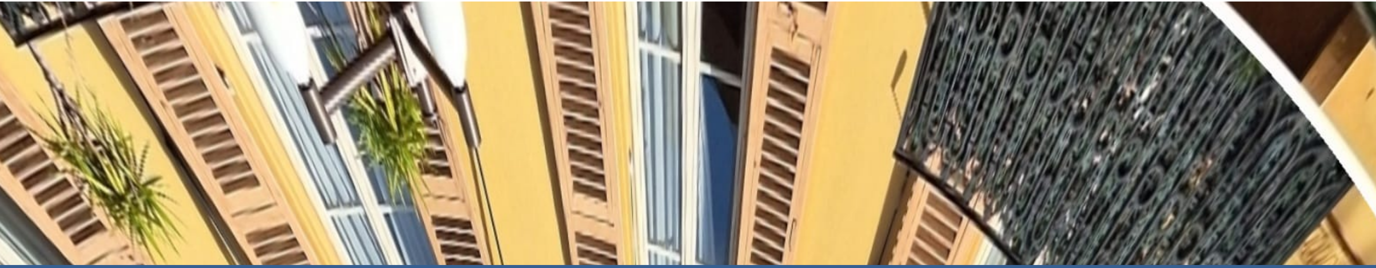

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Is there a waterbed effect generated by carbon reduction policies? A parallel EU-27 – China

Narcis Eduard Mitu[1), Cristian Valeriu Stanciu[2)

Abstract:
This study explores the phenomenon known as the waterbed effect in the context of carbon emission reduction policies, focusing on a comparison between the EU-27 and China. This is an economic metaphor used to describe the migration of phenomena from one place to another following the implementation of restrictive policies, especially between regions with differing regulatory standards. Global trade dynamics play a crucial role, with trade relationships between the EU-27 and China influencing carbon emissions. Despite EU-27 efforts, the trade deficit with China has widened, leading to a disproportionate increase in emissions. Analysed data indicate the existence of a waterbed effect concerning carbon emissions between the two regions, potentiated by the redistribution of emissions due to disparities in environmental regulations and production outsourcing. Thus, the study reveals a correlation between trade imbalances and carbon emissions, with China's emissions surpassing those of the EU-27 in recent years. Efforts to curb emissions within the EU-27 are undermined by the waterbed effect, exacerbating global climate challenges. Moreover, the waterbed effect evolves into a "move the goalposts" phenomenon, emphasizing the need for comprehensive and collaborative climate policies.
This analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between climate policy and the global distribution of carbon emissions, with notable implications for the development and future implementation of environmental policies worldwide. Addressing climate change requires a multifaceted approach, with EU-27 climate policies playing a crucial role. To effectively mitigate climate change, EU-27 policies must advocate for international agreements, contribute to global conservation efforts, and implement domestic policies with minimal economic impact. Additionally, recognizing the interconnectedness of global emissions and trade dynamics is essential to developing sustainable solutions. Ultimately, a collective effort is needed to combat climate change, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive and equitable climate policies on a global scale.

Keywords: waterbed effect, CO_2 emission, environmental policies, trade balance, greenhouse gas.
JEL Classifications: Q51, Q56, Q58, F18, H27

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Introduction

Climate change is a complicated and tender subject (Olimid et al. 2022). The term "carbon footprint" denotes the comprehensive quantity of diverse emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG), predominantly encompassing carbon dioxide, discharged as a consequence of the decisions and activities undertaken by an individual, entity, or nation/state. Typically, the carbon footprint is quantified in units of carbon dioxide (CO_2) or its equivalent (CO_2e or million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent - MMTCDE). Even though the focus is usually on CO_2, there are other gases that contribute to this greenhouse effect such as methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O) and Fluorinated gases (hydrofluorocarbons - HFCs, perfluorocarbons - PFCs, sulphur hexafluoride – SF_6, and nitrogen trifluoride – NF_3). For example, one ton of methane (CH_4) is equivalent to 25 tons of CO_2 (Stein, 2024). The bulk of these greenhouse gases, emanate from practices such as deforestation, the combustion of fossil fuels, and the manufacture and utilisation of various commodities and amenities.

In grasping the significance of the carbon footprint, one can analogize it to the imprint left by traversing through wet cement. This imprint ensnares and preserves one's impact, enduring for an extensive duration. Although often imperceptible, each decision made contributes either to the augmentation or mitigation of one's carbon footprint. Evidently, the carbon footprint serves as an indelible testament to human activity on the planet, hence elucidating the imperative nature of endeavours aimed at its reduction.

Worldwide, more and more measures have been adopted to reduce carbon emissions. But it is an approach that has several speeds. The European Union, along with many other countries, have committed to carbon neutrality by 2050, but China says it will do so before 2060 (United Nations, 2020; Wu et al., 2022). Given the different approaches of the EU-27 countries and China (a two-speed strategy), this study aims to identify whether there is a real effect, at the global level, of the efforts made by EU-27 member states regarding the drastic reduction of carbon emissions with the aim of slowing down climate change.

The evolving trend of carbon emissions: EU-27 vs China

The latest climate assessment by The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) asserts that humanity must drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, global greenhouse gas emissions must decrease by 60% by 2035 compared to 2019 levels (IPCC, 2023). Achieving this requires a collective effort from all countries, particularly those that are highly industrialized, but major polluters such as China and India did not undertake to do so until a few decades later (Chandrasekhar, 2022; Myllyvirta, 2023).

To tackle climate change, the European Parliament adopted the European Climate Law, which raises the EU's target of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions at least 55% by 2030 (from the current 40%) and makes carbon neutrality by 2050 legally binding.

In Europe, climate protection is increasingly integrated into political initiatives such as industrial policies, equity in society, and recovery efforts following the pandemic (European Commission, 2020). The Climate Law is part of the European Green Deal, the EU's roadmap towards climate neutrality. To reach its climate goal, the European Union has come up with an ambitious package of legislation known as "Fit for 55". It comprises several interlinked revised laws and new proposed laws on climate and energy (European Council, 2022; Olimid & Olimid, 2022). Contrarily, China currently lacks very ambitious targets in this regard. The latest five-year plan of China does not demonstrate any intensifications in efforts towards climate protection; instead, it mirrors the level of commitment seen in the previous five-year plan (Dröge, 2021).

International trade relations have become a central element in the global economy. However, they can result in adverse environmental consequences, as production geared towards exports may lead to unsustainable utilization of freshwater resources, pollution, loss of biodiversity, and deforestation. Trade channels economic incentives to producers across countries and, combined with weak or inadequate regulatory frameworks, can lead to negative environmental outcomes. Insufficiently regulated markets are particularly susceptible to generating adverse environmental impacts through trade activities (FAO, 2022).

The expansion of global trade and the increasing integration of global value chains raise inquiries regarding the interplay between trade and the environment. The economic growth spurred by the expansion of trade can directly affect the environment by augmenting pollution or depleting natural resources. Moreover, trade liberalisation might engender a concentration in pollution-intensive activities in certain nations if there are disparities in environmental policy stringency among countries, a phenomenon known as the pollution haven hypothesis (OECD, 2019). Savona and Ciarli (2019) highlighted that global trade patterns and alterations in emission intensities lend support to the pollution paradise hypothesis, suggesting that the intensity of environmental pollution has shifted from developed to emerging nations.

International trade exerts significant influence on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate change. Trade relations between China and the European Union play a critical role in global GHG reduction efforts. However, trade between China and the EU-27 results in incredibly unequal CO_2 emissions (Yang, L., Yan, Y., & Priewe, J., 2011).

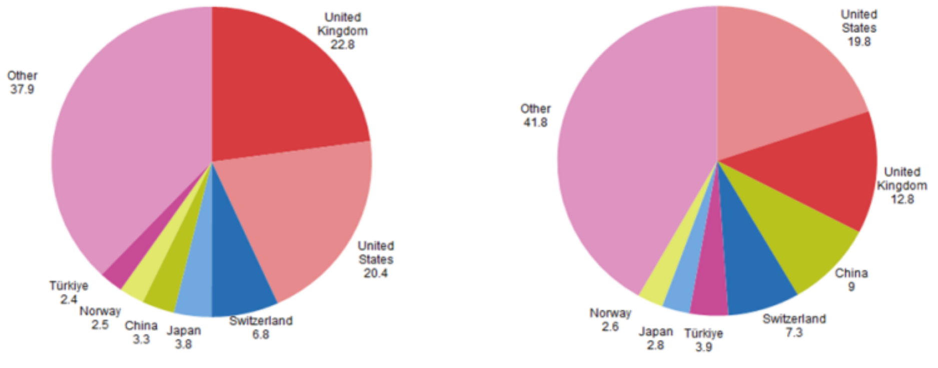
Figure 1 – EU-27 trade in goods with China: 2002 – 2022 (€ billion)

Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-018995)

Based on an analysis of the total value of trade in goods (in other words, the sum of exports and imports: trade balance), it can be observed (Figure 1) that EU-27 ran a sizeable trade deficit with China throughout the period from 2002 to 2022. Between 2002 and 2022, it grew from €41 billion to €396 billion. In total trade, China overtook the United States in 2020 and became the EU's largest trade partner in goods (Eurostat, 2023). Exports from China to the EU are approximately two to three times greater than exports in the opposite direction. Statistical data for 2022 reveals a year-on-year increase of over 30% in Chinese exports to the EU, whereas EU exports to China saw a more modest growth of only 3% (EPIC, 2023).

Figure 2 – EU-27 exports of goods, 2002 and 2022 (%)

2002 **2022**



Note: the figure shows the top seven partners with the highest value of exports in 2022
Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-018995)

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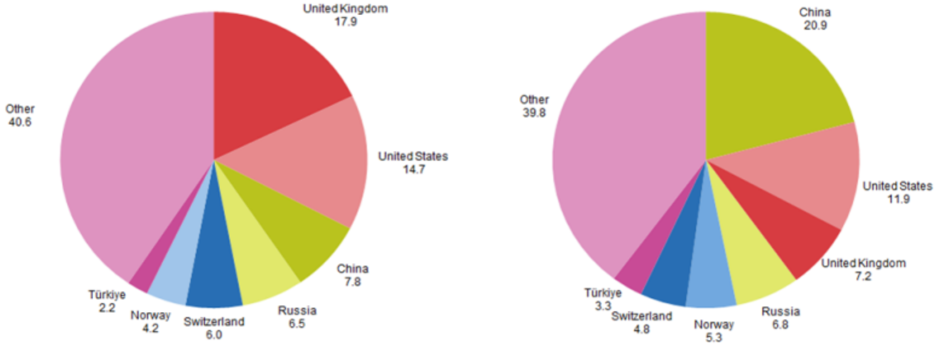
Figure 3 – EU-27 imports of goods, 2002 and 2022 (%)

2002 **2022**



Note: the figure shows the top seven partners with the highest value of exports in 2022
Source: Eurostat (online data code: DS-018995)

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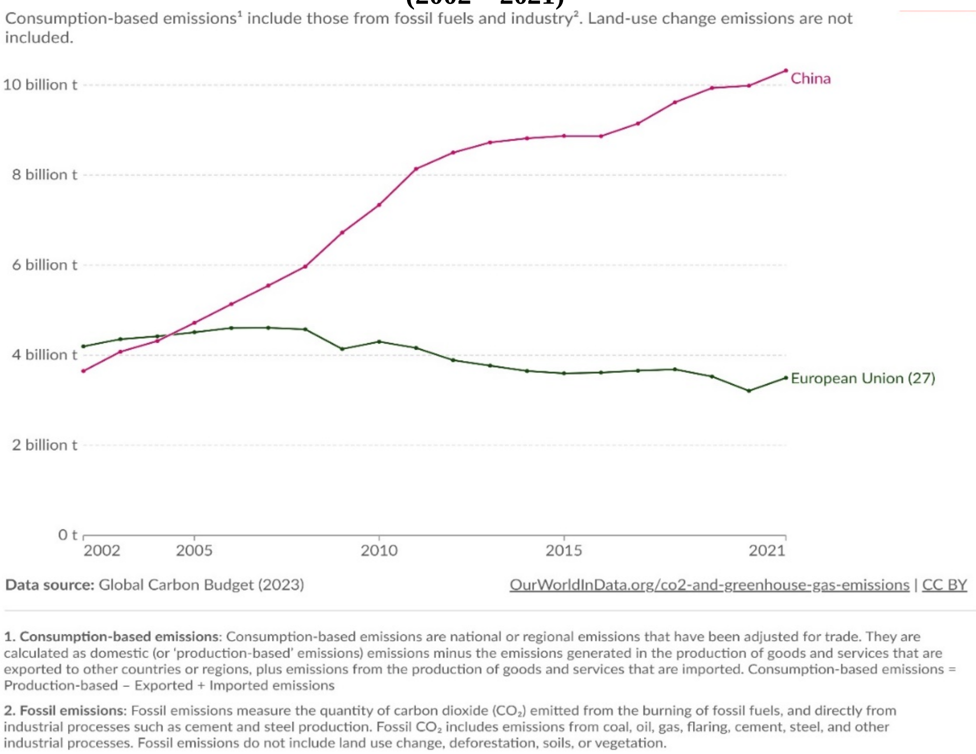
The very unbalanced trade balance of the EU-27 – China relationship and its evolution can also be observed from the comparative analysis of Figure 2 (EU-27 exports of goods, 2002 and 2022) with Figure 3 (EU imports of goods, 2002 and 2022).

Is there a waterbed effect generated by carbon reduction policies?
A parallel EU-27 – China

To put this unbalanced trade balance in context, we followed for the similar period (2002–2021; for the year 2022 there is no information yet), the parallel evolution of the amount of CO2 emissions, both for the EU-27 and for China (Figure 4) (Ritchie et al., 2023).

The trade deficit of the EU-27 with China, characterised by a substantial flow of goods and services from China to the EU-27, often entails the import of products with a high carbon footprint, such as industrial and manufactured goods. The production of these goods in China may involve intensive use of coal-based energy and other polluting practices, thereby contributing to the increase in global carbon emissions.

Figure 4 – Evolution of consumption-based CO_2 emissions: EU-27 – China (2002 – 2021)



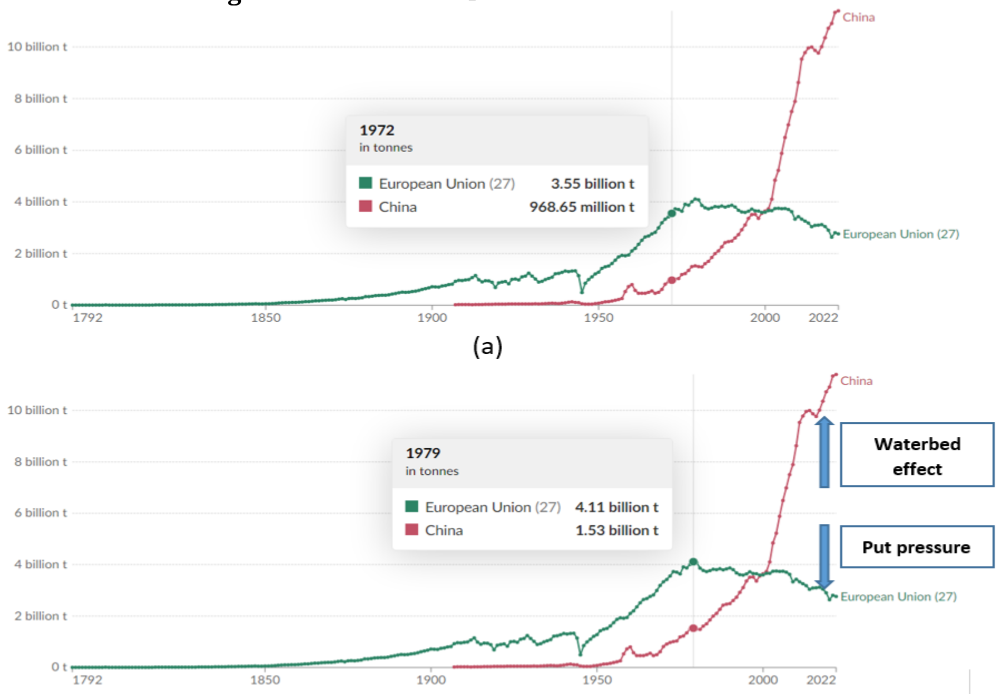
It can be observed that in the first half of 2004, there was an inflection point where the inversion of the major polluter characteristic occurred. The decreasing trend of the EU-27 countries is in opposition to the increasing trend of China's carbon emissions. This phenomenon can also be explained by the trade gap's sharply increasing trend, as shown in Figure 1.

