom*, British Council.
- Sheir, A., Alodwan, T., (2010). *Creativity&Teaching English as a Foreign Language*
- Swiggett, Glen, Levin, (1922). *Commercial Education Leaflet*, U.S. Government Printing Office

Challenging Creativity in Business English Classes

- Tomlinson, Brian. Ideas for using the coursebook creatively. Retrieved from: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/ideas-using-coursebook-creatively>
- Xerri, D., Vassallo, O. (2000). *Creativity in English Language Teaching*, Published by ELT Council
- VV.AA., (2000). *Business English*, Cordon Press, Barcelona.
- *** (2015). Retrieved from: <https://www.macmillanenglish.com/us/blog-resources/article/creativity>

Article Info

Received: September 13 2021

Accepted: October 28 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Linguistic Power Structures: Analysing Social Strategies of Communication and Negotiation

LavinIU Lăpădat¹⁾, Maria-Magdalena Lăpădat²⁾

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to provide focus on the fundamental connection between communication and negotiation. The ability to communicate, to speak and be heard, and ultimately to empathise shall establish a bond of trust between the interlocutors participating in a business negotiation. An honest discussion is the warden of trust and credibility between parties. The generation of a climate of reliability, characterised by mutual cooperation, can significantly aid in the effectiveness of collaborative arguments, as well as the assumption of associative bonds among partners. The purpose of language is to break down barriers, to explore that which we have in common towards the just detriment of the often capricious and artificial factors that seek to separate individuals. Language and honest communication can open the doors of empathy, synergy and symbiosis, making sure all the individuals involved in the process of negotiation prosper, flourish and experience exponential growth through the power of communicational togetherness.

Keywords: *communication; negotiation; language; agreement; cooperation.*

¹⁾ Assistant Professor, Ph.D, University of Craiova, Department of Applied Modern Languages, Phone: 0040773985380, Romania, Email: lapadat_lavinIU@yahoo.com.

²⁾ Assistant Professor, Ph.D, University of Craiova, Department of Applied Modern Languages, Phone: 0040731297911, Romania, Email: magda_faurar@yahoo.com.

Introduction

A thorough investigation into the process of information dissemination and more precisely the objectives of that procedure shall uncover the fact that language, the deliberate distribution, the pre-planned exchange of ideas, shall expose the transactional nature of our communicative endeavours. Subsequently, negotiation constitutes a superior function of language and therefore, we can predicate, based on this pattern of logic, that a good communicator will ultimately be a good negotiator within an enhanced social framework.

Extrapolating the importance of language in the area of social exchanges establishes a clear and undeniable bond between linguistics and the transactional world in which we are all willing or unwilling participants, always negotiating a bigger, better deal for ourselves and our loved ones, in an attempt to assert control and dominance throughout our external space, using our internal prowess. If the communicator is nothing more than a negotiator and vice versa, we can assert that a successful communicator/negotiator should first find all potential methodologies that will help him or her control the negotiation/communication process. A successful negotiation means always being prepared for any and every eventuality, finding ways to reach even the most difficult of interlocutors through preparedness, strategic analysis and transactional empathy, the ability to place oneself inside the mind of the communication partner in order to understand the needs, strengths and vulnerabilities of that person.

Strategic Socio-Economic Communication

The best strategy in starting a successful business endeavour relies upon the natural or even artificial creation of a good, decent and trustworthy reputation when forging the bonds of trust and cooperation with business partners or employees. Therefore, cooperation is reliant on the parties involved and the circle of trust that must include all the participating players that are overtly linked by stable and available communication. According to Gotti, cooperation must stem from a significant degree of specialisation, a dimension of preparedness that activates both language and specific settings: “[...] the specialist use of language in contexts which are typical of a specialized community stretching across the academic, the professional, the technical and the occupational areas of knowledge and practice. This perspective stresses both the type of user and the domain of use, as well as the special application of language in that setting. For specialized discourse to develop, all three of these factors need to be present.” (Gotti, 2011:15-16).

When trying to ascertain business negotiations from a social, communicative perspective, one can uncover three major pillars of distribution and consolidation. The first vector of the equation is the actual preparation of the negotiation. The endeavour of actually planning what exactly you want to obtain out of the negotiation, of what the potential partner(s) might want to achieve as well and actually predicting how the debate and arguments will progress throughout the entire process will constitute a prerequisite of the entire negotiating platform. Secondly, having a plan and a strategy is nothing without the proper implementation and execution of that strategic construct. Talking things through with your partners, finding out what they want to say, not what you might think they want to say will push the negotiation through and formulate a reasonable quid pro quo that will be mutually advantageous for all parties involved. And last but not least, one must find the wisdom and energy to harness the final outcome of the negotiations and finalise the procedures into an unshakable agreement that cannot fall

prey to subsequent interpretations or malevolent misinterpretations. Were we to perceive a communicative act of negotiation as walking on a tight rope, then we are bound to consider that the last step is always the hardest, and were we to lose focus, let our guard down for even a second, would mean a collapse in both communication and negotiation: “Communication is a key element in the development of every society.” (Stoian, 2019:134)

In truth, negotiations are a complex communicative undertaking, as they are most often plagued by complications, diversions and even sabotage, thus attesting to the fact that they are never smooth or peaceful in their progression. The preparations taking place before the debate are a useful tool but they are by no means a guarantee for stability or communicative equanimity. Almost always, talking about even the most insignificant of details, can lead to new doubts, those doubts will foster new proposals and those proposals, if not kept in check, can lead to endless and counterproductive debates.

Understanding linguistics in economics is crucial to the entire process of preparing for a negotiation. A lack of readiness in the anticipation of future exchanges will expose the unprepared or underprepared party to a reactive chain of events he or she will not be able to control, thus, transforming a proactive speaker into a reactive victim. Being ready, but above it all, being willing and able to talk will shift the focus towards a constructive approach in the communication and negotiating process, forsaking all stubbornness, rigidity or aggressivity.

In the opinion of Harish Tigari, an act of negotiation should abandon negativity and move towards a more cooperative, open and empathetic process: “The negotiation is an interactive process with collective bargaining between two or more parties involved in contractual understanding. The skill refers to understand or to have the knowledge or to know how, means in negotiation skill of the negotiator plays a significant role while bargaining something. The negotiation skill includes tactical thinking, effective listening, assertiveness, empathy, and record keeping, but the behavioural observation by the parties with one another and open ended and close ended questions between the parties are very important.” (Tigari, 2018:1275).

As both a communicator and a negotiator, one must first decide on what you want to obtain in order to articulate and understand what you are also willing to put on the table. If you want to know what you walk away with, you must first analyse not your own objectives, but rather the objectives of your interlocutor. Knowing your rival is quite often enough more important than even knowing yourself, and this transactional, communicational empathy is often the gatekeeper to a successful negotiation, to a felicitous act of communication. Formulating a message based on the desires and expectations of your listener is far more relevant than just basing that message solely and naively on yourself and your gregarious selfish needs. Communication can paradoxically often bring more benefits to the communicator if it is assembled as a selfless empathetic act rather than an instinctual, selfish assault on the interlocutor. Overall, empathy represents the ability to look at things from the perspective of the other, to walk a mile in the proverbial shoes, thus, allowing you to get into the proper mindset necessary for preparing a negotiation. Our own desires and objectives are clear and easily accessible to us, what we don't know is how many of them we can put into practice unless we comprehend and ascertain the full spectrum of purposes brought forth by the other party. Communication and negotiation allow you to bring your objectives to life through the acknowledgement and recognition of the second or even third party,

which in certain contexts can result in symbiosis or even synergy, facilitating positive results for all participants and eliciting a growth potential that can, under exceptional circumstances, grow exponentially and generate a superior level of prosperity, trust and eloquence.

Negotiation as a Platform for Collective, Societal Integration

Negotiations are a platform of communication, regulating the social behaviour and desires of the parties involved, the ensemble of issues and possible solutions. By talking things through, communication can carry out a mission to resolve any outstanding issues or problems and aid all those involved towards finding a pathway towards a mutually beneficial agreement. In order to define the concept of negotiation, Ksenija Čulo and Vladimir Skendrović assert that: “Negotiation is a dialogue between two or more people or parties, intended to reach an understanding, resolve point of difference, or gain advantage in out-come of a dialogue, to produce an agreement upon courses of action, to bargain for individual or collective advantage and to craft outcomes to satisfy various interests of two parties involved in negotiation process. Negotiation is a process where each party involved in negotiating tries to gain an advantage for themselves by the end of the process. Therefore, negotiation is intended to aim at compromise.” (Čulo&Skendrović, 2012:323)

Negotiators frequently have trouble eloquently expounding what they wish to obtain out of fear of seeming too rigid or unreasonable, often bringing the process of communication and negotiation to a standstill. A solution to this can be ascertainable by creating a road map of communication which clearly indicates the entry point of negotiation, as well as the desired destination. It is up to the parties to openly and efficiently discuss the shortest, easiest trajectory through the labyrinth of personal of subjective desires. According to Marcu: “Negotiations take place in all contexts of our lives. It is impossible to say that we do not negotiate if we are not businessmen or if we are not involved in a business process.” (Marcu, 2013:69)

Any discussion will start based on an entry point in the negotiation and hopefully generate a successful and strategic exit point. This road to success is governed by the primordial rule that one must never accept the primary offer of the interlocutor as there is always a better deal just around the corner that is significantly superior, available and reachable only though intensive discussion. Such a framework of possibility will produce more productive spaces of movement and transitions in order to reach a good deal.

The entry point in the negotiation is nothing more than a reasonable middle ground that is found acceptable by both communicative entities. One must make sure that the final objectives are not to ostentatiously presented, because overextended trust and undermining determination would trigger a negative reaction from the negotiating partner. It is recommended for one to have two distinct offers in mind when starting a negotiation, the first, of course, being exaggeratingly hopeful and selfish while the other will bring balance to the negotiating table, and also encompass the objectives and desires the other party should see as available.

The exit point strategy must test and challenge the limits and boundaries of the potential deal. The line connecting the entry and the exit point should rely on the solidity and force of your arguments and your listener’s willingness to accept or simply tolerate them.

An act of negotiation is a combination between passive-aggressive confrontation and traditional communication. A felicitous outcome in a negotiation is preconditioned by our capacity to win over and dominate our partners of discussion.

A multiplicity of frameworks and approaches are, at least in theory, made available when engaging in a negotiation:

- the non-communicative approach which should automatically fall under exclusion seeing as the purpose of a negotiation is to actually communicate with partners. It can, however, be brought forward in order to show extreme dissatisfaction in reference to a proposed offer and passively-aggressively shock the interlocutor into withdrawing the initial bid and coming up with a vastly improved offer which can provide the basis for ulterior development and communicative openness.
- the extrovert approach which harnesses an ensemble, a multiplicity of information and communicative structures that will sternly guide an individual towards a certain frame of mind or decisional apparatus. This style is apt to constitute or even reconstitute a strong displacement of power and direct authority to you based on dominance and unilateral authority.
- the inductive approach shall lead to a climate of partnership, relaxation and open discussion by correlating the compatible personalities and objectives of the partners involved in the discussion and negotiation. This is by far the most encountered method of negotiation as it harmonises the conciliatory needs of equals so as to achieve success and prosperity under the auspices of honesty and normality. However, the proper functionality of this approach is preconditioned by a robust ability to listen and process, by compatible minds who are not ashamed to recognise both merit and vulnerability, thus, enhancing one's capacity to bring relaxation where there is tension and peace where there is conflict.

The truth of the matter is that there is no singular approach that fits all emergent circumstances. In communication, adaptation shall always be the mother of negotiations and no amount of preparedness can significantly undermine this state of events.

A successful negotiator is nothing less than a flexible chameleon who can navigate all types of approaches with instinctual ease, speculating on both the fortes and vulnerabilities of his or her adversary. If we look at negotiation as a war, then words are most certainly the desired weapon of choice, beyond any internal or cultural contradiction, exposing psychological and sociological tools of relevance subsidised by the need to win in order to serve the gregarious interests of the individual or his or her proverbial tribe.

Patterns of Communication and Negotiation

The process of communication throughout a negotiation procedure goes beyond being a mere confrontation of conversational opponents or the simple manifestation of a traditional transfer of ideas. A functional negotiation is heavily reliant on our collective capacity to draw the others into our area of perception. The content of information is indeed the most important element of a negotiation, yet we must also underscore the importance of style and grammatical instruments: "The passive voice is frequently used by researchers in economics because it allows them to hide their results and take refuge behind the facts, thus adding additional force to their arguments." (Scortan, 2019:57)

Linguistic Power Structures: Analysing Social Strategies of Communication and Negotiation

Any discussion that will compel us to make concessions and reach an agreement is bound to depend on the implementation of a climate of cyclical, free-flowing trust especially if the participants in the act of communication have never met each other or are barely familiar with one another. Even non-verbal communication can act as a powerful foundation as well as an ice breaker for the creation of a negotiation.

The complex semiotics associated with trust will even take into account the subjective intensity of a handshake, respecting the interlocutor's personal space. Greeting and nodding in accordance with the proposed atmosphere. Maintaining a respectable level of visual contact is essential if we are to convey openness, honesty and direction, yet abusing this action can be interpreted as slightly aggressive or excessively inquisitive and force the other party to break eye contact due to certain frustrations or perceptions of exaggeration.

Playing a part is very important and we must take all the necessary psychological steps in order to ensure that the act of communication will become a mutual vector of harmony, equanimity and copacetic productivity.

The manner in which we dress, our adaptation to the context and location of the negotiation are also key elements in a negotiation. For example, even the most honest of negotiators will find frustration in establishing a productive link if one gets to the meeting dressed in shorts while the other will dress highly formal and wear an expensive suit.

Personal and Social Affinity in Negotiating

Moving on, beyond this, it is always a blessing to negotiate with someone you have previously interacted with. Human beings are creatures of comfort, stability and repetition, and a familiar face is always a joy to be hold, even if you make have had skirmishes with that individual in the past. The proliferation of attention and the manner in which information is captured or preserved has helped the researchers Ksenija Čulo and Vladimir Skendrović conclude that: "Oral communication skills include organization of thoughts before speaking, taking notes and planning what to say, outlining the main points to be covered, determining the logical conclusion of an idea and evaluating the possible reactions. It should be understood that also the silence can be a powerful negotiating tool. The speech must be concise and to the point without being blunt. The main point should be emphasized often, focusing on the benefit to the other party." (Čulo&Skendrović, 2012:325)

Throughout the process of negotiation, we need to render equal focus to both speaking and listening. When our interlocutor is addressing us, we must maintain a stable, phatic bridge of communication, connect through constant visual contact and keep focus regarding the meaning and the implications of our partner's statements and utterances. Taking notes is also a useful tool as it conveys an atmosphere of inherent professionalism while at the same time eliminating the possibility of losing, misunderstanding or misinterpreting key pieces of information, thus, providing us with a twofold success in both content and wrapping or appearance.

Expanding the platform for listening, not only for speaking will bring forth a plethora of opportunities that can commandeer favourable and useful dimensions of discussion and negotiation.

The Importance of the Non-verbal

The analysis and comprehension of body language can also in itself constitute a rich resource for additional factors of conversational awareness and interpretation.

Reading body language possesses and inherent duality of strategy and intent. By interpreting the clues given away by our partner's body language, we will gain an entire arsenal of undisclosed information, which we can use to either manipulate and harm our interlocutor, or simply be aware of those vulnerabilities and fears and be a truthful and honest partner by deciding to put those fears at ease and create an even more stable climate for agreement and debate. Čulo and Skendrović envision metalinguistic capabilities as a methodology of uncovering and exposing that which is hidden or dissimulated: "Nonverbal communication can provide information on what one participant in a negotiation may be concealing from the other one. It is significant in normal interpersonal exchange, and it differs between places and cultures. Although the words coming out of the mouth may mean one thing, the body language could be quite hostile. Therefore, it is advisable to always check on body language in order not to send out negative vibes, which may put off the negotiator completely. It is important to be aware that facial expressions and body posture may have different meaning in different cultures, and to know what kind of physical contact is appropriate with special attention to the physical distance between the communicating persons." (Čulo&Skendrović, 2012:325)

Body language is always a two-way street. Through this medium, our deepest and innermost thoughts can be exposed or betrayed, therefore, the ability to deliberately control our mannerisms can be a powerful nonverbal tool of negotiation. Moreover, a skilled communicator can indirectly and nonverbally let slip pieces of fake information through artificially generated movements or mannerisms which are designed to deceive or bamboozle the person standing in front of us. No matter the variations or strategies implemented, body and facial variations are undoubtedly robust tools of negotiations.

Areas of resolution

Just like any other endeavour of communication, negotiation as a paramount pillar of social and economic interaction is achieved in a predetermined spatial matrix that is described by areas of convergence but also divergence. The art of negotiation, the art of the deal is the ability or the capacity to embrace social convergence while learning to minimise or tolerate the impact of divergence. Divergent pathways coalesce structures of conflict between both ideologies and individuals, potentially including taboo or categorical elements that could potentially cripple the entire process of communication. The forbidden, the taboo must be skilfully navigated and harmoniously cast aside so that these elements are not allowed to proliferate and disseminate towards saboteurs of change, progress and transformation. Raymond Williams asserts that language, as a tool of negotiation, exists within a realm of complexity and intellectual displacement: "Between languages as within a language, the range and complexity of sense and reference indicate both difference of intellectual position and some blurring or overlapping. These variations, of whatever kind, necessarily involve alternative views of the activities, relationships and processes which this complex word indicates. The complexity, that is to say, is not finally in the word but in the problems which its variations of use significantly indicate." (Williams, 2015:53)

From a communicational standpoint, an honest debate can become the purest form of negotiation, where we are both active and reactive in relation to our interaction with our interlocutor. A discussion should always set forth to reach some sort of agreement and not linger on inextricable elements of disagreement or separation. After

Linguistic Power Structures: Analysing Social Strategies of Communication and Negotiation

the establishment of reasonable and honest standpoints on both sides, a negotiation will give both parties the chance to test their own constructs via external judgement and objective milieus of assessment and analysis. According to researcher Denisa Barbuceanu any successful act of communication begins with preparedness and harmonised agreement: "Preparation or organisation of conversations are progressive and cooperative enterprise that the parties involved decide upon." (Bărbuceanu, 2019:51)

Questions can never be frowned upon or excluded as offensive or aggressive because through them we can facilitate the honest flow of information and the ultimate highways that ensure that the flow of ideas will reach a fortuitous destination. Talking things through is ultimately a test of human honesty. An overt structure of dialogue between parties will bring into light all of the potential advantages that can bring growth and prosperity to both parties. A negotiation can only become toxic if the negotiations are fundamentally angry and prejudiced and use a platform for communication as nothing more than a simple stage on which they can vent their capricious anger. Not letting the other speak, playing the blame game, virtue signalling, personal and ideological attacks will only generate a collapse in discussion, productivity and human interaction in general. A passive-aggressive lack of respect or even simple irony can be equally powerful tools of deterrence, because minimising the merits of others can, under no shape or form, act as the building blocks for a successful human relation, business or otherwise.

At the beginning of each and every negotiation, awkwardness and tension are always the unwanted proverbial elephants in the room. What we must do is to make sure that we are able to starve these toxic elements of our being and not let tension make way to hostility and even conflict. Anger must be avoided at all costs, but this should be achieved without appearing as docile, weak or vulnerable. If a negotiation is not achieved among equals, then it is doomed to fail from the start, as bullying and abuse can never act as substitutes for trust and partnership. Respect must always be shown and if it is not genuine, let it at least be an almost perfect replica of the real deal, as respect controls our lesser instincts and ensures the elimination of selfishness inside a discussion or human interaction.

Negative reactivity has to be kept at bay. Even the choice of the proper pronoun can be a useful tool in circumventing conflict or confrontation, suggesting the idea that everyone is on the same side. Boundaries of discussion are always to be upheld and such apparent elements like allowing your partner the necessary talk time can go a long way towards articulating healthy boundaries of communication and understanding.

The articulation of communication within a negotiation draws strength from the acknowledgement of position, boundaries and common synergetic interests. It is highly productive for a negotiation to include the interests of both parties from the get-go without necessarily going into details or profound exploration. The intent of the initial stages of discussion is implementing a blueprint for respect and cooperation as it refers to the entire agenda.

A negotiation is a discussion between members of society who are trying to obtain something from the other side, both focusing on the merits of what they have to offer and trying to minimise the advantages of services brought forth by the other side of the table. In a tough negotiation social actors will try to validate their own position, trying to get a lot while offering very little in return. The initial dissemination of ideas

will make both sides seem like they are entrenched in an unreasonable proliferation of angst.

Were we to try to define the need for strategy in negotiation, we ascertain the fact that the totality of deliberate objectives of the negotiation will be tributary to the tactical ensemble used in one stage or another, a fusion of distinct conversational battles whose ultimate outcome will decide the end of the entire negotiation skirmish.

The idea of negotiation as conflict is pertinently expounded by Ilana Zohar who perceives negotiation as: “a way to resolve conflicts or disagreements or divide resources among two or more parties, carried out willingly by free choice. The two sides make contact for suggestions and counter suggestions and in this manner, communication takes place between the parties. Each side employs its own tactics in an effort to reach maximum results.” (Zohar, 2015:540)

The biggest impasse in a conversation/negotiation is the emergence of conflict that instils a climate of disdain and suspicion mindsets. Both sides will inherently fuel the conflict because of their natural propensity to establish dominance and take control of negotiation. This dominance is fuelled by the belief that one of the sides possesses more advantages, has bigger and better cards to play. If both parties, believe theirs is the winning hand then a positive outcome is ultimately unreachable as even a singular party trying to assert dominance is usually a vector for failed agreement or negotiation. They say it is often a buyer’s market and, in most negotiations, buyers tend to seek dominance, however, this is not always the case as certain products, patterns or companies are so good, so revolutionary that they tend to sell themselves. In this case, we might even witness bidding wars that sees a singular vendor establish dominance against a multiplicity of buyers, thus, employing the laws and logic of supply and demand towards its advantage.

If somehow through discussion and negotiation, both parties are able to circumvent the rift between them, they will achieve a cooperative understanding that will ultimately the strong bonds of a deal that can be mutually advantageous for years to come and possibly unite the two sides to the point of merging with one another, acknowledging through dialogue, pragmatism and shared ideals that their future in the business world can only be together or it shall not be at all.

Conclusions

The social partners of a negotiation shall always be separated and judged based on their behaviour and overall attitude. The fuel behind all these mechanisms of rendering and restoring value shall be provided by genuine convictions, honest practices of dealing, as well as intelligence and a steadfast discipline and respect for all the negotiators at the table. Conversational and ideological tolerance need not be perceived as an act of selflessness, but rather, paradoxically, as an act of indirect selfishness. It is true that through selflessness, we will open the door to the interests and necessities of our partners of negotiation. But only by opening that door for social dialogue, only by unlocking those pathways, can we make sure that the objectives we desire will go be achieved, thus, ultimately securing our own personal endgames that are at times detrimental to the social, collective agenda. A bleak perspective on dialogue and negotiation would entail that ultimately all negotiations are an inextricable act of selfish validation, yet, this is, fortunately, only a limited approach. Dialogue and discussion, in a negotiation, guarantee the fact that in order to take care of our personal interests, we must also learn to protect and respect the interests of our partners and friends, to obtain

personal prosperity without compromising or sacrificing the interests of our fellow members of society. True and steadfast progress means all parties should flourish, find synergy and exponential growth through social collaboration. Human beings are not termites, they are social animals who find comfort in the collective progress of the community, and ultimately of the species. Communication and dialogue will make sure that we uncover what is good and noble in all of us, that the sum of our qualities shall be brought to light and encouraged to proliferate, while the darkness of our flaws and hesitation will be forever undermined by the legacy of our shared humanity.

References:

- Bărbuceanu, C.D. (2019). Athena Rising? Mentoring in Higher Education. *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques*, 62, 45-54.
- Gotti, M. (2011). *Investigating Specialized Discourse*, 3rd ed., Oxford : Peter Lang.
- Tigari, H. (2018) Negotiations in International Business - A Conceptual Framework, *IJSART*, 4(4), 1274-1277.
- Čulo, K., Skendrović, V. (2012). Communication in Negotiation, *Informatologia*, 45(4), 323-327.
- Marcu, D. (2013). Business Negotiations in ESP Classes. In *Analele Universității din Craiova, Științe Filologice, Limbi Străine Aplicate*, 1, 69-75.
- Scortan, D. (2019). The Economic Speech in The French Press. *Journal of Social Sciences*. 2(2), 55 – 60.
- Stoian, A. M. (2019). Education, Social and Media Communication. *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques*, 62, 125-135.
- Williams, R. (2015). *Keywords. A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 3rd ed., New York: Oxford University Press.
- Zohar, I. (2015). The Art of Negotiation. Leadership Skills Required for Negotiation in Time of Crisis, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 209, 540-548.

Article Info

Received: November 26 2021

Accepted: December 02 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Modern Teaching Approaches: Listening Skills in Technical English Classes

Irina Janina Boncea¹⁾

Abstract:

The aim of the current paper is to analyse and emphasise the emergence and importance of listening skills in foreign language classes in post-communist formal and informal education. Listening represents the language input that is used most frequently and this is why it is an invaluable learning and, therefore, teaching resource. With a prevalence of listening activities in a minor proportion (if any) during communist foreign language instruction, this skill has acquired importance during the past three decades, particularly in the context of globalization and free travel, free exchange of ideas and the liberation of communicative barriers. The challenging nature of the listening process becomes evident in Technical English classes because the receiver also displays incomplete control of technical language and is often confronted with frustration because of limited knowledge. This article seeks to reveal specifically how listening can be used in modern technical education to increase learner knowledge, confidence and autonomy.

Keywords: *English for Specific Purposes; learner autonomy; listening skills; post-communist language instruction; Technical English.*

¹⁾ Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of Applied Foreign Languages, specialisation: English for Specific Purposes, Romania, Phone 0040724083333, Email: irina.boncea@edu.ucv.ro.

Modern Teaching Approaches: Listening Skills in Technical English Classes

On the Importance of Developing Listening Skills

It is commonly accepted that adults spend almost half their communication time listening as pointed out by scholars (Gilman & Moody:1984:331). Similarly, ESL students receive the majority of their in-school information through listening to teachers and to one another. Also, regarding the language skills development the same researchers cite that when people communicate, 45-50% of language competence derives from listening, 25-30% from speaking, 11-16% from reading and only 9% from writing. Nonetheless, only recently has the pivotal role of listening been recognized as a powerful comprehension tool and a major factor in enabling language learning (Oxford: 1993:206).

During the communist period, Romanian language teaching and learning relied heavily on the prevailing Grammar Translation method corroborated with little to no exposure to English speaking foreigners. This had created a setting for studying English merely for the sake of studying rather than for communicative purposes. Moreover, with a clear domination of French over English in Second Language classes, English listening activities were simply inexistent during ESL classes. Nonetheless, with post-communist second language classes witnessing the emergence of English as the new Lingua Franca, a massive influx of coursebooks from a variety of English and American publishing houses was triggered bringing along listening course materials (on cassettes initially, CDs later) and has made listening available to two eager categories of learners: firstly, those who had studied English thoroughly with the grammar translation method and who wanted to improve their pronunciation and understanding with genuine material and, secondly, those who knew little to no English and were most willing to learn how to communicate in English. Unfortunately, listening activities in the classroom were not made a priority until recently for a number of objective and subjective reasons:

- Teachers and/or students did not possess listening infrastructure (cassette/CD players, soundproof rooms);
- Listening was perceived as a waste of time since it does not involve overt active effort on the part of students, nor could it be used for evaluation to the best of teachers' knowledge;
- It was difficult to manage a large group of students so that they would remain quiet for the entire duration of the activity, hence teachers often gave up in favour of other, more manageable activities;
- A lot of grammar translation and mother tongue translation of input was still in practice starting from the wrong assumption that in order to comprehend, students need to translate input; during listening activities this method was not applicable;
- Few teachers possessed the ability to create listening oriented exercises, apply listening to evaluation, use listening activities creatively and communicatively.