This comportment is similar to that of a waterbed mattress that contains a certain amount of water. By putting pressure on the mattress in one place, the displaced water will always cause the mattress to rise somewhere else because water does not compress. In economic literature, this behaviour is called the "waterbed effect" (Appunn, 2019).

The waterbed effect occurs as a consequence of the pollution haven hypothesis, which posits that when industrialised nations aim to establish manufacturing facilities or offices overseas, they typically seek the most cost-effective options in terms of resources and labour, even if it entails adopting environmentally unsound practices. Countries offering inexpensive resources and labour often have less rigorous environmental regulations, whereas those with stringent environmental standards become comparatively costlier for companies due to compliance costs. Consequently, firms opting to invest physically in foreign countries tend to gravitate towards those with the lowest environmental standards or weakest enforcement mechanisms (Levinson & Taylor, 2008). The waterbed effect appears even more clearly if we extend the analysis period of the evolution of carbon emissions.

The starting point is the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (also known as the Stockholm Conference). This was an international conference convened under the auspices of the United Nations, held in Stockholm, Sweden, from June 5 to 16, 1972. It was the UN's first major conference on international environmental issues, and marked a turning point in the development of international environmental politics (European Parliament, n.d.). The correspondent of 1972 in the amount of carbon emissions can be seen in Figure 5 (a). But, due to inertia, the waterbed effect only began to manifest itself at the 1979 World Climate Conference in Geneva (Figure 5 – b). This is one of the first major international meetings on climate change. It was essentially one of the first scientific conferences, attended by scientists from a wide range of disciplines. This led to the establishment of the World Climate Programme (WCP).

Figure 5 – Annual CO_2 emissions: EU-27 – China



(b)

Data source: Global Carbon Budget (2023) OurWorldInData.org/co2-and-greenhouse-gas-emissions | CC BY

After 1979, the EU-27 countries began to put strong pressure on action to reduce the amount of carbon emissions, while China's carbon emissions exploded. The waterbed effect in the carbon market is obvious (Fankhauser et al., 2010; Bohringer, 2014).

Given that the EU-27 and China are two of the largest economies and carbon emitters in the world, their commercial relationship and trade balance have a significant impact on global carbon emissions and the environment. Therefore, it is crucial that policies and actions undertaken by both entities address these challenges and promote sustainable economic development and a transition to clean and renewable energy sources.

Conclusions

The waterbed effect refers to the phenomenon where further abatement efforts in one area lead to increased emissions in another area, resulting in constant CO_2 emissions. The stated desire of mankind is to reduce carbon emissions worldwide. Unfortunately, the world is not built like a multitude of balloons in which the air quality of each area depends exclusively on the efforts made; the world is a single balloon in which everyone pours out noxes. The effort must be everyone's.

In the case of the relation between EU-27 and China, the reduction of emissions in the EU-27 may be offset by the increase in emissions from China, in an attempt to meet European demand. This transfer of emissions can partially or even completely negate the progress made in the EU-27, highlighting the need for a coordinated and global approach to combating climate change. In this context, the trade deficit of the EU-27 with China represents a significant factor contributing to this effect.

Right now, even though European reduction efforts are permanent and evident, cumulative (worldwide) emissions are increasing rather than decreasing. In these conditions, due to the growing trade imbalance of the EU-27 countries in relation to China (Jian et al., 2022), the waterbed effect quickly turns into a "move the goalposts" effect (Mitu, 2024). This effect bears similarity to "problem externalization" in the sense that it involves the transfer of difficulty or a problem to other parties or domains, to no longer be directly addressed or dealt with by those responsible.

The trade deficit of the EU-27 with China is just one of the numerous factors contributing to the rise in global carbon emissions and environmental degradation. Addressing these issues requires a deep understanding of the interconnections between international trade, carbon emissions, and environmental sustainability, as well as the strong commitment of the international community to adopting sustainable and responsible solutions.

For this to happen, Bohringer (2014) suggests that EU-27 climate policy needs to fulfil three essential criteria: (i) advocating for international accords on climate protection; (ii) making its own contribution to worldwide climate conservation efforts, and (iii) executing domestic climate policies with minimal costs. To these we can add that the EU-27 must really engage as a player who understands that outsourcing environmental problems is not a viable solution. In vain we will clean only the European yard because the polluted air circulates globally.

Authors' Contributions:
The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

About the possibility of awarding non-pecuniary damages in the activity of passenger and luggage transport

Cristina Stanciu[1)]

Abstract:
Regarding the possibility of awarding non-pecuniary damages in the activity of passenger and luggage transport, the Romanian Civil Code establishes regulations concerning the compensation for damages and promotes the idea of full compensation thereof, in the sense of repairing both pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages. The regulations of the Romanian Civil Code on the aspects aimed at repairing non-patrimonial damages, i.e. those damages that compensate for physical pain, mental suffering, aesthetic damage, damage to reputation, are found in different regulatory areas of the Code. In this sense, there are the provisions of art. 252-257 of the Civil Code or the provisions of art. 1531 para. 3 which promotes the creditor's right to reparation of non-pecuniary damage. The principle of full compensation concerns the entire matter of civil liability, regardless of the type of liability—contractual or tortious. Considering the common law character of tort civil liability, the provisions of Article 1391 of the Civil Code can also apply in the matter of compensating non-pecuniary damage caused to the creditor through the non-fulfillment of contractual obligations by the debtor. In the matter of non-pecuniary damages, practice and doctrine consider that compensation for non-pecuniary damages resulting from an extra-contractual unlawful act is undeniable and serves as a rule. The one with a more restricted domain of granting and application is compensation for non-pecuniary damages in the domain of contractual liability. Here, only in certain contracts and for the non-fulfillment or improper fulfillment of certain contractual obligations can such compensations be awarded. Examples in this regard are contracts for the transport of passengers and luggage, contracts for the exploitation of copyright and inventor rights, and, in general, those contracts that include obligations to protect persons—hotel contracts, organization, and viewing of performances or sports games. Regarding transport law, the awarding of moral damages can have a dual application: the awarding of moral damages resulting from the improper exercise of transport activity – in the domain of tort liability, or, as the case may be, the awarding of moral damages in contracts for the transport of passengers and luggage – in the domain of contractual liability.

Keywords: *moral damages, passenger transport, luggage.*

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Legal Aspects Concerning Liability and Damage in Civil Law. The Romanian Civil Code does not explicitly define the notion of civil liability. Establishing the content of the notion of civil liability is the prerogative of specialized doctrine. The element of specificity of this type of liability and, at the same time, the differentiation from any type of legal liability—criminal, disciplinary, or contraventional - lies in the obligation to repair damage. In other words, to be liable in civil terms means to repair the harm caused to another.

Civil liability represents a legal institution that, in terms of its legal regime, manifests in two forms: one delictual, considered of common law, and another contractual, special, and derogatory.

Delictual civil liability represents the obligation of any person to fully repair all damages caused to another by breaching the obligation to respect the rules of conduct imposed by the law or the customs of the place and to not infringe upon the rights and legitimate interests of others (Romanian Civil Code: art. 1349, para. 1 and 2). Contractual liability is the obligation of any person, in their capacity as a party to a contract, to repair the damage caused to the other party by failing to fulfill the obligations they have assumed (Romanian Civil Code: art. 1350 para. 1 and 2).

Between the two forms of liability, contractual and delictual, there are numerous points of interference regarding their conditions, ways of realization, and purposes. Thus, the fundamental idea dominating both forms of liability is that of repairing a patrimonial damage, caused by the illicit and culpable acts of a certain person. Between the two forms of liability, there are no essential differences, their elements being the same: the existence of damage, the existence of an illicit act, the culpable commission of this act, and a causal relationship between the illicit act and the damage. However, the two types of liability also present a series of differences in terms of source, forms of fault, calculation of damages, etc.

Two principles govern the right and, at the same time, the obligation to repair the damage: the principle of full compensation for the damage and the principle of restitution in kind of the damage (Pop, 2010: 189).

Non-Pecuniary Damage – Development. According to doctrine (Pop, Popa, Vidu, 2012: 412), damage represents the harmful results, of a patrimonial or moral nature, consequences of the violation or harm of the rights and legitimate interests of a person.

Based on various criteria, damages are classified into several types. Those that have been established in doctrinal analysis are: the classical classification, considered traditional, and the modern classification. The classical classification divides damages into two categories: pecuniary damages and non-pecuniary damages or moral damages; and the modern classification is more nuanced, imposing three categories of damages: pecuniary damages, bodily damages, and moral damages or non-pecuniary damages.

Non-pecuniary damages are harmful consequences, without an economic value, consisting of psychological pain caused by the harm to the physical integrity or health of a person or by the infringement upon the rights associated with the personality of an individual or a legal entity (Baias, Chelaru, Constantinovici, Macovei, 2012: 1470).

The Romanian Civil Code enshrines regulations in the matter of repairing damages, promoting the idea of their full repair, in the sense of repairing both pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages.

About the possibility of awarding non-pecuniary damages in the activity of passenger and luggage transport

The regulation of the possibility of awarding moral damages is considered a proof of the modernity of the current Romanian Civil Code, and although the doctrine considers that this regulation is perfectible—in the sense that there are aspects that should be regulated in more detail and areas where additions are necessary—the existence of these regulations is appreciated in relation to the old regulation, which was lacking in this respect.

The current Romanian Civil Code is an improvement over the old regulation by enshrining in Art. 1391 the possibility of awarding moral damages, but the downside is that there is no explicit definition of them. The regulation should highlight the legal aspects that differentiate moral damages from material ones and not just list a few rules applicable only in the case of certain moral damages (Baias, Chelaru, Constantinovici, Macovei, 2012: 1470). Moreover, the focus of this regulation is on the awarding of compensation for the restriction of family and social life possibilities in the case of harm to the physical integrity or health of the person and on promoting the right to compensation for infringements on the rights inherent to personality (Romanian Civil Code: art. 1391). However, the spectrum of moral damages is, in reality, much broader.

An inventory of articles on this issue indicates that the issue of moral damages is revisited in several regulatory areas of the Code. Thus, in art. 1531 para. 3 of the Romanian Civil Code, the creditor's right to the repair of non-pecuniary damage is expressly enshrined. This type of damage targets physical pain, psychological suffering, aesthetic damage, and harm to reputation and honor.

The Romanian Civil Code enshrines Title V for the protection of non-pecuniary rights, through the provisions of Articles 252-257. In this regulatory sector, restitution in kind can occur, in particular cases, even in the case of non-pecuniary or moral damages. These are situations that consist of a certain act or fact of nature to restore the previous situation of the violated non-pecuniary rights, rights that protect human personality. In this regard, the provisions of Art. 253 promote non-pecuniary means through which the possibility of restitution in kind of non-pecuniary damages resulting from the violation of rights related to the protection of human personality is ensured (Romanian Civil Code: Art. 252). At the request of the injured person, the court may order: the immediate cessation and future prohibition of the violation of the victim's right, obliging the author, at his expense, to publish the conviction decision, obliging the author to perform any necessary measures to cease the illicit act, repairing the damage, to restore the violated right.

However, sometimes the repair of non-pecuniary damages through means of the same nature is insufficient for the victim to be restored to the previous situation. Therefore, art. 253 para. 4 expressly provides that the victim can also request a pecuniary compensation for the damage, even if non-pecuniary, that was caused, but only if the harm is attributable to the author of the damaging act. The pecuniary compensation aims to compensate, mitigate, or soothe the physical pains and psychological sufferings of the victims.

The principle of full compensation applies to the entire matter of civil liability, regardless of the type of liability—contractual or delictual.

Considering the common law character of delictual civil liability, the provisions of Art. 1351 of the Civil Code can also be applied in the matter of repairing non-pecuniary damage caused to the creditor by the debtor's non-performance of contractual obligations.

Moreover, in the matter of non-pecuniary damages, practice and doctrine consider that the repair of non-pecuniary damages resulting from an extra-contractual illicit act is unquestionable and has the value of a rule.

The one with a more restricted domain of granting and application is the repair of non-pecuniary damages in the field of contractual liability. Here, only in certain contracts and for the non-fulfillment or improper fulfillment of certain contractual obligations, such compensations can be granted. Examples in this respect are contracts for the transportation of persons and luggage, contracts for the exploitation of copyright and inventor rights, and generally, those contracts that include obligations to protect persons—hotel contracts, organization, and viewing of shows or sports games (Scarlat, 2019: 396-399).

Structurally, bodily damages have a dual composition (Jugastru, 2020: 127–133): an economic, pecuniary component, and another moral, non-pecuniary one.

Bodily injury also includes damage consisting of physical or psychological pains, aesthetic damage, juvenile damage, and enjoyment damage. The health and physical and psychological integrity of the person are promoted and recognized as the most important social values protected by legal norms and are defended in all legal systems on several levels of the legal system: in the field of civil liability of the perpetrator, the service provider, in the field of administrative liability of health institutions, in the field of criminal liability for offenses that have produced such consequences, the liability of insurers based on concluded insurance contracts, the liability of the manufacturer or supplier for defective products, etc. Victims claim such damages produced either through criminal acts of aggression (assault, bodily harm), or on the occasion of events, such as work accidents, traffic accidents, medical accidents, etc.

By engaging civil liability for the production of bodily harm, the aim is to sanction an illicit, culpable conduct, to restore the destroyed balance, and, implicitly, to repair it. The impact of these on the lives and health of the victims, but also on their close ones, demands that the methods of evaluation and payment of compensations to be clearly regulated.

Every case has its own specific elements and raises a series of specific problems for the awarding of such damages, depending on the mechanism of occurrence, their severity, the consequences produced in the life of the victim, their relatives being forced to provide assistance, etc. However, most decisions for the awarding of bodily damages are established through lump sums, as moral damages, without considering that, in the case of harm to a person's bodily integrity, a clear distinction between pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages cannot be made, and special evaluation methods are necessary for full repair (Boilă, 2012: 53–56).

Why can't such a distinction be made? Because repairing such damage presupposes, first and foremost, its classification within a broader sphere—that of damages caused to a person. In the broader sphere of damages caused to a person, are included all those infringements of rights that protect moral values: dignity, freedom of expression, the right to private life, etc. But in the category of bodily damages must be included both material consequences, such as expenses for medication, care, treatment, etc., and moral ones, physical, psychological suffering, etc. In other words, alongside "determined and immediately assessable damages" - such as medical expenses, loss of income, etc., there can also exist other damages, such as "loss of amenity" consisting of the impossibility to participate in social life and enjoy it as before the event occurred.

Loss of amenity refers to the victim's deprivation of the possibility of carrying out activities they previously engaged in. According to doctrine, the victim, through the suffering they were exposed to, was deprived of the joys of a normal life, in all its sectors: family life, professional life, the ability to travel, etc.

Natural repair or full repair are not possible, but rather it is about compensation, because what the victim receives is an indemnity with the role of moral satisfaction. The judge plays an essential role because the ultimate assessment belongs to them regarding the evaluation of the damage and the determination of the amount of the indemnity (Jugastru, 2020: 152). Full repair has a different application in the issue of bodily damages, in the sense that lump sum monetary compensations, as well as periodic compensations, can be awarded. A significant weight is given to monetary equivalent compensations, by obliging the responsible person to pay a compensatory value for the physical and psychological sufferings of the victim.

Another special category of moral damages is represented by ricochet damages, or damages of affection. Regarding the compensations related to moral damage by ricochet, damages consisting of the moral damages suffered by the parents, spouse, children, or siblings of the deceased victim, or fiancé, it was considered that an indirect moral damage is caused to the indirect victim, through the suffering caused to them by the loss of a loved one. Such compensation is awarded only if the condition of a sufficiently strong affective connection between the close person, who claims the repair of the moral damage, and the deceased victim, is verified in the case brought to court.

The existence of ricochet damage does not always presuppose the death of the direct victim, their close ones can obtain compensation even when the victim's condition is such that the severity of the injuries to their physical integrity or health deeply affects their living conditions; meaning that there have been dramatic changes in their conditions of existence, and the direct and constant contact with the victim they must care for has caused them severe emotional shocks or trauma (Mangu, 2017: 125–128).

In the practice of Romanian courts, the awarding of moral damages has been the prerogative of cases concerning individual rights. However, legal entities can also suffer non-pecuniary damage, as they can be harmed through various forms of civil wrongdoing. Thus, legal entities can suffer at least an image damage or an infringement of their right to a name, which necessitates its repair through material means. The one who has suffered a violation of such rights may ask the court to oblige the author of the act to undertake any measures deemed necessary by the court to restore the infringed right, such as: obliging the author, at his expense, to publish the conviction decision; or any other necessary measures to cease the illicit act or to repair the caused damage. Moreover, the injured party may request compensation or, as the case may be, a pecuniary repair for the damage, even if non-pecuniary, that was caused, if the harm is attributable to the author of the damaging act.

Besides the principles of delictual civil liability predictably applicable to such cases, there are decisions of the European Court of Human Rights in the matter, where it is explicitly shown that the possibility for a legal entity to receive compensation for non-pecuniary damage cannot be excluded. The Court considered that factors such as the company's reputation, uncertainty in decision-making, and disturbance in the administration of the company should be taken into account as types of damages, but that there are no determined criteria for quantifying moral damages (Nicolcescu, 2020: 63–64).

Regarding Liability and Damage in Transport Law. Non-compliance with obligations undertaken in the transport contract gives rise to civil liability for both the carrier and the sender, respectively the passenger.

Regarding the liability of the sender, respectively, the recipient, the rules that apply are those of common law, while, concerning the carrier, we note in terms of the legal regime of his liability and aspects that are distinct from the rules of common law. Also, regarding the legal regime of the carrier's liability, two types of liability are to be analyzed: the contractual liability of the carrier and his tortious liability. In other words, the liability of the carrier, viewed as a whole, can be extra-contractual (tortious) or contractual.

The legal regime of the carrier's liability is ensured, at the level of general norm, through the provisions of the Civil Code on the matter: art. 1350 regulates the contractual liability along with provisions of articles from Chapter II – "Enforced execution of obligations" from Title V - "Execution of obligations", Book V "About obligations"; and tortious civil liability regulated through art. 1349 paras. 1 and 2, art. 1357 – liability for one's own act, art. 1349 para. 3, art. 1372 para 1 and 2, and art. 1373 - liability for the act of another person, art. 1376 - liability for damages caused by things under his legal custody.

Liability and Damage in the Transport Contract. The carrier's liability is also ensured, at the level of the general norm in transport law, by the provisions of Art. 1959 and Art. 1984-2002 of the Civil Code in the case of the goods transport contract and by Art. 2004-2008 of the Civil Code.

The tortious liability of the carrier is subject to the provisions of common law (the norms of the Romanian Civil Code), and his contractual liability is subject, primarily, to the provisions of special laws in this matter and, only in the absence of special provisions, is subject to common law—the norms of the transport contract and the norms of contractual liability from the Romanian Civil Code. The contractual liability of the carrier, as derived from special laws, generally follows the general principles of contractual liability established by the Civil Code.

The legal regime of the carrier is considered by doctrine to be more severe than the contractual liability under common law. This is due to the commitment assumed by the carrier, namely to deliver the transported goods into the hands of the recipient in the case of the goods contract. Therefore, his obligation is one of result, and any deficiency in execution can be assimilated with a tortious act. Regarding the transport of passengers, Art. 2002 para. 2 stipulates that the carrier is obliged to bring the passenger on time, unharmed, and safely to the destination. Thus, we are dealing with an obligation of result regardless of the remunerated or gratuitous nature of the transport, and the content of this obligation not only includes the movement of passengers but also an obligation considered in the specialized literature (Pop, Popa, Vidu, 2012: 33–34) as being a security obligation, that of bringing the passengers unharmed and safely.

Security obligations do not have an explicit legislative consecration; they are considered to be a species of obligations to act, having a contractual nature in most cases and, sometimes, a legal one. It is about a contractual or legal duty that one party has to guarantee the other party and even third parties against the risks threatening their bodily security (Pop, Popa, Vidu, 2012: 33).

If we look at the legislation as a whole, we notice that security obligations are encountered, especially in consumer law (Law no. 240/2004, Law 245/2004) and in transport law, when it comes to the transport of persons. Therefore, the tortious acts of the carrier represent the legal basis for engaging his liability.

Liability and Damage in the Goods Transport Contract. According to Art. 1984 of the Civil Code, the carrier, in the case of goods transport, is liable for the damage caused by: total or partial loss of the goods, alteration or deterioration thereof, occurring during transport and delay in delivering the goods. These three tortious acts, expressly enumerated by the law, can lead to the engagement of the carrier's contractual liability in the goods transport contract.

Regarding the method of calculating the damage for the loss of the good, the express provisions of the law (Romanian Civil Code: Art. 1985) establish the principle of repairing the damage at the real value of the good. The determination of the real value of the good is established by relating it to the place and moment of delivery for transport. Thus, in the case of the loss of goods, the carrier must cover the real value of the lost goods or the lost parts of the transported goods.

The carrier must also refund the price of transport, the cost of ancillary services, and the transport expenses, proportionally, as appropriate, to the value of the lost goods or to the diminution of value caused by their alteration or damage (Romanian Civil Code: art. 1986).

Art. 1987 of the Civil Code establishes the possibility for the parties of the transport contract to include in the contract a declaration regarding the value of the goods subject to transport. The effect of such a declaration is that compensations for alteration and loss are no longer calculated by referring to the real value of the goods, but to the value established by the parties. If the value of the good was declared at the time of delivery, compensation is calculated in relation to that value.

However, Art. 1987 of the Civil Code limits the freedom of the contracting parties regarding the determination of the amount of the declared value. Thus, if the real value of the good at the place and moment of delivery is lower, the compensation is calculated in relation to this latter value. In other words, the sanction for inserting a declared value greater than the real value is its reduction to the real value of the goods at the place and moment of their delivery for transport.

In case of damage to the good, Art. 1985 of the Civil Code establishes the principle of repairing the damage at the real value of the goods. The determination of the real value of the goods is established by relating them to the place and moment of their delivery for transport.

Therefore, in case of alteration or deterioration of the goods, the carrier must, according to civil norms, cover their decrease in value, which is related to the real value of the good. The carrier must also refund the price of the transport, the cost of ancillary services, and the transport expenses, proportionally to the diminution of value caused by their alteration or damage (Romanian Civil Code: art. 1986).

According to Art. 1992 of the Civil Code, the carrier's liability is also engaged for the damage caused by the failure to perform the transport or by exceeding the transport term.

Special legislation concretely establishes, for each type of transport, the conditions for engaging liability for failure to perform or for delay in transport and the limits within which this liability operates. At the level of the general norm, the principle is: the carrier is liable for the damage caused by the failure to perform the transport or by delay. Although not expressly provided, from the entirety of the regulations, it is understood that the refund of the transport price and the transport expenses will be made only for the loss and damage of goods, not for delay.

Liability and Damage in the Passenger and Luggage Transport Contract. Regarding the legal regime of the carrier's liability for passenger transport, the Civil Code stipulates that he is liable for: the death of the passenger, injury to the bodily integrity or health of the passenger, non-performance of the transport, its execution under different conditions than those established, delay in the execution of transport.

The carrier's liability is, by its legal nature, contractual, and according to the legal regulation, any clause that removes or restricts the carrier's liability for damages provided for in the general law is considered unwritten.

Clauses considered unwritten are null and void by law. In doctrine (Nicolae, 2012: 27–29), it has been emphasized that they were established in our domestic law under the influence and impulse of community regulations, found in the domestic law of several European Union states, such as French, Belgian law, and that these are the clauses inserted in a legal act, that the legislator considers as non-existent because they contravene the nature and normal legal effects of that act and are replaced by law with the mandatory legal provisions.

The carrier is also liable for the damage caused by the means of transport used, its state of health, and the state of health of its employees.

The transport contract is unique and indivisible, and the period for which the carrier's contractual liability is engaged is the one between the moment of the passenger's boarding and the moment of their disembarkation, with boarding and disembarking being part of the transport activity and attracting contractual liability. Therefore, for actions or inactions attributable to the carrier before boarding or disembarkation, his liability can only be engaged on a tort basis (Cotuțiu, 2015: 210).

Art. 2004 para. 4 C provides the situations in which the carrier's liability exemption operates. Thus, the carrier is not liable in the following situations: if it proves that the damage was caused by the passenger, intentionally or through gross negligence; if it proves that the damage was caused by the passenger's state of health; if it proves that the damage was caused by the act of a third party for which it is not held to respond; if it proves that the damage was caused by force majeure.

The passenger's state of health and the act of a third party for which the carrier is not held to respond have for the carrier the legal nature of a fortuitous case. In the matter of the passenger transport contract, the fortuitous case is not exempt from liability, and the reason why the Civil Code expressly enumerates these two situations is that they, as an exception from the situation of the fortuitous case in general, exempt the carrier from liability (Cotuțiu, 2015: 211).

The analysis regarding the carrier's liability for luggage and other goods cannot be made without specifying, as previously mentioned, that the notion of luggage, as well as that of other goods of the passenger, do not receive a definition in the general law. The definition of the notion of luggage is important because, in the case of damage to other goods than those constituting luggage, the carrier's liability will be based on the provisions of Art. 1984 and following from the matter of the goods transport contract, and not on Art. 2005, which regulates the liability for luggage and other goods of the passenger (Baias, Chelaru, Constantinovici, Macovei, 2012: 2011).

Moreover, doctrine (Popa, 2020: 678–679) attempts to define the content of the notion of luggage. Thus, luggage consists of those goods intended for the traveler's use, aimed at the purpose of the journey, or necessary for the traveler at the destination

(Nemeș, Fierbințeanu, 2020: 310–311). In other words, luggage is a set of goods that serve the traveler as necessary and usual items for the journey they are undertaking or at the destination. They are of two types: hand luggage, which is carried alongside the traveler, therefore, in the same vehicle, being throughout the journey at their disposal and under their supervision, and checked luggage, which is handed over to the carrier and is transported separately from the traveler and under the carrier's supervision. Regardless of the type of luggage, there are conditions related to its content, quantity, or volume, depending on the type of transport. Thus, these goods are usually contained in suitcases, trunks, chests, travel bags, handbags, baskets, and the like, and the notion of luggage includes for different types of transport items such as: portable or wheeled chairs for the sick, strollers for children, skis, certain musical instruments, various devices needed by the passenger, etc.

The carrier is responsible for the loss or damage to the luggage or other goods of the traveler unless it is proven that the damage was caused by their defect, the traveler's fault, or force majeure.

It is noted that Art. 2005 of the Civil Code regulates loss and damage, but not the delay of luggage. This does not mean that in the case of delay, the carrier is not liable, but that the liability for luggage delay will be based on the provisions of Art. 1959, para. 2 of the Civil Code, which stipulates that: for damages caused by the delay in reaching the destination, except in the case of a fortuitous event and force majeure, the carrier is liable. This regulation can be applicable in this matter also because Art. 2005 para. 4 allows the application of regulations in the matter of the goods transport contract if there is no contrary stipulation, in the matter of the passengers and luggage contract.

For hand luggage or other goods that the traveler keeps with them, the carrier is only liable if the intention or fault of the latter regarding their loss or damage is proven.

As for the amount of compensation, the carrier is liable for the loss or damage of the luggage or other goods of the traveler up to the declared value or, if the value was not declared, in relation to the nature, usual content of these and other such elements, as circumstances may dictate.

Mention. The aspects previously analyzed generally address the provisions of liability from the general theory of the two contracts, for goods and for persons, and the rules for calculating damages, as they are provided in the general regulation, namely the provisions of the Romanian Civil Code. However, the aspects regulated by the Code are more numerous, especially concerning the transport of goods, and they cover multiple situations such as: liability in successive or combined transport, regulations on limiting, removing, and aggravating the carrier's liability, causes that remove or exclude the carrier's liability, liability for refunds and customs formalities, etc.

Moral Damages in Transport Law. Regarding transport law, the awarding of moral damages can have a dual application: awarding moral damages resulting from the improper exercise of transport activity - in the field of tort liability, or, as the case may be, awarding moral damages in the contracts of transport of persons and luggage - in the field of contractual liability.

Moral damages concern the activity of passenger transport and the transport of luggage and contracts related to this activity, not the activity of goods transport. The reasons for which moral damages can be awarded in the case of passenger transport are evident, considering, in the general context of civil law regulating moral damages, and they undoubtedly arise from the situations provided by the Civil Code for which the transport liability is engaged: the death of the passenger, injury to the bodily integrity or health of the passenger, non-performance of the transport, its execution under different conditions than those established, delay in the execution of transport.

Also, the type of obligation in passenger transport - of result and security. Security obligations need legislative consecration, with the passenger transport contract being a classic example of this type of obligation. The non-fulfillment of such an obligation has an evident potential for claiming moral damages. Whether we are talking about a definition and consecration in the regulations that target the classification of obligations of the Civil Code or an express consecration in the area of regulation reserved for the passenger transport contract, it needs to benefit from the definition and conditions for establishing liability and benchmarks for calculating the compensations it triggers and specifying the type of compensations—pecuniary and moral.

According to the doctrine (Boilă, 2012: 44–47), bodily injuries for which the carrier's liability is engaged—the carrier being contractually responsible for injury to the bodily integrity or health of the passenger—represent a distinct category of compensable damages, within the broader sphere of damages caused to a person.

As previously mentioned, the Romanian Civil Code promotes the principle of full compensation for the damage, and, as a result, in the sphere of these damages, it does not only cover those non-pecuniary consequences regarding physical and psychological pain, aesthetic, social, leisure damages, etc., but also introduces the economic losses suffered by the victim - expenses made with medication, medical care, applied treatments, a special diet, supervision of the patient by other persons, transportation of the patient to be hospitalized or treated on an outpatient basis, diminuation or loss of income, etc., all of these having the nature of pecuniary damages.

An analysis of the regulations in the current Romanian Civil Code regarding the repair of bodily injuries highlights the fact that, in its regulations, it makes a distinction between the physical person, in their capacity as a holder of rights and obligations, and the human being, as a biological existence. A summary of the regulations in the current Civil Code regarding the repair of bodily injuries indicates that in the matter of repairing bodily injuries, this distinction between the physical person, viewed as a subject of rights and obligations, and the human being, in the materiality of their biological existence, referring to their right to life, physical integrity, and health, has a different impact on calculating compensations. Thus, art. 58 para. 1 of the Civil Code included "the right to life, to health, to physical and psychological integrity, to honor and reputation, the right to respect for private life, as well as the right to one's own image"; in art. 61 para. 1 of the Civil Code, dedicated to guaranteeing the rights of the human being, it is provided that "the life, health, and physical and psychological integrity of any person are guaranteed and protected equally by law"; the principle of the inviolability of the human body is regulated in art. 64 of the Civil Code, in close connection with "the person's right to their physical and psychological integrity"; through the regulation in art. 66 of the Civil Code, the sanction of absolute nullity was established for "any acts whose object is the conferment of a patrimonial value to the human body, its elements or products", except in cases expressly provided by law. The Romanian Civil Code enshrines Title V for the protection of non-pecuniary rights, through the provisions of Art. 252-257.

About the possibility of awarding non-pecuniary damages in the activity of passenger and luggage transport

Regarding the issue of injuries to the human body, the Civil Code, through the provisions of Art. 1387 and 1388, contains only specific rules for the repair of bodily injuries, but does not define them, leaving this task to the doctrine and, possibly, to jurisprudence.

Some authors (Boilă, 2012: 52–56) believe that distinguishing bodily injuries in relation to other types of damages is essential, and these differences consist of the following: the tortious or contractual wrongful act to have negative effects on the human being itself, referring to its material, biological existence, but also to its spiritual, intellectual, emotional, professional, or material life; the social values infringed upon to be primarily the non-pecuniary personal rights targeting life, health, and the physical integrity of the human being, but indirectly affecting pecuniary rights, through the expenses and losses they cause. The status of an injured person may belong to the victim, but also to other persons injured "by ricochet", when the consequences extend to the family or those close to them.

In the field of transport law, these damages can also be claimed for the loss, deterioration, and delay of luggage. Hence the need for the current Civil Code regulations to define the notion of luggage. Luggage is not just any good; it is a good so intimately connected to the traveler that it can cause states to justify the awarding of moral damages. There cannot be an equality sign between the transport of goods and the transport of luggage, precisely for these reasons. Judicial practice abounds in solutions for awarding moral damages for the loss, damage, and delay in delivering luggage, with air transport being the most generous in this regard.

The loss of luggage or the delay in returning luggage can cause psychological suffering to the passengers to whom they belonged because they were deprived of the necessary items, and in their capacity as claimants, they can request material damages, but also moral damages. It is known that, in the field of contractual liability, moral damages are more limited than those in the field of tort liability, and they only target certain contracts and only certain obligations within these contracts. Luggage, due to the content of its notion, is susceptible to be the subject of an obligation whose non-compliance leads to the request for moral damages, not only material ones. The judge is the one who, depending on the factual circumstances, will assess the total amount that compensates for the consequences of the defective performance of this obligation (Pap, 2016: 197- 203).

However, in various types of transport concerning the awarding of compensation for luggage, as well as in the transport of goods, we witness the introduction of limits regarding the compensation that can be awarded. Without these limits, the carrier, which is a very important economic and social factor, would be easily exposed to bankruptcy. It is a professional, and its activity is regulated by a very strict regime of legal norms that condition and constrain it in concluding contracts specific to its activity, but it is, at the same time, legally protected by introducing limits on awarding compensation.