Over the past decades, there has been growing interest for communicating in Business and Technical English since, as pointed out by Bălănescu (2021:34) post-communist Romania witnessed “*numerous foreign companies set up subsidiaries or started new businesses in the country, employing local workforce. As a result, there emerged a distinctive group of people who needed to communicate in English for very specific, job-related purposes.*” Additionally, the rise of social media, music and a variety of games, the availability of various apps and internet channels have contributed greatly to the significant amount of exposure to listening activities outside the classroom creating a need for content comprehension and an inclination to treat listening more

seriously. As pointed out by Bălănescu (2019:59) at academic level, in post-communist Romania “*there are many faculties which offer undergraduate studies in English [...] such as English for Engineering, English for Business and Economics, English for Medical Science, etc. In the 1990s there emerged a distinctive group of people who were increasingly interested in learning English in order to take direct part in economic transactions and international projects*”. These groups of ESP students and technical professionals are the two categories of students with specific communicative needs that represent the focus of technical English teaching in modern Romania.

Due to the advent of communicative language learning and teaching, listening has acquired its deserved importance as it had been demonstrated to play a crucial part in facilitating the language learner to develop good pronunciation, stress words correctly, expand vocabulary and develop syntax gradually. Without understanding input appropriately, learning simply cannot get any improvement. Moreover, in the absence of listening skills, no communication can be achieved (Cross: 1998). During listening activities, students can actively involve themselves in the interpretation of what they hear, bringing their own background knowledge and linguistic knowledge to bear on the information contained in the aural text. Listeners need to discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intention, retain and interpret this within the immediate as well as the larger socio-cultural context of the utterance (Wipf 1984:345). According to Rost (2002:29) listening is a complex, active process of interpretation in which listeners match what they hear with what they already know. Listening can thus be defined as the process of receiving what the speaker actually says (receptive orientation); constructing and representing meaning (constructive orientation); negotiating meaning with the speaker and responding (collaborative orientation); and, creating meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy (transformative orientation).

With the development of communicative language teaching strategies and with a noticeable change in focus on production rather than on accuracy, the development of listening skills began to acquire great prominence. Based on the views expressed by Yagang (1994:4) the specific and numerous challenges of integrating listening into the classroom depend on the message, the speaker, the listener and the setting. Listeners must process messages as they come, often with insufficient time for reaction to the message they have just received. If they are still processing what they have just heard, there is seldom any time for going back or looking ahead in anticipation. Listeners must cope with the sender's choices of speech rate, vocabulary, pronunciation and phraseology (often idiomatic), speech structure and personal syntax (unpredictable and often difficult to follow), and the pace of delivery which may differ dramatically from the listener's own background or processing capabilities. As discussed by Flowerdew & Miller (1996), the problems of the students revolve around the speed of delivery, new terminology and concept (especially technical), difficulty in focusing and the physical environment. To all these we may add regional accents, non-standard varieties of English and sometimes background noise (often present in technical in production recordings), causing confusion, frustration and students' low self-esteem if not tackled with diplomacy and teacher professionalism.

Listening During Technical English Classes

Technical English classes, as any other ESP classes, should employ listening with the purpose of preparing future engineers to deal with specialized professional

Modern Teaching Approaches: Listening Skills in Technical English Classes

situations in a foreign language. That is to say that the listening activities will focus primarily on creating professionals that are able to function independently in a foreign language situation specific to their field of expertise such as handling long distance phone calls in English, understand and give technical instruction in noisy production sites, negotiate solutions to engineering problems etc.

As listening skills represent such a large proportion of daily activity in all walks of life and it basically comes down to the way in which we perceive the world, it is essential for language teachers to help their students become effective listeners while helping them develop top-down as well as bottom-up strategies for increasing their listening confidence and develop their functionality in an English-speaking profession. In the communicative approach to language teaching, teachers aim at modeling listening strategies and providing listening practice in authentic situations that learners are likely to encounter when they use the language outside the classroom. Thus, technical students become more likely to cope with the challenges posed by acting and reacting in a foreign language in daily life contexts but also in highly specialized situations that are likely to occur in their future professions.

Language learning during technical English classes requires intentional listening that employs strategies for identifying sounds and making meaning from them. Thus, listening provides the aural input that serves as the basis for language acquisition and enables learners to interact in spoken communication. Effective language instructors show students how they can:

- adjust their listening behavior to deal with a variety of situations, types of input, and listening purposes;
- develop a set of listening strategies to increase comprehension and match appropriate strategies to each listening situation;
- adapt their general English knowledge to incorporate technical English comprehension;
- relax and regain their focus despite imperfect comprehension of the listening input as well as produce relevant output.

Since listening strategies are techniques or activities that can contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input, they may differ depending on how the listener processes the input. Listeners employ the so-called 'top-down' processes when they use prior knowledge to understand the meaning of a message. Pre-existing knowledge can pertain to the topic, the listening context, the text-type, the culture or other information stored in long-term memory in the form of schemata (typical sequences or common situations around which world knowledge is organized). Listeners often use content words and contextual clues to form hypotheses in an exploratory manner. Another listening pattern occurs when listeners use 'bottom-up' processes when they employ linguistic knowledge to make sense of a message. They, thus, gradually construct meaning from basic sounds to words to grammatical relationships to lexical meanings in order to achieve message comprehension. Listening for gist primarily entails top-down processing, whereas listening for specific information draws on bottom-up processing to capture the intended details. Listening comprehension is not entirely top-down or bottom-up processing, but rather a complex, interactive, sense-making process in which listeners equally employ prior knowledge and linguistic knowledge in comprehending messages and reacting to it. The degree to which listeners use the one process or the other is profoundly personal and in direct relation with their proficiency in the language, familiarity with the topic and it greatly depends on the

purpose of the listening.

Top-down strategies during technical classes heavily rely on the listener as they will resort to background knowledge, familiarity with the topic, the situation or context, the type of text and the language used. According to Byrnes (1984), when listeners know the context of a text or an utterance, the process is facilitated considerably because listeners can activate prior knowledge and make the appropriate inferences essential to comprehending the message. Hence derives the need to create a significant background for technical students to rely on, such as exposure to an array of written, visual and audible materials that set up the foundation of the technical English course and can later play a structural role during listening activities. Additionally, technical knowledge can be developed by:

- grading informational content from simple to complex;
- practicing templates for describing phenomena, gadgets and scientific argumentation;
- selecting and enlarging upon key vocabulary and phraseology that is technically specific.

The background knowledge will activate a set of expectations that can help the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. Top-down strategies in ESP include: listening for the main idea; predicting; drawing inferences; summarizing.

Bottom-up strategies are text based; the listener relies on the language in the message, that is, the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning. Bottom-up strategies include: listening for specific details: gap filling, multiple choice, paragraph matching etc.; acknowledging cognates; recognizing correct word order patterns; reconstructing syntactic chunks.

In extracting meaning from listening to technical input, students need to become aware of what they are doing and follow a number of simple steps:

- Figure out the purpose for listening: is it for grasping the general idea or does it presuppose identifying specific details? In time students develop familiarity with exercise types and thus the purpose of the listening becomes intuitive rather than a thinking process.
- Activate background knowledge of the topic in order to predict or anticipate content and identify appropriate listening strategies. But how does one activate background knowledge? Pre-listening activities play an essential part in focusing interest and in activating preexisting knowledge to serve as a structural aid to the listening task.
- Focus on the parts of the listening input that are relevant to the identified purpose and ignore the rest. This enables students to concentrate on specific items in the input and reduces the amount of information they have to hold in short-term memory.
- Select strategies that are adapted to the listening task and use them flexibly and interactively. Students' comprehension improves and their confidence increases when they use top-down and bottom-up strategies simultaneously to gather meaning.
- Verify comprehension while listening and when the listening task is over. Providing comprehension feedback helps students deal with comprehension problems, and, consequently, directs them to use alternate strategies to ensure future listening success.

Modern Teaching Approaches: Listening Skills in Technical English Classes

How Do We Develop Listening Skills in Technical English Classes?

During technical English classes, teachers can use a wide range of listening activities by means of which they can expose students to genuine language contexts and activate their communicative language in professional environments. According to Lăpădat, L & Lăpădat, M.M (2020:144) foreign language learning entails the development of the necessary skills to perceive the classification systems by virtue of the relevance based on the operational patterns of that respective community, including professional communities. Consequently, learning a foreign language should prepare students for real-life situations, for a variety of experiences and intercultural exchanges they are likely to encounter in their English-speaking endeavour. Authentic materials and situations prepare students for the types of listening they will need to do when using the language outside the classroom. In this respect, it is important to use both one-way as well as two-way type of listening activities to make sure the students are not excessively passive or excessively active in their future job interactions in an English language speaking environment.

One-Way Communication

Listening materials that can be the learning source include:

- Radio and television programs, YouTube presentations, tutorials with subtitles/captions;
- Public announcements (in factory announcements, production site recordings);
- Lectures and formal presentations, opening addresses at technical universities, technical speeches/debates/reviews;
- Technical research oral presentations at international research conventions.

The actual listening procedure should include pre-listening as well as while-listening activities which will:

- Help students identify the listening goal: to obtain specific information; to decide whether to continue listening; to understand most of or the entire message.
- Help students outline predictable sequences in which information may be presented: who-what-when-where (when creating a technical story line); "for [function], press [number]" (technical instructions), what happens if you...(technical descriptions/cause->result), what->when->why (describing malfunctions of equipment/ troubleshooting).
- Help students identify key words/phrases to listen for in the shape of relevant handouts and customized listening follow-up.

Two-Way Communication

In authentic two-way communication, the listener will focus on the speakers' message rather than the speakers' language. The focus should be placed on language only when the message is not clear and analysing the language can provide clarification.

- Telephone recordings with clients providing technical specifications for product customization, recordings of technical meetings, brainstorming sessions in R&D departments;
- Customer-engineer negotiations/ engineer-engineer debates on technical issues;
- Negotiations of engineering solutions during teamwork etc.

When the teacher designs listening materials, they should not expect a complete recall of all the information of the aural input because this is unrealistic even for native speakers. Instead, the tasks should aim at getting students accustomed to following a

two-way interaction, adapting to the succession of speakers each with their own personal style of speaking, being able to detect metalinguistic elements such as emotions (irritation, annoyance, irony), intended message etc. Listening activities are meant to train and develop skill rather than teach a particular piece of information. Therefore, they should be success-oriented and build students' confidence in their listening ability and their general ability to cope with a foreign unfamiliar and unpredictable language situation and provide a meaningful and relevant response.

Technical English teachers should, therefore, be attentive to a set of guidelines in selecting the listening activities that can optimise in their goals during technical classes:

➤ **The listening activity should be constructed around a contextualized task**

Situational listening activities emulate real-life tasks and provide the listener with an idea of the type of information to expect and what to do with it in advance of the actual listening. A beginning level task might consist of locating pieces and components on a product map (one way) or exchanging specific technical data and negotiable basic information (two way). At an intermediate and advanced level students could be asked to follow directions for assembling a piece of equipment (one way) or work in pairs to describe an engineering process, to identify arguments in negotiating a technical solution or to compare and contrast pieces of equipment on a set of given criteria (two way).

➤ **The listening activity defines the instructional goal and type of response**

Recognizing the goal(s) of listening comprehension in each listening situation is very important as it will help students select appropriate listening strategies.

- Identification: recognizing or discriminating specific aspects of the message, such as sounds, categories of words, morphological distinctions;
- Orientation: Determining the major facts about a message: topic, text type, setting, attitudes;
- Main idea comprehension: identifying the higher-order ideas, producing an abstract, inferring, making generalisations;
- Detail retention: identifying supporting details in reconstructing a gapped sequence;
- Replication/ alternation: reproducing/rephrasing the message orally or in writing.

➤ **The level of difficulty of the listening text ought to be adapted to student level and task goal for obtaining autonomy and listening confidence**

While cognitive strategies manipulate the material to be learned or apply a specific technique to a listening task, socio-affective strategies depict the techniques listeners use to collaborate one another, to check understanding or to decrease listening stress. Research has shown that skilled listeners employ more metacognitive strategies than their less-skilled counterparts (O'Malley & Chamot: 1990, Vandergrift: 1997). When listeners know how to analyse the requirements of a listening task, activate the customised listening processes needed to make appropriate predictions and monitor their comprehension as well as evaluate the success of their approach, they are using an array of metacognitive tools to increase the success of their listening comprehension. This is critical to the development of self-regulated learning (Wenden: 1998:517). Consequently, each activity should aim at improving one or more specific listening skills and develop learning autonomy. A listening activity may have more than one goal or

Modern Teaching Approaches: Listening Skills in Technical English Classes

outcome, but technical teachers should be careful not to overload the beginners or intermediate students. The teacher must constantly judge the relative ease or difficulty of a listening text for a particular purpose and a particular group of students. There is a number of questions that the teacher must reflect on before choosing a particular listening activity:

How is the information organized? Does the text content/ instruction conform to familiar expectations? Can the sequencing be followed? Texts in which the events are presented in natural chronological order, which have an informative title and which present the information following an obvious structure (main ideas first, details and examples second) are easier to follow and students will focus on the content rather than waste time getting oriented in the sequence. At advanced levels, the listening materials can contain scrambled sequencing to increase difficulty and emulate real-life digressions and transgressions.

How familiar are the students with the topic? The faulty application of background knowledge due to limited previous experiences can cause serious comprehension difficulties. Which is why teachers need to be aware what previous knowledge students rely on, what the commonly shared experiences that can be turned into listening activities are. If listeners are acquainted with the context, comprehension is considerably easier as listeners can activate prior knowledge and make the appropriate inferences essential to comprehending the message (Byrnes, 1984:318). Therefore, teachers need to help students put matters into perspective, to activate appropriate background knowledge for understanding and to enable them to make predictions prior to listening. If need be, contextualizing information can be provided through a number of pre-listening activities in the form of reading tasks that dwell on the technical topics that are to be developed during the listening tasks. For example, if a technical English teacher decides to use a presentation about the braking system of a car or about the four-stroke engine as a listening activity, they might think about introducing students to the topic by performing a reading activity first, with some visual input introducing specialized vocabulary, sequencing schemata that would enable students to develop an understanding of what actually happens to the components during the process and what the outcome is. Thus, watching a presentation on the topic as a listening activity will rely on pre-existing knowledge and comprehension will be optimized into a superior form of understanding, leading to abstract thinking, conceptualization and high-level metacognition.

Are the text length and complexity adapted to students' level? At the lower levels of proficiency, listeners find short, simple messages easier to process, but students with higher levels of proficiency naturally enjoy and are able to cope with the growing difficulty of technical language along with intricate sequencing. Recordings that are deemed too intricate may result in frustration and low self-esteem with elementary students, while listening materials that are too easy seem likely to result in boredom and a feeling of time wasting with more proficient students. Additional to the necessity of adapting listening activities to students' level, there is the need for meaningful, informative content. Students tend to react positively and achieve better scores to recordings that are interesting and are able to arouse curiosity, challenge their thought processes and provide an interesting outlook on a technical matter.

Does the text involve multiple individuals and objects that are clearly distinguished? For instance, it is easier to understand a text with an engineer and a customer than one with two engineers or comparisons between gadgets from different

categories or with clearly marked differences. In other words, the more marked the differences, the easier the comprehension.

Does the text offer visual support to assist in the interpretation of what the listeners can hear? Visual aids such as maps, diagrams, pictures, pie-charts or the images in a video help contextualize the listening input and provide clues to meaning. Moreover, visual input is a welcome interruption from the monotony of a white wall to stare at while listening. Additionally, visual input can employ colour-coding strategies, imagery and action to render the comprehension more dynamic, stir up imagination and increase meta-cognition to a greater extent.

➤ **The teacher employs pre-listening activities to prepare students for what they are going to hear or view.**

The activities chosen during pre-listening may serve as preparation for listening in several ways because they:

- assess students' background knowledge of the topic and linguistic content of the text;
- provide students with the background knowledge necessary for their comprehension of the listening passage or activate the existing knowledge that the students possess;
- clarify any cultural-specific information which may be necessary to comprehend the passage: for instance, a picture of engineers in protective gear may infer the idea that the conversation is going to take place on the factory premises rather than in an office and that they are about to discuss some safety issues rather than the menu of the day;
- make students aware of the type of text they will be listening to, the roles of the participants and the purpose(s) for which they will be listening;
- provide opportunities for group or collaborative work and for background reading or class discussion activities.

Pre-listening activities may include but are not restricted to: analysing pictures, maps, diagrams, or graphs; reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures; reading a piece of text related to what the students will be listening to; constructing semantic webs (a graphic arrangement of concepts or words showing how they are related); predicting the content of the listening text; getting a better grasp of the directions or instructions for the activity. Questions should be used to guide students' attention towards the elements of the text that are essential for comprehension. Before the listening activity begins, students review the questions they will answer orally or in writing after listening. Listening for the answers will help students recognize the crucial parts of the message.

➤ **Predicting encourages students to monitor their comprehension as they listen**

A well-chosen predicting activity before listening arouses interest in what follows and builds students' confidence. The teacher should remind students to review what they are hearing to see if it makes sense in the context of their prior knowledge and what they already know of the topic or events in the passage.

➤ **While-listening activities should be well timed and adapted to the instructional goal, the listening purpose, and students' proficiency level.**

While-listening activities are directly related to the tasks, and students tackle them during or immediately after the listening activity, thus ensuring optimal information retrieval. If students are to complete a written task during or immediately

Modern Teaching Approaches: Listening Skills in Technical English Classes

after listening, they should be allowed to read through it before listening. Students need to devote all their attention to the listening task which they can do successfully if they don't have to read the instructions of the tasks while listening. Technical English teachers need to make sure students understand the instructions for the written task before the listening activity begins so that they are not distracted by the need to figure out what to do while listening.

➤ **Writing should be kept to a minimum during listening.**

The primary goal in listening should be comprehension rather than production. Having to write while listening may distract students from this essential goal and create frustration when writing speed is not fast enough to keep up with the influx of the aural input. If a written response is to be given after listening, it should be kept within reasonable limits and not rely heavily on the reproduction of what the student has listened to. Instead, rephrasing, inference and deduction do better job at verifying comprehension while offering students a chance to use alternative language and make personal contributions.

While-listening activities include one of the following examples, but they can also combine a maximum of two tasks per listening activity: listening with visuals, filling in graphs and charts, following a route on a map (either geographical or technical), checking off items on a list, listening for gist, searching for specific clues to meaning, gapped text exercises, deciding on true/false statements, distinguishing between formal and informal registers etc.

➤ **Immediate feedback, whenever possible, is essential**

The teacher should involve technical students in the process of error correction and encourage students to examine how or why their responses were incorrect and reinforce correct ones based on the assumption that it is better to strike the iron while it is hot. If immediate feedback is offered, short term memory is consolidated through repetition and this increases the chance that concepts are retained in long-term memory. Transcripts can be used as a resource for increasing comprehension as well as a source of new vocabulary, syntactic and idiomatic input. Students often develop an internal understanding of listening traps in the sense that they notice how task formulation differs from audible input and they will get a better grasp of correct answer due to this ability to surf through technical listening input and steer clear of language traps.

Conclusion

The greatest challenges with technical listening recordings refer to how to integrate the listening experiences into classroom instruction and making them relevant, interesting and educational. The challenges arise from the fact that technical English is often wrongly assumed to be particularly difficult and from the fact that most technical teachers have to construct their own listening activities and find technical listening material that they can adapt to suit their purposes. Fortunately, as opposed to two or three decades ago, there is hardly any shortage of listening material for technical English due to the unprecedented access to a great number of channels that can be used as listening input. As far as the students' interest in listening goes, students seem to be very excited whenever a listening task is announced and this is due to the entertaining nature they associate listening to, often a passive reception of music or dialogues. Thus, teachers can take advantage of the alluring side of listening to stimulate students into completing technical tasks without even being aware of its technical nature. As the activities increase in difficulty, students become increasingly proficient in dealing with

the challenges of technical listening, especially since most students nowadays are interested in technology and are more than keen on watching videos or listening to presentations about their object of interest. As opposed to the post-communist language instruction classes, contemporary teachers are able to produce and enjoy the teaching results that are noticeable in the contemporary tech-savvy generation of students.

References:

- Anderson, N.J. (2002). The role of metacognition in second language teaching and learning, *ERIC Digest*, April 2002, pp. 3-4.
- Bălănescu, O. (2019). The Fall of Communism and Its Impact on English Teaching and Learning, *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques* • No. 61 • 2019: 57 – 67 http://cis01.ucv.ro/revistadestiintepolitice/numarul61_2019.php.
- Bălănescu, O. (2021). Acquiring ESP Teacher Competence Through Theory And Practice, *Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. IV (2) 2021, <https://jss.utm.md/vol-iv-2-2021/>.
- Byrnes, H. (1984). The Role of Listening Comprehension: A Theoretical Base. *Foreign Language Annals* 17:317-29.
- Cross, D. (1998). *Teach English*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Flowerdew, J., Miller, L. (1996). Student perceptions, problems and strategies in second language lecture comprehension, *RELC Journal* 23 (2), pp.60–80.
- Gilman, R. A. & L. M. Moody (1984). What Practitioners say about Listening: Research Implications for the Classroom. *Foreign Language Annals* 17:331-34.
- Gillespie, C. (2019) Difference Between Active Listening & Passive Listening. Retrieved from theclassroom.com: <https://www.theclassroom.com/difference-between-active-listening-passive-listening-10014817.html>, Retrieved October 22-nd 2021.
- Lăpădat, L., Lăpădat M. M. (2020). Teaching Foreign Languages: Between Tradition and Contemporary Synchronicity, *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques*, No. 68, 2020, 139–148, https://cis01.ucv.ro/revistadestiintepolitice/numarul68_2020.php.
- Oxford, R. (1993). Research Update on L2 Listening. *System* 21:205-11.
- O'Malley, J. M., Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ridley, D.S., Schutz, P.A., Glanz, R.S. & Weinstein, C.E. (1992). Self-regulated learning: the interactive influence of metacognitive awareness and goal-setting, *Journal of Experimental Education* 60 (4), pp.293-306.
- Rost, M. (2002). *Teaching and Researching Listening*. London, UK: Longman.
- Mendelsohn, D. (1998) Teaching listening, *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 18, pp.81-101.
- Vandergrift, L. (1997). The Strategies of Second Language (French) Listeners: A Descriptive Study. *Foreign Language Annals* 30:387-409.
- Wenden, AL (1998). Metacognitive knowledge and language learning. *Applied Linguistics* 19(4):515–537.
- Wipf, J. (1984). Strategies for Teaching Second Language Listening Comprehension. *Foreign Language Annals* 17:345-48.

Article Info

Received: November 01 2021

Accepted: November 14 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

“Meeting the Goals”: Enhancing English Language Skills for Students in Engineering

Diana Marcu¹⁾

Abstract:

The present paper aims at describing the importance of developing English language skills for the students who currently study in the field of engineering. English for Science and Technology (EST) is part of the general domain of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which has grown in importance during recent years due to the constant developments in science, technology and business. Thus, the paper is structured into four sections, the first offering a brief view on what EST means and requires, as well as on the specific features it is based on. Nevertheless, learners' needs and expectations are always to be taken into consideration afore the development of any specific course, and, the second part of the paper includes facts and characteristics related to the learner-centered approach of teaching the language. Attitudes and motivation, together with the importance of a needs analysis questionnaire are briefly discussed. The third section deals with the description of receptive and productive skills tailored on engineers' needs as well as with the metacognitive skills which aren't to be forgotten due to their importance in the process of acquiring knowledge and using information in real-life instances. Considering the given facts, the paper ends with the conclusions which outline the importance of focusing on learners' needs, improving, at the same time, various skills which students need in order to become proficient users of a language in their future careers.

Keywords: *EST; learners' needs; metacognitive skills; productive skills; receptive skills.*

¹⁾ Senior Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Department of Applied Modern Languages, Romania, Phone: 0040744436172; Romania., Email: dianamolcut@yahoo.com.

Introduction: the importance of EST

Undoubtedly, nowadays, due to the processes of globalization and internationalisation, English teaching and learning have become a vital part of the educational activity for all non-native speakers who embark on the quest of acquiring the necessary skills in order to effectively perform on worldwide markets. At the academic level, the focus is shifted from the general knowledge of the language to the more specific one, meant to help future professionals in their areas of study. Thus, out of the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) domain, the area of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) emerged, right after the World War Two. In the 1960s, ESP developed as a new discipline, opening the gates for in-depth research and study.

Dudley-Evans and St John state that “The original flowering of the ESP movement resulted from general developments in the world economy in the 1950s and 1960s: the growth of science and technology, the increased use of English as the international language of science, technology and business, the increased economic power of certain oil-rich countries and the increased number of international students studying in the UK, USA and Australia” (Dudley-Evans, St John, 1998: 19). In Romania, we can talk about the prevalence of ESP, especially after the Revolution in 1989, when the country fought for its democracy and succeeded in achieving its place among the democratic countries worldwide. Professionals in different domains were faced with the challenge of working with peers from other countries, being employed by multinational companies where the use of English was and still is a 'must'.

Taking into consideration the purpose/ objective of the teaching activity, as well as learners' needs and expectations, ESP is divided into two major areas: EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and EOP (English for Occupational Purposes). When it comes to teaching English to Engineering students, the subcategory of EST (English for Science and Technology) prevails. Accordingly, one cannot speak about a 'stand-alone' definition of EST, but of one related to the definition of ESP, with features belonging to the specificity of the technical area.

After having identified the origins of ESP, its development and categories included, Hutchinson and Waters consider ESP as “an approach not as a product. ESP is not a particular kind of language or methodology, nor does it consist of a particular type of teaching material. Understood properly, it is an approach to language learning, which is based on learner need. The foundation of all ESP is the simple question: Why does this learner need to learn a foreign language? From this question will flow a whole host of further questions, some of which will relate to the learners themselves, some to the nature of the language the learners will need to operate, some to the given learning context. [...] ESP, then, is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning” (Hutchinson, Waters, 1987: 19). Later on, Laurence Anthony defines ESP as “an approach to language teaching that targets the current and/or future academic or occupational needs of learners, focuses on the necessary language, genres and skills to address these needs, and assists learners in meeting these needs through the use of general and/or discipline-specific teaching materials and methods” (Anthony, 2018: Introduction).

English for Science and Technology was among the first subcategories to appear in the area of academic studies, because of the developments in science and technology which flourished in Europe right after World War II. At the beginning, ESP was based on scientific texts, with a focus on the included vocabulary and grammar practice. Yet, learners' needs and developments in society have turned the process of

“Meeting the Goals”: Enhancing English Language Skills for Students in Engineering

teaching and learning towards more communicative approaches. Besides the technical vocabulary learners become accustomed to, their need of communicating in the foreign language (be it spoken or written) has grown as importance, thus, the materials addressing such students needed to be changed so as to meet such goals. Aside technical vocabulary and grammatical structures widely used in scientific texts, a special focus was offered to the development of other skills, such as listening, writing and speaking, alongside metacognitive skills which the future engineers will definitely need in their careers. Not to mention that, the studying of engineering includes several areas which cannot be considered perfectly independent. Engineering students are specialised in different fields – mechanical engineering, aero spatial engineering, computer engineering, electrical engineering and so on, which makes the task of a teacher working with such a variety of students rather difficult. Nevertheless, these specializations have a common core which an EST course can address. In the end, Woodrow considers that “the focus of EST is on the technical and semi-technical vocabulary of scientific texts, the commonly found grammatical structure in them and their genres- for example, a laboratory report. [...] The role of the EST teacher is to help the learners integrate into their intended disciplinary community by using accepted ways of communicating” (Woodrow, 2018: 13-14).

Rao remarks, “English for science and technology or EST is a sub category of the larger field of English for Specific Purposes in which it shares some basic characteristics with the larger field of ESP. It emphasizes purposeful and utilitarian learning of English. The communicative needs of the learners are important consideration of course design. EST is concerned with both the oral and written discourse of English for academic or professional, occupational or vocational purposes. It mainly deals with learners at the tertiary level for whom the learning of English takes on a service role for their specific needs in study, work or research” (Rao, 2014: 3-4).

Thus, we can define EST as an approach to language learning and teaching with a focus on the development of specific skills the future engineers will use in their careers. The content of the course primarily depends on the needs of its attendees, while the materials used would help in meeting these needs.