Thus, although it is left to the discretion of the judge, who must assess whether or not to award moral damages in the case under judgment, the awarding of compensation is limited according to legal regulations.

Moreover, in the case of moral damages, regarding their proof, the court, unlike material damage where it must verify the fact that it is certain, both in terms of its existence and the extent of the said damage; in terms of awarding non-pecuniary damages, the judge needs to verify only the fact that the damage is certain in terms of its existence. Possibly, that it has not yet been repaired. The certain character of the damage presupposes that it is certain, both in terms of existence and in terms of the possibility of evaluation, and the extent of the damage is to be established by the court depending on the circumstances of the case and the liability limitations that operate for that type of transport.

An example in this regard is the air transport of passengers and luggage, where the liability of the community air carrier for passengers and their luggage is regulated by the Montreal Convention. Article 22(2) of this Convention, ratified by Romania through OG no. 107/2000 and approved by Law no. 14/2001, stipulates that: "in the case of luggage transport, the carrier's liability in the event of destruction, loss, damage, or delay is limited to the sum of 1,000 Special Drawing Rights (SDR) for each passenger unless the passenger, at the time the checked luggage was handed over to the carrier, made a special declaration of interest in delivery at destination and paid a supplementary sum, if necessary" (Montreal Convention ratified by OG no. 107/2000: art. 23; Law no. 14/2001 for the approval of OG no. 107/2000).

The Convention does not condition the awarding of this compensation on the proof of the amount of the suffered damage. The Montreal Convention aimed to limit the compensation in such situations, without conditioning the amount and awarding of compensation on the proof of the damage, which, in such circumstances, would be almost impossible to prove.

Regarding the liability of air transport operators established by the Montreal Convention, the European Court of Justice has also ruled (in case C-63/09 Axel Walz/Clickair SA). The Court analyzed the objectives considered in the adoption of the Montreal Convention and concluded that the Convention established a strict regime of liability for air transport operators. Thus, regarding the damages that occurred in the case of destruction, loss, or damage to checked luggage, the transport operator is presumed responsible for these damages if "the event which caused the destruction, loss, or damage took place on board the aircraft or during any period in which the carrier was in charge of the checked luggage". As a counterbalance to this presumption of the carrier's responsibility, the Court deemed that such a strict regime of liability implies that a "fair balance of interests" between the interests of air transport operators and those of passengers must be maintained. This balance implies that the transport operator is obliged to respond under the Montreal Convention, but only limitedly (www.rolii.ro). In other words, the term "damage" in the Montreal Convention must be interpreted to include both material damages and moral damages. That is, combined, they cannot exceed the limit imposed by the Convention regulation. The Court of Justice of the EU showed that the compensation limits operate in favor of air transport operators and that, regarding luggage, the maximum limit of compensation cannot be automatically granted. Indeed, a limitation of compensation thus conceived allows passengers to be compensated easily and quickly, without imposing on air transport operators a very burdensome repair burden, difficult to identify and calculate, which could compromise and block, or bankrupt their economic activity.

The contractual commitment of the carrier, in their capacity as a professional and debtor in the performance of certain activities conducted within the legal relationships created, involves the assumption of a certain legal regime from which a set of rights and obligations arises. The non-compliance with professional obligations established by law gives rise to tort liability, and in case a contract is concluded between a professional and a client establishing the framework for exercising the attributes of their specific activity – contractual liability.

In other words, being a professional engages legal liability, both extra-contractual and contractual, and this implies impeccable conduct, exercising activities with maximum diligence, so as to prevent potential damages that might be inflicted on individuals using their services (Luntraru, 2017a: 152-153).

Doctrine notes that the special obligations imposed on a professional, generally private, can be grouped into three major categories: obligations arising from contractual loyalty, obligations regarding loyalty towards the co-contracting party, and obligations arising from the principle of efficiency (Luntraru, 2017b: 153). Most of these obligations are legally based on the principle of good faith, and non-fulfillment or inadequate fulfillment of them incurs the tort liability of the professional and, as an exception, contractual liability, if it is found that by not respecting these special obligations, the objective proposed in the contract was not achieved.

At this level, the tort liability of the carrier, compensation can also be requested for both material damages and moral damages. Through the defective performance of its activity, the carrier can cause its client, the passenger, states of discomfort, stress, and frustration by the improper execution of its activities to which it was contractually committed but which must be executed respecting certain standards governing its activity or affected one of the values protected by the Civil Code regarding human personality, namely health, physical and psychological integrity, dignity, private life intimacy, etc.

In summary. Viewing the regulation reserved, in general theory, for the contract of transport of persons and luggage, we cannot help but notice that it is allocated a very limited number of articles (7 articles) and that in fact, only two aspects of the contract of transport of persons and luggage are regulated: the obligations of the parties and the transport operator's liability for the person of the traveler and for luggage and other goods. Thus, the regulation in this matter is perfectible both in terms of the aspects it needs to address and their content.

Clearly, in these brief texts, aspects regarding moral damages were not regulated, but they would have been necessary considering that, in their entirety, the regulations of the Civil Code are not sufficient on the issue of non-pecuniary damage. The Romanian Civil Code, although it provides for the carrier's obligation to transport the traveler's luggage without other payment and establishes the carrier's liability for its non-fulfillment, does not define the notion of luggage, does not establish a legal regime at the principle level for liability regarding hand luggage and checked luggage, and does not make a clear and nuanced distinction between the transport of goods and luggage. Also, Art. 2005 of the Civil Code regulates loss and damage but overlooks the liability for the delay in delivering the luggage, a liability that is engaged according to special laws on this matter.

Therefore, in this matter, the regulations of the Romanian Civil Code are incomplete, and future regulation is needed on several legal aspects concerning the contract of transport of persons and luggage, including the area of awarding moral damages in this matter. A set of rules in general theory must be established that represent clear benchmarks for awarding these types of compensation, which can be awarded, on one hand, by not performing obligations incumbent on the carrier from their professional regime, and on the other hand, when not performing or defectively performing those contractual obligations that have the potential to be remedied by also awarding moral damages. These rules would create a uniform practice and the possibility of their award in all types of transport, especially in the case of luggage, as the field of air transport seems to be the preferred domain where they are awarded.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Unleashing the Potential of AI in Classrooms

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Change is the only constant in life.
Heraclitus

Abstract:
The integration of Artificial Intelligence into classrooms has opened the way for a new era in education, transforming traditional learning environments into dynamic, adaptive spaces. This article tackles the evolution and impact of AI-powered classrooms, highlighting the potential benefits, challenges and ethical considerations associated with the use of AI in education. AI has the potential to become a teacher's co-worker, as long as the teacher filters and reviews AI's products. What is important to understand is that while AI can put together the structure of an educational paradigm, it is the teacher's task to fill in the missing components. AI-powered classrooms represent a transformative shift in education, offering unprecedented opportunities for personalized learning, efficient administrative processes and enhanced content creation.

Keywords: *challenges, opportunities, technology, impact, revolution.*

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Introduction

As teachers, little did we realize in the last few years that Artificial Intelligence would soon become our co-worker. To put in a chronological order, it all started with the invention of the personal computer in the early 1970's with the Kenbak-1, designed and invented by John Blackenbacker of Kenbak Corporation. At that time, the technology of the personal computer was both immersive and addictive and it was there to stay. Then, no longer than two decades ago, we were introduced to two breakthroughs in technology: one was the Internet and the other was the mobile phone. Only few people realized the significant impact of the new technology represented by the internet and the personal computer. Some people simply got a hint of what was just around the corner later on, with the expansion of the internet and technology.

The development of AI – The fourth Industrial Revolution

The last decade was quiet, although we saw some developments in technology, but nothing as impactful as the development of Artificial Intelligence. AI has been around for quite some time, although few of us really paid any serious attention to its presence. Whether we watch TV, go online, use a mobile phone or drive a new-generation car equipped with all kinds of high-tech sensors, AI is present. In addition to this, AI is heavily present in various branches of industry because machines and robots can execute tasks more accurately and for endless periods of time with little or maybe no feedback at all, whereas humans are prone to errors. Not only the industrial domain is the place where AI can be found, but also in our homes: widgets, devices and domestic robots are intended to make our lives easier. Recently thought, AI has snuck into the educational domain, stepping into our schools and classrooms. AI is one of the drivers of the 4.0 Industrial Revolution to facilitate education in teaching and learning (Fitria:2021). The questions that naturally arise are: what will be the impact of such change in the paradigm of education and what consequences should we expect?

AI seems to have come out of the blue recently, although it is the natural consequence of all the little steps taken one by one throughout the time, starting with IBM's Deep Blue, the supercomputer that challenged human intelligence in the famous games of chess against Garry Kasparov in 1996 and 1997. During the last few years, several examples of Artificial Intelligence sprang into being, such as smart assistants, e-payment systems, search algorithms, media streaming, smart phones, smart cars, navigation apps, facial recognition, text editors and social media feeds. However, the creation of the Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer, or simply Chat GPT, is of the outmost importance in our opinion, as it highlights the most important discoveries and developments in the field of Artificial Intelligence. The first version of Chat GPT was easy to interact with and straightforward to use. With little tips and tricks, one could do magical things with Chat GPT, for example brainstorming, outlining essential aspects of a discourse of even creating artificial images. None of these would have been possible not long ago, at least with the same quality or the same speed. Hartono and alii claim that the adaptive nature of AI tools is valued for its ability to cater to individual needs and offers immediate feedback. (Hartono & alii: 2023)

Understanding AI and Chat GPT Terminology

Before we immerse ourselves in the specifics of Chat GPT and its applications, it is essential that we familiarize with some AI terms:

- *Language Learning Models* (LLM): sophisticated AI systems designed to understand and generate human language, enabling powerful interaction with others;
- *Generative AI*: the ability to create various forms of media such as images, texts, videos and more;
- *Open AI*: the visionary organization behind Chat GPT and other groundbreaking technologies;
- *Prompt Engineering*: the skill of crafting effective prompts or instructions to guide AI models like Chat GPT in producing desired outputs;
- *Prompts*: instructions that are provided to generative AI models like Chat GPT in order to produce specific outputs or responses;
- *Inputs*: the commands or instructions given to generative AI models like Chat GPT to generate outputs;
- *Outputs*: the results generated by generative AI models like Chat GPT in response to the given inputs.

First of all, we must understand that AI is here to stay, so it is up to us to understand how it works and how we can benefit from it. AI has the potential to become a teacher's co-worker, as long as the teacher filters and reviews AI's products. What is important to understand is that while AI can put together the structure of an educational paradigm, it is the teacher's task to fill in the missing components. There are some negative perspectives that may make us want to consider the viability of implementing AI in education, for example Goldman Sachs' projection that up to 300 million jobs will be affected by the latest wave of AI. This type of negative aspects, combined with the speed of development in the domain of AI, which is a speed that we have never encountered before in our entire history, not even in the Industrialized Era, can get a bit overwhelming. Of course, every dark cloud has a silver lining, as AI comes with indisputable advantages. A study conducted by Harvard Business School concluded that workers who used GPT-4 completed on average 12.2% more tasks, were 25.1% quicker and 40% produced higher quality results (Black:2023). The key to a successful interweaving of AI in educational activities lies in the understanding of the way in which AI works and in becoming aware of what it can do and especially of what it cannot do.

AI implementation. Conditions and circumstances

In the recent years, some countries have successfully implemented AI in their curricula from primary to high school. The problem of this type of approach is to have empowered teachers able to implement and execute such AI curriculum. In order to solve this problem, a competency framework has been designed for teachers to implement and execute AI curriculum, such as Curriculum of ICT in Armenia, Data Science and Artificial Intelligence in Austria, Computing and Information Technology in Qatar and Information and Programming in Serbia (for more information, see unesdoc.unesco.org/AI curricula). In the near future, all of us will need to further develop and upgrade our competency framework in order to be able to execute AI-empowered curriculum. This is very important and matters a great deal, as jobs tend to switch from physical to virtual. For example, less than 100 years ago, there were jobs that no longer exist nowadays, due to the fact that circumstances that led to their appearance have changed. There were the so-called water carriers, people who used to carry barrels of water down the street selling it to thirsty people, or lamp-lighters, people who would walk in the street at dusk carrying long sticks which they used to ignite lamps on poles or lift operators. These jobs have disappeared along the way as technology has replaced them with a tap or a simple switch that performs the same task faster, more accurately and definitely much cheaper than a human operator. The point is that jobs, more exactly their particularities and goals, change as time passes and technology evolves. Less than 10 years ago, jobs such as block chain analyst, driverless car engineer, telemedicine physician, cloud architect, drone operator or e-sport game coach were very rare or did not exist at all. It was beyond one's imagination back then that people would actually make money from creating virtual content on social platforms such as Tik Tok or YouTube. The unimaginable is happening now. What is more, as circumstances change, new jobs will appear, dictated by new needs and these will result in new professions, such as space tourism guide, climate change reversal specialist, drone manager, virtual identity defender, data detective, AI Business Manager or even Space Junk Recycler. As new as they are, these jobs will require new knowledge, new skills and competencies and teachers will have to acquire new tools in order to teach and help develop the necessary skills for specialists to perform the tasks implied by these new jobs. What this means is that the concept of teaching will undergo some fundamental changes as well. As Bărbuceanu states, "Subsequent of the growth of ground-breaking didactic technologies, the common apprehension of teaching and didactics progresses together with the expansion of learning theories" (Bărbuceanu:2020). This is equally valid for the development of technology. Some may claim that human teachers will be replaced somewhere along the way by virtual teachers guided by Artificial Intelligence, which is something that may pose a series of problems we have never encountered before, such as how objective can AI be in assessing semi-objective evaluation items or how appropriate is AI in terms of dealing with aspects related to students' emotional intelligence. Is online presence enough for a high-quality teaching session or should teachers just customize their lesson planning and teaching techniques according to future AI existence-related circumstances?

AI competency as a key skill for teachers

AI-powered tools in education are seen as potentially beneficial to both students and teachers since they offer the opportunity to experience personalized, flexible, inclusive and engaging learning. (Delgado:2020). Teachers' activity in the virtual environment will not be limited only to using virtual platforms such as Zoom, EdX or Coursera. Their activity will become more intricate and it depends on us to start preparing for the change that is just around the corner, as the speed at which the progress in the technological domain is unfolding is simply remarkable. What does preparation imply more exactly? Well, we can just assume what the teachers of the future will need to be and what they definitely won't need to be. First of all, there is no need to replace human teachers with robots, for a multitude of reasons, among which ethical reasons are obviously the most important. But the teachers of the future will definitely need to be AI literate and will have to be able to perform several tasks. To me more precise, the fundamental role of teachers will be different. Teachers will move from the paradigm of the person who delivers knowledge to the paradigm of the person who will facilitate and accelerate learning using Artificial Intelligence. In practical terms, this means on the one hand that teachers will have to assist students to use Artificial Intelligence in ethical ways in order to solve problems, do homework, prepare for lessons and then how to engage in more intricate problem-solving using their own minds. On the other hand, teachers will have to be AI competent, meaning they will need to operate or use different language models, different AI tools or even AI prompting techniques. To such purpose, teachers will have to learn how to use AI for the benefit of students, granting roles to AI as Admin Co-Pilot, Lesson Planner, Auto-Grading, Test Prep Co-Pilot or even Gap Analyst. For instance, using AI as Admin Co-Pilot offers the opportunity to use Voice-2-Text applications, meaning that the teacher only has to activate the function that turns speech into text. Also, applications such as Chat to Any *PDF* allow teachers to upload files into the computer and then, instead of spending time to read tens or even hundreds of pages, simply ask questions such as “What is the topic of this paper?” or “Identify the main events of the story in this document.” If, for instance, the teacher uploads a series of documents, AI can identify quite rapidly similitudes and the degree of originality, saving time and energy for teachers and allowing them to get involved in other educational activities. Other online tools, such as Perplexity AI, can prove valuable instruments for teachers’ portfolios, as this specific application can help teachers prepare lessons. It gives instant results powered by latest .3 or .4 versions of Chat GPT and links the results to the resources available on the Internet. Other AI-powered applications, such as Bing Chat, use large advanced language and are connected to the internet, making it possible to access any necessary information. Of course, there are search engines, such as Google, that can offer answers to a variety of questions, but instead of searching repeatedly through suggested search results indicated by Google, Bing Chat offers easy-to-understand responses with links in the footnotes to follow in case of need for further clarifications. Bing Chat has a lot of other interesting features: it can be used to find answers to questions related to class or teaching materials, to carry out research for a paper, to find answers for take-home exams or assignments, to make graphs or charts or simply to explain intricate concepts or topics in a proactive, stress-free way. Students may also use Quizlet by building a study set with terms and definitions and then using different learning methods in order to comprehend the notional content. For students who are keen on learning another language, Duolinguo is a great application which can be used as a supplement to courses they take in school and represents a good way to bridge the understanding gap that sometimes is created in class. Duolinguo focuses on vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, listening and speaking and features gamified language learning with bite-sized lessons, suitable for various proficiency levels. Memrise is another application which focuses on vocabulary and pronunciation and uses mnemonic techniques and multimedia to help students remember words and phrases. Grammarly focuses on grammar and writing and helps students improve their writing by providing grammar and style. Rosetta Stone is another application which focuses on all language skills and offers immersive language learning with a focus on natural language acquisition. Last but not least, there is Google Translate, which is useful for translating texts, practicing pronunciation and learning new words. If parents are somehow worried about the access to various information available on the internet that teenagers can gain just by using AI chatbots, then Socratic is a good alternative, as it allows students to ask questions about their topics of interest and school subjects, to upload their work sheets and to participate in human-like conversations, with responses related to YouTube links, blocking at the same time, to parents’ relief, inappropriate questions.