Challenges and expectations

It is known that ESP is a learner-centered approach, and the processes of both teaching a specific language as well as that of acquiring it, need to meet the needs and expectations of learners. In the case of English for engineering, students' main motivation is that of performing well in their future careers. EST has evolved a lot throughout years, since, at the beginning the focus was on technical vocabulary and grammar structures, while in time, other necessary skills grew in importance. As Parkinson states, “The initial interest of EST teachers and researchers was on linguistic forms, with later emphasis on skills, a more recent focus has been on disciplinary socialization, and most recently, a critical perspective, which considers how literacy practices express societal or disciplinary power differences” (Parkinson, 2014: 155).

Prior to any attempt of actually teaching a specific language, the teacher/trainer needs to consider both the attitude and motivation of learners. Even if they are interrelated, there is a distinction which needs to be made clear: attitude refers to the feelings of students towards the language being taught, while motivation is linked to the reasons of learning the language. In terms of attitude, the learning background of a student weighs heavily in his/her positive or negative attitude towards English. There are

students who had a nice and interesting experience in acquiring the language while in high school, as well as students who show a reluctant attitude towards the process of learning the language since they might have found it dull or difficult in their previous studying years. And here comes the challenge of the teacher: how to turn the entire process of learning into a pleasant one, a positive experience even for the unenthusiastic ones.

Motivation, on the other hand, deals with the reasons which lie behind the wish of acquiring as much knowledge as possible in the field. It should be taken into consideration the fact that, according to Bălănescu, “[...] there are students who come to classes with a relatively weak motivation and then, again, by bringing in interesting subjects and exercises, teachers have the possibility to build and increase these students’ internal drive to learn and succeed” (Bălănescu, 2019: 60). Nevertheless, most students are aware of the requests of the international labour markets nowadays, and, the knowledge of English represents an important part in the process of selecting new employees. So, their main motivation is that of finding 'a good job' in the future. Gardner (1985), Gardner and Wallace (1972), Basturkmen (2006; 2010), Nation and Macalister (2010), Huhta, Vogt, Johnson and Tulkki (2013), Brown (2016), etc. conducted several studies in the area of students' motivation when acquiring a new language. Gardner describes motivation as “a very broad-based construct that has both cultural and educational components when applied to the language learning situation. It has cognitive, affective, and behavioral characteristics, and the motivated individual demonstrates all facets” (Gardner, 2010: 10).

Afore the actual unfolding of a course, the needs analysis questionnaire has proven to be a great tool in determining the expectations of students when it comes to learning English from a different perspective – that of combining general knowledge with the specificity of their domain of study. The questionnaire is not at all simple to be assembled, since, to get the most out of the students' answers, it needs to include topics related to their previous experiences, the skills they are interested in improving by attending the course, the level of knowledge they wish to reach, what they consider difficult to work with or different activities which they may find engaging. According to Brown (2016), the concepts of needs analysis and needs assessment are interchangeable, meaning the same thing. When dealing with a needs analysis questionnaire, four viewpoints need to be included: the democratic view, where the target is on what students need from various stakeholders' viewpoints (by stakeholders he refers to teachers, administrators, etc.); the discrepancy view, i.e. the difference between what students should be able to do and what they can currently do; the analytic view, what the students should learn next based on their acquired experience; and the diagnostic view which establishes which elements will do most harm if they are missing (Brown, 2016: 5-9).

The teacher or the analyst of the questionnaire should bear in mind, right from the beginning, that the survey could comprise different results, since not all students will answer the questions in the same way, opinions vary, as well as expectations vary. We are different as individuals and our expectations are also varied. Yet, a balance should be found when deciding upon the materials to be used in class, the skills that need a higher amount of time for the students to properly acquire, so that the entire experience of attending such a class at university should not only meet the target but also remain as a positive experience in the learners' mind. Lăpădat reminds us that “the modern world continues to change and it is the role of teachers to respond to current challenges. The

“Meeting the Goals”: Enhancing English Language Skills for Students in Engineering

teaching process should reflect the needs of a modern society and develop the student’s critical thinking and skills” (Lāpādat, Lāpādat, 2020: 147).

Developing skills

Bearing in mind that the main focus of acquiring a foreign language is to be able to use it in both oral and written communication, the development of language skills prevails no matter the specialization of students. The same is the case of engineering students, they will need to further use the language in order to communicate in both their professional and everyday lives. Huckin and Olsen remark, “Scientists and engineers may be technically brilliant and creative, but unless they can convince co-workers, clients and supervisors of their worth, their technical skills will be unnoticed, unappreciated and unused. In a word, if technical people cannot communicate to others what they are doing and why it is important, it is they and their excellent technical skills that will be superfluous. From this perspective, communication skills are not just handy; they are critical tools for success, even survival in ‘real world’ environments” (Huckin, Olsen, 1991: 3). Thus, we should always have in mind ways of improving different skills in English, be they reading, listening, writing or speaking skills. These language skills are not independent; they are related to one another in several ways and their development helps students become proficient users of a foreign language in their future careers.

Receptive skills –reading and listening, show students’ ability to understand language, to make the right meaning out of a written or spoken message. As Sreena and Ilankumaran observe, “Language is received and meaning is decoded for the easy understanding of the message. Imagination is increased through listening and reading” (Sreena, Ilankumaran, 2018: 670). Most engineers will face situations when they need to read technical texts in order to understand a process or to find out technical specifications of certain products. It becomes the task of the teacher to search and select the right type of written text and messages to be in accordance to their specialization. When working on such an input, written messages offered by native speakers, students get accustomed not only with the language needed but also to other important aspects such as correct layout, accuracy and specific style. Technical books in English as well as the Internet become valuable sources for teachers to select proper materials to be used in class.

When dealing with various reading requests, we should always consider the fact that most students bring their knowledge of the subject matter to the task, since they have already studied such technical items in their native language. So, for them, reading about technical processes or products in a foreign language becomes more of an activity of enriching their vocabulary in English, finding out how certain terms are used and pronounced in the foreign language and not so much a new and totally unknown field of study. The process represents more like a transposition of already acquired knowledge of the subject matter into a foreign language since their background information helps them tremendously in the reading process. Whether students are asked to read for the general information or for the specific one, the objective is for them to demonstrate the ability of understanding the message and the further use of specific vocabulary in different tasks.

Listening comprehension is also vital in developing the receptive skills of students. The main purpose of this activity is to get students accustomed to different spoken explanations or dialogues on technical facts, go beyond the textual understanding and use the language effectively on their own. Thus, critical and effective understanding

are not to be forgotten. Jian reports, “In doing the task, students are expected to: develop their critical thinking ability by forming their own idea and use the language and idea they have learned in the listening process. By involving students in doing these, students will also have a better comprehension of the text and have a better real-world motivation for listening” (Jian, 2019: 31). In a study conducted by researchers of Lhokseumawe State Polytechnic in Indonesia on a number of 22 students specialized in Civil Engineering, it’s been shown that a great help in the listening activity of students is to use visuals combined with the verbal mode. Students’ response to using verbal and visual mode in understanding the listening extract was higher than when using only the verbal mode. As a result, the authors conclude, “multimodal analysis is a great choice for language teachers to be used in the teaching. In real life, most of listening contexts involve more than one mode listening, combining verbal and visual modes. Hence, the students need to be exposed to this kind of situation. They will obtain more advantages by exposing themselves to enough exposure of the context” (Yusnimar, Ernawati, Ismaniar, 2020: 422).

Both reading and listening tasks aim at applying authentic materials to help students enrich vocabulary, develop understanding skills and use the newly-acquired knowledge in similar situations. Receptive skills are highly connected to the productive ones, since it is impossible to teach/develop them separately. Many listening tasks comprise reading activities as well as writing and post-activity speaking.

In terms of the productive skills, i.e. writing and speaking, again, the target is to use tasks connected to students’ specialization. Engineers need to be able to write particular types of materials (explanations, instructions, e-mails, reports, etc.) as well as speak in various contexts with colleagues or partners and be able to explain processes or issues encountered in their professional lives, even conduct presentations of different technical products.

In order to improve the writing skills of students, it is important to gradually work on assignments, expanding activities from paragraph-based models to longer pieces of written messages. Engineering students seem interested in how to write descriptions of devices or processes, how to interpret diagrams, illustrations or charts as well as filling-in forms related to their subject matter. At the same time, of great help in developing their writing skills is to send and receive written correspondence among one another or from students to teachers so that they get accustomed with the adaptation of style and register depending on the correspondent. Golkova and Hubackova observe that “There are more and less successful students in the area of productive skills, but the truth is that they should not be discouraged in any phase of learning process. Continuous chase for more effective activities in order to meet the learners’ needs and even more activate their productive skills should be one of the teacher’s main objectives and motivations” (Golkova, Hubackova, 2014: 480).

Speaking is the activity that most students are somehow afraid of, especially because such an activity inhibits them, they do not feel at ease to use a foreign language in front of their colleagues, they focus more on accuracy and forget about fluency, they consider difficult to find the right words or terms to use in their spoken act, so it usually takes time and patience to help students develop such skills. Role-plays, simulations, group discussions and debates are useful ways to lead students into the ability of conducting their own oral presentations. The same as with working on the development of writing skills, speaking tasks are to be used gradually, starting from shorter acts of

“Meeting the Goals”: Enhancing English Language Skills for Students in Engineering

speech to longer debates and presentations. The main idea is to offer students confidence in their knowledge and power of using such knowledge in their speeches.

At the same time with developing language accuracy and fluency, it is important to work on the metacognitive skills that help students in achieving tasks successfully and prepare them for their future. It is important to guide students towards the process of reflecting upon their learning process as well as the factors which lead to performance, to be able to plan, evaluate and correct their performance. Metacognition is applied in various situations alongside the learning process, such as during a reading task when a student comes across an unfamiliar word and uses the context to deduct its meaning before looking it up in a dictionary, or during speaking or listening activities when students are asked to work in groups to reach a common conclusion, instances which request conscious behavior in terms of recognizing and using the best strategies to handle tasks. Thus, students collaborate frequently and better and create bonds with one another which form a relaxed, harmonious environment in class. Wilson and Conyers (2016) use the term *assets* for the cognitive strategies which help students in their learning process and remark,

“* Maintain an outlook of practical optimism about their learning performance,
Set learning goals and plan to achieve them,
Focus their selective attention and optimize working memory,
Monitor their learning progress, and
Apply their learning experiences across core subjects and in their personal lives” (Wilson, Conyers, 2016: 9).

The receptive, productive and metacognitive skills go hand in hand in the process of foreign language acquisition, being impossible to be completely separated one from the other, yet, certain sessions may focus on some of the skills rather than others. It is important for the teacher to try to cover all fields of expertise, and combine them into a pleasant and interactive atmosphere. Ostbye notes, “An interactive exploitation and combination of skills stimulate new pedagogical perspectives that require using language in new and more technical ways. Emerging technologies are transforming the teaching/learning process and changing the traditional role of the teacher. Hopefully, in the future, more and more students and teachers will be experimenting with the Learning Revolution” (Ostbye, 1997: 103).

Conclusions

Worldwide developments in science and technology together with the processes of globalization and internationalization have opened the gate for newer and continuous interactions among professionals in various fields. Engineers from all over the world have started working together for different projects and processes, international companies have emerged in order to advance in the field. The common language of communication in the engineering field is English, which nowadays prevails as *lingua franca* in many activities. Students studying the field of engineering are more and more aware of the importance of acquiring and developing English language skills necessary in their future careers. EST has evolved a lot, shifting the focus from vocabulary and grammar to the development of more communicative skills. The need to communicate in a foreign language has changed not only the materials selected for the study of English but also the approach of teaching and learning the language. Besides the technical vocabulary and grammatical structures widely used in scientific texts, a special focus is offered to the holistic development of receptive, productive and metacognitive skills. A

prerequisite of the English language course is to address the specific expectations of the attendees; materials are to be selected in order to meet students' needs while the chosen tasks should target the development of different skills necessary in their future career. All these activities should unfold in a relaxing and engaging atmosphere and be supported by a tight collaboration between teachers and students.

References:

- Anthony, L. (2018). *Introducing English for Specific Purposes*. Routledge.
- Basturkmen, H. (2006). *Ideas and Options in English for Specific Purposes*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Basturkmen, H. (2010). *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Baştürkmen, H., Bocanegra-Valle, A. (2018). Materials Design Processes, Beliefs and Practices of Experienced ESP Teachers in University Settings in Spain. *Key-Issues in English for Specific Purposes in Higher Education*, Springer, p. 14.
- Bălănescu, E.O. (2019). The Fall of Communism and Its Impact on English Teaching and Learning. *Revista de Stiinte Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques*, (61), Universitaria Publishing House, pp. 57-67.
- Brown, J. D. (2016). *Introducing Needs Analysis and English for Specific Purposes*. Routledge.
- Dudley-Evans, T., St John, M., J. (1998). *Developments in ESP. A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gardner, R. C., Wallace, E.L. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning*. Newbury House.
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role and Attitudes and Motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Gardner, R. C. (2010). *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition. The Socio-educational Model*. Peter Lang Publishing, New York.
- Golkova, D., Hubackova, S. (2014). Productive Skills in Second Language Learning. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, (143), Elsevier, pp. 477-481.
- Huckin, T. N., Olsen, L. A. (1991). *Technical Writing and Professional Communication for Nonnative Speakers of English*. McGraw-Hill International Edition.
- Huhta, M., Vogt, K., Johnson, E., Tulkki, H. (2013). *Needs Analysis for Language Course Design. A holistic approach to ESP*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hutchinson, T., Waters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes. A Learning- centred approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jian, H. (2019). Material Development for Listening to Financial and Economic News: A Case Study. *Convergence of ESP with Other Disciplines*. Vernon Press.
- Lăpădat, L., Lăpădat, M.M. (2020). Teaching Foreign Languages: Between Tradition and Contemporary Synchronicity. *Revista de Stiinte Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques*, (68), Universitaria Publishing House, pp. 139-148.
- Nation, I.S.P., Macalister, J. (2010). *Language Curriculum Design*. Routledge, pp. 24-37.
- Ostbye, L. I. (1997). A Multidimensional Approach to Syllabus Design. *Applied Languages. Theory and Practice in ESP*. Jordi Pique & David J. Viera, ed., Universitat de Valencia.
- Parkinson, J. (2014). English for Science and Technology. In Paltridge, B. & Starfield, S. (Eds.), *The Handbook of English for Specific Purposes*. Wiley Blackwell.
- Rao, V. C. S. (2014). English for Science and Technology: A Learner Centered Approach. In *English for Specific Purposes World*, ISSN 1682-3257, www.esp-world.info, Issue

“Meeting the Goals”: Enhancing English Language Skills for Students in Engineering

42, Vol. 15.

- Sreena, S., Ilankumaran, M. (2018). Developing Productive Skills Through Receptive Skills – A Cognitive Approach. *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*, (7), 669-673.
- Wilson, D., Conyers, M. (2016). *Teaching Students to Drive Their Brains. Metacognitive Strategies, Activities and Lesson Ideas*. ASCD, Virginia, U.S.A.
- Woodrow, L. (2018). *Introducing Course Design in English for Specific Purposes*. Routledge.
- Yusnimar, Y., Ernawati, Br., Surbakti, Ismaniar, I. (2020). Multimodal Analysis in Developing EFL Students’ ESP Listening Skill in Civil Engineering. In *ISLLCE 2019: Proceedings of the First International Seminar on Language, Literature, Culture and Education*, Kendari, Indonesia, CCER & EAI, pp. 417-422.

Article Info

Received: November 11 2021

Accepted: November 25 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Using students' different learning styles to enhance classroom interaction

Daniela Scorțan¹⁾

Abstract:

The aim of our article is to analyze the individual characteristics of learners and to differentiate our teaching methods in order to promote the success of as many students as possible. Taking into account the specificities of each one, it may be possible to reduce the intra-group variance in order to form moderately heterogeneous teams in order to promote the development of interactions between learners which are likely to have a positive effect on the quality of their learning. These different learning styles clearly show that each learner has distinctive characteristics for the appropriation of knowledge. This is why we must admit that learners do not achieve the same performance with the same type of teaching. Considering learning strategies adapted to each style helps the learner to process and to perceive information. The diversification and multiplication of learning activities make it possible, on the one hand, to mobilize resources according to the context, and on the other hand to consolidate and to strengthen learning. The teacher's role is therefore also to construct new pedagogical situations that are sufficiently varied to lead the student towards new developments of his knowledge and especially of himself, as a personality.

Keywords: *learning styles; teaching practices; motivation; teamwork; grouping.*

¹⁾ Lecturer, Ph. D., University of Craiova, Department of Applied Modern Languages, Romania, Phone: 0720.154.311, Email: danielascortan@yahoo.com.

Using students' different learning styles to enhance classroom interaction

Introduction

The quality of learning and academic success directly influence teaching practices. Indeed, the challenges related to the evolution of knowledge, the growing heterogeneity of students, the pressing needs to train a qualified workforce, the rise of technologies requires constant adaptations of educational practices in order to guarantee their quality. However, the teacher alone cannot be held responsible for the success of the targeted learning, his responsibility being defined in terms of resources put in place to ensure learning. The student has therefore an important role to play in terms of academic success. Thus, if it is important to identify teaching practices that promote learning, it is just as important to draw attention to the privileged learning modes.

Teaching is not the same as learning. Teaching styles refer to modalities of didactic communication; learning styles are modalities of problems solving. Learning style and cognitive style are distinct concepts, even though they are often confused. For purists, cognitive style is innate and stable while learning style results from innate and acquired knowledge and can therefore evolve through experience. Learning styles are not the expression of a rigid typology that claims to classify individuals into strict categories (like classic typologies). In fact, they only reflect a particular aspect of the complexity of individuals.

We cannot prioritize learning styles. Just like in the sports field, there is no strict relationship between style and the quality of performance. So there is no such thing as a right way to learn or solve a problem. We are all different, but complementary. Any attempt to „normalize” the intellectual approach of a learner, any attempt to prescribe an ideal and orthodox learning style is a normative fantasy that does not qualify to teach.

For centuries, teachers have classified students according to their grades in exams. For decades, psychologists have classified subjects according to their I.Q. Perhaps it is time to complete these assessments with less prescriptive approaches, less hierarchical, where the promotion of diversity takes precedence over selection through compliance. The research into learning styles might help.

At school, as in a company, the identification of learning styles should enable an optimal use of skills, more effective communication and the constitution of more efficient student groups.

Theoretical perspectives on learning styles

From a social constructivist perspective, the learner builds his knowledge through active interaction with his physical and social environment. In this context, social interactions are essential, and can be the origin of a questioning of the initial representations. However, the variety of learning situations, in which the specificity of the content, of the situations and of language activities occupy a decisive place, has led various authors to consider that the other dimensions of the social, such as the involvement of the subjects in the task, the psycho-emotional aspects, the quality of communication skills, play a role in the efficiency of interactions.

The social constructivist approach of learning does not reject the individual aspect. It is moreover this taking into account of the constitutive dimensions of the individual and of the learning situation that will guide the direction of our research. For this purpose, the learning style corresponds to a constitutive dimension of the learner.

According to Schmeck (1988), a learning style is a predisposition in some students to adopt a particular learning strategy independently of specific requests of the

learning task. The learning style accounts for the regularities in a student's behavior, which are related to the learning achieved by this student.

Operationally, Barbe and Swassing (1979) defined learning style as the relative ability of an individual to achieve an academic task according to the main perceptual modalities. Knowledge of the learning style is not meant to make the learner a prisoner of a label. It allows to design and open up new ways of learning in order, from the student's point of view, to become a more effective learner. For this purpose, knowledge of the learning style can lead to greater self-awareness.

According to Hermann (1990), individuals are attracted to activities that allow them to exercise their preferred brain functioning modes, and their performance at work, as during studies, will be higher if their profile is in line with the content of the tasks requested. The notion of learning style is based on the idea that individuals have different ways of learning, that is to say of perceiving, storing, processing and rendering information, of building a knowledge base. According to studies on the impact of learning styles on academic performance, the learner will achieve a better performance if the learning environment in which he operates is congruent with his style.

The theory of self-determination has gradually established itself in recent years to explain the behavior of individuals in various contexts including that of education. Learning difficulties have long been designed uniquely as resulting from deficits in the intellectual efficiency of learners.

The work of Binet (Binet & Simon, 1916) was intended to identify children who, due to their cognitive deficits, were part of a special education. The individual differences were appreciated according to a unique dimension: mental age. Binet had the intuition of qualitative differences when describing, for example, the different functioning modes of his two daughters, which he never suspected presumably of any debility.

With Piaget's theory (1953), a few decades later, the deficits in the structuring of logical-mathematical thought will be diagnosed as the cause of the learning difficulties. Although it is not a theory of learning, the genetic epistemology of Piaget has had great success in the world of education and training. In particular, it served as a basis for research on social aspects of learning but also for the design of teaching methods intended to raise the operation level of poorly qualified adults.

The study of elementary mental processes, to which was devoted for a long time the research in general cognitive behavior psychology, has resulted in the observation that knowledge of these processes provided little information for explaining the individual differences of performance. Differential psychology, for its part, has focused on studying, beyond individual differences in efficiency, differences in the form that take, in different individuals, their behaviors in the resolution of a problem. This line of research has shown that there are stable inter-individual differences in the way of perceiving and memorizing information, of producing hypotheses, of making a decision. Cognitive styles are the dimensions underlying these observed differences. It's about differences in the form of cognitive functioning because cognitive styles of an individual are in part independent of his level of cognitive efficiency.

David Kolb's description of learning styles is by far the most widely used. Kolb (1984) proposes a theory of learning which is intended to be a synthesis of the work of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and Jean Piaget. Drawing a parallel between the development of scientific theories and the way in which an individual appropriates a new notion, Kolb proposes a cycle of learning passing through four successive and ordered phases. From a

Using students' different learning styles to enhance classroom interaction

concrete experience of the sensitive world, the person will engage in a reflective observation on this experience, which will lead him to an abstract conceptualization (which can be seen as a reorganization of his representations), generating new hypotheses which will be tested during an active experimentation phase, the source of a new concrete experience which thus completes the cycle.

Kolb posited that every learner is characterized by the preference he gives to one of the four phases of the learning cycle. These preferences are evaluated using a questionnaire that positions the individual on two bipolar axes: one constitutes the concrete / abstract dimension and the other the active / reflexive dimension. This positioning in the space defined by these two dimensions allows Kolb to offer four types of learners:

- the divergent (concrete-reflexive), identified by his capacity of imagination and his „emotional intelligence“;
- the convergent (abstract-active), who likes to apply ideas;
- the accomodator (concrete-active), who chooses facts to theory and action to meditation;
- the assimilator (abstract-reflexive), focused on concepts and theories.

Kolb validated his model by studying the distribution of these four types in various groups of students. For example, he finds the majority of students in humanities studies are divergent, while engineering students are more often convergent.

Learning styles research, which dates back to the 1930s, began in Western Europe and the United States and has really taken off over the past five decades. During this period, the density of research work fluctuated, but has experienced a revival for several years, no doubt linked to the trend for cognitive psychology.

In recent years, an individualization of teaching as well as a desire to meet the personal needs of the student have increasingly encouraged the educational community to consider the contribution of the learning style. Defined by Legendre (1988) as modifiable preferential mode via which the subject likes to master a learning process, solve a problem, think or, quite simply, react in a teaching situation, the style makes it possible to identify the modes of access to knowledge that the learner favors in his learning.

Learning styles are diverse and it goes without saying that they can be listed in many ways and be the subject of various studies. Thus, according to Duckwall, Arnold and Hayes (1991), these modes are categorized according to four approaches. The first of these approaches deals with independence or dependence on the field of learning (Witkin, Moore, Goodenough and Cox, 1977). Styles are defined as individual characteristics and reflect a stable preferential mode. The second approach considers the way in which the person acquires and uses information in his learning. The learning style is conceived as being modifiable and as part of a cycle or an experiential learning process (Kolb, 1984; Honey and Mumford, 1986; Magolda, 1989). A third approach studies preferences according to context and learning experiences (Rezler and Rezmovic, 1981). Finally, a fourth approach touches on the affective aspect of learning style and includes concepts such as motivation (Entwistle, Hanley and Hounsell, 1979).

Styles can also be grouped according to three main assessment procedures: direct observation of performance, subject self-observation or rapport, and self-assessment (Lavault, 1992). The first of these procedures involves directly observing a subject performing one or more formal tasks (Witkin, 1977). In a self-observation procedure, it is the subject himself who indicates the frequency of his behaviors

(Lamontagne, Lamontagne and Lamy, 1982), while in a self-assessment procedure, the subject expresses his opinions or judgments by giving his perception of his actions (Kolb, 1984; Honey and Mumford, 1986; Rezler and Rezmovic, 1981).

Teacher's perspective on learning style

From the teacher's point of view, knowledge of students' learning style awakens what he must do to teach them. For example, this knowledge may allow the development of strategies to try to correct what is lacking in the learner's learning process.

When a teacher understands the concept of learning style and applies what he knows to his relationships with students, they are more likely to benefit from their school experience and perform well (Butler, 1987). By providing students with options based on these styles, the teacher can create a supportive atmosphere that maximizes the academic potential of each student.

Indeed, the study of different learners and of their style makes it possible to understand how knowledge of a style improves the achievement of competence in a learning process. The students who would be most successful are those in whom there is an adequacy with the external conditions of learning (proposed pedagogical formulas) and their most marked inclinations to acquire particular knowledge or to develop specific skills. In this sense, it will be a question of harmonizing the teaching formulas with the preferences and characteristics of the student so that the latter has access as surely as possible to the object of learning.

Far from a simple classification where everyone takes note of the category to which they belong to confirm membership and justify resistance, the integration of learning styles promotes the quality of teaching and maximizes learning. Also, by borrowing this approach, we move away from the „classic” reaction of believing that learning styles will help us as educators or researchers to „classify” the students to whom we speak. Far beyond this attribution of labels to learners, an increased knowledge of learning styles should, in our opinion, be used to question and explain preferences and ways of doing that are present in learning and education.

In fact, this leads us to question the benefits and limitations of learning situations inspired by learning styles. In connection, one may wonder about the value of making students with different learning styles interact when performing academic tasks.

Cooperative learning and teamwork

Cooperative learning and teamwork are learning situations that lend themselves well to interaction and, therefore, to the possibility of bringing together different styles of learners.

Teamwork involves bringing students together to get them to accomplish a common task in order to achieve a common goal. Teamwork promotes positive interdependence and individual empowerment, which makes work more efficient and rewarding. Teamwork encourages interactions between students. The environment characterized by trust, respect and the importance of interpersonal relationships promotes risk-taking, transparency, communication and support between students.

The teacher must take special measures to balance the status of the students, to avoid that the interaction is dominated by those with high status and that the others do not withdraw from the task (roles, treatment of multiple skills, attribution of competences). To succeed in the task, students must appeal to the diverse resources of

Using students' different learning styles to enhance classroom interaction

all team members. Students who lack speaking skills and those who generally do not enjoy speaking might naturally avoid going with more advanced students who have better speaking skills. Teachers need to consider when it would be best to place students in heterogeneous groups. There is a possible link between students' satisfaction and their perception of learning in multi-level classes. If a student feels that he is learning, he will be satisfied with the activity that helped him learn something. When we group together students of different levels, these students may think that the activity does not target their specific needs. An activity can meet the needs of students of a particular level, while others will be frustrated or bored.

Types of cooperative learning groups

There are several types of grouping possible for teamwork, each of these formulas having its advantages and limitations. We will briefly describe four here: random grouping, affinity grouping, grouping by proximity and teacher-formed grouping.

Random groupings accustom students to working with several other students of different personalities, thus reproducing social work, where teammates are rarely chosen. This type of grouping allows the student to acquire social skills such as tolerance, respect and valuing of differences. Groups can be formed using, for example, colored cards. The teams will then consist of students with cards of the same colour or with different colours. This type of grouping makes it easy to modify the number of students of each team. Indeed, it is a kind of grouping that does not require any affinity criteria. You just have to take into account the number of students in the class.

Grouping by affinities lets students group together as they wish. Certain situations require resorting to this type of grouping. The teacher will use affinity grouping when, for example, a climate of trust and complicity must reign during exchanges, when students are called upon to express feelings or discuss subjects that affect them personally. Students are more comfortable working with those with whom they share common interests, because the motivation and intellectual performance of our students are conditioned by the emotional security that the educational environment provides them, and this is what we want to obtain in a cooperative learning environment.

In teacher-formed grouping, the teacher reserves the right to form teams. This operating rule in cooperative learning must be known by the students and must be previously explained. In fact, the students should know that, for certain activities, it is possible to group together either at random, by proximity, by affinities or by fields of interest. For other assignments, it is rather the teacher who determines the composition of the teams. We therefore inform the students that, for certain activities, the teacher will consider the abilities and aptitudes of each student in order to build effective and productive teams.

It seems that four is the ideal number to form a learning team because it allows, on the one hand, to maximize interactions and on the other hand to guide and monitor all group members. However, teams of two students lend themselves well to exchanges and specific assignments of short duration. Teams of three can sometimes be problematic since there is often a tendency to isolate or ignore the third student. As a general rule, the larger the team is, the more difficult it becomes to lead it.

Students can be given a free hand to choose a subject or a theme that interests them, or they can be asked to choose from among the proposed activities the one they want to prepare. Then they are asked to regroup according to the chosen activity. We

can, of course, first place the students in teams and then invite them to choose together the activity to be prepared. However, it should be noted that the two types of grouping allow different objectives to be achieved. The first respects the personal tendencies of the pupils and arouses their motivation and their commitment. The second allows students to learn to make concessions and introduces them to the practice of consensus, which are high-level skills. The teacher must clearly define the cooperation objectives to be achieved before choosing the type of grouping for a given activity.

Groupings by proximity can be used in a specific stage during the activity, it can be useful to bring two students together for a short time in order to allow them to compare or verify their work, to exchange information and to support each other. The student is asked, for example, to discuss with his neighbour, to give him an explanation. He is then invited to listen carefully to his classmate's explanation. The student can also be told to exchange his copy with his neighbour in order to identify and correct possible mistakes. We can also propose the student to read the text of his neighbour and check if the work is finished and well documented.

In fact, the ideal grouping in cooperative learning must respect a certain heterogeneity. We can then consider variables such as strengths from an academic point of view; the cultural and linguistic diversity or the gender of the students. Personalities or any other considerations that could facilitate the formation of balanced learning teams can also be taken into account. It is therefore very important for the teacher to plan the groupings of the students, keeping in mind the objectives to be achieved, since the grouping supports this objective and has an influence on the quality of the work accomplished.

Positive interdependence and individual responsibility

Positive interdependence is the most important component that can ensure both cooperation and mutual aid within the group. According to Johnson & Johnson (1989) interdependence takes place when students realize that they are related to their teammates and they cannot succeed unless their colleagues succeed and (vice versa). They must coordinate their efforts with those of their teammates to complete an assignment.

There is positive interdependence when the success of a student increases the chances of success of others. Positive interdependence stands out from other forms of relationships between team members, such as independence, which provides a context where the work of one does not affect that of others, or negative interdependence, which occurs when the achievement of a student's goals is only possible if others fail to reach theirs. Unlike other forms of work, positive interdependence maximizes the learning of all members, the sharing of resources, the mutual support and the celebration of common successes.

Closely linked to positive interdependence, individual responsibility constitutes a second component of cooperation. We speak of individual responsibility when students feel responsible for their learning and perceive that their own effort, participation and commitment to the assignment, are essential to achieving the goals set for the team. To improve team cooperation, each member must be aware that he cannot rely on the work of others to succeed in the task. Since the motivation is not the same for all members of a team or of a group, it is necessary to create mechanisms to ensure that each student is encouraged to do his part by maximizing his potential. To achieve this objective, it is necessary that the responsibility of each member of the group be obvious

Using students' different learning styles to enhance classroom interaction

and clear (for example, give each member of the group a different colored marker by specifying that all colors must be present in the final product).

Student accountability does not mean that every student should make an equal contribution to that of others, but rather significant and corresponding to his capacities. It is therefore necessary to organize activities that allow students who have not yet mastered certain skills to perform tasks easier, while not neglecting their importance in achieving the common goal. We can also make an appeal to various other means in order to consolidate the meaning of responsibilities such as being observed by the teacher, the appropriate distribution of roles, congratulations and encouragement.

It is also possible to develop a sense of individual responsibility by resorting to formative assessment. By assigning a team score based on individual scores, we can make everyone in the group feel responsible for the performance of the team. The feedback period after each activity, also allows each member group to reflect on his own performance, on his participation as well as that of his teammates, or to know what the others think about it. Knowing that their individual contribution will be judged by others, encourages students to increase their efforts, thereby positively influencing their behavior and their responsible investment.

However, these feedback periods must remain constructive. Finally, the members of a team can, before an activity, write a contract that binds them each other. In this contract, each member agrees to do his part of the work and specifies the behaviors he will adopt to get there. Thus, each student is responsible for his own learning and also responsible for helping teammates achieve the common goals of the group.

Group learning pedagogy gives less importance to the role of the teacher who, by letting the learners participate actively in their own learning, becomes a resource person, a facilitator, an expert, an observer. He is no longer the only person to impart knowledge. He simply offers his help and support to the group members. The teacher's interventions in group learning pedagogy must be limited to bare minimum. It is therefore not necessary to intervene to prevent but to adjust or encourage if necessary. Likewise, learners must be trusted in their own capacities to monitor their learning.

Conclusions

In an oral and situational language teaching, the activities are almost always carried out in teams. Most of the time, these teams are formed on the basis of personal affinities in the classroom. One of the first advantages of teamwork is that it places the student in a climate of emotional security. Learners who work in pairs or in teams can develop the skills necessary to plan, organize, negotiate and reach consensus. Even the beginner learners are able to develop these skills, since they can benefit from collaborative teamwork.

Knowledge of the learning styles of learners, as they are revealed by a self-descriptive questionnaire, can be useful for identifying potential sources of difficulty. Thereby, for example, during a training where the pedagogy is based on group interactions, we can assume that a learner who perceives himself to be little socializing has some risks of feeling uncomfortable, which is sure to have an effect on his performance.

Another example, another individual, with an independent style, will undoubtedly have difficulties in following a very rigidly programmed education. We see all the interest, from a consulting perspective, to identify the styles that a person prefers,

to help him become aware of them and to put these styles in relation to information regarding the characteristics of the formation that the person is considering.

Learning styles are a valuable contribution to the psychoeducational diagnosis, on condition that they are considered as generators of hypotheses as well as other factors and not as the convenient explanation of the difficulties of learners and teachers.

It is undoubtedly reasonable, in the early stages of learning, to ensure that the content to be assimilated is presented to the learner under a shape that suits him best, that is, a form that is congruent with his style. The first phases of learning are often those where the learner must face all the difficulties: lack of familiarity with the content, ignorance of the most effective strategies, making contact with the learning environment, whether physical (premises, equipment) or human (teacher, classmates).

However, learning, especially if it is professional, aims to make the learner capable of adapting to situations that have their own system of constraints. The pedagogy will therefore consist of relying on the vicariousness of styles of learning in order to transfer the learner from his „spontaneous” style to other styles that will prove to be more effective in a professional situation. We should also note the importance of the level of cognitive efficiency in taking into account the pedagogy of learning styles: it has been observed, for example, that students whose intellectual level is rather low need very structured teaching methods while these methods are less effective for rather high level students. The latter succeed better when they are exposed to „liberal” methods.

References:

- Barbe, W.B., Swassing, R.H. (1979). *Teaching through Modality Strengths: Concepts and Practices*, Columbus: Zaner Bloser.
- Bărbuceanu, C. D. (2020). Visual Teaching- Using Digitalized Material to Engage ESP Students, *Revista de Științe Politice, Revue des Sciences Politiques*, Craiova: Universitaria Publishing House, nr.67, 36-44.
- Binet, A., Simon, T. (1916). *The Development of Intelligence in Children*, New Jersey: Publications of the Training School at Vineland.
- Butler, K. (1987). *Learning and Teaching Style: in Theory and Practice*, Columbia: Learners Dimension.
- Duckwall, J.M., Arnold, L. & Hayes, J. (1991). Approaches to learning by undergraduate students: A longitudinal study. *Research in Higher Education* 32(1), 1-13.
- Entwistle, N., Hanley, M., Hounsell, D. (1979). Identifying distinctive approaches to studying. *Higher Education*, 8, 365-380.
- Herrmann, N. (1990). *The Creative Brain*, Lake Lure: Ned Herrmann Group.
- Honey, P., Mumford, A. (1986). *The Manual of Learning Style*, Maidenhead, Berkshire: Ardingly House.
- Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T. (1989). *Cooperation and Competition: Theory and Research*, Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.
- Kolb, D. A. (1976). *The Learning Style Inventory: Technical Manual*, Boston, MA: McBer.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Using students' different learning styles to enhance classroom interaction

- Lamontagne, C. (1985). *Le profil d'apprentissage: vue d'ensemble*, collection Outils, Techniques et Méthodes, Québec : Institut de Recherche sur le Profil d'Apprentissage.
- Lamontagne, C., Lamontagne, G. & Lamy, J.-M. (1982). Tests pour la détermination du style d'apprentissage, Saint-Hubert: Institut de recherche sur le profil d'apprentissage.
- Lavault, D. (1992). *Les styles cognitifs*, Ottawa: Université d'Ottawa.
- Lăpădat, L., Lăpădat, M.M. (2020). Teaching Foreign Languages Between Tradition and Contemporary Synchronicity, *Revista de Științe Politice, Revue des Sciences Politiques*, Craiova: Universitaria Publishing House, no. 68, 139-148.
- Legendre, R. (1988). *Dictionnaire actuel de l'éducation*, Paris: Larousse.
- Magolda, M.B. (1989). Gender differences in cognitive development. An analysis of cognitive complexity and learning styles. *Journal of College Student Development*, 30 (3), 213-220.
- Piaget, J. (1929). *The Child's Conception of the World*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Piaget, J. (1953). *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Piaget, J. (1970). *Science of Education and the Psychology of the Child*, New York: Viking Press.
- Rezler, A.G., Rezmovic, V. (1981). The Learning Preference Inventory. *Journal of Allied Health*, 19 (1), 28-34.
- Schmeck, R.R. (1988). *Learning Strategies and Learning Styles (Perspectives on Individual Differences)*, Boston: Springer.
- Witkin, H.A., Moore, C.A., Goodenough, D.R., & Cox, P.W. (1977). Field-dependent and field-independent cognitive styles and their educational implications. *Review of Educational Research*, 47 (1), 1-64.

Article Info

Received: November 14 2021

Accepted: November 26 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Religious coping in times of crisis

Veronica Gheorghită¹⁾, Alexandrina Bădescu²⁾

Abstract:

The article focuses on the theoretical aspects of the relationship between crises (such as health, economic or social crises) and religion, highlighting theoretical models of religion as a form of coping. The case study regarding the impact of the global pandemic of COVID-19 on religious life aims at pointing out the general perceptions of how religious beliefs and behaviours were influenced, as well as how faith communities have adapted to the coronavirus crisis.

Keywords: *religious coping; crisis; COVID-19 pandemic; religious faith.*

¹⁾ Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Romania, Phone: 0040740458527, Email: veronica.gheorghita@edu.ucv.ro.

²⁾ Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Theology, Romania, Phone: 0040763778967, Email: alexandrina.badescu@edu.ucv.ro

Religious coping in times of crisis

Introduction

In times of crisis, marked by uncertainty and adversity, religion often becomes a way to deal with unforeseen, difficult and stressful situations, with many studies indicating a direct relationship between religion and, implicitly, how man expresses his faith and his physical and emotional well-being.

In defining the term religion, the concept of adaptation also comes up, thus building a frame of reference, a global approach by which to understand the world and to interpret human events. Adaptation itself is a form of universal human experience adopted by people when they go through unpleasant, frustrating, dangerous or stressful situations or events and who need to find a way to obtain or keep what is valuable to them.

Religious adaptation is self-regulating and improving behavior, which refers to the “use of cognitive or behavioral techniques, in the face of stressful life events, that arise out of one’s religion or spirituality” (Tix and Frazier, 1998: p. 411).

In Kenneth Pargament's view, the ability to adapt to religion refers to the way in which religious beliefs or practices are used in order to provide meaning and purpose in difficult times in life.

Koenig, Pargament, and Nielsen (1998) emphasize the idea that religious adjustment strategies can prevent and mitigate the negative emotional effects of a stressful life. Therefore, religious adaptation “encompasses religiously framed cognitive, emotional, or behavioral responses to stress” (Wortmann, 2013), aims to provide a meaning to life, personal development, creating a connection with divinity, hope or gaining inner peace.

The theoretical explanations of religious adaptation form common perspectives of understanding that are based on how beliefs and religious behaviors are used to “manage the perception, occurrence and/or consequences (e.g., emotional, psychological) of an undesirable or threatening event or situation” (Chatters, Taylor, Jackson and Lincoln, 2008).

Forms and methods of religious adaptation

In the context of crisis, religion encourages man to perceive the difficult moments he faces as an opportunity to change his life, helps him to create a connection with the divinity or superior force, and it also guides and supports the individual by engaging him/her in religious rituals during the stages of transition in his life (Goodman, 2020).

On the other hand, during a crisis, religion can become problematic by the way in which the image of the divinity is reconstructed, as “revengeful” and “something that punishes”, thus accentuating the feelings of abandonment, anger, disappointment, guilt and distrust.

In the literature, religious adaptation is presented as a multidimensional construct that can be both religious and secular in itself (McDougle, Konrath, Walk et al., 2016), with forms and methods of religious adaptation, both positive and negative.

In general, methods of religious adaptation include a variety of beliefs, behaviors, and activities focused on emotions and problem solving such as:

- ✓ prayer for help, healing, forgiveness, thanksgiving, guidance
- ✓ trust in God
- ✓ reading religious materials
- ✓ meditation

- ✓ rituals of purification, emptying and forgiveness of sins
 - ✓ forms of support from the religious community
- Such examples of religious adaptation are found in existing religions and religious cults.
- ✓ In the Orthodox Christian cult there is the healing ritual or healing mystery, the sixth mystery of the church, entitled "the holy anointing". It takes place especially on fasting days and consists in the participation in religious services of both healthy and sick people, who, by means of the prayers said by the priests and the anointing with oil considered holy, seek to cure diseases of the body and of the soul.
 - ✓ Bar Mitzvah is a ceremony by which a person becomes a full member of the Jewish community and responsible for his/her actions
 - ✓ The Roman Catholic sacrament of confirmation, the second of the sacraments of initiation (the rest being baptism, communion, confession, marriage, holy orders and anointing of the sick people) is a ceremony in which young people are baptized and confirmed to live their lives as true Christians.
 - ✓ The doctrine of karma in the Hindu religion includes the idea of rebirth and liberation from the cycle of reincarnations. Adherents of this religion claim that both the future existence and the present life of man are conditioned and influenced by the actions and way of life of the person from previous lives.

Pergament explains and supports the importance of understanding the functions of religious adaptation methods by emphasizing that it is not enough to know how often religious behavior is performed (eg, worship, prayer, involvement in religious activities), but rather it is essential to be known "the content of prayers, the types of support sought from faith communities, and the perspectives about what the stressor means in light of one's faith may vary dramatically across people performing the same religious behaviors or even within the same person across different stressors"(Cummings and Pargament, 2010: 31).

Thus, Pergament (1997) built RCOPE, currently the most commonly used instrument for measuring religious adaptation, a scale that includes elements for evaluating the forms of religious adaptation related to major stress factors in an individual's life and for integrating religious and spiritual dimensions in the healing process and in treatment schemes (Pargament, Feuille and Burdzy, 2010: 54).

The measuring instrument includes 105 items divided into 21 subscales, items that reflect the functions of religious adaptation, those of meaning, control, comfort, intimacy and transformation of life, the search for the sacred or spirituality). The instrument itself was built to take into account the way in which people represent their positive and negative methods of religious adaptation from a cognitive and attitudinal point of view.

The positive forms of the subscale regarding religious adaptation have been associated with individual perception of the sacred and with religious evolution in stressful times. Instead, the negative religious adaptation was associated with the state of tension and conflict, which are highlighted in a low quality of life and indifference towards others. In their research, the authors noted a greater preponderance of the use of positive methods of religious adaptation compared to the negative ones, both being representative of the following items:

Religious coping in times of crisis

Table. 1 Positive and negative forms of religious adaptation (RCOPE)

<i>Positive forms</i>	<i>Negative forms</i>
“looked for a stronger connection with God”	“wondered whether God had abandoned me”
“sought God’s love and care”	“felt punished by God for my lack of devotion”
“sought help from God in letting go of my anger”	“wondered what I did for God to punish me”
“tried to put my plans into action together with God”	“questioned God’s love for me”
“tried to see how God might be trying to strengthen me in this situation”	“wondered whether my church had abandoned me”
“asked forgiveness for my sins”	“decided the devil made this happen”
“focused on religion to stop worrying about my problems”	“questioned the power of God”
“looked for a stronger connection with God”	
“sought God’s love and care”	

Source: Pargament, Feuille and Burdzy, 2010: 57

Although there are a variety of perspectives used in defining religious adaptation, the inclusion of the idea of "sacred" is the common element, because all beliefs and practices that include sacred elements have a greater capacity to provide meaning, balance, order, and security.

The relationship between religious adaptation and health

In general, studies on religious adaptation refer to issues related to the health, well-being, self-esteem and personal satisfaction of the individual.

Health problems create reasons for anxiety and stress, and therefore affect the quality of life of the individual and his/her ability to function properly. Often the stressors take many forms from the negative effects of the condition itself, high costs of treatment, difficult access to treatment to other obstacles encountered in the health system.

In times of poor health, people can turn to religion to overcome sickness by promoting emotional well-being, adopting an active behavior to solve health problems, building social support, and creating or maintaining a relationship with the divinity. The religious methods of adjustment used (eg prayer for healing, relief, guidance, help from the community) help people to accept the situation they are facing and to overcome the stress caused by those problems more easily. In these difficult times, focusing on religious values, beliefs, and teachings can help people gain a clearer perspective on their situation.

Most research on the relationship between religious adaptation and health indicates that positive forms of religious adjustment mark the intensity of an individual's relationship with God and are associated with a better quality of life. In contrast, negative forms of religious adaptation reflect a weak relationship with the divinity and are associated with a poorer well-being of life.

There is a lot of relevant research that emphasizes how people use religion in times of crisis. They show how religious adaptation greatly improves the physical and psychological health of individuals, reduces mortality, anxiety and the impact of

unpleasant events on the lives of individuals. On the other hand, research has also highlighted how the physical and mental health of the individual can worsen in the case of people who are dissatisfied with the relationship with the divinity and show distrust in its powers.

Among these researches that highlight the influence of religious adaptation in relation to health can be mentioned:

- ✓ H G Koenig, K I Pargament, J Nielsen researches the relationship between religious and non-religious adaptation behaviors with the health status of hospitalized elderly patients. People who use methods of religious adaptation show better mental health, establish a connection with the divinity and with members of the religious community, help other people and positive appreciations about it (H G Koenig, K I Pargament, J Nielsen, 1998);
- ✓ Tarakeshwar, N.; Vanderwerker, L.C.; Paulk, E.; Pearce, M.J.; Kasl, S.V.; Prigerson, H.G., have researched religious adjustment and quality of life among patients with advanced cancer. 170 patients were selected and it was concluded that religious adaptation directly influences the quality of life, which depends on the types of religious adaptation strategies used (Tarakeshwar, Vanderwerker, Paulk, Pearce, Kasl and Prigerson, 2006);
- ✓ Hebert, R., Zdaniuk, B., Schulz, R., & Scheier, M. highlight how positive and negative religious coping influences overall well-being (both physical and mental), life satisfaction and the level of depression among women with breast cancer (Hebert, Zdaniuk, Schulz and Scheier, 2009);
- ✓ Woods, TE, Antoni, MH, Ironson, GH, & Kling, DW used a sample of 33 HIV-positive African-American women with mild symptoms to investigate the link between their level of religiosity and their emotional and physical condition. Using forms of religious adjustment (trust in God and well-being associated with religion), lower levels of depression and anxiety were found among the women included in the study (Woods, Antoni, Ironson and Kling, 1999);
- ✓ Wachholtz, A. B., & Sambamthoori, U. have research into how prayer influences people with depression. The main results of the study were as follows: people who pray are usually involved in a religious community, prayer is used as a complementary form of therapy for depression, and Latin Americans and African Americans are more likely to pray when they suffer from health problems associated with depression, while non-whites, regardless of depression level, are more engaged in prayer (Wachholtz and Sambamthoori, 2013);
- ✓ Wachholtz AB, Pargament KI (2005) researched how meditation with spiritual components creates greater benefits (physically, psychologically, spiritually) than other forms of meditation that are considered secular. Thus the group of spiritual meditation reported less anxiety and a better state of mind, more spiritual experiences both during and outside meditation, a greater tolerance for pain than the group of secular meditation and relaxation (Wachholtz and Pargament, 2005).

Research on religious adaptation by means of the practice of Orthodox church-goers during the Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic marked the beginning of a new stage, full of challenges and uncertainties for people around the world. In addition to the challenges in the fields of science, medicine, economics and education, there have also been challenges in the way people organize their daily lives, from family life, setting up relationships with friends and colleagues, to understanding meaning of life.

Religious coping in times of crisis

The Covid-19 pandemic has influenced, to a greater or lesser extent, every aspect of individual and social life, including the organization and functioning of religious cults. Measures imposed to prevent the spread of coronavirus (isolation, social distancing, avoid contact with people but also with objects of common use, avoid crowded places) have directly influenced issues related to access and attendance at places of worship, conducting religious rituals specific to each religious cult, the interaction between members of religious communities.

In this context, the World Health Organization (WHO) has highlighted the key role of leaders, institutions and religious communities in preventing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and combating the diseases associated with it. As a source of guidance, support and care, they can disseminate information on responsible social behavior, provide support to vulnerable people and the community during times of health crisis. "Religious-inspired institutions can promote helpful information, prevent and reduce fear and stigma, provide reassurance to people in their communities, and promote health-saving practices" (World Health Organization, 2020).

This research aimed to identify social and individual approaches to religious adaptation. The social approach emphasizes the degree of integration of individuals in the community and is measured by attendance at the place of worship, while the individual approach focuses on the frequency of prayer.

Research methodology: the research was applied among religiously involved people, ie among Orthodox church-goers who attend Orthodox places of worship in Craiova. The Orthodox Christian cult was chosen because, at national level, the Romanian Orthodox Church has the highest number of followers, in the 2011 Census, 86.5% of Romanians declared that they are of the Orthodox religion. The opinion poll method was used, based on a questionnaire administered, on a sample of 143 people, aged over 18, 67.9% female and 32.1% male, among those who attend Orthodox churches in Craiova. The questionnaire was applied between May and June 2021.

Results

Overall, the answers can be grouped into three categories: attending church regularly (ie monthly), attending church irregularly (only on public holidays, once a year or less) and not attending church. According to the data provided by the European Value Study-European Values Study 2017: Integrated Dataset (EVS 2017) the Romanian population has a high frequency of participation in religious services, approximately 49% of the population say they go to the place of worship at least once a month. Compared to the previous wave of EVS research (2008), in Romania, there is a slight decrease in religious public behavior on all analysis criteria.

Table. 2 Participation in religious service of the Romanian population

	More than once a week	Once a week	Once a month	Only on specific holy days	Once a year	Less often	Never, practically never
2017	5.8%	25.5%	17.7%	36.5%	7.1%	2.4%	5.0%
2008	6.3%	24.0%	19.6%	36.4%	6.0%	3.4%	4.3%

Source: EVS (2020). European Values Study 2017: Integrated Dataset (EVS 2017). GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA7500 Data file Version 4.0.0, The data from 2008 were taken from the Longitudinal Data File EVS 2008 and the individual model of Romania

The study found that about a third of respondents participated in Sunday religious services at least once a month in the last 12 months, the most common behaviors being those aimed at going to church once a week (11.9%) or once every two weeks (11.9%). However, there are high percentages of irregular attendance (34.3%) among those who are connected to the Orthodox faith and the church, and non-attendance of the church amounts to 27.3%.

Table 3. Participation in Sunday religious services in the last 12 months (March 2020-April 2021)

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Weekly	11.9%
once every 2 weeks	11.9%
once a month	5.6%
once every 2 months	5.6%
only on important Christian holidays	15.4%
less often	18.9%
I did not go	27.2%
I don't know / I can't appreciate	3.5%

This low attendance is observed among the respondents, 46.2% of those involved religiously stated that between March 2020 and April 2021, they went to church to a lesser extent than usual. For 38.5% of the respondents, the participation in the religious services has not changed, while 14% claim that they started to go to church more often with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4. Church attendance during March 2020-April 2021 (more, the same or less than usual)

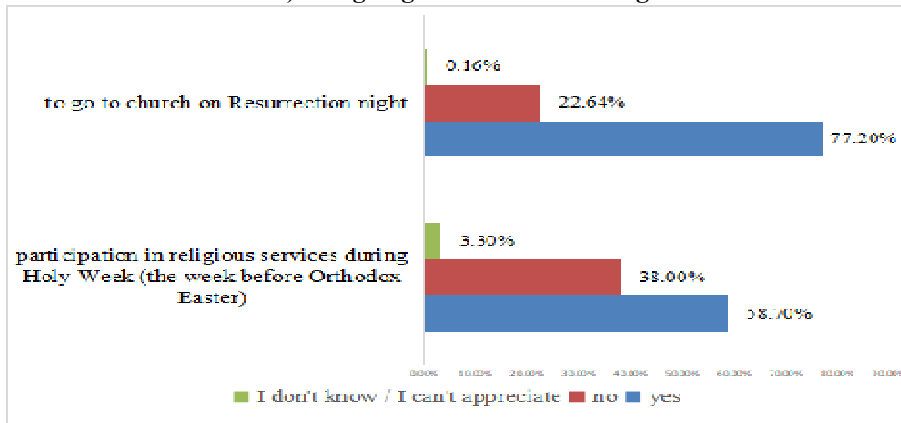
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percent</i>
less	46.2%
as before	38.4%
more	14.0%
I don't know / I can't appreciate	1.4%

In itself, the Orthodox religion, by means of its religious holidays, builds a sense of belonging and cohesion because it creates subtle connections throughout society as people develop similar experiences (Gheorghitã, 2015: 151). The Easter Holiday captures the very fundamental teaching of Christianity, namely the power of sacrifice and the transition to eternal life. In 2012, in the research conducted by the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy - IRES, "Easter for Romanians", on a sample of 1500 people, aged 18 and over, almost all respondents claimed to celebrate Easter, 85 % stated that they regularly participate in the Resurrection service and 59% usually attend church on Easter day.

Research data show that over 52% of the people questioned intend to participate in religious services during Holy Week (the week before Easter).

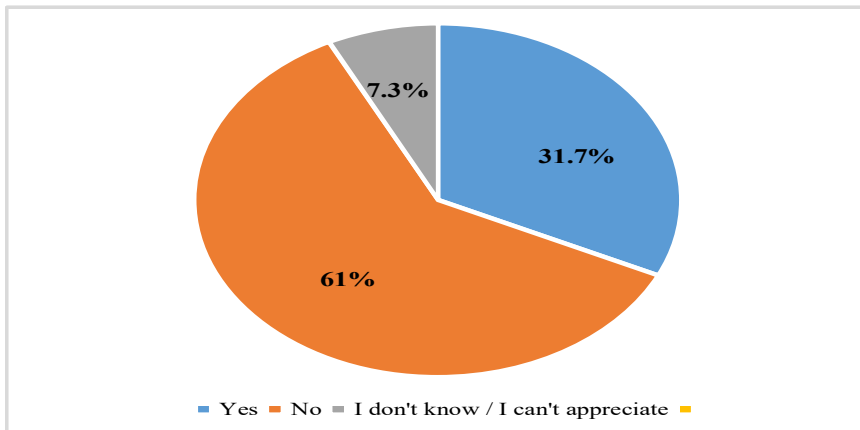
Religious coping in times of crisis

Chart 1. Intention to participate in religious services during Holy Week (the week before Orthodox Easter) and going to church on the night of the Resurrection



In the context of the pandemic, the authorities' recommendations on social distance (avoiding group meetings, keeping distance from others) and observing sanitary protection measures (face masks, avoiding touching objects shared by community members, avoiding physical contact) have changed at the level of religious behavior. All the more so as, at the beginning of the pandemic, the Orthodox Easter celebration took place in the midst of a national emergency period, and was marked by restrictions on leaving the home and closing churches for church-goers. The Easter light was distributed, upon request, from house to house, by priests and volunteers and with the involvement of the police to ensure compliance with the rules of health protection. Thus, at the religious services of the Resurrection (on the first, second or third day of Easter), the majority of respondents say they do not intend to participate.