Artificial Intelligence can be an invaluable support for teachers in the process of planning lessons. Open AI launched a new feature in Chat GPT called Vision to Text. This special feature allows teachers to input an image in the program, while Chat GPT will describe the image layer by layer starting from the background, then moving to the middle ground and ending with the foreground. This feature of describing images in detail can be used by prompting a question to AI such as how that image can make the lesson more engaging for the students. AI will then offer some suggestions that will stir the teacher's creativity and act as a supporting scaffolding for the structure of the lesson. Moreover, AI can be asked questions such as what related tasks the students can perform in order to prepare for the class or what is the best method to deliver information for those students who might find the topic of the lesson too complex. The same approach works for other applications, such as Bart, which basically performs the same tasks as Chat GPT, with the advantage of not having to pay a monthly subscription. Beautiful AI helps turning thoughts and ideas to images, allowing students to create word clouds and quotes. Bing Image Creator is somehow similar to Bart and Chat GPT, in that it creates images starting from requests typed in by the user. PlaygroundAI performs the same tasks, that is creating images, once you have typed in specific instructions. One can simply type in "Atilla the Hun riding a Harley Davidson motorbike, wearing traditional clothes and black Ray-Ban sunglasses" or "Elvis Presley planting roses in the garden", and you can get these amazing images:

Another benefit of using Artificial Intelligence in education is that it can be used in the process of assessment and evaluation. Of course, although assessment and evaluation imply a certain degree of subjectivity, the human factor should perform these tasks still. However, AI can help the teacher in assessing and evaluating students by offering feedback on files containing students' answers, analyzing the weak points and their strong points, thus playing the role of Grading Co-Pilot. Aside from giving feedback, AI can make recommendations on how students can improve their skills and performance, which can be a very useful tool in teachers' work.

Empowering AI in English Language Teaching

Integrating AI into teaching English can enhance the learning experience for students by providing personalized, adaptive and interactive tools. Using AI in education is not necessarily about tools, but about building competencies and life skills, including abilities regarding data mining, digital literacy, media literacy or asking purposeful questions. Using AI in education is also about fostering engagement, collaboration and creativity. Here are some ways teachers can leverage AI in teaching English:

- AI-Powered Language Learning Apps

Language learning apps are programs that use AI algorithms to adapt to each student's proficiency level and learning style. These apps often provide personalized lessons, quizzes and feedback.

- Automated Assessment and Feedback

AI-driven tools are implemented for automated grading and feedback on written assignments. This can save teachers' time and provide students with immediate insights into their language skills.

- Speech Recognition Technology

Speech recognition technology is integrated in order to help students improve their pronunciation and speaking skills. AI-driven systems can provide real-time feedback on pronunciation accuracy and fluency.

- Chatbots for Conversational Practice

AI-powered chatbots are used to facilitate conversational practice. Chatbots can engage students in dialogues, answer questions and provide language exercises in a conversational format.

- Adaptive Learning Platforms

Adaptive learning platforms that use AI are implemented to adjust the difficulty and content of lessons based on individual student performance. This ensures that each student receives content that is tailored to their specific needs.

- Language Translation Tools

AI-driven language translation tools are used for exploring and understanding English texts. These tools can help students translate unfamiliar words, phrases or sentences, whilst promoting comprehension.

- Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR)

VR and AR applications help create immersive language learning experiences. These technologies can simulate real-world scenarios, making language learning more engaging and contextual.

- Grammar and Writing Assistants

AI-driven grammar and writing assistants can help students improve their writing skills. These tools can provide suggestions for grammar, style and vocabulary enhancements.

- Interactive Language Games

AI can be incorporated into interactive language games that make learning English enjoyable and engaging. These games can reinforce vocabulary, grammar and language skills in a playful manner.

- Data Analytics for Progress Tracking

AI-driven data analytics tools are used to track student progress and identify areas where additional support may be needed. This data can inform instructional strategies and interventions.

- Personalized Learning Plans:

Personalized learning plans can be developed and customized for students using AI algorithms. These plans can be based on initial assessments and continuously adjusted as students improve skills and gain more knowledge, ensuring a tailored learning experience.

Potential results of using AI in classroom

Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, stated that "In the 21st century, the capacity to continuously learn and apply/integrate new knowledge will be the key competency. Every child should be inspired and empowered to be a life-long learner" (see unicef.org/media). Starting from this quote, we can go even further and predict that in the AI era, a growth set will represent our wings towards the future and lifelong learning will be our power.

Combined, these two concepts will help us keep the pace with the machines and use their potential to help us evolve as human beings. Intelligence and abilities can thus develop overtime with hard work and effort, as using AI in classrooms can result in higher motivation and better performance. Students will learn how to tackle challenges, how to become resilient and persistent when facing a setback and how to view failure as a learning experience rather than simply a failure. More than that, students will be able to learn from their mistakes and develop critical thinking, reasoning, problem solving thinking and analytical thinking. More important than anything, students will have to be able to discern, to gather information, verify and put it in various contexts and to handle generated knowledge. However, Alhalangy and Abdalgane point out that in order to have a positive impact on the field of English language teaching and learning, AI needs to be better integrated into educational settings. (Alhalangy and Abdalgane:2023)

All things considered…

As technology continues to evolve, the collaboration between teachers, policymakers and technologists will be crucial in shaping the future of AI in classrooms. AI-powered classrooms represent a transformative shift in education, offering unprecedented opportunities for personalized learning, efficient administrative processes and enhanced content creation. While the benefits are substantial, careful consideration of ethical implications, privacy concerns and equitable access is essential in order to ensure that the implementation of AI in education serves the best interests of students and teachers alike.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Maltese History And Its Cultural Heritage

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Abstract:
The seven islands in the Ionian Sea form one of the smallest states in the world – Malta. The Phoenicians called it Malat, the Greeks called it Melita or Melite, and the Maltese called it Ghasel, meaning honey. The Maltese gave it this name because of the specific color of the soil, the rocks, but also because of the tradition of honey cultivation on the territory of Malta. Malta's cultural heritage is inversely proportional to the size of the state. Seven megalithic temples are found on the islands of Malta and Gozo, each the result of a distinct stage of cultural development. The two temples on the island of Gozo, dating from the Bronze Age, are impressive for their gigantic structures. Some other examples in this regard, given by UNESCO experts, are the monuments: Auberge de Baviere, Church of the Shipwreck of Saint Paul the Apostle, Mantel Theatre, the Library located in the heart of the capital Valletta and many others. From the strong cultural wealth of Malta we cannot omit the The Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM), officially the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta. The birth of the Knights Hospitaller dates back to around 1048. The original hospitaller mission became the main activity of the order, growing ever stronger during the 20th century, most especially because of the contribution of the activities carried out by the Grand Priories and National Associations in many countries around the world.

Keywords: *tradition, culture, heritage.*

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Introduction

Malta is the country with the smallest capital in the European Union. The capital Valletta is a true open-air museum. Moreover, the whole country is captivating with its magnificent constructions and cultural diversity. Malta has two official languages - English and Maltese.

Malta's geographical position has made this country a strategic pole throughout history.

Since 1964, Malta has gained independence from the United Kingdom as a sovereign and independent Commonwealth territory. Until 1974, Malta had the Queen of Great Britain, Elizabeth II, as head of state. In 1974, Malta became a Republic. In 2004, Malta was admitted to the European Union. And in 2008, Malta joined the Euro zone.

The origins of the island of Malta

The origin of the term *Malta* has several variants. The most well-known is that the origin of the word *Malta* comes from the Greek language, from the Greek word *meli*, which means *honey*. The Greeks said of the island of Malta that it was as sweet as honey. The Greeks made this claim, probably based on Malta's honey production; an endemic subspecies of bees lives on the island.

Later, the Romans took this name and adapted it to *Melita*, which can be considered as a Latinization of the word *meli*.

In another variant, it is claimed that the word *Malta* comes from the Phoenician *Maleth* which translates as *a haven* or *port* and refers to the many bays of Malta.

Such a small country has such a vast history. It is believed that the Maltese islands were first settled in 5200 Î.H., mainly by Stone Age hunters or farmers who came from Sicily. This assumption is based on the fact that the pottery found by archaeologists at the Skorba Temples is similar to that found in Italy.

The population of Malta cultivated grain, raised animals and had faith in a representation of fertility. In mythology, the earth is a primordial element, the genesis and creation of man. Earth is part of the four elements that make up the world around us, along with water, fire and air. In many mythologies, he is personified and he establishes with the sky, a harmonious relationship of eternal love. Earth and sky are contrasting, opposite elements, like man and woman, and complement each other. Therefore, it was said that in prehistoric times, the Maltese worshiped a personification of fertility.

From the Early Neolithic period, there are prehistoric agricultural settlements, open areas and caves, the most spectacular of which is Ghar Dalam.

> According the site VisitMalta “Ghar Dalam Cave is a highly important site as it was here that the earliest evidence of human settlement on Malta, some 7,400 years ago, was discovered. The display area consists of two parts: the cave and the museum, which exhibits a remarkable wealth of finds from animal bones to human artefacts. An overlaying river running at right angles formed the cave. It is some 144 metres deep, but only the first fifty metres are open to visitors. The lowermost layers, more than 500,000 years old, contained the fossil bones of dwarf elephants, hippopotami, micro-mammals and birds. Above the pebble layer that follows is the so-called ‘deer’ layer, dated to around 18,000 years ago. The top layer dates to less than 10,000 years and holds evidence of the first humans on the Island”. (https://www.visitmalta.com/en/a/info/ghardalamcavemuseum/)

Around 3500 Î.H., these people built some of the oldest free-standing structures still in existence in the world, in the form of the megalithic temples of Ġgantija on the island of Gozo. Other early temples are those at Ħaġar Qim and Mnajdra. The temples have a special architecture and design in the shape of a trefoil, they were used between 4000 and 2500 Î.H. Because archaeologists have found traces of animal bones and knives there, it was concluded that animals were sacrificed in those temples.

It is suggested that animal sacrifices were made to the Goddess of Fertility whose statue is now at the National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta.

Around 2500 Î.H., this population apparently disappeared, most likely due to famine, and the Maltese islands were depopulated for a longer period. In the Bronze Age, another pollution appeared in the Maltese islands. This population cremated their dead and bequeathed other smaller megalithic temples called dolmens. Because these dolmens were similar to those built in Sicily, it is said that this pollution also came from Italy. Moreover, this migration is also understandable, given the fact that Sicily is 80 km from Malta. During the Phoenician period, it seems that the Phoenicians used the island of Malta as a stopping point on their way to the Eastern Mediterranean. The Phoenicians lived in today's Mdina, that is, the first capital of Malta. After the fall of Phoenicia in 332 I.H. the area came under the control of Carthage, in the past it was a Phoenician colony. During this period, the inhabitants of Malta cultivated olives and carob trees (trees whose seeds are used for animal consumption, and flour for humans. In the past, the grains were used to weigh precious stones, called carats. This is where the unit of measurement for gold comes from, namely in carats.

In 218 Î.H., after the Second Punic War, Malta was conquered by the Roman consul Tiberius Sempronius Longus. Since then, Malta has come under the jurisdiction of the province of Sicily.

Romanization of the island was difficult.

Over the years, the Maltese islands have experienced real development, rising to the rank of a municipality. In 53 the Apostle Paul together with the Evangelist Luke were shipwrecked on the island staying for 3 months. Moment in which Christianity began to prosper.

In 395, when the Roman Empire split in two, Malta remained in the Western Roman Empire. Since then it has been conquered several times: 454 – 464 – the Vandals (Eastern Germanic tribe), after 464 by the Ostrogoths (Germanic people from the Baltic Sea area), in 533 it was regained by the Byzantine Empire until 870. They also introduced Greek families in the Maltese population.

In 870 after a hard fight between the Byzantines and the Muslims, the latter managed to loot and kill the inhabitants of the island. Remaining unpopulated until 1048 – 1049, when it was repopulated by the Sicilian Muslims. Sicily in turn was under Muslim occupation.

The Siculo-Arabic language that will evolve into the Maltese language. The Normans captured Malta in 1091 as part of their conquest of Sicily. The Norman period was a productive one; Malta became part of the newly formed Kingdom of Sicily, which also included the island of Sicily and the southern half of the Italian Peninsula. The Catholic Church was restored to the role of state religion, Malta coming under the ecclesiastical authority of the Diocese of Palermo.

The kingdom passed into the hands of the Hohenstaufen dynasty from 1194 to 1266. Malta was part of the Holy Roman Empire for 72 years. Malta was declared a county and marquisate, but its trade fell into ruin. For a long time, only a fortified garrison remained. The mass expulsion of the Arabs took place in 1224 and the entire Christian male population of Celano in Abruzzo was deported to Malta in the same year. In 1249, Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor, decreed the expulsion of all other Arabs from Malta or their conversion to Christianity. Malta was ruled by the House of Barcelona, an Aragonese dynasty, from 1282 to 1409. Relatives of the kings of Aragon ruled the island until 1409, when it officially passed to the Crown of Aragon. In 1551, the population of the island of Gozo (around 5,000 people) was enslaved by pirates and taken to the Barbary Coast in present-day Libya. The knights' rule ended after Napoleon captured Malta on his way to Egypt during the French Revolutionary Wars in 1798.

Between 12 and 18 June 1798, Napoleon lived at the Palazzo Parisio in Valletta. The statue of Napoleon can still be found today at the Palazzo Parisio in Valletta.

> According Wikipedia "he reformed national administration with the creation of a Government Commission, twelve municipalities, a public finance administration, the abolition of all feudal rights and privileges, the abolition of slavery and the granting of freedom to all Turkish and Jewish slaves.[108][109] On the judicial level, a family code was framed and twelve judges were nominated. Public education was organised along principles laid down by Bonaparte himself, providing for primary and secondary education. He then sailed for Egypt leaving a substantial garrison in Malta". (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malta)

The French armies that remained behind Napoleon were not appreciated by the Maltese. So the Maltese drove out the French, and to their aid appeared the armed forces of Great Britain. At 1800 General Claude-Henri Belgrand de Vaubois surrendered together with the French armies in Malta, and they asked Sir Alexander Ball that the insult of Malta become a British dominion. The Maltese people drew up a Declaration of Rights specifying that His Majesty has no right to cede the island of Malta to anyone, and if he chooses to withdraw his power, the Maltese have the right to choose another sovereign, specifying that the island belongs only to the inhabitants.

In 1814, as a result of the Treaty of Paris, Malta officially became part of the British Empire, being used for maritime transport and representing the headquarters of the fleet. After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Malta's position midway between the Straits of Gibraltar and Egypt proved to be its main asset, as it was considered an important point on the way to India, a central trade route for the British.

During the First World War, between 1915 and 1918, Malta became known as the the Nurse of the Mediterranean due to the large number of wounded soldiers who were brought to Malta.

During World War II, Malta played a very important role for the Allies; as a British colony, located close to Sicily and the Axis transport corridors, Malta was bombed by the Italian and German air forces.

Malta was used by the British to launch attacks on the Italian navy and had a submarine base. It was also used as a listening and reading station for German radio messages, including the decryption of Enigma traffic.

The bravery of the Maltese in the Second Siege of Malta impressed King George VI, who collectively awarded the whole of Malta the George Cross on 15 April 1942.

Some historians argue that this decoration caused Britain to accept disproportionate losses in the defense of Malta, as the credibility of the British Empire would have suffered if Malta surrendered.

The George Cross stands as testimony to an act of heroism and devotion by the brave Maltese soldiers, which has remained forever famous in history.