Chart 2. Participation in religious services after the Resurrection (on the first, second or third day of Easter) Orthodox Easter



At national level, the influence of the institution and religious leaders on the population is observed, the Romanian Orthodox Church (BOR) being the one that affirmed its support for the health protection rules imposed at national level. Thus, on

the occasion of the Easter holidays in 2021, the recommendations sent by the Romanian Patriarchate regarding the access of people to the church on Easter night aim at observing the normative documents regarding the state of alert on the Romanian territory. These regulations are specified in the Order no. 1,103 / 95/2020 which lays down rules regarding the access and development of activities, as well as the specific sanitary measures, adopted and imposed by the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Thus, according to Order no. 1.103 / 95/2020 for the approval of the rules on access to places of worship, the minimum safety distance and specific sanitary measures for carrying out religious activities access to the place of worship or in the places where religious services and meetings are organized shall be organized according to the following rules:

- ✓ ensuring an area of at least 2 square meters for each person and a distance of at least 2 m between persons (by Order no. 2,283 / 157/2021 of October 25, 2021, the access of church-goers to locations where religious services and meetings are organized if an area of at least 2 sq m is provided for each person and a distance of at least 2 m between persons.);
- ✓ disinfection of hands with disinfectant, at the entrance, provided by the organizers of the religious event;
- ✓ wearing a mask to cover the mouth and nose;
- ✓ observational triage, if one person shows symptoms of respiratory infection (cough, sneezing, rhinorrhea, temperature) is not allowed to enter the church;
- ✓ written announcements regarding the rules of hygiene and physical distance placed in visible places in the place of worship and in the places where religious services and meetings are organized;
- ✓ inside the place of worship shall be organized separate entry and exit circuits, clearly highlighted;
- ✓ the services held in the open air shall take place while maintaining the distance of 2 m between people.

The specific sanitary measures shall consider the disinfection of the cult objects with which the church-goers come in contact, periodic disinfection, once every 4 hours, for the surfaces or objects frequently touched.

These compulsory measures imposed changes in the organization of religious rituals, such as the Holy Sacraments considered necessary for any Christian for his salvation. Regarding communion and confession, the opinions of the respondents are divided: half agree and half do not agree with these restrictions.

The various practices, by which church-goers come into contact with objects of worship specific to Orthodoxy, such as icons, were also affected. For Christians, the icon provokes, “at the level of prayer a direct reaction, thanks to its simple evidence, it does not need to be translated, like the sacred text, into another language, but it reveals to us the broad vision that unites the past and the future, in a continuous present” (Bădescu, 2017: 48). In Orthodoxy, touching and kissing icons is an important ritual, one through which a connection with God is created and maintained and a way of confessing the faith. In this context, over 67% of respondents consider the recommendations to limit the spread of infections by avoiding touching or kissing icons and relics to be appropriate.

Religious coping in times of crisis

Table 5. Recommendations on limiting the spread of infections by avoiding touching or kissing icons and relics

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percent</i>
totally agree	49.6%
rather agree	18.9%
rather against	19.6%
totally against	10.5%
I don't know / I can't appreciate	1.4%

Pilgrimage is a central element of Orthodox religious faith and a measure of religious behavior. In Orthodoxy, the pilgrimage has deep spiritual meanings and is a way to intensify love for God, forgive sins, heal and confess the faith. About 50% of those surveyed said they go on pilgrimages less than they used to do before the pandemic broke out. The explanations take into account the travel restrictions imposed by the state, especially those in a state of emergency, the recommendations to keep a physical distance to protect yourself from contacting the virus (WHO warns that the virus can spread through respiratory drops when a person carrying the virus speaks, sneezes or is coughing), measures to discourage unimportant physical gatherings.

Table 6. Pilgrimages during March 2020-April 2021 (more, the same or less than usual)

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percent</i>
less	49.7%
as before	14.0%
more	2.8%
I don't know / I can't appreciate	33.5%

Avoiding attendance at places of worship or not participating in important religious events does not have as main motivation the fear of contacting the virus, more than half of the respondents claim that there is a low probability of being infected with the new coronavirus. On the other hand, 47.6% of them claim that the church can become a source of infection to a large extent.

Table 7. The belief that a person can become infected with the new Coronavirus by attending church

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percent</i>
to a very large extent	18.2%
largely	29.4%
to a small extent	30.8%
to a very small extent	12.6%
not at all	7.6%
I don't know / I can't appreciate	1.4%

Regarding the recommendation to avoid attending places of worship or not participating in important religious events, there is a tendency not to accept the recommendations imposed on limiting the spread of coronavirus infections, 64.3% being rather or totally against them, while only 35.7% rather or totally agree.

Table 8. Avoiding attending places of worship / not participating in important religious events

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Percent</i>
totally agree	14.7%
rather agree	21.0%
rather against	24.5%
totally against	39.8%

Devotion, the less formal and public part of religious participation takes place in the private space, usually in the home, which makes this behavior more difficult to monitor. In general, four elements are used to measure the level of devotion: the frequency of prayer (personal as well as together with the family), the frequency of reading religious texts, the frequency of religious discussions in the family and the frequency of watching religious programs on television or listening to them on the radio.

In the research carried out, prayer was considered, which, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, is configured as a more accessible option. Thus, 77.7% of the respondents state that they pray at least once a week, of which 45.5% state that they pray daily.

Table 9. Frequency of prayer

daily	45.4%
several times a week	20.3%
once a week	11.9%
at least once a month	7.7%
several times a year	2.1%
less often	7.0%
never	4.2%
I don't know / I can't appreciate	1.4%

In 2017, according to data provided by the European Value Study-European Values Study Integrated Dataset (EVS 2017) Romania ranks second in Europe, after Albania, as a country with a strong private practice, 54% of Romanians say they pray daily.

Table 10. Frequency of prayer within the Romanian population (EVS 2017)

Year	<i>Every day</i>	<i>Several times a week</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>At least once a month</i>	<i>Several times a year</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
2017	54.2%	19.0%	8.2%	5.9%	2.5%	7.3%	2.9%
2008	53.9%	19.7%	7.1%	5.0%	2.6%	8.9%	2.8%

Source: EVS (2020). European Values Study 2017: Integrated Dataset (EVS 2017). GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA7500 Data file Version 4.0.0. The data from 2008 were taken from the Longitudinal Data File EVS 2008 and the individual model of Romania.

Conclusions

By means of the role that religion plays in crisis situations, there have been shaped both the positive explanations, that support the way in which religion contributes to healing by helping people overcome unpredictable and unpleasant situations, as well as the negative explanations, by emphasizing how it undermines the recovery process of the individual and society. Therefore, strategies for religious adaptation are defined as actions that are consciously chosen by individuals to deal with the unpleasant situations they face.

The theoretical and methodological approach to religious adaptation has raised many questions, bringing into question both aspects of how faith in God or divinity can become a source of motivation, refuge, peace, comfort, support, and empathy.

In the national context, the COVID-19 pandemic produced changes in the religious life, at the level of the institutional organization, of the religious rite but also of the religious behavior.

Bibliography:

- Bădescu, A. (2017). *Tehnici artistice tradiționale pentru icoane noi realizate în tempera pe suport de lemn*, Craiova: Mitropolia Olteniei Publishing.
- Chatters, L. M., Taylor, R. J., Jackson, J. S., & Lincoln, K. D. (2008). Religious Coping Among African Americans, Caribbean Blacks and Non-Hispanic Whites. *Journal of community psychology*, 36(3), 371–386. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20202>.
- Gheorghită, V. (2015). *Religie și religiozitate în România*, Craiova: Sitech Publishing.
- Goodman, B. (2020). Faith in a time of crisis. Psychologists' research shows why some people can find peace during the COVID-19 pandemic, while others may be struggling with their faith.
- Hebert, R., Zdaniuk, B., Schulz, R., & Scheier, M. (2009). Positive and negative religious coping and well-being in women with breast cancer. *Journal of palliative medicine*, 12(6), 537–545. <https://doi.org/10.1089/jpm.2008.0250>
- Koenig, H. G., Pargament, K. I., & Nielsen, J. (1998). Religious coping and health status in medically ill hospitalized older adults. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 186(9), 513–521. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00005053-199809000-00001>
- McDougle, L., Konrath, S., Walk, M. et al. (2016). Religious and Secular Coping Strategies and Mortality Risk among Older Adults. *Soc Indic Res* 125, 677–694 . <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-014-0852-y>.
- Ordin 1103 17/06/2020 - portal legislativ. ORDIN 1103 17/06/2020 - Portal Legislativ. (n.d.). Retrieved November 5, 2021, from <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/226854>.
- Tarakeshwar N, Vanderwerker LC, Paulk E, Pearce MJ, Kasl SV, Prigerson HG.(2006). Religious coping is associated with the quality of life of patients with advanced cancer. *J Palliat Med.*; 9(3):646-57. doi: 10.1089/jpm.2006.9.646. PMID: 16752970; PMCID: PMC2504357
- Tix, A. P., & Frazier, P. A. (1998). The use of religious coping during stressful life events: Main effects, moderation, and mediation. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 66, 411–422
- Torralba, J., Oviedo, L. & Canteras M. (2021). Religious coping in adolescents: new evidence and relevance. *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 8, 121. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00797-8>.
- Wachholtz AB, Pargament KI. (2005). Is spirituality a critical ingredient of meditation? Comparing the effects of spiritual meditation, secular meditation, and relaxation on

- spiritual, psychological, cardiac, and pain outcomes. *J Behav Med.* 2005 Aug;28(4):369-84. doi: 10.1007/s10865-005-9008-5. PMID: 16049627.
- Wachholtz, A. B., & Sambamthoori, U. (2013). National trends in prayer use as a coping mechanism for depression: changes from 2002 to 2007. *Journal of religion and health*, 52(4), 1356–1368. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-012-9649-y>
- Woods, T. E., Antoni, M. H., Ironson, G. H., & Kling, D. W. (1999). Religiosity is associated with affective status in symptomatic HIV-infected African-American women. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 4(3), 317–326. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135910539900400302>
- World Health Organization. (n.d.). Practical considerations and recommendations for religious leaders and faith-based communities in the context of covid-19. World Health Organization. Retrieved November 5, 2021, from <https://www.who.int/publications>.
- Wortmann J. (2013). Religious Coping. In: Gellman M.D., Turner J.R. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Behavioral Medicine*. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1005-9_665.

Article Info

Received: November 25 2021

Accepted: December 02 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Unipolarity and Multipolarity in the System of International Relations

Daniela Alina Mic (Mărgineanu)¹⁾

Abstract:

When the Cold War ended, the United States faced a great debate over the re-evaluation of the basic principles of foreign policy. A central element of this discussion is related to the development of a security policy for this new era as well as the US military objectives. During the Cold War there was a broad consensus regarding the meaning of security as a word. At that time, security directly referred to the physical integrity and political sovereignty of the nation-state. Security was primarily related to the purpose, function, structure and cost of the armed forces. The security policy was formulated by a small group of people from the White House and the Departments of State and Defense (Popescu, 2020 : 14).

Over the last decade, the short definition of the word security has been called into question. Several notions of security have been suggested, incorporating other aspects, such as aspects of economic nature, aspects of social and environmental life, as well as military aspects. The main reason for redefining the meaning of security was the acknowledgement that the economic power of a state is of great importance in achieving its objectives, which will represent the new priorities of foreign policy. Another reason is the one brought to attention by environmental problems, as global warming is considered a major problem with direct effects on each person's health and safety, and this situation requires cooperation both regional and global cooperation.

From the point of view of foreign policy, the main concern of the USA was the achievement of a common security, which later turned into a collective security, thus going far beyond the notion of military blocs. Collective security includes all states or at least most states in a region, based on the idea that the security of one state is linked to the security of other states in the region. Therefore, a conflict within the states or between the states from the same geographical area is and becomes a concern for the other states. Collective security aims to incorporate all participating states into decisions that affect regional security.

Keywords: *security, bipolarity; unipolarity; system of international relations.*

¹⁾ PhD Student - "Carol I" National Defense University, Information and National Security, Romania, Phone: 0040771656012, Email: alinamargineanu2003@yahoo.it.

Unipolarity in the system of international relations and US hegemony

A characteristic of the contemporary world was the extensive reconfiguration of international relations, both in what quality is concerned - remodeling old balances, the emergence of new international institutions, increasing the number of actors in the international arena, geopolitical changes - and in quantity - the proliferation of actors such as transnational corporations, non-governmental organizations, the emergence of new states, but especially supranational arguments over the proliferation of black arms markets or climate change.

At the same time, we are witnessing a new stage of capitalist system consisting of increasing trade flows of goods and services, achieved through the export and import of consumer goods between countries from south to north, the establishment of a new economic regime under the auspices of finance and the expansion of economic reforms which decisively influence the international relations environment.

Lately, especially in the last three decades, the world has witnessed a series of structural transformations both in the capitalist economic system and in international relations. Both phenomena are continuously fed into a complex flow of relational networks made up of various actors whose interests are often in conflict and lead to the reconfiguration of the environment of international economic relations. The rise of the new world order is marked by a new step aimed at accumulating capital through a global program that will include numerous institutions starting with academics institutions leading to international organizations in order to reconfigure international political institutions.

We entered a world order different from the Cold War, which we lived after the Second World War and the North American unipolar moment could be felt after the collapse of Soviet imperialism. During the Cold War, the world system was bipolar, and the two great empires clashed in political ideologies. The mutual capacity for nuclear destruction has limited the military conflict between the two contenders, leaving room for the rivalry that will develop on the periphery in areas such as Afghanistan, Angola, Central America, Czechoslovakia, Vietnam, in the context of liberation wars, uprisings and popular operations of propaganda and espionage.

Economic collaboration between the two competing empires was rare. The process of economic globalization took place within the Western bloc and represented the liberalization of trade and investment of multinational companies promoted under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The decline of the Soviet Union opened the door to a period of North American domination, a phenomenon encountered on the international political scene as unipolarity. The most obvious events were those that accelerated the process of economic and cultural globalization through the creation of the World Trade Organization and technological development through the spread of the Internet.

In the military field, we can mention the situation in the Gulf and the Balkans, the American invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the war against Islamic terrorism. The global financial crisis of 2008-2009, the epicenter of which was the United States, led to the failure of the Middle East democratization project and called into question America's ability to achieve its goals. Finally, Donald Trump's victory at the end of 2016 promoted a revisionist and nationalist profile in North American foreign policy. The Trump administration's main goal was to renegotiate trade and military agreements with its traditional partners. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Canada and Mexico was renegotiated, as well as current business agreements with Japan, South

Unipolarity and Multipolarity in the System of International Relations

Korea, the European Union and other allied countries. From a commercial point of view, it was proposed to withdraw the "asymmetric concession" granted in the context of the Cold War and rebalance the "playing field" to benefit all its producers. Some negotiations have already been completed, others are moving in the direction indicated by Washington (Balze, 2019).

In the military, the US diplomacy has put pressure on its traditional allies, NATO members, to contribute more to the common defense, increasing their military spending to at least 2% of GDP, despite resistance from some states, the process is ongoing. Germany, which spends about 1.3% of GDP, has vowed within NATO to reach the 2% level by 2023. The Trump administration focused its efforts on trade, technology and geopolitical relations with China, seen today rather as a "strategic rival" - as it is called in the US National Security Strategy, 2017 (Balze, 2019).

At the same time in Europe the federal guidance project led by Germany and France over the past three decades has shown signs of weakening. The idea of regaining sovereignty by prioritizing intergovernmental agreements is gradually gaining ground in European politics, which is why we can no longer talk about a "Europe of Nations". The British decision to leave the European Union - Brexit, the Italian opposition on immigration issues, the demand for greater autonomy from some Eastern European states - Austria, Hungary, Poland, the consolidation of critical political parties, administrative centralization are some of the phenomena that will contribute to a state of illness throughout the European continent.

In its turn, Russia's aggressive behavior towards Ukraine and the forced annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia's military involvement in the Syrian civil war to support President Bashar al-Assad put Moscow back on the table of world geopolitics. Financial sanctions imposed by the United States and its allies have exacerbated tensions between them but this was not enough to change Moscow's behavior. Tensions and disputes between China and other states bordering the East and South China Seas (Brunei, the Philippines, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam) have worsened recently as a result of the close relationship between America and Taiwan. The regional naval control by the Seventh Fleet in the Straits of Malacca through which more than 20% of the world's oil transits daily is just one of the awkward situations that irritate China (Balze, 2019).

The Asian giant has increased its naval capacity in the region and is trying to expand its sovereign rights by building military installations on islands in order to control airspace and protect its commercial interests. For several decades, the United States facilitated China's economic growth, while the latter tacitly accepted America's military dominance in the Asia-Pacific region. This period is over, and today Chinese geopolitical ambitions and American nationalist revisionism have begun to clash. China's eastern and southern seas and surrounding regions will be the prime targets of geopolitical and military disputes in the first decades of the 21st century, just as Europe was for much of the 20th century.

We are witnessing a new stage, a new era, in which China is experiencing a period of ascent while the United States is in a relative decline, facts that are determined by a new setting of the world. Its international strategy has been discreet, focusing on opening markets, attracting new foreign investment and ensuring the transfer of technology to modernize the economy. The large size of the Chinese market and its huge population were in fact the main basis of its progress. Economic openness, willingness to work, the dynamism of business, the strict social discipline imposed by the

Communist Party ensured the stability needed to facilitate a very high rate of savings and investment for more than thirty years, thus stimulating high and sustained growth of the economic sector. The model of state capitalism put into practice is characterized by a strong dose of state leadership in the selection of investments. Internationally, an ambitious mercantilist strategy has been applied. China selectively protected in the domestic market of foreign competition will promote large companies that will aim to conquer the foreign market (Balze, 2019).

Ironically, none of these would have happened if the United States had not changed its policy toward China during the 1970s. After President Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1973, many North American companies invested in China, this becoming the main trigger of the transformation process. It was the United States that facilitated China's incorporation into key economic institutions, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. On the other hand, the interest shown by large multinationals in accessing the Chinese market, taking advantage of low labor costs, has also led to the rapid development of export-oriented industrial centers.

The political history of the West and the consolidation of liberal democracies after World War II in countries such as Japan, Taiwan and South Korea confirmed the seemingly overwhelming force of economic development on the evolution of the political system. Chinese political developments have suddenly denied the illusions created. The political system is authoritarian and neo-totalitarian. The party is Leninist in practice and in its political ideas based on democratic centralism in order to manage the state and society. It is not a total freedom of the press, information transmitted via the Internet is censored, and political dissidents and ethnic minorities - Tibetans, Uighurs - are persecuted or sent to perform forced labor in rehabilitation centers.

In this setting of the world, as I like to call it, the US will remain the world's number one power on the world stage, but China is close to it and the differences between the two are narrowing on all levels. America is today the dominant military power because of its ability to project power globally. From a financial point of view, it maintains its prominent position; the dollar is by far the main international reserve currency. The USA is also the largest beneficiary of direct investment in the world, and its state-of-the-art technological dynamism is extraordinary (Balze, 2019).

It is the power with the greatest cultural influence, attracting students from all over the world, exerting an enormous ascendancy through its internet companies, television, news agencies and the wide presence of its brands in global consumption. We must also note that the privileged geographical position - a quasi-island to continental scrap with access to two oceans gives it the magnet position for skilled immigration. And yet, despite these strengths, the United States is declining relative to China. The institutional system, admired all over the world for decades, has become less functional, while the political space has become excessively contentious in recent years, negatively affecting the decisions made. From a military point of view, China ranks second after the United States. The defense budget is 56% higher than that of Japan, India and the countries that are part of the Southeast Asia Association (ASEAN) (Balze, 2019). Its military power is conditioned by the difficulties it encounters in establishing military alliances. China's development and America's relative decline will bring about a profound transformation in the world political system. The unipolar world in which the USA is considered a hegemon is falling apart, gradually moving towards a new scenario with strong bipolar characteristics.

Unipolarity and Multipolarity in the System of International Relations

Multipolarity in the system of international relations between concept and reality. new centers of power: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – BRICS

The acronym BRIC - Brazil, Russia, India and China, was created in 2001 by Jim O'Neill, the chief economist of Goldman Sachs, in the study "Building Better Global Economic BRICs" (Ramos et al., 2012). Among the main points of the study done in 2001-2002, we can mention the real GDP growth in the big market economies. Over the next ten years, the share of the BRIC countries and especially China in world GDP was to increase and raise important questions about the global economic impact of fiscal and monetary policies in the BRIC states. Faced with such prospects for change, global policy-making forums should be reorganized and the G7 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States) should be adjusted to incorporate them as representatives of BRIC states. The term BRIC was easily established as a category of analysis in the economic, financial, commercial, academic and communication fields. This term refers to different states that have individual characteristics that must be taken into account as a result of the establishment of a new mechanism that will make it possible the connection between them.

The new millennium brings a dynamic of transformations in the international system considered a gradual process of global reorganization. In this process of reorganization, the BRICS group has emerged as an important player on the international political scene. Looking back at the formation and evolution of the BRICS group, it must be borne in mind that the emerging powers did not actively participate in the institutions of global governance. However, it should be noted that, given the gradual intensification of ties between the five states, the degree of institutionalization of the group has deepened, becoming soon a set of rules, norms and procedures that lead to the formulation of decisions meant to define the expectations, interests and behavior of the actors constituting them. At the beginning of the 21st century, Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa were gradually invited to the G8 Summit as observers - G8 + 5 (Ramos et al., 2012). The largest meeting of the group took place in 2009 in Ekaterinburg, Russia, and created a dynamic of the activities of the four original members.

The BRIC / BRICS summits have become very important, an occasion leading to the intensification of the interaction between the members, at the level of the heads of government, in order to defend the newly reformed and democratic financial and economic architecture much more reformed and democratic. The support provided by the BRIC even without the participation of South Africa was intended to support a new multipolar world order in order to reform the UN and hoping for India and Brazil obtaining a more obvious position within it. Given that the global economic recovery was not solid, leaders realized the need to reform international financial institutions and called for a more predictable and diversified monetary system to protect the interests of developing countries, as a financial and technical cooperation for sustainable development. The 2011 summit in China marked the entry of South Africa into the BRIC group, and from now on the group has had the acronym BRICS in which economic and financial development, agriculture, energy, science and technology projects will be the main objectives of the actors involved in this group.

To strengthen cooperation for global stability, security and prosperity, the 2012 New Delhi Summit included topics such as managing the global economic crisis and institutional reform. During the Summit, BRICS members discussed the viability of a

joint investment bank to finance infrastructure projects and a sustainable economy in emerging countries. In addition to the Summits, numerous group meetings were held at the level of ministries responsible for security issues. A decade after its establishment, we can ask an obvious question: What is the importance of the BRICS for the world order so as become able to propose a new development paradigm? (Costa Vazquez, 2018).

In this situation I will start with the second part of the question, motivating the fact that it cannot be said that the BRICS group proposes a new paradigm of development, but rather the emergence and institutional consolidation through the New Development Bank which is more and more closely linked to the changes in the economic and political system as a result of China's development. The BRICS did not emerge in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, but in a multipolar system after the 2008 financial crisis. Therefore we can say that three variables stimulated the formation of common goals for the creation of BRICS, which can be classified as follows:

1. The crisis of the neoliberal paradigm, which involves a crisis of neoliberal globalization and, therefore, the questioning of the role of the transnational financial class, especially after 2008 (Essop & Overbeek, 2019). At the political and institutional levels, developing and emerging countries have called into question the management of national crises through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, by imposing predefined solutions, such as the Washington Consensus. At the 2010 G20 Summit in Seoul, an agreement was reached, called the Seoul Consensus, based on the importance of inclusive and sustained economic growth to reduce poverty in the absence of a single formula for development (Ramos et al., 2012).

2. Mutual demands for greater participation of BRICS members in global economic governance institutions: the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. We are also witnessing new types of hegemonic relations between existing and emerging global powers.

3. China's crucial and growing role in global governance, from rule moderator to "rule maker" (Wang, 2011). This process implies a new type of leadership in global governance, in inter-state relations and between social forces. The rise of China and the new Xi Jinping administration in 2013 promoted a series of foreign policy changes that politicians regard as substantial, with an affirmative and expansive purpose (Wang, 2011). This change was correlated with the creation of financial institutions, the strengthening of international trade and a greater incentive for foreign investment. This process of Chinese consolidation and expansion has shaped what we call the merger of BRICS institutions into Chinese-led institutions.

Based on these three variables, we can say that the main objective of the BRICS was to cooperate in the G20 Summits and to emphasize the importance of reaching a consensus on a reform of international financial institutions to allow greater participation of emerging powers in the international order (brics.itamaraty.gov.br). At the second Summit, BRICS members highlighted the crisis of legitimacy and the need for reforms in international institutions, especially in the United Nations (Vadell & Ramos, 2019). The third BRICS Summit took place in Sanya in 2011. The meeting highlights two events: the inclusion of South Africa and the fact that all BRICS countries were part of the United Nations Security Council that year. There was also a fact that led to concerns about international security, the consequences of the Arab Spring. The Fourth Summit took place in New Delhi in 2012 and was characterized by a common and assertive

Unipolarity and Multipolarity in the System of International Relations

position on the implementation of new reforms in government institutions. For the first time, the possibility of setting up a new BRICS development bank was discussed, which led to the commitment of all countries to assess this possibility (brics.itamaraty.gov.br).

The evolution of the number of members from 4 to 5 was observed at the fifth BRICS Summit in Durban, in 2013 (brics.itamaraty.gov.br). The incorporation of South Africa as an interlocutor for Africa opened the doors of development cooperation, this being considered the great novelty of the first great transformation of the group. As at previous Summits, the BRICS reaffirmed its commitment to multilateralism and the defense of democratic global governance through reforms in international financial institutions. At the BRICS Summit in Fortaleza in 2014 (brics.itamaraty.gov.br), also considered the sixth, a new era of meetings was inaugurated in which the proposals exceed the requirements. The main theme was: inclusive growth and sustainable solutions. The agreement led to the establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB), which aims to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in member countries for emerging and developing economies. NDB authorized an initial capital of \$ 100 billion with an initial capital of \$ 50 billion, divided equally among the founding members. At the Goa Summit in 2016, the demands made by the BRICS called for a more equitable order that would include greater participation of group members in international institutions, emphasizing the importance of cooperation in a multipolar international order.

At the Xiamen Summit, China aimed at financial consolidation, an action plan for innovation and cooperation, a strategic framework for customs cooperation between the BRICS and a Memorandum of Cooperation between the BRICS Business Council and the New Development Bank. There were also agreements on monetary issues, such as the BRICS local currency bond markets and the future establishment of a BRICS local currency bond fund, emphasizing interbank cooperation between development banks. On this occasion, an agreement was reached for the creation of a New Development Bank office in South Africa, the first regional office. The BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, in July 2018, had as its main theme the "Industrial Revolution". All the main objectives were related to China's economic expansion: deepening economic and trade cooperation between member countries for a favorable growth of industry, institutional expansion of New Development Bank with the creation of an office in São Paulo, Brazil, strengthening a BRICS plus, which it means extending the economic and political formation of the BRICS to a new yet undetermined formula. The expansion of the BRICS was on the agenda of the Xiamen Summit (brics.itamaraty.gov.br). Foreign Minister Wang Yi even suggested the incorporation of Mexico, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in order to expand an active platform for South-South cooperation.

In conclusion, the BRICS continues its existence; however, the group's agenda will coincide with China's imperative expansion into the contemporary capitalist system. BRICS is an intragroup of balanced economic cooperation with a mutual benefit, the main trade focus being China. Throughout the 21st century, China has established itself as the main partner of the rest of the BRICS members: Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa with significant trade surpluses in its favor. On the other hand, BRICS plus, in any established format, is a priority of the initiative of the great Chinese project of a "new silk road".

Conclusions

Quite recently, especially in the last three decades, the world has witnessed a series of structural transformations both in the capitalist economic system and in international relations. Both phenomena are continuously fed into a complex flow of relational networks made up of various actors whose interests are often in conflict and lead to the reconfiguration of the environment of international economic relations. The rise of the new world order is marked by a new step aimed at accumulating capital through a global program that will include numerous institutions starting with academic institutions leading to international organizations in order to reconfigure international political institutions.

Thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe should reflect on the changes that have taken place in terms of security developments. The first conclusion that can be highlighted is that humanity is facing a completely different scenario. Perhaps the most shocking thing for post-modernist organizations was the cruel phenomenon of war in different parts of the world, war being seen as an aspect that had disappeared from our lives and whose consequences have shaken the peaceful foundations of the European continent in particular and other continents in general.

Generally speaking, we will keep on witnessing the emergence or prolongation of inter-state conflicts, with the use of violence, this time a biological violence, which will seek to influence the moral values of society by undermining civil rights and freedoms. Western perceptions concerning Islam as a threat will continue, the flow of migration will increase, organized crime and terrorist movements will remain, possibly with higher levels of lethality, the proliferation of mass destruction weapons, especially biological and chemical ones will also be valid. More precisely, all the above mentioned phenomena will interact with each other, with different levels of intensity. Due to the impact they will generate, as well as the ability to spread to other phenomena, migrant flows, environmental damage and, in particular, organized crime as well as intrastate conflicts will play a decisive role in international security.

This last type of conflict will be in particular the distinctive phenomenon of the international security context, based on an unprecedented quality: the double attribute of being the phenomenon with the highest quantity and quality of interactions with the rest, and entirely the only specific subsystem within the field of international security. No one can say that this scenario or any other is inevitable, because methodologically, its usefulness is limited to reducing levels of uncertainty. On the other hand, it could be said that, unless other significant random events - commonly unusual in the field of Social Sciences - occur, the contrasts between the proposed scenario and the global situation of international security at the dawn of the 21st century would be limited.

As these significant events are linked to the human will and its ability to shape the future, two courses of action are clear in order to improve international security in the near future. The first of these modalities consists in the conscious and constant promotion and development of two specific phenomena of the international security subsystem: peace cult initiatives with the participation and involvement of non-governmental organizations. The second way is to identify phenomena that conspire simultaneously against the outbreak and development of intrastate conflicts, of Western perceptions of Islam as a threat, of the hierarchy of migratory flows as terms of danger.

The transformation of the short-term efficiency that the international community can achieve, in its effort to improve the parameters of international security in the future, forces us to go beyond the limits of this subsystem. These things involve

Unipolarity and Multipolarity in the System of International Relations

operating with the stable forces of the emerging post-Cold War order. Therefore, the efforts to reduce conflict levels and the multifaceted violence inherent in international security will bring lasting benefits if the dual nature of globalization is diminished and the existing cultural antagonisms are reduced.

References:

- Balze, F. A. M. de la, (2019). La lucha por la hegemonía mundial (Estados Unidos, China y Argentina). In *Estudios internacionales (Santiago)*, 51(194), https://scielo.conicyt.cl/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S037692019000300195.
- Costa Vazquez, K., (2018). *Can the BRICS propose a new development paradigm?* Aljazeera. July 25 2018. Disponível em: <https://www.aljazeera.com>.
- Essop, B., Overbeek, H., (2019). *Transnational Capital and Class Fractions. The Amsterdam School Perspective Reconsidered*. New York: Routledge.
- Popescu, A. I. C., (2020). *Analize Incomode*, Editura Militară.
- Ramos, L. et al., (2012). A Governança econômica global e os desafios do G-20 pós-crise financeira: análise das posições de Estados Unidos, China, Alemanha e Brasil. In *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, 55(2): 10-27, https://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0034-73292012000200002&script=sci_abstract&tlng=pt.
- Vadell, J., Ramos, L., (2019). The Role of Declining Brazil and Ascending China into the BRICS Initiative. In: LI, X. (Ed.). *The International Political Economy of the BRICS*. London: Routledge.
- Wang, H., (2014). *From "Taoguang Yanghui" to "Yousuo Zouwei": China's Engagement in Financial Minilateralism*. CIGI Papers: CGI, <https://www.cigionline.org>.
<http://brics.itamaraty.gov.br>.

Article Info

Received: November 22 2021

Accepted: December 02 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

Romanian Post-Communism. Redefining Modernity and the Shortcomings of Communism

Tudor Urea¹⁾

Abstract:

The year 1989 marked in Romania the beginning of the renunciation of the communist ideology, and, as an arc over time, as more than a hundred years ago, the Romanian society is divided, this time, between the nostalgic of the communist regime and the pro-Europeans who support the path of development according to the Western European model. The processes of change after December 1989 have been permanently redefined in the last 30 years, leading at least temporarily to another type of societal organization, oscillating between capitalism and communism, between tradition and modernity, but with postmodern influences, between social democracy, conservatism and liberalism. Resolving the controversies and divergences between nostalgic and pro-Europeans related to the path that post-communist Romania must follow, requires the presence of a real public space for the manifestation of civil society. Currently, the Romanian elites do not have the capacity to produce and support a competitive social development. This is the reason why Romania imposes changes that do not have the support of the majority of society and which look like experiments whose effects are impossible to anticipate. Post-communist Romania is in a permanent societal redefinition that oscillates between capitalism and communism, between modernity and tradition. An active civil society in a real public space could be the solution for resolving the existing divergences in the actual Romanian society.

Keywords: *Romania; communism; modernity; political.*

¹⁾ PhD Student, University “Lucian Blaga” of Sibiu, University “Lucian Blaga” of Sibiu, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, field of study History, Romania, Phone: (+40)743869062, Email: tudor_urea@yahoo.com.

Romanian Post-Communism. Redefining Modernity and the Shortcomings of Communism

Occurred in the Western area, first in Western Europe and then extended to North America, modernity has two related definitions, according to the Oxford English Dictionary. It is “the quality or condition of being modern; modernness of character or style” and “an intellectual tendency or social perspective characterized by departure from or repudiation of traditional ideas, doctrines, and cultural values in favor of contemporary or radical values and beliefs (chiefly those of scientific rationalism and liberalism) values (Hunt 2008: 48; Franzén ***: 2).” The modernity could be perceived as the aspects of society that have been developed based on traditional values or ideas to be replaced by a modern equivalent, or the rejection of these traditional aspects in favor of new and modern ideas or.

The period in which our society had the best evolution, when the foundations of our modernization were laid, was that of the end of the 19th century, between the War of independence and the First World War. The formation of the Romanian nation, which culminated in the creation of Greater Romania, at the end of the First World War, was a complex process, but which was based on the prioritization of political goals, what today we call a country project. The creation of political institutions adequate to the requirements of the modern state, the Constitutions of 1866 and 1923, which provided the framework for the development of political life, firm guidance in both domestic and foreign policy, the transformation of an eminently agricultural economy into an economy based on industry and on the city requested the energies of successive generations of Romanians.

During this period, Western Europe will exert a decisive influence on Romanian political institutions and on the development of industry, which provoked an uninterrupted controversy among Romanian intellectuals between “pro-tradition current” who emphasized the country's agrarian character and the need to preserve the tradition and the “pro-European current” who supported the development path according to the European model. The establishment of the communist regime after the end of World War II will put an end to this controversy. Hitchens remarks that for more than forty years, from the late 1940s to 1989, it served as an ideological cover for a political and economic system that oriented Romania from Western Europe to the East (Hitchens 2013: 12). The path that Romania should follow was one of the fiercest controversies that had divided the Romanian intellectuals into two camps, and not since yesterday, but since the formation of the Romanian nation, until now.

The year 1989 marked in Romania the beginning of the renunciation of the communist ideology, and, as an arc over time, as more than a hundred years ago, the Romanian society is divided, this time, between the nostalgic of the communist regime and the pro-Europeans who support the path of development according to the Western European model. As Hitchens notes, those who want to resume the Western path face formidable obstacles, given that there are many who defend the tradition, and we can also talk about reminiscences of communism (Hitchens 2013: 13). Certainly, the past is in a structured correlation, but also symbolic with the present society. In the sense of Professor Levi-Strauss's conception, accumulated and fruitful time is considered a tradition in modern societies (Lévi-Strauss 1999: 31–32). The past, as part of common cultural knowledge, becomes a determining factor in national identities. In this sense, collective memory does not only mean knowledge, but it is a process, a mechanism, that characterizes societies, but also produces them, because through the prism of such a mechanism they are reorganized.

Post-communism is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as the cultural or political

situation following or resulting from a period of communist government, now especially that of eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Chronologically, the Romanian post-communism, as described by Bogdan Voicu knows so far two stages: the transition and the post-transition (Voicu 2005: 18). The changes that take place during this period in Romania will profoundly affect social organization, ideologies, interpersonal relationships, values, which although they could not be avoided, were a part of natural social evolution, otherwise not always conducive to social progress. Like other post-communist societies, the Romanian one will follow the path of redefining modernity, defined by Constantin Schifirneț as social organization of Western origin, characterized by individualism, democracy, capitalism, secularism, balance, stability, and civil rights (Schifirneț 2009: 81). The trends in Western European societies will soon be taken over by imitation, contagion and less by planned change by the Romanian post-communist society. But the Romanian society will know its own modernity, inconsistent, slow, characterized by actions and ideas that remain partial and unfinished which Schifirneț calls “tendentious” (Schifirneț 2009: 85). The Romanian post-communist society characterized by a drifting economy, primarily concerned with political-institutional construction, has a consistent gap between the rapid pace of political, cultural, and intellectual modernization and the slow economic modernization that makes modernity, understood as a standard generated by the process of modernization in the West, to remain more of a trend than a record.

The pressure of change after 1990 has imposed a transition toward democracy that takes place at different levels and different speeds. As Daniel Barbu shows from the perspective of the tunnel parable, the Romanian transition could be described in terms of a impatience's political economy (Barbu, 1999: 111). What characterizes the post-communist period, both from the point of view of society, but especially from the point of view of politics, is a process of initial institution of democracy and consolidation of very low speed in relation to the expectations of the population (Sandu, 1999: 37-70). The policy of leveling the society from the economic, social and cultural point of view that the communist regime practiced in Romania will finally dictate the different speeds of the changes from the post-communist period.

The transition stage of the Romanian post-communism will represent the stage of major changes, having at macro-social level as a result a new societal order. But this new societal order is the result of an import modernity that responds to the immediate needs of some individuals, concerned only with their social and economic condition and we find that the socio-institutional structures in traditional Romanian society are still present, unaltered at this stage. At the end of the road, in the post-transition, we find that we are not in the dream-type Western capitalism, and that in the absence of a political project of modernization in the Romanian space, modernity remains only a trend. Post-communism is far from a balanced situation, it is rather a stage in social development.

The processes of change in post-December Romania have been permanently redefined in the last 30 years, leading at least temporarily to another type of societal organization, oscillating between capitalism and communism, between tradition and modernity, but with postmodern influences, between social democracy, conservatism, and liberalism. Certainly, the post-communist Romanian society is strongly impacted by numerous influences, such as exogenous factors that represent certain elements of globalization processes: the common history of the region, contact with Western Europe, but also internal factors related to tradition and national specificity (Voicu 2005: 70).

Romanian Post-Communism. Redefining Modernity and the Shortcomings of Communism

We now find that political institutions, although they have copied the model of Western democracy, their cultural inadequacy prevents them from being truly effective. Although the country's economy has been restructured, the market lacks capital and production is lower than in developed countries. Corruption is an important resource for subsistence and accumulation at the individual level. Distrust in political institutions due to disappointments associated with the costs of reform and declining living standards, will lead to a lack of interest of citizens in how to structure the political act and their reduced involvement in decision-making.

Among the causes and premises of the authentic Romanian modernity we find a civil society that lacks the force of action. The power vacuum after 1990 will confuse civil society and fuel Romanians' nostalgia for communism. Series such as “Memorialul durerii” or literature on the “Fenomenul Pitești” will cast anathema on the communist period. But, the thirty years of post-communism, in which we still do not see, do not even glimpse the light at the end of the tunnel have induced in a large part of Romanian society a real state of hypnotic regression that has given rise to many stories about how good it was during the communist era. For several years, we have been witnessing a real explosion of collective memory with nostalgic accents about communism. Bogdan Voicu remarks that people would individually reproduce the models learned in communism for many years, and society would feel this in their way of is structured (Voicu 2005: 16). History does not mean the whole past, but neither does everything that remains of the past. Or, if we want, in addition to written history, there is a living history that is perpetuated or renewed over time and in which many old currents can be found that only seemingly disappeared.

The commercials for sweets from the communist period, the wave of the literature produced by the young authors or directors who exploit from a literary point of view childhood and adolescence spent under a totalitarian regime, are just as many ways to remember communism, sometimes in totally unexpected forms. The memory of communism is a meeting place between generations, between the young people who never knew Ceausescu and the old people who openly regret some gone times. We notice a certain obsession with the idea of dictatorship in the conversations between people, of the order and discipline of the past, now lost. We don't know what to do with the idea of responsibility. We are not used to taking care ourselves. Someone else must answer for our individual destiny. We miss the state's perpetual support, and we miss the food and drink we despised in the communist era. Although, in essence, communism as well as capitalism knows the same mechanisms of relationship with labor, products, consumption. The communist society gave birth to the phenomenon of fetishization of objects which we didn't find in the market, but also due to price stability. The consequence is that for a much longer period you have the same objects and phenomena that do not change, and this produces a certain type of memory.

Resolving the controversies and divergences between nostalgic and pro-Europeans related to the path that post-communist Romania must follow, requires the presence of a real public space for the manifestation of civil society. But the birth of public space in post-communist Romania was grafted by media distortions and state violence, from which we can conclude that the political power that controls the media at some point, but also manages the state's coercive capacity is interested in altering this real public space.

Conceptually like the physical space occupied by objects, the public space can in turn be occupied by one ideology or another, the ideological conflict between various

opposing camps distorting the lines of force of public space, such as front lines on a battlefield. The existence of public space is conditioned by human interaction, it being in fact the result of interactions between individuals and populated human groups. The more intense the human interaction in the public space, the more alive the public space is. When interaction is lacking, public space is lacking. The public space, or public sphere, is an environment, which is based on political reason, a space in which individuals can express themselves freely, without constraints of time, resources, themes and where arguments should take precedence over power and the state. After Paul Johnson this space is created even by the interactions between individuals willing to accept that the ideas argued have greater power than the authority of tradition (Johnson 2001: 217).

The creation and recreation of public space are essential actions for strengthening democracy, as only public space is the environment where political actors can justify actions and can take responsibilities, a place of launching and debate for political initiative. After Erik Eriksen it thus becomes a political resource, facilitating both the autonomous formation of public opinion and the ability of citizens to influence political decisions (Eriksen 2005: 352).

Making an analysis of the post-communist genesis of the Romanian public space, states Codruța Cuceu opinioned that the moment of transition from communism to what appears to us as democracy, defining itself as post-communism should have created conditions at least for founding a space public as a place of constant manifestation of a subsequent public sphere, meant to reduce the range of the state and to constantly adjust the ratio between public space and private space (Cuceu 2010: 40).

Media distortion and state violence are the most used mechanisms by which the communist regime in Romania controlled society. Codruța Cuceu remarks that what was to be established as a real public space becomes, through several historical mechanisms, a simulacrum of public space (Cuceu 2010: 40).

The public television is a constant factor in manipulating public opinion. The most obvious episode of manipulation is the media distortion of the Romanian Revolution, through which communism will invent civil society and ensure its own survival. A propaganda tool of the communist regime, the state television of December 1989 will create a false, artificial public space, in which the debate of events is simulated and not authentic and which will succeed in legitimizing the so-called “new political class”, which will impose itself without popular support. Media systems are under political pressure, which leads to politicization. After the fall of communism, we find that most of the Romanian media is politicized.

At the 30 years after announcing the victory of the revolution on public television, things take a completely different turn, and military prosecutors advance the idea that during the events of December 89 television broadcasts created a diversion of information and the appearance of a civil war. Leveled the way to power of security generals, and the army, casters, and security guards.

A second historical mechanism that will lead to another simulacrum of the Romanian public space is the state violence, a mechanism that can be exemplified by the “Mineriada” of June 13-15, 1990. University Square is declared a “free zone of communism” becoming the symbol the fight against neo-communism, coagulating civil society and non-governmental organizations to stop the occupation of public office by members of the former communist nomenclature and by members of the Security. However, this public space will be annihilated by the bloody violence of the “miners” to

Romanian Post-Communism. Redefining Modernity and the Shortcomings of Communism

restore public order. On the streets, students and intellectuals were brutally beaten by "miners", brought by train to Bucharest by order of Ion Iliescu. Opposition political leaders were hunted down by beaten individuals, and party headquarters and their homes were devastated. The new neo-communist power in Bucharest wanted absolute control, in the name of a legitimacy gained through the elections of May 20, 1990. The leaders gathered around Ion Iliescu refused to leave the communist mentality and, without restraint, practiced state violence.

The public space as a place of manifestation of the civil society in the first years after the fall of communism suffers from a phase shift between concept and reality, because the Romanian democracy is treated by the political elites as an extrinsic issue of the civil society. Thus, the concept of democracy is monopolized in the political space, being used by political leaders for propaganda purposes, and the power of civil society is too small to be able to oppose and give consistency to a real public space of manifestation.

The anti-corruption protests in Romania from 2017–2019 will consecrate Victoriei Square as a public space for the manifestation of civil society. The amendments to the Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code, the amendments to the Fiscal Code and the political corruption will represent as many causes that will displease the Romanian civil society. The anti-corruption protests in Victoriei Square on August 10, 2018 will be marked by violence between protesters and law enforcement. Members of the ruling parties had a hostile attitude towards the protesters and stated that the rally was a political one, in the context in which the representatives of the main opposition parties announced their presence at the protest.

Again, almost 30 years after the fall of communism, state violence creates a mockery of public space from a real public space. Therefore, the Romanian society as a whole, although it is defined as democratic, is still today lacking socio-political consciousness, a sign of apathy or rejection of political life.

Freed from the ideological constraints specific to the previous totalitarian system, the Romanian public space has not yet resumed its role as a market, as a meeting place for equal but different people. This image favors the perspective of the public space as being given, like the physical space, therefore available for its occupation depending on the result of the ideological confrontations. The existence of standards of objectivity, the existence of a prior code of intellectual exchange, the appropriate formulation of discourses for the exchange of ideas as a condition of meeting the criteria of competitive interaction, are all subsumed by the logic of public space. Without an objective public space of intellectual exchange, that is, a public space capable of harboring the truth and freedom of the person, there is no objective reality.

Certainly, no one expected democracy to function flawlessly in a country whose democratic traditions are not deeply rooted, but rather a form of import from the West. In fact, we find that post-communist Romania does not function as a democracy, but as an oligarchy with a democratic face. The power of the people, the foundation of democracy, is strongly limited and skillfully hijacked by the political elite, in fact, deeply divided ideologically, which contributes significantly to the instability of the political system.

Between the War for Independence and the First World War, the Romanian elite will consolidate, mainly politically. Between the First World War and the Second World War, the new Romanian elite will be a symbiotic construct, both with aristocratic reflections and with modern nuances. This is the model that will dominate the interwar

period. As such, the great cultural personalities will be, during this period, equally great political personalities, deliberately assuming this dimension.

If we look back, the establishment of the Romanian communist regime in led to the annihilation of the entire Romanian elite and its replacement with an ideological elite, foreign to national traditions and culture. Arriving at the same time, after the collapse of the communist regime, the political elite remained equally conflicted, failing to establish a minimum consensus on the rules of the political game and, again, the development model considered most appropriate for the country. This time, the most important dividing line is the position of power, according to which the political elite has divided into two opposing camps: those who govern and those in opposition. The post-communist Romanian political elite is an elite of the position or position occupied, divided by disagreement regarding the rules of the game and the values of the institutions.

Currently, the Romanian elites do not have the capacity to produce and support a competitive social development. This is the reason why Romania imposes changes that do not have the support of the majority of society and which look like experiments whose effects are impossible to anticipate. The organization of the Romanian communist society on the principles of the free market and the rule of law was not able to produce a modern social organization, with a consistent civil society, a true public space dominated by a direct and principled dialogue between social actors. At present, Romania is dependent on a social system that is not communism but either capitalism.

As Schifineț observed the lack of communication and real solidarity between all segments of society, between elites and the population are a proof of the modern trend. The axiological system is still dominated by the transition from traditional to modern values. Although an institutional political and legal framework has been established, based mainly on European legislation and norms, I must say that the foundations of capitalist and democratic development are still precarious in today's Romanian society. The political class and the intellectual elites have a discourse oriented towards modernity, but they fail to create a consistent project of development and modernization (Schifirneț 2016: 113-126).

So, more than thirty years after the fall of the communist regime, as an arc over time, the Romanian society is divided, between the nostalgic of the communist regime and the Western European model of development. Post-communist Romania is in a permanent societal redefinition that oscillates between capitalism and communism, between modernity and tradition. An active civil society in a real public space could be the solution for resolving the existing divergences in the actual Romanian society. However, a real public space, undistorted by partisan interests, proves to be an unattainable target for post-communist Romania. Undoubtedly, the remnants and nostalgia of the former communist regime have remained in the collective minds of a mature population today. The attachment of Romanians to the Western European model seems increasingly weak due to the economic, social and cultural involution of Romania in recent decades.

References:

- Barbu, D. (1999). *Republica absentă*. Editura Nemira. București.
- Cuceu, C. (2010). Despre geneza post comunistă a spațiului public românesc. *Analele Institutului de Istorie „George Barițiu” din Cluj-Napoca*, Series Humanistica, tom. VIII, 39-52.

Romanian Post-Communism. Redefining Modernity and the Shortcomings of Communism

- Eriksen, E. (2005). An Emerging European Public Sphere, *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 8, nr. 3, 341-363.
- Franzén, M. (***). Deconstructing Aldous Huxley's Brave New World's Ambiguous Portrayal of the future. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1283674/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.
- Habermas, J. (2005). *Sfera publică și transformarea ei structurală*. Comunicare.ro. București.
- Hunt, L. (2008). Modernity and History. *Measuring Time, Making History*. NED-New edition, 1, Vol. 1, 47–92. Central European University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7829/j.ctt1282fh.5>
- Johnson, P. (2001). Habermas's Search for the Public Sphere, *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 4, nr. 2, 215-236.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1952). Race and History. *The Race Question in Modern Science. Race and History*. Unesco Paris.
- Sandu, D. (1999). *Spațiul social al tranziției*, Iași: Editura Polirom.
- Schifirneț, C. (2009). Modernitatea tendențială. *Sociologie Românească*, vol VII, nr. 4, 80-97.
- Schifirneț, C., (2016). *Modernitatea tendențială. Reflecții despre diversitatea evoluției societăților modern*. Editura Tritonic. București.
- Voicu, B., (2005). *Penuria Pseudo-Modernă a Postcomunismului Românesc. Schimbarea social și acțiunile indivizilor*, Volumul I. Editura Expert Projects.

Article Info

Received: November 03 2021

Accepted: November 13 2021



ORIGINAL PAPER

The Evolution of the Post-Cold War International Relations System. Bipolarity

Daniela Alina Mic (Mărgineanu)¹⁾

Abstract:

Throughout time, the evolution of international relations has mostly been dominated by the distribution of power within the system of international politics. Therefore, the decade following the year 1990 can be characterized as a period of development of democratic norms and institutions, in which the American triumph represented the central point of the entire international political system that governed the next historical period.

An important aspect of the system has been the power distribution by emphasizing the term polarity as a configuration of the structure of international relations according to the number of the state actors. Polarity means exactly a supposed distribution of power and that is why, in the current vocabulary of international relations, we can refer to alternative structures of the international system of bipolar, unipolar, multipolar nature. Consequently, the configuration of power forces or power poles is an essential element that has been used for several decades in order to define the structure of the international system.

If we analyze the situation for this period from a security point of view, there has been recorded a flurry of controversy, thus some authors have mentioned the new created environment as a unipolar one, while others see it as multipolar: in his work "The Unipolar Illusion": "Why New Great Powers Will Arise?" (1993) V. Layne, stated that the international system is not a multipolar one, but is characterized by a "unipolar moment".

At a certain point in history, unipolarism could find in the United States the only center acknowledged internationally as a worldwide authority, and yet we could say that unipolarism has often been counterbalanced by multipolarism, as a revival of some countries which have lately proved their superiority and influence several times. On the other hand, the distribution of polarity power within the system is undoubtedly the most important feature, which involves its stability as well.

Keywords: *security; bipolarity; unipolarity; system of international relations.*

¹⁾ PhD Student - "Carol I" National Defense University, Information and National Security, Romania, Phone: 0040771656012, Email: alinamargineanu2003@yahoo.it.

The Evolution of the Post-Cold War International Relations System. Bipolarity

Polarity, as a characteristic of the system of international relations post cold war

An important aspect of the system of international relations was the way the power was distributed by emphasizing the term polarity as a configuration of the structure of international relations according to the number of actors. In order to explain the general configuration that the international scene has adopted, an important part of it will use the concept of polarity in different theories of international relations. The variety of their usage depended mainly on the definition of power and the relevance of its distribution in different international currents.

In what the realistic theories are concerned – theories whose basic notions are the national interest, the anarchy of the international system and the balance of power - polarity is a fundamental variable. In Kenneth Neal Waltz's neorealist theory, polarity plays a major role in theoretical development (Leyde, 2014). Neorealism tries to explain the changes in the international structure using two principles: the principle of order, as a way of distributing authority in the legal system and the principle of power distribution (Leyde, 2014). Because the principle of ordering is considered a fixed variable when the system is regarded as anarchic, the changes that occur in the international system depend exclusively on polarity changes. On the other hand, the predominant transnational economic perspective takes into consideration the polarity of the state only as a relevant instrument, as long as it is useful to the global actor on the international market.

In what the extrastate theories are concerned (Leyde, 2014) – theories which highlight the influence of civilian actors on international interactions – the principle that applies is the principle of minimizing or denying the importance of the structural configuration of the international system. This theory makes the actor's position on polarity similar to that of the theory of economic domination, which means becoming useful. However, this utilitarianism, instead of focusing on the beneficial effects of the economy, focuses on the effects that polarity can have on the influence of civil, governmental or foreign actors.

Although there is no consensus on the definition and application of polarity in the formulation of international relations, almost all theories admit that this is an extremely relevant direct or indirect variable. This consideration is fundamental when assessing foreign policy, as it conditions the level of cooperation and conflict within the system. For developing countries, this is a topic of importance that can determine the polarity of the system as a necessity of the capacity for growth in the structural sphere, in the case of emerging powers in order to determine the limitations exerted by the system (Leyde, 2014).

Its importance also lies in the fact that it is one of the few concepts in the theory of international relations whose historical evidence is timeless and indisputable. Although the origin and the way in which the polarity changes of the system develop are not yet clear, the main generally accepted forms of polarity are of three types: unipolarity, bipolarity and multipolarity.

At the beginning of the XXIst century, we have been faced with a new reorganization of the international system, in which power is globally distributed for the first time in history; thus providing a transition to a multipolar system, where states are no longer the only active agents of power, but a group of emerging powers fighting and acting in alliances with the aim of achieving a new distribution of world power, thus trying to put an end to the unipolar coalition led by The United States, after the change of political regime in the socialist states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

It is very important to define that a system can be conceptualized as a set of interacting elements, thus forming a whole and representing a true organization. In the case of international relations, as a result of a systematized analysis it can be highlighted that the interactions between the actors constitute a system that has certain characteristic features, thus forming the structure of the system. These characteristics are distinguished according to the rules of the game and sometimes weigh as obligations that can be observed in the actors' behaviour.

Polarity contains exactly a supposed distribution of power, which is why in the current vocabulary of international relations; we can speak about alternative structures of the international system of bipolar, unipolar, multipolar nature (Leyde, 2014).

The bipolar system - In this system two powers dominate their rivals until each of them will be at the center of a coalition, thus being forced as secondary actors to be in a relationship according to the blocs. The objective of the main actors is not to be at the mercy of the rival in order for him never to acquire superior means over him (Leyde, 2014). Thus, we are witnessing the realization of permanent alliances within which each party will receive both rewards and constraints. Some theorists will consider the bipolar balance to be the most effective (Leyde, 2014), as happened during the Cold War from 1960 to 1991. Although the existence of various important actors in the global international system tried during this period to model in one way or another the international scene. Through various actions, the relevant polycentric character will remain the Soviet-American bipolarity.