> According Eric Grove “Malta was now enabled to play a key role in the Mediterranean campaign. After the loss of the surface striking forces, its effect on Axis supply lines had been, at best, marginal. There were always more supplies at Tripoli than could be transported to German troops at the front. Indeed the effort put into supplying Malta was disproportionate… In this way, therefore, Malta eventually vindicated, at least to some extent, the effort put into preserving it as a base across Axis communications. And after the Allied victories in North Africa, late in 1942, to which the island had finally contributed, the long siege of Malta was raised at last”. (Grove, 2011: https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/siege_malta_01.shtml)

On 21 September 1964, after intense negotiations with the United Kingdom, Malta gained its independence. Initially, it retained Queen Elizabeth II as Queen of Malta. On December 13, 1974, Malta proclaimed itself a Republic.
Currently, Malta is a republic whose parliamentary system and public administration are closely modeled on the Westminster system. Malta has a real cult for the politicians who have ruled it. Everywhere, there are statues of heads of state, ministers and prime ministers, with mayors, but also with political representatives who have worked throughout history to make Malta a true force in Europe today.

Malta seems to be a special land both from the point of view of brave deeds throughout history, the settlement and the dream landscapes, the rich tradition of which it can be proud.

Malta was mentioned in the fifth book of the New Testament (Acts of the Apostles). It is said in the book that the Apostle Paul was shipwrecked on Melita Island. And the fact that the name Malta comes from Melita (island of honey - as the ancient Greeks called it) is indisputable.
Saint Paul the Apostle is considered by Maltese Catholics to be the protector of the country.

Tourism in Malta

According Wikipedia “three times more tourists visit than there are residents. Tourism infrastructure has increased dramatically over the years and a number of hotels are present on the island, although overdevelopment and the destruction of traditional housing is of growing concern. In 2019, Malta had a record year in tourism, recording over 2.1 million tourists in one single year”. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malta)

Malta is one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Europe. An open-air museum, a country with an important cultural and historical tradition, Malta fascinates at first sight with the charm of a special island.
Malta is an archipelago consisting of six islands: Malta, which is the largest in area (246km2), Gozo (67km2), Comino (3.5km2), Cominotto, Filfla and St. Paul, the last three being uninhabited.

Located about 90 km south of the island of Sicily and 290 km from the coast of Africa, Malta is actually a low calcareous plateau, with a maximum height of 417m (the island of Gozo). Located in the center of the Mediterranean Sea, the Maltese archipelago combines natural beauty with 7000 years of history.

Over the years, Malta has combined tradition and culture, but also modern beaches. The country stands out for its calcareous stone, which has a golden-yellow color, like honey.
The trip to Malta could start from the capital Valletta, magnificent with its unique streets in shape and decoration, with brightly colored balconies, with statues lining the streets, with magnificent cathedrals, with landscapes that take your breath away.

Valletta is the most fortified capital in the world; 13 empires fought for it. The capital of Malta is named after the great master Jean de la Vallette.
The Ioannit Knights being very rich and having material resources, they fortified the city and contributed to its development. Valletta had sewage under the pavement and even the hospital used silver cutlery. The use of this metal was chosen both for its antiseptic properties, but also to show the greatness of the order of the Knights of Ioannina.
The buildings in Valletta are built in the Baroque style.

In Valletta can be admired - the Tritons Fountain, the new Parliament building, the Georges Pompidou center, the Royal Opera, Palazzo Ferreria, the Church of Our Lady of Victory, the church of St. Catherine of Alexandria, Auberge d'Italie, Palazzo Parisio (Napoleon's residence), St. John's Cathedral, Upper Barrakka Gardens, Lower Barrakka Gardens, Court of Justice, National Library of Malta, Palace of the Grand Masters.

In the Lower Barrakka Gardens there is a neoclassical temple built in 1810 in memory of the British admiral Sir Alexander Ball. When you look towards the Grand Harbour, you can also see the Siege Bell erected in memory of the victims of the Second World War.
The Barrakka Gardens, built in 1775, has many monumental statues and a magnificent view of the three cities in the sky. In the Upper Barrakka Gardens, we find a statue called *Les Gavroches*.

The city was officially recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1980. Today, Valletta is a cultural and tourist center of Malta, a very popular tourist destination among travelers.

The Tritons Fountain was built between 1952-1959. The fountain consists of three bronze figures of mythological tritons supporting a huge circular basin that measures 5 m in diameter and weighs about 3 tons. Two of the tritons are seated, while the third is kneeling and balanced on a seaweed base. The face of each Triton is visible when viewed from the City Gate. Their position gives a sense of strength as well as spiral movement that contributes to the fountain's monumentality. The water jets were also designed to convey the feeling of movement. The triton figures represent Malta's links with the sea, and their design was inspired by the Fontana delle Tartarughe in Rome. After the fountain plate was damaged in the 1980s, a bronze pillar depicting a flight of seagulls was added to the fountain to support its weight.

The parks and gardens located in Floriana and Valletta would be very difficult to describe in words. These are spectacular for those who have the privilege of visiting them and viewing their impressive palette of colors. The most famous are Upper Barrakka Gardens and Lower Barrakka Gardens, which, in addition to the vegetation itself, also offer spectacular views of the sea. The three cities can be admired in the distance - Birgu or Vittoriosa, Senglea, Cospicua or Bormla. The three cities are fortified, majestic, with magnificent buildings built in the Baroque style. They are all crossed by an old wall, a clock, a tower, a fort, Also impressive are the colorful boats specific to Malta. The same colorful boats can also be seen in the fishing village of Marsaxlokk. Blue, red, yellow, green - the predominant colors on Maltese boats - make an excellent contrast to the honey-colored old buildings bathed in the scorching sun of the magnificent Maltese island.

Marsaxlokk is a fishing village where every Sunday there is an impressive fish market where the Maltese get their supplies for the whole week. Somehow, time seems to stand still at Marsaxlokk, where the traveler is mesmerized by the hundreds of brightly colored boats with two eyes in front (the eyes of Osiris).

Mdina is the old capital of the state of Malta. A city with an ancient history, from whose hills you can admire the sea, but also the green hills of Malta. In fact, Mdina was a defensive fort, as it is built, on top of a hill; and the entrance to the city is on a defensive bridge. The city is limited between its own walls, with narrow streets, with houses built in the old style, but in which barons lived. Mdina is also called the City of Silence because only 299 people live here, all with roots from families with a rich history. Mdina is a closed society, just like the walls that surround the city. If someone from outside this city intended to purchase a home here, they could only do so with the consent of the entire community.

On Sundays, impressive religious processions take place in Mdina, in which almost the entire city participates. People dress up for the holiday, Catholic priests go out into the streets with magnificent statues on catafalques. The gentle breeze of Malta waves the impressive flags hoisted on the buildings that bear within their walls thousands of years of victorious history.

> According Marcel Proust “the real voyage of discovery consists, not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes”. (Proust, 1993:132)

Conclusions

The traveler will be impressed by the magnificent island of Malta. It is strong, it has withstood many enemies who wanted to conquer it throughout the ages. Malta represents a conglomeration of peoples, an amalgam of colors, a bold fusion of modern and classic, a harsh but victorious history together with a tasteful modernism.

Even the language spoken in Malta is an amalgam - the Maltese language is of Arabic origin with some old Sicilian influences, a pre-Italian language. But all the inhabitants of Malta speak English. Maltese is the only Semitic language in the European Union. Maltese is distinguished from other Semitic languages by its writing system, based on the Latin alphabet plus diacritical marks. Also, Maltese is the only one that was formed as an independent language, with independent literary norms. Maltese has similarities to urban varieties of Tunisian Arabic, but over time Maltese has also adopted grammatical patterns from Italian, Sicilian and English.

The small island of Malta is actually great by settlement, by the courage shown throughout time, by the mixture of peoples, by the impressive colors that we see on the balconies of Valletta, by the brightly colored luzzu boats of Vittoriosa and Marsaxlokk. The color of honey found in the stone from which the old buildings are built, bathed in the mild Maltese sun - all this amalgam gives the impression that the traveler is an actor in a high-class movie. In fact, it is no coincidence that Malta earns enormously from cinematography because highly successful film productions have been filmed in Maltese cities. So Malta is a dream country that deserves to be admired both for its rich history and for its beauty.

Authors' Contributions
The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

The Influence of AI Technology in Stimulating Growth and Innovation in Business

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Abstract:
In the contemporary era, marked by rapid technological advancements and a global shift towards digitalization, Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology emerges as a pivotal force in redefining the paradigms of growth and innovation within businesses. This article delves into the multifaceted role of AI in catalyzing economic expansion and fostering innovative practices across burgeoning enterprises. Through an academic examination of specialized literature, case studies, and conceptual frameworks, the study elucidates how AI-driven solutions not only optimize operational efficiencies but also engender novel business models, thereby propelling startups and nascent industries towards unprecedented scales of success. Central to this discourse is the exploration of AI's capacity to analyze vast datasets with unparalleled precision, enabling predictive analytics, personalized customer experiences, and strategic decision-making processes that are inherently more informed and agile. Furthermore, this research highlights the transformative impact of AI on product development, market penetration strategies, and competitive differentiation, underscoring its significance in the dynamic and often turbulent landscape of new business ventures. By integrating insights from leading experts and pioneering entrepreneurs, the study offers a comprehensive overview of AI's instrumental role in navigating the complexities of modern business environments, fostering a culture of continuous innovation, and driving sustainable growth. In essence, this article posits that the strategic integration of AI technology is not merely an option but a quintessential component for new businesses aiming to thrive in the digital age, marking a new epoch in the synergy between technological innovation and entrepreneurial success.
Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Business Innovation, Operational Efficiency, Competitive Differentiation, Entrepreneurship.*
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Introduction

In embarking upon this scholarly endeavor, we were driven by the profound realization of the transformative impact that Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology has begun to exert on the global business landscape. The importance of this research stems from an acute awareness of the pivotal role AI is poised to play in shaping the future of economic growth, innovation, and the very fabric of entrepreneurial ventures. Our choice of topic was inspired by a keen observation of the current technological zeitgeist, where AI's influence permeates every aspect of new business development, from operational efficiencies to the creation of groundbreaking products and services.

This inquiry is not merely academic; it is a reflection of the pressing need for a comprehensive understanding of AI's potential to revolutionize industry standards, competitive dynamics, and the approach to customer engagement. We were motivated by the desire to contribute meaningful insights that could help entrepreneurs, policymakers, and scholars in navigating the complex landscape of digital transformation. Our research is grounded in the conviction that the integration of AI technology is not just a trend but a fundamental shift in the way businesses are conceived, developed, and scaled.

Through this research, we aim to illuminate the myriad ways in which AI facilitates a new paradigm of business operation — one that is more adaptive, innovative, and capable of addressing the challenges of the 21st century. By articulating the significance of AI in driving economic expansion and fostering a culture of innovation, this study endeavors to provide a roadmap for new businesses striving to leverage technological advancements for sustainable success. Our exploration into the influence of AI technology is, therefore, both timely and essential, offering a lens through which the future of business innovation can be envisaged and strategically navigated.

The impetus for our research was further fueled by the observation of AI's capacity to democratize innovation, making cutting-edge technology accessible to startups and SMEs, thereby leveling the playing field with larger corporations. This democratization is not only altering the competitive landscape but also encouraging a more inclusive approach to innovation, where diverse ideas and solutions can flourish. Moreover, the ethical and societal implications of AI deployment in business practices necessitate a rigorous examination. As we delve into the advantages and challenges of AI, our analysis is imbued with a critical perspective on ethical considerations, aiming to foster a discourse that promotes responsible and sustainable AI integration.

Through these insights, our research seeks to bridge the theoretical with the practical, offering a nuanced understanding of AI's role in contemporary business. It is our belief that through a meticulous investigation of AI's capabilities and challenges, we can contribute to a more informed and ethical approach to technology adoption in the business world. Thus, our work not only charts a path for future research but also serves as a guide for entrepreneurs aiming to navigate the evolving landscape of AI-driven innovation.

1. The advantages and disadvantages of AI in business

In the discourse on the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the business landscape, we observe a complex interplay of benefits and challenges that necessitates a nuanced examination. On one hand, AI technologies herald unprecedented efficiencies and innovations, transforming operational paradigms and fostering a competitive edge. On the other, they introduce a spectrum of disadvantages, from ethical dilemmas to potential job displacements, that must be carefully navigated.

We recognize that the advantages of AI, such as its ability to process and analyze data at a scale and speed beyond human capacity, significantly enhance decision-making processes. This capability is exemplified in the financial sector, where institutions like JPMorgan leverage AI for real-time risk assessment, fraud detection, and personalized customer services, thereby increasing both security and client satisfaction. Similarly, the consulting giant EY employs AI-driven analytics to identify market trends and operational inefficiencies, offering tailored strategies that propel businesses ahead of their competition. These underscore AI's role in catalyzing strategic agility and innovation, driving growth in a rapidly evolving marketplace.

However, juxtaposed against these advantages are the disadvantages associated with AI's deployment. The automation of tasks, while elevating efficiency, raises concerns over job displacement and the ethical implications of diminishing human involvement in critical decision-making processes. Moreover, the reliance on AI systems introduces vulnerabilities, such as biases in decision-making algorithms and the potential for data breaches, which can undermine trust and integrity within business operations.

In our opinion, the comparison between the advantages and disadvantages of AI in business stimulation and innovation reveals a landscape marked by both opportunity and caution. While the benefits of AI in enhancing operational efficiency, fostering innovation, and creating competitive advantages are undeniable, they are accompanied by significant challenges. These include ethical considerations, the need for regulatory oversight, and the imperative to manage the societal impacts of technological displacement. The balance between leveraging AI for its immense potential and mitigating its risks requires a strategic approach that encompasses robust ethical frameworks, continuous monitoring, and adaptive policies to ensure that the deployment of AI technologies aligns with broader societal values and business ethics.

Ultimately, the juxtaposition of AI's advantages and disadvantages underscores the complexity of its integration into business practices. It demands a judicious evaluation of both its potential to drive innovation and growth and the imperative to address its challenges responsibly. As such, the discourse on AI in business is not merely about harnessing technology for economic gain but also about shaping a future that values ethical considerations, human welfare, and sustainable development equally.

2. Literature Review

In essence, our review unveils AI's multifaceted impact on business growth and innovation. Through strategic integration and thoughtful application, AI emerges not merely as a tool but as a transformative force reshaping the landscapes of industries and propelling businesses toward new horizons of success and efficiency. In our literature review, we delve into the burgeoning role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in stimulating growth and innovation within the business sector. This exploration is anchored in a variety of perspectives offered by leading scholars and practitioners in the field.

Huang and Rust (2018) offer a nuanced view on AI's dual impact on service industries, emphasizing the technology's role in both innovation and the displacement of jobs. They propose a framework for understanding how businesses should navigate AI integration, highlighting the shift towards tasks requiring empathetic and intuitive human skills (Ming-Hui Huang & R. Rust, 2018).

Saura, Ribeiro-Soriano, and Palacios-Marqués (2021) discuss the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems within the B2B sector. They emphasize how AI-driven CRMs can transform digital marketing strategies, offering a systematic review that categorizes CRM types and explores AI applications in enhancing B2B digital marketing. Their findings shed light on the future direction of AI in CRM systems, suggesting a pivotal role in strategizing and managing B2B interactions

Paschen, Kietzmann, and Kietzmann (2019) provide a comprehensive overview of AI's impact on market knowledge within B2B marketing. They detail AI's foundational components and discuss its implications for acquiring and managing customer, user, and external market knowledge. The study highlights AI's potential to significantly enhance knowledge-based marketing strategies in the B2B realm, offering avenues for future research to explore AI's evolving role

Spulbar C. (2008) elucidates the pivotal role of forecasting within the financial banking sector, a practice equally pertinent in the corporate realm. The outcomes derived from this forecasting function are instrumental in the effective allocation of resources, subsequently culminating in superior performance for the corporation. This process is methodically categorized based on the forecast's horizon, granularity, and obligatory nature into three principal segments: forecasts, plans, and programs. Such a classification is integral for fostering both development and innovation within the business environment

Chatterjee et al. (2021) analyze the effects of AI-based CRM systems on organizational performance and competitive advantage in a B2B context. Through empirical analysis, they explore how AI-CRM influences strategic relationship management activities, underscoring the critical success factors for implementing AI in B2B relationship management. The study integrates institutional theory and the resource-based view, offering insights into AI-CRM's strategic importance.

Chen et al, (2021) propose a conceptual framework for AI adoption in B2B marketing, derived from a systematic review of the literature. Identifying drivers, barriers, practices, and consequences of AI adoption, the framework serves as a foundation for understanding AI's role in B2B marketing innovation. This study illuminates the pathways through which AI can facilitate efficiency, accuracy, and relationship improvements in B2B settings, offering a novel perspective on AI-enabled marketing innovation.