The unipolar system - The distinctive feature of this system is the main actor, which absorbs the others, eliminating potential international agents. A classic example is the Roman Empire where political units were conquered and thus becoming part of the imperial system, with a higher degree of dependence, but which are accountable to the same hegemonic authority.

In the twentieth century, the international system was unipolar between 1945-1950, and the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, more precisely the years 1991-2011 were dominated by the existence of a single world superpower that will not reach in terms of system development to a historical multicentre. In the period 1991-2011, the United States, in its position as a superpower, will not be able to win any war even if globally it will benefit from the characterization of a military oversizing.

The multipolar system - The peculiarity of this system is that the main actors are more than three, and their forces are not equal enough. Within this system we can observe a forecast of the unfolding of events by reducing the possibility of the outbreak of the conflict as a result of diplomatic actions, which will characterize the pre-war period in order to maintain a balance in the international system. A concrete example in the history of international relations is the Europe of the 18th and 19th centuries. In the twentieth century, the international system was multipolar, between 1929 and 1945, thus covering the period of World War II. The alternative of a multipolar international system with autonomous decision centers would be the incorporation of a union of states / countries, both from the south and from the north, in the development process of the world economy.

This configuration of international forces has implications that go far beyond international economic barriers. In such a situation no state has preponderance over the international system, which is why the need for a union of centers of power would be able to make decisions on the various and complex issues of international politics. If we refer to the multipolarity in the southern part of the globe, we can talk about a

The Evolution of the Post-Cold War International Relations System. Bipolarity

pluripolarity of international relations, where we will encounter a diverse configuration of geopolitical forces, with different cultural identities, heterogeneous with a much changed political ideology. In what the Latin American states are concerned, the existence of a new mentality regarding the modeling of some power poles could form an international pluripolar system (Leyde, 2014).

Therefore, the configuration of forces or poles of power is an essential element that has been used, for several decades, in order to define the structure of the international system. However, other characteristics can be considered a precedent: the hierarchy of powers, the homogeneity and existence of international regimes, ie a set of rules in a new sphere of international relations: trade and navigation through which the interaction between states can be regulated and establish less conflicting relationships (Leyde, 2014). In the case of state actors, they transfer the interests of their domestic policies to the international scene, generating heterogeneous and sometimes conflicting situations in the international system. Therefore, a second element in the systematic analysis of international relations is the difference between the internal and external aspects of the system. Some historians have presented the history of international relations as a succession of systems or as a configuration of the same system (Leyde, 2014). In this sense, we can say that there are four distinct stages of the international system.

The first stage of the Cold War is marked by the construction of the main rules of operation of the bipolar system. **The second stage**, represented by the relaxation period, is characterized by the cooperation and competition of the international bipolar system, **the third stage** is differentiated from the other two stages by the sudden degradation of the relaxation process, thus accentuating the bipolar confrontation and resulting in a conjunctural unipolarity of the international system. **The fourth and last stage** of this cycle is represented by the disappearance of the Soviet Socialist Union in 1991, with the appearance of a single superpower in international relations.

In this regard, the Gulf War, in 1991, the “humanitarian intervention” in Somalia, in 1992, the bombings against Yugoslavia, in 1999, and the wars against Iraq, in 2001, Afghanistan, in 2003, Libya, in 2011, were a clear example of “novelty”. an imperialist interventionism implemented on the basis of a bloody sacrifice under the direct guidance of the United States, in order to geopolitically control important territories on different continents and to impose its authority on the main energy and mineral resources that will constitute in the future close to the main American targets (Leyde, 2014).

As a result of all mentioned above, we can admit that unipolarity, as a dimension of the military and political force of one power, corresponds to the global reality of 1991-2011, but also represents a correlation of international forces that shows a deep trend towards a multipolar system. Thus emphasizing the heterogeneous and diverse nature of international relations in the 21st century.

Will the European Union remain a pole, or will it disintegrate as a result of the economic crisis that has negatively affected the economy and the financial system? Will there simply be the China pole or a China-Japan pole or the Russia-China pole? Will Russia's strong consolidation be a pole of world power?

The answer to these questions, related to the place that each of the above-mentioned powers will occupy in the configuration of the international system of the 21st century, represents another considerable degree of uncertainty, knowing that the structural transformations of the international environment can extend over a long

period. However, these tendencies may be accelerated or delayed by the wars of imperial powers or altered by the current effect of the economic and financial crisis to which are added the health problems facing all mankind.

If we accept that the peak of American power has already been consumed, it is necessary to note that the evolution towards a multipolar or pluripolar international system does not equate to the total decline of the United States. The decline means a weakening in some layers of power, but not in all, so the rise of other actors indicates the beginning of a period of relative decline in American influence. In order to establish a diagnosis about the process of decline, it is necessary to deepen the analysis of the US situation, its possibility to rebuild new economic capacities by looking for solutions / resources in its capitalist system.

If the change in the dynamics of current geopolitics continues to spread at an accelerated pace, the change in global leadership could occur by 2030, and the only way the US could avoid a large-scale war would be due to its dominant position in international politics. Therefore, in the short and medium future, the United States is likely to remain one of the central powers of the international system without being recognized for the privileged position of unipolarity gained after the demise of the USSR in 1991, which does not mean that the empire will give up on international politics, but rather will act in accordance with other related world powers in the form of a collective imperialism without facilitating the transition to organized multipolarity.

Mainly, the multipolar structure of the international system is based on the five main world economies, in the following order: USA, China, European Union, India, and Japan, to which is added Russia, which through its military capabilities could be included in the above-mentioned group. This configuration of forces is a consequence of the changes that take place in the depths of the economic structures in the USA, England and Japan representing a non-compact distribution order which tries to catch the USA in an economic amalgam by directing it in an oscillating direction, in an impact directly with the economic networks of China, India and Russia, in order to attract Europe led by Germany, which has gradually strengthened its control over the continent despite the contradictions between European powers.

In fact, the movement to establish a multipolar international system is driven by the great capitalist economic crisis that began in 2008 and aimed at the depletion of Western forces and the expansion of China. Some economists believed that the dollar, as the main international currency, is certainly nearing the end of his reign, which could lead to severe financial difficulties for the United States. The US government is facing a suffocating debt, a market for goods whose roots have failed, with a bloated banking system, an extremely high unemployment rate, in conclusion with a show of a hesitant economy (Leyde, 2014).

This is not the image of a superpower truly worthy of the privileges obtained from the currency of world trade. Therefore, as we have shown, other states have begun to observe this process of superpower degradation and have gradually begun to use other currencies in international trade and financial transactions.

The bipolar power system and its implications on the behavior of states in international relations

Among the actors in international relations that may be part of the bipolar power system, we will analyze the Russian Federation, China and the EU.

The Evolution of the Post-Cold War International Relations System. Bipolarity

a. Russian Federation

In what Russia is concerned, the evolution is very different from that of the USA. After the disappearance of the USSR, the Russian state had a huge loss on all levels, but especially in everything that meant the size of power. Despite this situation, Russia was quick to rebuild its forces, especially its military capability, gradually but surely rebuilding its world power and influence to such an extent that it was called by the United States "the special partner" in international politics, although in matters of its own strategic interests, America has always ignored Russia.

In the end, Russia was gradually excluded from the project aimed at building the European Union, thus contradicting Mikhail Gorbachev's dream. The way NATO and the European Union have been enlarged has led to the exclusion of Russia from what Gorbachev called the "European common house", because from his point of view being part of the "European house" means being a member of NATO and of the European Union. As a result, Russia is pursuing its own independent power, backed by its military capability and natural resources, plus support from allied neighboring states with which it has signed neutrality treaties, engaging in a multipolar international system. This is probably the most comfortable position according to its geopolitical configuration, as a power located on two continents, Europe and Asia.

As a consequence, Russia made a major effort to convert the Collective Security Treaty (CSTO) into a politico-military alliance, but had to deal with the mutual distrust of the majority of its members, in addition to the many differences within the security of each. The inability of its members to identify internal threats and to separate them from external ones by counteracting them was a real problem that could not be solved by the Collective Security Treaty (Leyde, 2014).

If the European Union remains subordinate to the US security strategy, Russia will most likely seek a counterweight, in this case the Asian side, thus increasing its cooperation with the former Soviet republics and especially with the People's Republic of China, which appears as the main power of the international system in the second half of the 21st century. However, the main states of Europe: Germany, France and Italy recognize in Russia a power outside the framework of the European Union, taking into account its energy capacity and its strategic policy.

On the other hand, Russia approved, in 2010, an armaments development program, until 2020, which provides for the delivery to its armed forces of a number of 8 strategic missile carriers, about 20 multifunctional submarines, over 50 warships, about 100 spacecraft for military use, over 600 modern aircraft, including fifth-generation fighter jets, over 1000 helicopters, over 38 complex missiles Iskander-Mšisk more than 2300 tanks (Leyde, 2014).

On the 19th of October 2012, Russia successfully launched an intercontinental ballistic missile from the Ojos nuclear submarine in the far east of the country. A few days later, on the 24th of October 2012, they conducted a new test of a new intercontinental ballistic missile, launched from the Kapustin Yar range in the southern part of the country, which was successfully completed for Russia (Leyde, 2014). Similarly, in the second week of October 2012, Russia undertook the largest military exercise in recent history with the massive involvement of the entire nuclear triad, which consists of nuclear missiles at sea and on land.

All of these are part of the strategic nuclear forces and are of particular importance to the US military in terms of Russia's stockpile of nuclear weapons (Leyde, 2014). On the other hand, Russia is working to strengthen the Customs Union, as an

embryo of the Eurasian Union. The Customs Union was achieved by signing the act on January 1st, 2010 by Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus (Leyde, 2014). This union is considered the brick that underlies the gradual lifting of what was called the Eurasian Union in 2015. The crisis in the European and American economy, coupled with the growth of the Chinese economy, were the decisive causes that led to deepening the multipolarity of the international system. .

Another important step in this process was the founding of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on June 15th, 2001, when the military-strategic agreement between Russia and China was signed (Leyde, 2014). Both powers will oppose the aggression against Syria by preventing the approval of the resolution by the Security Council, which wanted to conduct a UN military air operation against Damascus. These were the turning point towards a multipolar international system which could undoubtedly ensure a higher level of stability and peace in international relations. The trend towards multipolarity was gaining followers, and the global space was to strengthen or weaken depending on the dynamics and purpose of the conflict in Syria in which Russia was the first player (Leyde, 2014).

Regarding the global development system of the last 20 years, including the period of unipolarity and Russia's new role in world geopolitics, the Russian leadership said that the unipolar force was not able to guarantee the stability of the international system and the increased unpredictability of the economic field and the military call for responsible and trusting cooperation between states, especially between permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Russia's new critical vision considers that the great economic powers serve as locomotives for development, offering greater stability to the world economy, but at the same time with an increased risk to international politics. Regarding these imbalances, Russia aimed to restore economic power, eradicate poverty by creating a professional workforce, a middle class that could keep up with the tectonic process of global transformation, a new cultural, economic, technological and geopolitical era at world-level (Leyde, 2014).

b. People's Republic of China

China was not at first a superpower of the international bipolar system. Therefore, referring to today's China as a superpower was a way of anticipating historical time. The truth is that this country reached this rank in the coming decades, imposing at national level a development policy that started near the 1970s, reaching its maximum supremacy in the years 2018-2020 (Leyde, 2014). China is par excellence the main Asian power, with an important presence in Europe, Africa and a vision to expand in Latin America and the Caribbean. Almost all international analysts have predicted that, over time, China will overtake the United States in terms of gross domestic product and is expected to become the world's largest economy (Leyde, 2014).

Ultimately, the Asian nation is already a world leader in several economic and social fields. China has launched a foreign policy, which was aimed at gaining international recognition and respect while giving priority to the development of the economy, military technology, especially for the maritime and cosmic space where cooperation between it and Russia is very strong. This allowed China to warn the US, without fear, about the danger of the militarization of outer space and about the constant military maneuvers carried out very close to the conflict in the Korean peninsula (Leyde, 2014).

The Evolution of the Post-Cold War International Relations System. Bipolarity

At the same time, we must add the allegations, well-founded or not, offered by the Pentagon in the sense that the Republic of China would own most of the American technologies applied in the military industry, through intelligence and cyber intelligence services. In reality, China has begun the process of innovating and renewing its armed forces and military technologies, by introducing the first aircraft carrier among other modern weapons (Leyde, 2014).

China, due to its prospects, in the future hierarchy of the international system, is a power with which most states want to promote relations based on mutual respect. Some actors in the system prefer developing relations in the regional sector, based on sustained economic growth (Leyde, 2014), thus marking the behavioral capacity of each to adapt to a new international policy. While the gross domestic product of the traditional powers is declining, that of China continues to grow steadily.

Making an analysis, although the US dollar is the most used currency in over 45% of transactions, in addition, in just one day it is traded on the money market about five trillion, the equivalent of a third of gross domestic product in the US year, the dollar gradually loses global currency status. To this we can add the fact that one of the world's major economies does not use the US dollar to trade, the example of China which maintains similar agreements with countries such as Japan, Brazil, India, Russia and Australia (Leyde, 2014).

Therefore, it is very difficult not to accept that the international situation is in the process of change, and the end of the 21st century could bring with it many economic changes, in which China was considered in 2018, a great superpower of the international system. Along with the spectacular progress, we must not forget that the People's Republic of China has an emerging economy today, and the average income of a Chinese is even lower than the income of an American (Leyde, 2014).

However, if there were a surprising process of destabilization of the Chinese political system following the changes in the geopolitical world, as a result of a war provoked by the US and its allies in order to disrupt China's progress, it would be certain that such a situation would trigger a serious global crisis with unpredictable consequences for the stability and functioning of the entire set of international systems.

Nonetheless, everything seems to indicate that the People's Republic of China will be able to avoid all challenges and threats, both political and military, especially economic ones, which since 2008 has threatened and affected most of the economies of the European Union, the United States, Japan, including Russia's economy

c. The European Union

The European Union is the first regional pole in a multipolar labyrinth, in which we meet the states that founded this European bloc and the countries with the vocation to become members or aspirants of the political, economic and military bloc in the old continent. Thus, the states within the pole are seen as a circle inside which are located those that hold European economic and political supremacy, while outside gravitate the states whose status is that of member and aspirant. The circle increases in time with the entry into the great pole of the countries that were once outside it.

All these states are subject to a process of progressive integrity of the objectives set by the institutions, which from Brussels, lead the European construction. They must carry out a process of adapting domestic law to the standards of Community law, developing the so-called rule of law, adopting the rules of liberal democracy, fighting corruption, guaranteeing the rights and freedom of human beings and of all minorities

(Leyde, 2014). Their candidatures force them to make legal and institutional changes, given that they will receive advantages in the medium or long-term integration.

It is also important to note that the enlargement of the European Union, over a period of time, has led to a visible decline in the quality of European standards in all respects, as the enlargement process took place at a time when economic policy was one of neoliberal draconian, also known as "austerity" applied by the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank. Added to all these is Germany's enormous influence through its "austerity policy", Germany being the main economic power in the region and therefore the driving force behind the construction of the European concern (Leyde, 2014).

In this situation, a second circle of countries is pursuing a "neighborhood policy", a policy whose geographical and material outline is still poorly defined given that it is not very clear whether these states will be allowed to integrate into the European bloc. The logic of this applied policy is one of attraction, not domination, arguing in different scenarios the benefits they can have by complying with certain conditions, because of which to obtain future benefits through the reciprocity mechanism by joining the great European pole (Leyde, 2014).

To these the project of the Mediterranean Union can be added, an idea promoted by France, in order to influence the European Union, in a place where the cultural, political, economic and military character contrasts strongly with European principles, values and methods (Leyde, 2014).

Resistance within the European Union, coming from Germany and Great Britain, based on competition and rivalry in order to control this area has been an important point in European politics over time, resistance that can be compared to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict created by the Americans. However, there are reasons to say that the model of building the European Union remains a regional one, led by a Franco-German reconciliation, which is the miracle of international relations after 1945, for the benefit of peace on the old continent.

In 2013, Germany and France form the axis of the European Union (Leyde, 2014), an axis that in the current conditions of the economic and financial crisis cannot achieve a comprehensive border and a leadership in accordance with the new global reorganizations of international relations. Taking into consideration its power, this criterion of reorganizing the global world does not exclude a universal influence and even a domination of the periphery, the third world. In any case, the European Union has lost the credibility and prestige of maintaining effective world domination by moving towards a paradigm of pursuing other nations or regions of the international system.

All the structures that make up the functioning of the European Union are limited by its weak military dimension; therefore, it is not able to ensure international security, even if we refer only to the European continent, which is why it will not be able to intervene successfully in conflicts outside its borders (Leyde, 2014). If we talk about our own security, we can say that it is placed under the US protectorate through the North Atlantic Pact (NATO), which implicitly makes it dependent on the American military strategy.

We should ask ourselves whether our own defense could develop within the North Atlantic alignment, as France's "new foreign policy" seems to aspire to. Even in this situation, the states of the European Union are free to express their point of view in international politics. Within the UN, for example, the member states of the European

The Evolution of the Post-Cold War International Relations System. Bipolarity

Union present their own political positions, which are not always necessarily convergent, as the bloc has failed to consolidate a common foreign security policy.

Weighing this weakness, the European Union could not be disintegrated from the outside, but a fragmentation from inside as a consequence of the divisions of the Member States by the nature of the distinct differences of political mentalities can happen, and in such a conjuncture, we can witness a degradation from all points of view of the European continent.

Members of the European Union are major contributors to the UN budget - more than a third, but this financial strength has not turned into political influence (Leyde, 2014). Yet, the European Union is a pole of the multipolarity of the international system of the 21st century, by opposing the American foreign political unilateralism, that is, the hegemony of the only superpower, with this not being done in a frontal manner. Without a break with the US, in recent years, contradictions between the two sides have been visible with the use of force against Iraq, the compromise of European countries on the environment, the limitation of the consequences of climate change through multilateral action.

Of particular significance was the confrontation developed around the International Criminal Court. The United States has committed itself to concluding bilateral agreements with states that are part of the Rome Convention, with the aim of exonerating its citizens living abroad under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, while European countries fight against alleged claims, which are opposed to the Convention (Leyde, 2014). These legal differences have reached the Security Council on the immunity of US military forces engaged in peacekeeping operations. European countries were at the center of these legal confrontations, but they obviously could not win.

All these clearly show that, although it is true that the European Union and the United States are considered the bastions of the old order of capitalist domination on a global scale, in their international projections there are oppositions or rivalries between the two conceptions: one that perceives international politics through the primacy of multilateralism and international law, and the second based on coercion, pressure and the use of force, thus preventing compliance with the rules of international law.

In constitutional terms, the European Union is an entity separate from the power, in fact, a unit of European states, which can evolve towards a balancing factor in an international multipolar system. In this sense, redefining future ties with the United States is a key issue for the European Union. At the economic and financial level, the sensitivity and vulnerability of European states, in the current situation of the euro crisis and the one in the medical field manifested at global level, will represent the main points of imbalance in the relations within the international system.

Hence, Germany's idea of a free trade area between the European Union and the United States (Leyde, 2014), which over time would strengthen economic interdependencies, in order to achieve an economic NATO that could fuel competition and rivalry between capitalist economies.

With regard to security as the main tool "in the fight against terrorism" and "the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction", we must mention two aspects that both sides have: the first aims to achieve a political framework in defense of Israel, while the second highlights discrimination and an attack on Iran and Syria. If we talk about the political aspect between the two, we can notice the existence of a silent rivalry between NATO and the European Union, the US using the military line as a control mechanism

over the expansion process of the European Union, thus trying to direct and why not, to control this expansion process evoking a Western alliance of democracies in a hypothetical borderless international system from North America to Australia (Leyde, 2014).

All these indicate that in the current globalization of international relations, the interdependence between the new power configurations could work for the benefit of both, and the weakening of US power offers opportunities for greater influence of emerging powers and a greater margin for action for the countries, which are part of the pattern of capitalist periphery.

In the case of the European Union, we should ask ourselves whether it will be able to equip itself with the necessary tools to enable it to become a superpower of the 21st century, a full player in international relations, leaving behind the era in which it was considered by the USA is an important pawn in international politics. Observing the situation of the next decades of the 21st century in the international system, the US challenge will not only be for the European Union, which often disagrees with exacerbated militarism and its policies in general, but especially for the great emerging or reappearing powers which, just like Russia, develops following a very different logic from that of American unipolarity without abandoning the claims of great power, seeking to contribute to a different prospective design of international relations.

In what Russia is concerned, the European Union is carefully managing its energy dependence on other emerging powers such as China and India, which are gradually controlling the market for hydrocarbons and raw materials, overtaking other producers; accepts rivalry in the agricultural export sector even if this is made by an increasing number of countries, reducing the competitiveness of its services.

The continuation of international regional conflicts affects the image of the European Union as an international player, which is why the disputes between Kosovo versus Serbia, Armenia versus Azerbaijan should be avoided. This situation is a consequence of the US's inability to impose its integral domination in the international system of the 21st century to overcome the power of Russia, when we talk about strategic weapons and to overcome China, when we talk about the economic-trade system.

These will be some of the characteristics of the international multipolar and multicenter system predictable for the next decades of the 21st century.

Conclusions

In the context presented above, we can point out a consequence that was not visible in the early 1990s. Therefore, the events that characterized the Cold War were placed in a historical-chronological perspective, until the 21st century and showed that the two important things of a state: the global power and the unipolar hegemony of the United States of America were not enough to create a new international order, on the contrary, they opened a geopolitical competition in which an important group of great powers, big societies and political games have greatly violated the agreements of the Western world. In this context, despite its economic and military power, the US specifies the need to create an active diplomatic structure that will allow it to build a consensus to act internationally. In conclusion, it is clear that the economy and demographics are among the factors that will slightly increase the power of countries such as China, India, Russia, Brazil and South Africa.

The Evolution of the Post-Cold War International Relations System. Bipolarity

References:

- Balze, F. A. M. de la, (2019). La lucha por la hegemonía mundial (Estados Unidos, China y Argentina). In *Estudios internacionales (Santiago)*, 51(194), https://scielo.conicyt.cl/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S037692019000300195.
- Essop, B., Overbeek, H., (2019). *Transnational Capital and Class Fractions. The Amsterdam School Perspective Reconsidered*. New York: Routledge.
- Leyde, E. R. H., (2014). De la unipolaridad a la multipolaridad del sistema internacional del siglo XXI. In *Revista de Estudios Estratégicos* (1), La Habana : CIPI, <http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/Cuba/cipi/20180227121442/Art4.pdf>
- Ramos, L. et al., (2012). A Governança econômica global e os desafios do G-20 pós-crise financeira: análise das posições de Estados Unidos, China, Alemanha e Brasil. In *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, 55(2): 10-27, https://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0034-73292012000200002&script=sci_abstract&tlng=pt.
- Vadell, J., Ramos, L., (2019). The Role of Declining Brazil and Ascending China into the BRICS Initiative. In: LI, X. (Ed.), *The International Political Economy of the BRICS*. London: Routledge.
- Wang, H., (2014). *From "Taoguang Yanghui" to "Yousuo Zouwei": China's Engagement in Financial Minilateralism*. CIGI Papers: CGI, <https://www.cigionline.org>.

Article Info

Received: November 22 2021

Accepted: December 02 2021



CEPOS NEW CALL FOR PAPERS 2022
12TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
AFTER COMMUNISM. EAST AND WEST UNDER SCRUTINY
Craiova (Romania), 18-19 March 2022

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to invite you to participate in the 12th International Conference AFTER COMMUNISM. EAST AND WEST UNDER SCRUTINY in Craiova, Romania, 18-19 March 2022.

More than three decades after, an event is both history and present. The annual conference organized by CEPOS involves both the perspectives of the researches in the field of Communism and Post-Communism: research experiences and scientific knowledge.

Like a "pointing puzzle", 33 years after the fall of communism, the conference panels explore with emotional detachment, but with a peculiar professional involvement creating and exploiting the inter-disciplinary developments of the East-West relations before and after the crucial year 1989 in the fields of political sciences, history, economics and law.

The conference will be hosted during two intense and exciting days, participants all over the world (professors, professionals, doctoral and post-doctoral researchers and students) are invited to raise the issue of the study of recent history of the former communist space in connection with the Western world. We are confident that all of us will focus during these two days on what is important to move the research in the field forward.

We dear to state that we even bear the moral obligation to do that.

Best regards,

The Board of Directors of CEPOS 2022 Conferences and Events Series

PROPOSED PANELS for CEPOS CONFERENCE 2022

Center of Post-Communist Political Studies (CEPOS) proposes the following panels:

- History, politics and ideologies in modern and contemporary Europe;
- Political history, collective memory and cultural heritage;
- Politics and social change communication in postcommunism;
- Communism, transition, democracy;
- Post-communism and collective memory;
- Political culture and citizen participation;
- Law, legal studies and justice reform;
- Law, transitional justice, democratization;
- Constitution(s), legality & political reforms;
- Legal and constitutional patterns of the democratization process;
- Political culture, rights and civil society;
- Political culture, civil society and citizen participation;
- Political parties, electoral systems and electoral campaigns;
- Security and diplomacy in national and Euro-Atlantic environment;
- Security, social movements and citizenship;
- Rights, identities, policies & participation;
- Education, media & social communication;
- Education, social inclusion and regional policies;
- Administrative history and governance within South-Eastern Europe during transition;
- E-government, comparative policies and strategic approaches
- Law, administration and transitional justice
- Economics, financial law and policy mechanisms
- Social economy, climate change and sustainable development
- Education, political culture and language skills
- EU policy cooperation and resilience facilities in (post)pandemic context
- Media analysis, public discourse and democracy
- Judicial encounters and public policies
- Political leadership, democratization and regional security;
- Comparative policies, sustainable growth and urban planning;
- Knowledge transfer and competitiveness in regional economies;
- Comparative policies, financial reforms and competitiveness;
- Security, foreign policy, social movements and citizenship;
- Economics, financial law and policy mechanisms;
- Administration, social inclusion and urban planning;
- Global environment and cultural heritage;
- Environment, biodiversity and climate change;
- Integration, identity, and human rights in European systems;
- Religion, cultural history and education;
- Media, online communication and politics;
- Media analysis and transition;
- Discourse, language and social encounters;
- Bioethics and transition challenges.

ABSTRACT SUBMITTING (SEE CEPOS CONFERENCE 2022 REGISTRATION FORM-on <http://cepos.eu/>)

The proposals must be sent in English and must contain the title of the paper, the abstract (no more than 300 words) and a short presentation of the author(s) (statute, institutional affiliation, short list of relevant scientific contributions).

CEPOS NEW CALL FOR PAPERS 2022

DEAD-LINE FOR SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL: 04 MARCH 2022

Proposals must be submitted until 04 MARCH 2022 at the following address:
cepos2013@gmail.com

CEPOS CONFERENCE PAST EDITIONS

More information, photos and other details about the previous editions of the Conference and CEPOS Workshops, Internships, and other official events organized in 2012-2021 are available on CEPOS official website sections

CEPOS Previous Events. Photo gallery CEPOS Events

<http://cepos.eu/gallery>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Center-of-Post-Communist-Political-Studies-CEPOS/485957361454074>

REGISTRATION FEES

CEPOS CONFERENCE 2022 Registration fees will be paid exclusively ONLINE by Wednesday, March 09, 2022.

90 euros / first paper and 20 euros/ second paper (same author(s)) can be paid directly via bank transfer on CEPOS Bank account as follows:

Details for online payment

Banca Romana pentru Dezvoltare (BRD)

Owner: ASOCIATIA CENTRUL DE STUDII POLITICE POSTCOMUNISTE

Reference to be mentioned: CV taxa participare si publicare CEPOS

Account Number: RO64BRDE170SV96030911700 (RON)

Very important !

The registration WILL NOT be confirmed until the payment of the Registration fees is received. The participant has to bear all bank charges due to the transfer of money (local, foreign etc.). The final Programme of the CEPOS Conference 2022 will be provided to all participants by Sunday, March 13, 2022.