Kushwaha, Kumar, and Kar (2021) explore the impact of AI-enabled chatbots on customer experience (CX) in B2B enterprises, using insights from big data analytics. Their study, informed by CX theories, examines how AI chatbots influence B2B interactions at various customer touchpoints. The findings emphasize the design and trust aspects of AI chatbots as crucial for enhancing CX in B2B contexts, suggesting a model for integrating chatbots effectively to improve customer engagement and satisfaction.

Gladilin (2023) discusses AI's contribution to enhancing leadership efficiency and optimizing business processes. The paper explores AI's capabilities for learning, reasoning, and self-correction, and their implications for decision-making and competitive advantage in the managerial sphere (L. Y. Gladilin, 2023).

Yang et al. (2021) examine AI's role in precision marketing, stressing its ability to enhance marketing efficiency, reduce costs, and personalize marketing efforts. This analysis underscores AI's transformative potential in modern marketing methodologies (Xue Yang, Haowen Li, Likun Ni, & Teng Li, 2021).

Spulbăr and Nițoi (2012) successfully conducted a comparative analysis of diverse banking systems, highlighting the influence of national context, economic strength, and social determinants on the corporate environments. This comparison underscores the heterogeneity inherent in global business practices and frameworks. Drawing a parallel to the integration of AI in business innovation, it becomes evident that, similar to the varied banking systems, the adoption, and impact of artificial intelligence in corporate settings are significantly influenced by a company's geographical location, economic capabilities, and societal factors. Just as the effectiveness and structure of banking systems vary across different countries, so does the adoption and innovation of AI in business. Regions with robust technological infrastructure and favorable economic conditions are likely to witness more rapid and effective integration of AI, driving innovation and efficiency. Conversely, areas with limited resources may experience slower adoption, underlining the importance of context in leveraging AI for business innovation.

In the scholarly work of Chandra et al. (2023), the discourse extends to the nuanced incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within business strategies, elucidating its pivotal role in refining decision-making capabilities, augmenting operational efficiencies, and stimulating innovation. Nonetheless, their research concurrently underscores the imperative to diligently navigate the ethical terrain, safeguard data privacy, and uphold human oversight as foundational elements to responsible AI integration. This underscores our conviction that organizations must judiciously employ AI to adeptly maneuver through the intricacies of the contemporary business milieu, advocating for a balanced approach that harmonizes technological advancement with ethical stewardship.

Exposition on AI articulates its transformative essence in reimagining business innovation, delineating nine distinct pathways through which AI engenders significant alterations in business models. This encompasses the enhancement of customer segments, the fortification of customer relationships, the refinement of value propositions, and the amplification of overall business model efficacy. Lu's insights resonate with our perspective that AI acts as a formidable catalyst in the redefinition and evolution of business innovation paradigms (Lu, 2020).

Spulbar, L. F. and Mitrache, L. A. (2023) propose a conceptual framework that emphasizes the role of corporate finance in promoting sustainability through capital allocation, risk management, and strategic decision-making. This framework suggests that mobilizing finance in support of sustainability not only helps achieve long-term business goals but also contributes to wider societal and environmental benefits. The introduction of AI within corporations can increase elements of CSR (Corporate social responsibility) and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance).

Further, the analyses by Edilia and Larasati (2023) illuminate AI's instrumental role in personalizing customer experiences and sharpening strategic decision-making processes. This, they argue, heralds a shift towards a more integrated approach to business strategy development, where AI and human cognition coalesce to engender innovative and flexible business strategies. Their arguments reinforce our belief in fostering a symbiotic relationship between AI capabilities and human insights to drive forward-thinking business strategies.

Introduce the concept of innovation analytics as a crucial AI application, supporting innovation management through the generation of insightful analytics and visualizations. Their case studies vividly illustrate AI's capacity to streamline the innovation process, offering profound strategic insights for managing innovation. This aligns with our understanding of AI's utility in enhancing the decision-making framework for innovation managers, thereby facilitating a more informed and strategic approach to innovation (Kakatkar et al., 2018).

Lastly, Rao and Raman (2019) delve into AI's integral role in driving digital transformation, underscoring its efficiency in time-saving, cost reduction, and operational enhancement across diverse business spectrums. Anticipating the widespread adoption of AI in digital commerce by 2025, they highlight the necessity for a comprehensive operational system that seamlessly integrates AI resources. This anticipation aligns with our foresight on the critical need for organizations to adopt a holistic framework in AI integration, thereby ensuring a cohesive and efficient operational ecosystem.

3. The case study

The exploration into Danfoss, a Danish conglomerate established in 1933, provides an instructive illustration of Artificial Intelligence's (AI) integration and its consequent impact on sales strategies within the global business milieu. With its expansive operational footprint spanning over 100 countries and a robust workforce of approximately 28,000, Danfoss embarked on a transformative journey towards digitization, particularly within its sales domain, epitomizing the strategic infusion of AI technologies to augment business operations and strategic decision-making.

The advent of digitized sales tools in 2014, facilitated through the Sales Force platform, marked a seminal phase in Danfoss' digitization trajectory, although initially devoid of bespoke algorithms and dashboards specifically attuned to its operational exigencies. This foundational step towards AI integration heralded a more nuanced and effective utilization of AI technologies by 2016, with the advent of MyPipeline within the Sales Force tool, illustrating a paradigm shift towards leveraging digital tools to enhance sales efficacy (Ferreira et al., 2020; Cotter, Guan, Mahdavian, Razzaq, Schneider, 2018).

The establishment of a global Business Excellence area and the tailored development of tools to meet Danfoss' operational needs underscore the pivotal role of strategic AI deployment in optimizing sales performance. This is further accentuated by the organization-wide encouragement for regional adaptation and the establishment of regional objectives, illustrating a comprehensive and supportive framework for AI integration across the corporation (Singh et al., 2019; Antonio, 2018; Homburg et al., 2017)

Moreover, the initiation of the ONE ERP program in 2018 exemplifies Danfoss' dedication to a holistic digital transformation, aiming to unify its digital processes onto a singular platform. This endeavor reflects the strategic vision towards an all-encompassing integration of AI across operational spectrums, thereby enhancing efficiency and fostering an innovative culture.

Empirical research, employing interviews and exploratory analysis, reveals a dichotomous understanding of AI's role in sales. The benefits and challenges of AI adoption are highlighted, showcasing support in lead generation and follow-ups while acknowledging the irreplaceability of human interaction in sales contexts in the short term. This dichotomy resonates with the broader consensus within academic literature on AI's potential and limitations within sales processes, advocating for a balanced approach that marries technological advancements with the indispensable human element in sales interactions (Ferreira et al., 2020; Cotter, Guan, Mahdavian, Razzaq, Schneider, 2018).

The Danfoss case study not only exemplifies the strategic incorporation of artificial intelligence into business process improvement, but also illuminates the ongoing discourse between technological innovation and human-centric approaches in the evolution of sales strategies. This case provides deep insight into the multifaceted impact of AI on business innovation and operational excellence, providing a valuable framework for organizations navigating the complexities of digital transformation in the contemporary business ecosystem.

4. Future trends of AI in business

The rapid evolution of technology and digitization, it is vital for businesses to keep pace with emerging trends in Artificial Intelligence (AI). This table presents a brief analysis of some key AI trends and their implications for the business environment. From improving predictive analytics to the ethical adoption of AI and exploiting the synergy between AI and the Internet of Things (IoT), these trends highlight the main directions in which technological development is headed and how it influences enterprise strategies and operations. By understanding and integrating these trends, organizations can strengthen their position in an increasingly competitive business environment and prepare for the digital future.

Table 1: Future trends of AI in business

Trend	*Description*	*Implications*
Enhanced Predictive Analytics	Advancements in algorithms and computational power will improve predictive analytics, allowing businesses to understand consumer behaviors and market trends with greater accuracy.	Businesses can make more informed decisions, tailoring strategies to meet consumer needs and anticipate market movements effectively.
Autonomous Systems	The rise of AI-driven robotics and autonomous systems will expand their application across various sectors, automating operations and transforming workforce requirements.	Operational efficiency will significantly increase, but businesses will also need to manage the transition for workers affected by automation.
AI and IoT Synergy	The integration of AI with the Internet of Things (IoT) will offer real-time insights, optimizing operations from supply chain management to customer service.	Enhanced operational visibility and the ability to act on real-time data will streamline processes and improve customer experiences.
Ethical AI Adoption	Addressing AI ethics, including bias, transparency, and data privacy, will become crucial as AI's role in business expands.	Trust and accountability in AI-driven operations will be paramount for consumer trust and regulatory compliance.
AI-Powered Personalization	AI's data analysis capabilities will enable personalization at	Businesses that harness this capability will likely see

	scale, offering customized products, services, and experiences to each customer.	improved customer satisfaction and loyalty.
Sustainability through AI	AI will facilitate sustainable business practices, optimizing resource use and enhancing energy efficiency.	Businesses will not only contribute to environmental and social goals but may also find economic benefits in sustainability.
Decentralized AI	The convergence of blockchain and AI will lead to decentralized business models, ensuring data integrity and secure transactions.	This trend could redefine business operations, offering new levels of security and transparency in transactions.

Source: Developed following European Parliament Research on AI (2020)

In our view, the progression of AI algorithms and computational capabilities heralds a significant shift in how businesses will navigate consumer and market intricacies. This evolution stands as a testament to the transformative power of data, equipping enterprises with the foresight to act with precision and agility, rather than mere reaction.

The unfolding narrative of autonomous systems across various sectors is not just about operational efficiency; it reflects a deeper transition towards a landscape where efficiency and precision become the norm. However, this shift also calls for a reimagined approach to workforce development, striking a balance between automation benefits and the irreplaceable value of human insight.

The confluence of AI and the Internet of Things (IoT) is particularly intriguing to us. It promises a future where real-time insights become the backbone of operational strategies, offering a level of efficiency and customer responsiveness previously unattainable. This synergy could well redefine the essence of customer service and operational management.

From our perspective, the ethical dimensions of AI adoption cannot be overstated. As AI technologies become more embedded in business operations, the imperatives for fairness, transparency, and privacy gain prominence. We believe that businesses that navigate these ethical waters with integrity will stand at the forefront of the AI-driven future, maintaining trust and compliance in an increasingly scrutinized digital age.

The trend towards personalization at scale is, to us, a remarkable reflection of AI's potential to redefine customer engagement. This capability to tailor products, services, and experiences to individual preferences might well become the new benchmark of customer satisfaction, heralding a shift in the dynamics of customer loyalty.

We are particularly drawn to the role of AI in promoting sustainable business practices. This alignment of AI with sustainability goals not only underscores the broader benefits of environmental stewardship but also highlights the potential economic advantages inherent in sustainable practices.

The emergence of decentralized AI, through the integration of blockchain technology, presents a fascinating frontier. This development promises to offer new paradigms of security, transparency, and trust in business operations, challenging enterprises to adapt to these new models of transaction and interaction.

These reflections encapsulate our anticipation and optimism for the role of AI in shaping the future of business innovation. As we navigate this journey, our focus remains on leveraging AI not just as a tool for economic advancement but as a catalyst for responsible, sustainable, and equitable growth within the global business ecosystem.

5. Conclusion

In concluding our scholarly exploration of the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the growth and innovation within new businesses, we reflect upon the nuanced dynamics and multifaceted implications that AI technologies introduce into the contemporary business landscape. Through the lens of our comprehensive analysis, underscored by empirical evidence and theoretical insights, we have endeavored to illuminate the profound ways in which AI serves as both a catalyst for and a challenger to traditional paradigms of business development and competitive strategy.

How AI could be harnessed to stimulate growth and foster innovation within emerging enterprises. Our investigation has revealed that AI's integration into business operations not only enhances decision-making processes, operational efficiency, and customer engagement but also redefines the very essence of innovation. AI-driven tools and platforms enable businesses to navigate complex markets, anticipate consumer needs, and respond with agility and precision to the ever-evolving competitive landscape.

However, this journey is not without its challenges. We posed critical questions regarding the ethical considerations, the potential for job displacement, and the need for human oversight in the deployment of AI technologies. Our discourse has emphasized the importance of addressing these concerns through robust ethical frameworks, continuous learning, and adaptation, ensuring that AI's integration aligns with both organizational goals and societal values.

Moreover, we pondered the future trajectory of AI in business innovation, contemplating its potential to perpetuate a paradigm shift in how businesses operate and compete. Our findings suggest that the strategic leverage of AI not only holds the promise of unprecedented growth and innovation but also necessitates a reimagining of business models, processes, and leadership approaches to fully realize its benefits.

In synthesizing our insights, we advocate for a balanced and strategic approach to AI integration, one that harnesses its potential while navigating its challenges with foresight and responsibility. We underscore the necessity for ongoing research, collaboration, and dialogue among businesses, policymakers, and scholars to explore the evolving role of AI in shaping the future of business innovation.

As we look to the horizon, the interplay between AI and business innovation remains a fertile ground for exploration. Our study contributes to this burgeoning field of inquiry, offering a roadmap for future research and practice. The questions we have posed and the answers we have begun to uncover serve as a testament to the dynamic and transformative nature of AI in the modern business era. In the spirit of continuous exploration, we invite the academic and business communities to join us in furthering this discourse, charting new territories in the application and understanding of Artificial Intelligence in stimulating growth and innovation in new business ventures.

Authors' Contributions:

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Exploring Heutagogy - The Digital Twist in Self-determined Learning and Education

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Abstract:
Heutagogy is a term that refers to a **self-determined learning model** where learners take an active role in their own learning. Unlike pedagogy (teacher-led learning) and andragogy (adult learning), heutagogy places a significant emphasis on the learner's ability to plan, manage and evaluate their own learning experience. In a heutagogical approach, learners are considered capable and motivated to direct their own learning paths, encouraged to set their own learning goals, choose learning methods and assess their own progress. This approach assumes that learners are not just passive recipients of information but are actively engaged in constructing their knowledge and skills through the involvement and the use of various resources and **technologies** that empower learners to access information, collaborate with others and create their own learning experiences. It is particularly relevant in today's dynamic and information-rich environment, where the ability to learn independently is highly valuable thus standing in contrast to more traditional educational models where the teacher or instructor plays a more central role in directing the learning process. The term "heutagogy" was coined by **Stewart Hase** and **Chris Kenyon** in the early 2000s and has gained attention in discussions about innovative and **learner-centered approaches** to education. The implications of heutagogy are diverse and can impact various aspects of education and learning, some of which are treated in this article especially from the point of view of technology use to facilitate self-directed learning; online resources, collaborative tools and digital platforms can support learners in accessing information, connecting with others and creating their own learning environments.

Keywords: *heutagogy, technologies, self-determined, learner-centered, engaged.*

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In today's information-rich culture, the aptitude to learn autonomously and adaptively is paramount, it goes beyond the achievement of knowledge, it is aimed at fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills crucial for accomplishment in a rapidly progressing world. Learning is now perceived, especially after the pandemic period, as a multifaceted procedure necessitating the student to move further than simply acquiring information and abilities - it is not just repetition and modelling, it needs novel networks and more creative insights to be completed. Heutagogy is a term that refers to an erudition theory and instructive practice that places stress on learner self-government and self-determined education moreover “To be an agent is to intentionally make things happen by one’s actions. Agency embodies the endowments, belief systems, self-regulatory capabilities and distributed structures and functions through which personal influence is exercised, rather than residing as a discrete entity in a particular place.” (Bandura, 2023:2).

The notion was first presented by Stewart Hase and Chris Kenyon in 2000, while the term is somewhat new, the concepts behind it has origins in preceding instructive philosophies and models, such as constructivism and experiential education. Heutagogy trials old-fashioned ideas of educational leadership and pedagogy allowing teachers to converse to more facilitative roles, such as guiding learners and providing support. “The essence of heutagogy is that in some learning situations, the focus should be on what and how the learner wants to learn, not on what is to be taught. Hence this approach is very different from the more formal and traditional way of teaching people. In heutagogy the educational process changes from being one in which the learned person (teacher, tutor, lecturer) pours information into the heads of learners, to one in which the learner chooses what is to be learned and even how they might learn it. It represents a change from teacher – centered learning to learner – centred learning.” (Hase, Kenyon, 2000:7). Derived from the **Greek word heutagogia**, this concept means "self-directed learning" or "self-determined learning" and proposes a didactic theory and approach that focuses on self-directed knowledge, compared to pedagogy (teacher-directed education) and andragogy (adult-directed education), thus placing a strong prominence on learners taking control of their own educational process. It is seen by its advocates as particularly suited to the demands of the 21st century, where rapid transformation and the need for incessant erudition are prominent and aligned with the idea that learners need to be equipped with the skills to navigate an ever-evolving knowledge landscape, independently.