ORGANIZING DETAILS

The registration fee covers:

- * Conference attendance to all common sessions, individual and special panels
- * Conference materials (including the Book of Abstracts of the Conference)
- * Certificate of attendance (offered at the end of the CEPOS Conference 2022)
- * Publication of the Conference Papers in the International Indexed Journal Revista de Stiinte Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques. Previous publication of the 2012-2021 Conference papers is available at:

<http://cis01.central.ucv.ro/revistadestiintepolitice/acces.php>

CERTIFICATES OF ATTENDANCE

Certificates of attendance will be offered at the end of the conference.

INTERNATIONAL INDEXING OF REVISTA DE STIINTE POLITICE. REVUE DES SCIENCES POLITIQUES. Revista de Stiinte Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques is an International Indexed Journal by:

ERIH PLUS

ProQuest Political Sciences

EBSCO

CEEOL

KVK

CEPOS NEW CALL FOR PAPERS 2022

Gale Cengage Learning
Index Copernicus
Georgetown University Library
Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB
Journal Seek

Latest international indexing updates 2021 (April 2021) of the *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques* (selective list 2019-2021)

Reseau Mirabel
<https://reseau-mirabel.info/revue/3046/Revista-de-Stiinte-Politice>

Bond Library University
https://librarysearch.bond.edu.au/discovery/fulldisplay?vid=61BOND_I NST%3ABOND&docid=alma9930197890502381&lang=en&context=SP

Ghent university library
<https://lib.ugent.be/catalog/ejn01:100000000726583>

The Royal Library and Copenhagen University Library Service
https://e-tidsskrifter.kb.dk/resolve?umlaut.locale=da&url_ver=Z39.88-2004&url_ctx_fmt=info%3Aofi%2Ffmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Actx&ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_tim=2020-04-11T21%3A23%3A41%2B02%3A00&ctx_id=&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rft.issn=1584-224X&rft.search_val=1584-224X&rft_val_fmt=info%3Aofi%2Ffmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Ajournal&rft_id=info%3AAsid%2Fsfxit.com%3Acitation

Glasgow Caledonian University
https://discover.gcu.ac.uk/discovery/openurl?institution=44GLCU_INST&vid=44GLCU_INST:44GLCU_VU2&?u.ignore_date_cover age=true&rft.mms_id=991002471123103836

Open University Library Malaysia
<http://library.oum.edu.my/oumlib/content/catalog/778733>

Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, United States
<https://searchworks.stanford.edu/?q=469823489>

Cornell University Library, Ithaca, United States
https://newcatalog.library.cornell.edu/catalog?search_field=publisher+number%2Fother+identifier&q=469823489

University of Michigan Library,
<https://search.lib.umich.edu/catalog?&library=All+libraries&query=isbn%3A469823489>

Pepperdine Libraries, Malibu, United States
https://pepperdine.worldcat.org/search?qt=wc_org_pepperdine&q=no:469823489

University of Victoria Libraries , Victoria, Canada
<http://uvc.summon.serialssolutions.com/#!/search?ho=t&fvf=ContentType,Journal%20Article,&l=en&q=1584-224X>

CEPOS NEW CALL FOR PAPERS 2022

Academic Journals database

<http://journaldatabase.info/journal/issn1584-224X>

University of Zurich Database

<https://www.jdb.uzh.ch/id/eprint/21535/>

California Institute of Technology - Caltech Library

<https://www.library.caltech.edu/eds/detail?db=poh&an=98646324&isbn=1584224X>

Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin

http://kvk.bibliothek.kit.edu/view-title/index.php?katalog=STABI_BERLIN&url=http%3A%2F%2Fstabikat.de%2FDB%3D1%2FCHARSET%3DISO-8859-1%2FIMPLAND%3DY%2FNLNG%3DDU%2FSRT%3DYOP%2FTTL%3D1%2FSID%3D8dda05B-1%2FSET%3D1%2FSHW%3FFRST%3D1&signature=cBtSKEx2BuW-HASpUcSt39FB3vQpIm6cGAajCH-kz44&showCoverImg=1

Union Catalogue of Belgian Libraries

http://kvk.bibliothek.kit.edu/view-title/index.php?katalog=VERBUND_BELGIEN&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.unicat.be%2FuniCat%3Ffunc%3Dsearch%26query%3Dsysid%3A7330250&signature=Dxe-cVFwJMO1W4HpEAWW_ERyKR4oiGWXLGFinWk8fNU&showCoverImg=1

The National Library of Israel

http://merhav.nli.org.il/primo-explore/fulldisplay?vid=ULI&docid=NNL-Journals003477656&context=L&lang=en_US

Verbundkatalog GBV

http://kvk.bibliothek.kit.edu/view-title/index.php?katalog=GBV&url=http%3A%2F%2Fgso.gbv.de%2FDB%3D2.1%2FCHARSET%3DUTF-8%2FIMPLAND%3DY%2FNLNG%3DDU%2FSRT%3DYOP%2FTTL%3D1%2FCOOKIE%3DD2.1%2CE900d94f2-d%2Ci0%2CB9000%2B%2B%2B%2B%2B%2CSY%2CA%2CH6-11%2C%2C16-17%2C%2C21%2C%2C30%2C%2C50%2C%2C60-61%2C%2C73-75%2C%2C77%2C%2C88-90%2CNKVK%2BWEBZUGANG%2CR129.13.130.211%2CFN%2FSET%3D1%2FPNSET%3FPN%3D590280090&signature=Omwa_NLtwvdaOmmyeo7SUOCEYuDRGtoZqGXIK-vTY1o&showCoverImg=1

COPAC, registered trademark of The University of Manchester

<https://copac.jisc.ac.uk/search?&isn=1584-224x>

ACPN Catalogo Italiano dei Periodici, Universita di Bologna

<https://acnpsearch.unibo.it/journal/2601620>

Bibliothèque Nationale de Luxembourg

https://a-z.lu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?vid=BIBNET&docid=SFX_LOCAL1000000000726583&context=L

National Library of Sweden

<http://libris.kb.se/bib/11702473>

Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University

http://sfx.lib.byu.edu/sfxlcl3?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&url_ctx_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&ctx_enc=info:ofi/enc:UTF-8&ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/sfxit.com:azlist&sfx.ignore_date_threshold=1&rft.object_id=1000000000726583&rft.object_portfolio_id=&svc.holdings=yes&svc.fulltext=yes

CEPOS NEW CALL FOR PAPERS 2022

Catalogue of Hamburg Libraries

https://beluga.sub.uni-hamburg.de/vufind/Search/Results?submit=Suchen&library=GBV_ILN_22&lookfor=1584-224x

Edith Cowan Australia

<https://ecu.on.worldcat.org/search?databaseList=&queryString=1584-224X>

University College Cork, Ireland

<https://ucc.summon.serialssolutions.com/?q=1584-224X#!search?ho=t&jt=Revista%20de%20Stiinte%20Politice&l=en-UK&q=>

York University Library, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

<https://www.library.yorku.ca/find/Record/muler82857>

The University of Chicago, USA

https://catalog.lib.uchicago.edu/vufind/Record/sfx_100000000726583

The University of Kansas KUMC Libraries Catalogue

<http://voyagercatalog.kumc.edu/Search/Results?lookfor=1584-224X&type=AllFields>

Journal Seek

<http://journalseek.net/cgi-bin/journalseek/journalsearch.cgi?field=issn&query=1584-224X>

State Library New South Wales, Sidney, Australia,

<http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au/search~S1/?searchtype=i&searcharg=1584-224X&searchscope=1&SORT=D&extended=0&SUBMIT=Search&searchlimits=&searchorigarg=i1583-9583>

Electronic Journal Library

https://opac.giga-hamburg.de/ezb/detail.phtml?bibid=GIGA&colors=7&lang=en&flavour=classic&jour_id=111736

Open University Malaysia

<http://library.oum.edu.my/oumlib/content/catalog/778733>

Wayne State University Libraries

<http://elibrary.wayne.edu/record=4203588>

Kun Shan University Library

http://muse.lib.ksu.edu.tw:8080/1cate/?rft_val_fmt=publisher&pubid=ucvpress

Western Theological Seminar

https://col-westernsem.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991001225541104770&context=L&vid=01COL_WTS:WTS&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,1584-224X&facet=rtype,include,journals&mode=Basic&offset=0

Swansea University Prifysgol Abertawe

http://whel-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=44WHELP_SWA_VU1&reset_config=true#.VSU9SPmsVSk

Vanderbilt Library

https://catalog.library.vanderbilt.edu/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991043322926803276&context=L&vid=01VAN_INST:vanui&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,1584-224X&offset=0

Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozial

https://www.wzb.eu/en/literature-data/search-find/e-journals?page=searchres.phtml&bibid=WZB&lang=en&jq_type1=IS&jq_term1=1584-224X&jq_bool2=AND&jq_type2=KS&jq_term2=&jq_bool3=AND&jq_type3=PU&jq_term3=&offset=-1&hits_per_page=50&Notations%5B%5D=all&selected_colors%5B%5D=1&selected_colors%5B%5D=2

Radboud University Nijmegen

<https://zaandam.hosting.ru.nl/oamarket-acc/score?OpenAccess=&InstitutionalDiscounts=&Title=&Issn=1584-224&Publisher=>

Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB (Electronic Journals Library)

http://rzblx1.uni-regensburg.de/ezeit/detail.phtml?bibid=AAAAA&colors=7&lang=de&jour_id=111736

The University of Hong Kong Libraries

https://julac.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/search?query=any,contains,1584-224x&search_scope=My%20Institution&vid=HKU&facet=rtype,include,journals&mode=Basic&offset=0

Metropolitan University Prague, Czech Republic

<https://s-knihovna.mup.cz/katalog/eng/l.dll?h~=&DD=1&H1=&V1=o&P1=2&H2=&V2=o&P2=3&H3=&V3=z&P3=4&H4=1584-224x&V4=o&P4=33&H5=&V5=z&P5=25>
University of the West Library
<https://uwest.on.worldcat.org/search?queryString=1584-224x&clusterResults=off&stickyFacetsChecked=on#/oclc/875039367>

Elektronische Zeitschriften der Universität zu Köln

https://www.ub.uni-koeln.de/IPS?SERVICE=METASEARCH&SUBSERVICE=INITSEARCH&VIEW=USB:Simple&LOCATION=USB&SID=IPS3:2d1c5acebc65a3cdc057a9d6c64ce76e&SETCOOKIE=TRUE&COUNT=15&GWTIMEOUT=30&HIGHLIGHTING=on&HISTORY=SESSION&START=1&STREAMING=on&URLENCODING=TRUE&QUERY_alAL=1584-224x&SERVICEGROUP1.SERVICE.SEARCH_EDS=on&SERVICEGROUP1.SERVICE.SEARCH_KUGJSON=on&SERVICEGROUP1.SERVICE.SEARCH_KUGUSBWEB=on&SERVICEGROUP1.SERVICEGROUP.USB:Default=on

EKP Publications

https://ekp-invenio.physik.uni-karlsruhe.de/search?ln=en&sc=1&p=1584-224X&f=&action_search=Search&c=Experiments&c=Authorities

Valley City State University

https://odin-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/search?query=any,contains,1584-224X&tab=tab1&search_scope=ndv_everything&sortby=rank&vid=ndv&lang=en_US&mode=advanced&offset=0&displayMode%3Dfull&displayField=all&pcAvailabilityMode=true

Impact Factor Poland

<http://impactfactor.pl/czasopisma/21722-revista-de-stiinte-politice-revue-des-sciences-politiques>

Universite Laval

http://sfx.bibl.ulaval.ca:9003/sfx_local?url_ver=Z39.88-

CEPOS NEW CALL FOR PAPERS 2022

2004&url_ctx_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&ctx_enc=info:ofi/enc:UTF-8&ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/sfxit.com:azlist&sfx.ignore_date_threshold=1&rft.object_id=1000000000726583&rft.object_portfolio_id=&svc.fulltext=yes

Universität Passau

<https://infoguide.ub.uni-passau.de/InfoGuideClient.upasis/start.do?Query=10%3d%22BV035261002%22>

BSB Bayerische StaatBibliothek

<https://opacplus.bsb-muenchen.de/metaopac/search?View=default&oclcno=502495838>

Deutsches Museum

<https://opac.deutsches-museum.de/TouchPoint/start.do?Query=1035%3d%22BV035261002%22IN%5b2%5d&View=dmm&Language=de>
Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt
[https://opac.ku.de/TouchPoint/start.do?Branch=3&Language=de&View=thi&Query=35=%22502495838%22+IN+\[2\]](https://opac.ku.de/TouchPoint/start.do?Branch=3&Language=de&View=thi&Query=35=%22502495838%22+IN+[2])

Hochschule Augsburg, Bibliothek

<https://infoguide.hs-augsburg.de/InfoGuideClient.fhasis/start.do?Query=10%3d%22BV035261002%22>

Hochschule Weihenstephan-Triesdorf, Zentralbibliothek

Freising, Germany

<https://ffwtp20.bib-bvb.de/TouchPoint/start.do?Query=1035%3d%22BV035261002%22IN%5b2%5d&View=ffw&Language=de>

OTH- Ostbayerische Technische Hochschule Regensburg, Hochschulbibliothek

OTHBR, Regensburg, Germany

<https://www.regensburger-katalog.de/TouchPoint/start.do?Query=1035%3d%22BV035261002%22IN%5b2%5d&View=ubr&Language=de>

Staatliche Bibliothek Neuburg/Donau , SBND,

Neuburg/Donau, Germany

<https://opac.sbnd.de/InfoGuideClient.sndsis/start.do?Query=10%3d%22BV035261002%22>

Universitätsbibliothek Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Eichstätt, Germany

[https://opac.ku.de/TouchPoint/start.do?Branch=0&Language=de&View=uei&Query=35=%22502495838%22+IN+\[2\]](https://opac.ku.de/TouchPoint/start.do?Branch=0&Language=de&View=uei&Query=35=%22502495838%22+IN+[2])

Bibliothek der Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Universitätsbibliothek der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Berlin, Germany

https://hu-berlin.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/prime-explore/search?institution=HUB_UB&vid=hub_ub&search_scope=default_scope&tab=default_tab&query=issn,exact,1584-224X

Hochschulbibliothek Ansbach, Ansbach, Germany

<https://fanoz3.bib-bvb.de/InfoGuideClient.fansis/start.do?Query=10%3d%22BV035261002%22>

CEPOS NEW CALL FOR PAPERS 2022

Bibliothek der Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder)
Frankfurt/Oder, Germany
<https://opac.europa-uni.de/InfoGuideClient.euvsis/start.do?Query=10%3d%22BV035261002%22>

University of California Library Catalog
<https://catalog.library.ucla.edu/vwebv/search?searchCode1=GKEY&searchType=2&searchArg1=ucoclc469823489>

For more details about the past issues and international abstracting and indexing, please visit the journal website at the following address:

<http://cis01.central.ucv.ro/revistadestiintepolitice/acces.php>.

CONFERENCE INTERNATIONAL INDEXING OF THE PAST EDITIONS (2014-2021)

CEPOS Conference 2021

The Eleventh International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 19-20 March 2021) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 5 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

<https://academic.oup.com/jcs/advance-articleabstract/doi/10.1093/jcs/csaa064/5941887?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

<https://conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=229654>

<https://www.sciencedz.net/en/conference/72628-1thinternational-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-underscrutiny>

<https://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-underscrutiny>

<https://worlduniversitydirectory.com/edu/event/?slib=1thinternational-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-underscrutiny-2>

CEPOS Conference 2020

The Tenth International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (27-28 March 2020) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 7 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

Scichemistry
<http://scichemistry.org/ConferenceInfosByConferenceTopicId?conferenceTopicId=57>

Oxford Journals
<https://academic.oup.com/jcs/advance-articlepdf/doi/10.1093/jcs/csz078/30096829/csz078.pdf>

CEPOS NEW CALL FOR PAPERS 2022

Conference alerts

<https://conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=215370>

<https://www.sciencedz.net/en/conference/57625-10thinternational-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-underscrutiny>

Intraders

<https://www.intraders.org>.

cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/www.intraders.org/news/romania/10th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-underscrutiny/amp/?amp_js_v=a2&_gsa=1&usqp=mq331AQCKAE%3D#ah=15737604302246&referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&_tf=De%20pe%20%251%24s&share=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.intraders.org%2Fnews%2Fromania%2F10th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny%2F

10 times

<https://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-underscrutiny>

The conference alerts

<https://theconferencealerts.com/event/46428/10th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny>

Scirea

<https://www.scirea.org/ConferenceInfosByConferenceCountryId?conferenceCountryId=75>

CEPOS Conference 2019

The Ninth International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 29-30 March 2019) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 6 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

Oxford Academic Journal of Church & State <https://academic.oup.com/jcs/article-abstract/60/4/784/5106417?redirectedFrom=PDF>

10 Times

<https://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny>

Conference Alerts

<https://conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=205682>

Researchgate

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327905733_CEPOS_9TH_INTERNATIONAL_CONFERENCE_AFTER_COMMUNISM_EAST_AND_WEST_UNDER_SCRUTINY_2019?iepl%5BviewId%5D=sjcOJrVCO8PTLapcfVciZQsb&iepl%5Bcontexts%5D%5B0%5D=publicationCreationEOT&iepl%5BtargetEntityId%5D=PB%3A327905733&iepl%5BinteractionType%5D=publicationCTA

The Free Library

<https://www.thefreelibrary.com/9th+INTERNATIONAL+CONFERENCE+AFTER+COMMUNISM.+EAST+AND+WEST+UNDER...-a0542803701>

CEPOS NEW CALL FOR PAPERS 2022

Science Dz.net

<https://www.sciencedz.net/conference/42812-9th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny>

CEPOS Conference 2018

The Eighth International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 23-24 March 2018) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 15 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

Conference Alerts, <https://conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=186626>

Sciencesdz, <http://www.sciencedz.net/conference/29484-8th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny>

ManuscriptLink,

<https://manuscriptlink.com/cfp/detail?cfpId=AYAXKVAR46277063&type=event>

Maspolitiques, <http://www.maspolitiques.com/ar/index.php/en/1154-8th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny>

Aconf, https://www.aconf.org/conf_112399.html

Call4paper, <https://call4paper.com/listByCity?type=event&city=3025&count=count>
Eventegg, <https://eventegg.com/cepos/>

10 times, <https://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny>

Biblioteca de Sociologie, <http://bibliotecadesociologie.ro/cfp-cepos-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny-craiova-2018/>

Science Research Association <http://www.scirea.org/topiclisting?conferenceTopicId=5>
ResearcherBook <http://researcherbook.com/country/Romania>

Conference Search Net, <http://conferencesearch.net/en/29484-8th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny>

SchoolandCollegeListings,

<https://www.schoolandcollegelistings.com/RO/Craiova/485957361454074/Center-of-Post-Communist-Political-Studies-CEPOS>

Vepub conference, <http://www.vepub.com/conferences-view/8th-International-Conference-After-Communism.-East-and-West-under-Scrutiny/bC9aUE5rcHN0ZmpkYU9nTHJzUkRmdz09/>

Geopolitika Hungary, <http://www.geopolitika.hu/event/8th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny/>

CEPOS Conference 2017

The Seventh International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 24-25 March 2017) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 10 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases: Ethic & International Affairs (Carnegie Council), Cambridge University Press-

CEPOS NEW CALL FOR PAPERS 2022

<https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2016/upcoming-conferences-interest-2016-2017/>

ELSEVIER GLOBAL EVENTS
LIST <http://www.globaleventslist.elsevier.com/events/2017/03/7th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny>

CONFERENCE ALERTS-<http://www.conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=171792>

10TIMES.COM-<http://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny>

Hiway Conference Discovery System-<http://www.hicds.cn/meeting/detail/45826124>
Geopolitika (Hungary)-<http://www.geopolitika.hu/event/7th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny/>

Academic.net-<http://www.academic.net/show-24-4103-1.html>

World University Directory-
<http://www.worlduniversitydirectory.com/conferencedetail.php?AgentID=2001769>

Science Research Association-
<http://www.scirea.org/conferenceinfo?conferenceId=35290>

Science Social Community-<https://www.science-community.org/ru/node/174892>

CEPOS Conference 2016

The Sixth International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 8-9 April 2016) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in the following international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

ELSEVIER GLOBAL EVENTS-
<http://www.globaleventslist.elsevier.com/events/2016/04/6th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny/>
Oxford Journals – Oxford Journal of Church & State-
<http://jcs.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2016/02/06/jcs.csv121.extract>

Conference Alerts-<http://www.conferencealerts.com/country-listing?country=Romania>
Conferences-In - <http://conferences-in.com/conference/romania/2016/economics/6th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny/>

Socmag.net - <http://www.socmag.net/?p=1562>

African Journal of Political Sciences-
http://www.maspolitiques.com/mas/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=450:-securitee-&catid=2:2010-12-09-22-47-00&Itemid=4#.VjUI5PnhCUk

Researchgate-
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283151988_Call_for_Papers_6TH_International_Conference_After_Communism_East_and_West_under_Scrutiny_8-9_April_2016_Craiova_Romania

CEPOS NEW CALL FOR PAPERS 2022

World Conference Alerts-
<http://www.worldconferencealerts.com/ConferenceDetail.php?EVENT=WLD1442>
Edu events-<http://eduevents.eu/listings/6th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny/>

Esocsci.org-<http://www.esocsci.org.nz/events/list/>

Sciencedz.net-<http://www.sciencedz.net/index.php?topic=events&page=53>

Science-community.org-<http://www.science-community.org/ru/node/164404/?did=070216>

CEPOS Conference 2015

The Fifth International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 24-25 April 2015) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 15 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL OF CANADA, CANADA-
<http://natocouncil.ca/events/international-conferences/>

ELSEVIER GLOBAL EVENTS LIST-
<http://www.globaleventslist.elsevier.com/events/2015/04/fifth-international-conf>

GCONFERENCE.NET-
http://www.gconference.net/eng/conference_view.html?no=47485&catalog=1&cata=018&co_kind=&co_type=&pageno=1&conf_cata=01

CONFERENCE BIOXBIO-<http://conference.bioxbio.com/location/Romania>

10 TIMES-<http://10times.com/Romania>

CONFERENCE ALERTS-<http://www.conferencealerts.com/country-listing?country=Romania>

<http://www.iem.ro/orizont2020/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/lista-3-conferinte-internationale.pdf>
<http://sdil.ac.ir/index.aspx?pid=99&articleid=62893>

NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM-<http://www.nationalsymposium.com/communism.php>
SCIENCE DZ-<http://www.sciencedz.net/conference/6443-fifth-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny>

ARCHIVE COM-http://archive-com.com/com/c/conferencealerts.com/2014-12-01_5014609_70/Rome_15th_International_Academic_Conference_The_IISES/

CONFERENCE WORLD-<http://conferencesworld.com/higher-education/>
KNOW A CONFERENCE KNOW A CONFERENCE-
<http://knowaconference.com/social-work/>

International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications (IJONTE)

CEPOS NEW CALL FOR PAPERS 2022

Turkey <http://www.ijonte.org/?pnum=15&>

Journal of Research in Education and Teaching Turkey-
<http://www.jret.org/?pnum=13&pt=Kongre+ve+Sempozyum>

CEPOS CONFERENCE 2015 is part of a "consolidated list of all international and Canadian conferences taking place pertaining to international relations, politics, trade, energy and sustainable development". For more details see <http://natocouncil.ca/events/international-conferences/>

CEPOS Conference 2014

The Fourth International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny, Craiova, 4-5 April 2014 was very well received by the national media and successfully indexed in more than 9 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases such as:

American Political Science Association, USA-
<http://www.apsanet.org/conferences.cfm>

Journal of Church and State, Oxford-
<http://jcs.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2014/01/23/jcs.cst141.full.pdf+html>;
NATO Council of Canada (section events/ international conferences), Canada,
<http://atlantic-council.ca/events/international-conferences/>

International Society of Political Psychology, Columbus, USA-
http://www.ispp.org/uploads/attachments/April_2014.pdf

Academic Biographical Sketch, <http://academicprofile.org/SeminarConference.aspx>;
Conference alerts, <http://www.conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=121380>
Gesis Sowiport, Koln, Germany, <http://sowiport.gesis.org/>; Osteuropa-Netzwerk,
Universität Kassel, Germany, http://its-vm508.its.uni-kassel.de/mediawiki/index.php/After_communism:_East_and_West_under_scrutiny:_Fourth_International_Conference

Ilustre Colegio Nacional de Doctores y Licenciados en Ciencias Politicas y Sociologia, futuro Consejo Nacional de Colegios Profesionales, Madrid,
<http://colpolsocmadrid.org/agenda/>.



RSP MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLICATION

REVISTA DE ȘTIINȚE POLITICE. REVUE DES SCIENCES POLITIQUES (RSP)

Email: Manuscripts should be submitted online at cepos2013@gmail.com with the following settings:

Page setup: B5 JIS

Paper title: For the title use Times New Roman 16 Bold, Center.

Author(s): For the Name and Surname of the author(s) use Times New Roman 14 Bold, Center. About the author(s): After each name insert a footnote (preceded by the symbol *) containing the author's professional title, didactic position, institutional affiliation, contact information, and email address.

E.g.: Anca Parmena Olimid*, Cătălina Maria Georgescu**, Cosmin Lucian Gherghe***

* Associate Professor, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Phone: 00407*****, Email: parmena2002@yahoo.com. (Use Times New Roman 9, Justified)

** Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Phone: 00407*****, Email: cata.georgescu@yahoo.com. (Use Times New Roman 9, Justified)

*** Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Phone: 00407*****, Email: avcosmingherghe@yahoo.com. (Use Times New Roman 9, Justified)

Author(s) are fully responsible for the copyright, authenticity and contents of their papers. Author(s) assume full responsibility that their paper is not under review for any refereed journal or conference proceedings.

Abstract

The abstract must provide the aims, objectives, methodology, results and main conclusions of the paper (please submit the papers by providing all these information in the abstract). It must be submitted in English and the length must not exceed 300 words. Use Times New Roman 10,5, Justify.

Keywords

Submit 5-6 keywords representative to the thematic approached in the paper. Use Times New Roman 10,5, Italic. After the keywords introduce three blank lines, before passing to the Article text.

Text Font: Times New Roman: 10,5

Reference citations within the text

Please cite within the text. Use authors' last names, with the year of publication.

RSP MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

E.g.: (Olimid, 2009: 14; Olimid and Georgescu, 2012: 14-15; Olimid, Georgescu and Gherghe, 2013: 20-23).

On first citation of references with more than three authors, give all names in full. On the next citation of references with more than three authors give the name of the first author followed by “et al.”.

To cite one Article by the same author(s) in the same year use the letters a, b, c, etc., after the year. E.g.: (Olimid, 2009a:14) (Olimid, 2009b: 25-26).

References:

The references cited in the Article are listed at the end of the paper in alphabetical order of authors' names.

References of the same author are listed chronologically.

For books

Olimid, A. P. (2009a). *Viața politică și spirituală în România modernă. Un model românesc al relațiilor dintre Stat și Biserică*, Craiova: Aius Publishing.

Olimid, A. P. (2009b). *Politica românească după 1989*, Craiova: Aius Publishing.

For chapters in edited books

Goodin, R. E. (2011). The State of the Discipline, the Discipline of the State. In Goodin, R. E. (editor), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 19-39.

For journal Articles

Georgescu, C. M. (2013a). Qualitative Analysis on the Institutionalisation of the Ethics and Integrity Standard within the Romanian Public Administration. *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques*, 37, 320-326.

Georgescu, C. M. (2013b). Patterns of Local Self-Government and Governance: A Comparative Analysis Regarding the Democratic Organization of Thirteen Central and Eastern European Administrations (I). *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Științe Politice*, 39, 49-58.

Tables and Figures

Tables and figures are introduced in the text. The title appears above each table.

E.g.: Table 1. The results of the parliamentary elections (May 2014)

Proposed papers: Text of the Article should be between 4000-5000 words, single spaced, Font: Times New Roman 10,5, written in English, submitted as a single file that includes all tables and figures in Word2003 or Word2007 for Windows.

All submissions will be double-blind reviewed by at least two reviewers.