Heutagogy places a strong accent on **learners’ independence** who are encouraged to take accountability for their own education, set their own goals, determine their own learning route and foster a sense of individuality and self-direction. “From a social constructivist perspective, the learner builds his knowledge through active interaction with his physical and social environment.” (Scorţan, 2021:143). It promotes **flexibility** and **elasticity** in learning, adjusting to different learning environments, use various resources and develop the skills needed to learn independently, particularly relevant in the context of information and technology. **Self-determined learning,** as the name says, challenges customary notions of educational leadership and pedagogy permitting teachers to transition to more facilitative roles, guiding learners and providing sustenance rather than acting as the primary source of information. Applying heutagogy in education requires a modification in the outmoded roles of teachers and learners, meaning teachers should become facilitators or guides, providing support and resources while allowing learners to take the lead in their education, often seen as well-suited for adult teaching and constant learning, where individuals are driven by personal and professional developmental goals. Although is not a one-size-fits-all method and its usefulness can depend on factors such as learner features, theme, subject matter and educational framework, the repercussions of heutagogy are varied and can influence various aspects of education and learning.

The **self-directed nature** of heutagogy emboldens critical thinking and problem-solving abilities making learners not just learn information by heart but energetically engage with it, inquiring conventions and making networks to real-world circumstances. When learners have more govern over their erudition process they may exercise more sophisticated levels of motivation and assignation to create "active and constructive learning that can be applied later in social, professional and cultural terms." (Lăpădat, Lăpădat, 2020a:142). The talent to choose themes of interest, set particular goals, and agree on learning methods can augment the general learning experience and permanent education. By developing the abilities to direct their own scholarship, furthermore because "it is the human nature itself to pursue the maximal outcome at the minimal amount of effort." (Buşu, 2022:98), individuals are better furnished to continue learning all through their lives, acclimatizing to new defies and acquiring new needed skills and awareness.

Self-directed learning - resources and approaches

Set explicit learning goals: one needs to outline what it is that she/he wants to achieve through self-directed learning and then institute specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound **(SMART) goals** to guide the hard work.

Advance a learning/ strategy design: One needs to create an organized plan outlining what she/he requires to learn, how they will learn it, the time allowed for when they anticipate to achieve each momentous. For all these to be successful learners should break down larger goals into smaller, convenient tasks and "activities that are meant to encourage the student's creativity, critical thinking and communication skills." (Stoian, 2019a:131).

Find learning materials / resources: students should exploit a variety of interactive resources such as books, online courses, tutorials, podcasts, videos and forums, nevertheless choose resources that align to fit their own personal learning styles and goals.

Manage time productively: learners ought to allocate dedicated time for learning daily or weekly and stick to the schedule by eliminating inconsistencies and creating a favorable learning environment.

Rehearsal dynamic learning: the keenly engagement with the material is done by taking notes, briefing key points, asking questions and relating concepts through practice exercises or projects "in order to obtain better student outcomes" (Stoian, 2019b).

Pursue feedback and reflection: students should solicit feedback from peers, mentors, or instructors to measure the progress and identify areas for perfection, moreover reflect on their learning experiences and adjust their methodology as needed. "Students who account to have warm interactions with their peers and teachers also have the inclination to show better academic self-drive and engagement than students who lack this reciprocal affect." (Bărbuceanu, 2022: 185).

Stay driven: partners in the process of education need to find intrinsic motivation by connecting the learning goals to personal interests, passions or long-term aspirations nevertheless recognize and celebrate one's realizations and stay resilient in the face of challenges. “Increase of motivation and enthusiasm of students and teachers through active involvement in the process of live communication, possibilities of language acquisition are increasing thanks to the cooperation, interaction and communication in learning language.” (Chiriţescu, Păunescu, 2017:376).

Embrace inquisitiveness: learners must cultivate a curious mindset by exploring new topics, asking probing questions, seeking out diverse perspectives and furthermore be opened to experimenting with different learning techniques and styles.

Stay structured: heutagogical learners must stay organized to maintain clarity and focus, keep track of their progress, resources and notes using tools like digital or physical notebooks, spreadsheets or task management apps.

Constant appraise and adjust: students ought to regularly assess their learning goals, progress and strategies, adjust the learning approach based on what works best for them and receive feedback from the learning journey. “This result can be accomplished by personal and social awareness and proper emotional feedback in specific circumstances.” (Buşu, 2020:205). By incorporating these strategies into the self-directed learning practice they can boost their effectiveness and achieve the desired learning objectives more efficiently. Assessment in heutagogical environments may need to shift from outmoded methods to more vigorous and personalized tactics that could focus on the process of learning, reflective practices and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world situations. Heutagogy frequently embroils **the use of technology** to assist self-directed learning: **online resources**, collaborative tools and **digital platforms** can provision learners in accessing information, emotionally linking with others and creating their own learning environments. “Emotions therefore accompany the students (…) and may interfere with learning or consolidate it.” (Scorţan, 2022:146).

Technology integration

Collaboration and networking: Heutagogy often involves combined learning and networking allowing learners to connect with others and share related interests, creating groups of practice that outspread beyond customary classroom boundaries. Different cultural perceptions on education and individual learning styles may influence how heutagogical principles are applied and practiced. While heutagogy offers a favorable structure for learning in the 21st century, its efficacious carrying out requires cautious deliberation of the learning background, the needs and vulnerabilities of the learners and constant support for both educators and students. “In the universe of communication, there is practically a vulnerability of reception of the individual who perceives himself to be a unique and original snowflake.” (Lăpădat, Lăpădat, 2020b:121). Technology can play a substantial role in supporting heutagogical approaches to learning, providing learners with admission to infinite amounts of information: online resources, e-books, educational websites and databases that empower them to explore topics of concern, autonomously.

Online learning platforms: learning management systems (LMS) and online course platforms propose a diversity of tools that provision self-directed learning from which learners can select when and where to study, access multimedia materials and interrelate with online groups and post pandemic “vulnerable groups” (Paraschivu, Cotuna, 2021:573). Social media platforms and online communities generate spaces for learners to link, share knowledge, and collaborate accordingly. These virtual communities can augment not only the social aspect of learning and provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning but furthermore enhance “social well-being” aimed to increase the resilience status of the communities.” (Olimid, Olimid, 2022:91). Adaptive learning technologies use algorithms to shape learning practices based on individual evolvement and needs, allowing learners to focus on areas where they need perfection. Mobile devices enable learners to access educational content anytime, anywhere while mobile apps, podcasts and other moveable technologies support heutagogical learning by providing elasticity and availability. Online courses, webinars, and interactive simulations, in a variety of formats, offer miscellaneous learning experiences from which students and learners can select and engage with the content in a manner that suits their predilections and educational styles. Tools such as video conferencing, cooperative documents and virtual reality can facilitate collaborative learning proficiencies so that students can work together on projects, share ideas and contribute to a mutual consideration of a subject. Technology can make available tools for self-assessment, reflection and goal setting for learners to track their advancement, set intentions and reflect on their education journey. It’s important to note that the effective integration of technology in heutagogical approaches requires thoughtful design and consideration of learners' needs, additionally, **digital literacy** becomes crucial as learners navigate online resources and engage with various technologies to support their self-directed education. “The present tense conditions the listeners to actively listen and be involved in the activity of learning in the present with a view of improving the future.” (Chirițescu, Păunescu, 2021:102)

Several **AI tools** can be leveraged to augment heutagogical learning practices such as adaptive learning platforms:

Augmented Reality AR for learning: integrates **AR** to create immersive learning experiences allowing learners to discover virtual surroundings.

Brightspace insights: provides learning analytics to track students’ advancement, ascertain areas of strength and weakness and provide insights to both learners and educators.

Carnegie learning: utilizes **AI** to provide tailored tutoring in math, acclimating to individual learner needs and providing real time feedback.

Duolingo: language learning app that uses **AI driven chatbots** to engage learners in interactive dialogues, providing instant feedback.

Edmondo: offers a platform for joint learning, allowing students to bond, share resources and work on projects together.

Knewton: an adaptive learning platform that personalizes learning resources based on specific student performances and preferences.

Natural Language Processing NLP: IBM Watson Tutor Incorporates NPL to create a conversational interface for tutoring, adapting to students’ responses and guiding them through the learning process.

Project based learning platforms: combine elements of gammification with project-based education, encouraging partnership, permitting students to take possession of their projects.

Voice assistants in education: **Alexa for education**, incorporated voice activated **AI** to assist with information recovery, language learning, and educational Q&A.

Chatbots: when applying AI tools for heutagogical learning it is fundamental to reflect on the unique needs and predilections of learners, to endow learners to take control of their education accordingly. AI tools should be designed to maintain and enrich self-directed learning journeys by assimilating new concepts such as **chatbots**

into a heutagogical learning setting. A chatbot is a computer software program that mimics and processes human dialogue - a conversational agent - (either written or spoken), allowing individuals to interconnect with digital devices. A chatbot is designed to simulate dialogue with human users, especially over the internet. These programs are typically powered by artificial intelligence **(AI) algorithms** that allow them to comprehend and reply to user interrogations or instructions in natural language. A chatbot, a computerized program that linkages with learners like a human would, can offer personalized supervision by considering the learners' preferences, goals and past exchanges, can provide recommendations for learning resources, endorse personalized study strategies and offer leadership on setting attainable goals and intentions. Learners can obtain immediate feedback on their work and progress through exchanges with the chatbot facilitating them to understand their strengths and areas for enhancement in real-time, nurturing a continuous feedback circle. The chatbot can recommend applicable learning materials based on the learner's interests, existing knowledge level and learning inclinations, including articles, videos, books and other assets that align with the learner's objectives in order to "…boost personal, social and professional growth in his future career and social interaction within the academic environment or imminent job." (Bărbuceanu, 2019:46). Chatbots are used in countless solicitations, such as client service, information recovery and they can range from modest rule-based systems to erudite AI models capable of understanding situations and engaging in more complex discussions. Chatbots in education are renovating the way students learn and interrelate with course materials. These intelligent systems can support a diversity of tasks, including responding questions, providing feedback, distributing personalized learning proficiencies and even easing discussions and group teamwork.

Learners can use the **Socratic, TutorAI** chatbot to ask questions and seek elucidation on concepts they find thought-provoking and the program can deliver explanations, examples and supplementary resources to aid in understanding and prompt learners to reflect on their learning experiences. By asking questions about what they've learned, their trials and their objectives, the chatbot can aid learners advance **metacognitive skills** and become more self-aware about their learning process. Chatbots assist learners in setting genuine goals, breaking them down into convenient tasks and creating a span for achieving those goals henceforth endorsing a sense of ownership and accountability in the education process. The program can enable concerted learning experiences by connecting learners with analogous interests or goals, suggest study groups, argument forums or collaborative projects, promoting a sense of community among self-directed learners. For language learners, a chatbot can provide conversational rehearsal, can involve in dialogues, asses language errors, provide vocabulary and grammar guidelines, creating an overall interactive language learning experience. The chatbot can offer motivational posts, positive fortification and prompts to keep learners on track. Additionally, the chatbot is bendable and flexible to cater to the sundry learning styles and inclinations of individual learners in a heutagogical framework. Consistent updates and enhancements based on user feedback can boost the usefulness of the chatbot in supporting self-directed learning. Celebrating realizations, no matter how small, subsidizes to a positive learning experience.

"Heutagogy in underpinned by the assumptions of two key philosophies: humanism and constructivism. As mentioned above, the idea of the learner being central to the educational process is a humanistic concept." (Hase, Kenyon, 2000:21). Heutagogy symbolizes a transformative methodology to learning that enables individuals to become self-directed, lifelong learners by assumption of principles of self-rule, critical reflection, teamwork and incessant learning, thus offering a pathway towards a more vigorous, adaptive and all-encompassing educational landscape. As educators and learners steer the densities of the 21st century and post pandemic period heutagogy positions itself as a guiding light of authorization, revealing the complete potential of learners to flourish in a speedily shifting world.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

AI and Deep Fake - Video and Audio Manipulation Techniques Capable of Altering the Political Process

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Abstract:
All the important aspects of modern-day society, including global politics, are influenced by AI-generated deep fakes, which nowadays are easier than ever to produce. Present-day politics is also characterized by the rise of illiberalism. The limitations of democratic practices, which occur at a global level, are well documented. However, there is a lack of research meant to classify types of deepfakes and the dangers they pose to democratic practices, such as elections. The goal of this paper is to create a framework in order to describe AI-generated deepfake use, especially in politics. In the long run, the purpose of this framework would be to help future research papers better describe cases in which deepfakes are being used in politics and their effects, especially how these practices are being employed by populist politicians in order to enhance their electoral message. This descriptive paper is based on the qualitative approach of document research, presenting several deepfake categories that can be used in future research in order to create a clear image of the way in which AI-generated deepfakes impact politics. The paper has generated interesting results. There are a multitude of types of deepfakes that originate from various sources. The only difference is the complexity of the technology being used. Another relevant discovery is that deepfakes can be used for multiple purposes, not only to undermine political opponents. Moreover, deepfakes could be used anytime, not just on the brink of elections. This paper is relevant for the study of the dangers deepfakes carry in both national and international politics. It represents a step forward in the research on the implications carried by the use of deepfakes in politics.

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AI and Deep Fake - Video and Audio Manipulation Techniques Capable of Altering the Political Process

1. Introduction

In a digitalized society, technology is present in every aspect of our lives. Political developments are highly influenced by the pace of technological innovation (Gabor, Oancea & Pripp, 2023, p. 68). This tendency should be perceived as dangerous, especially in Europe and North America, regions that have been well known for their firm stance in defending democracy. The digitalization process, which occurs all around us, being accelerated by globalization, can act as a means for the perpetuation of undemocratic tendencies. The present paper intends to classify different types of AI-generated deep fakes. The purpose is to generate a conceptual framework meant to facilitate research on how these practices might affect the political process.

Through this paper, there are highlighted several risks imposed by the use of AI-generated deep fakes, especially now that elections held in democratic nations are being threatened by the rise of illiberalism. In order to have a better understanding of the functioning process of AI, it is necessary to present its conceptual framing and how it could be used by populists and authoritarian regimes in order to reshape the political environment. The main purpose of the paper is to describe different types of deep fakes and to highlight the challenges to democracy posed by these practices. The role of the qualitative method of document research is to determine a classification of deepfake materials and their effects on the general public.

2. Literature Review

a. Artificial Intelligence (AI) – conceptual framework

One of the main particularities of the Fourth Industrial Revolution is represented by the rapidity with which its effects shape global developments. Its predecessors had a limited impact on the so-called Third World. According to the United Nations, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are defined as *„...low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development. They are highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks and have low levels of human assets."* (UN, n.d.) Angola, Myanmar, Nepal, and Yemen are among the 45 countries that are included in December 2023 in this category. Their political, economic, and social fate is influenced by the latest technological evolutions, just like the fate of the United States of America (USA), Germany, or China. Artificial Intelligence (AI), additive manufacturing, augmented reality, blockchain, drones, or advanced robotics are among the elements that build a new reality, which is *„...characterised by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital and biological spheres."* (Adhikari, 2020, p. 42). The fact that the speed with which constant innovations enact worldwide implications is also reflected by the fact that the Fourth Industrial Revolution is doubled by a Fifth one, which *„...encompasses the notion of harmonious human–machine collaborations, with a specific focus on the well-being of the multiple stakeholders".* (Noble, S.M., Mende, M., Grewal, D., Parasuraman, A., 2022) However, one of the key aspects of this paper is to highlight that human-machine collaborations, in certain contexts, can have toxic effects on the stability of liberal democratic political regimes.

Artificial Intelligence can be defined as *„making a machine behave in ways that would be called intelligent if a human were so behaving."* (McCarthy, J., Minsky, M. L., Rochester, N., Shannon, C. E., 2006, p. 12). AI, alongside machine learning, one of its methods, enables the possibility of creating entities that are capable of performing cognitive tasks even more efficiently than human beings. Newly developed algorithms

„...learn from data and develop solutions to problems." (Scharre, P., Horowitz, M.C., Work, R.O., 2018, p. 4). Although the field of AI is currently characterized by narrowness compared to the human ability to multi-task, machine learning has the potential to eliminate this gap in the future. Data is utilized in the construction of neural networks, which fuel the process of deep learning, allowing, among others, results like image recognition or predicting medical outcomes. In areas where a sufficient amount of data is not available, algorithms can continue their evolution by using synthetic data generated through computer simulation (Scharre, P., Horowitz, M.C., Work, R.O., 2018, p. 6). The remarkable progress of AI is also reflected in its ability to master games, including ones that hide essential information from algorithms, like poker. Thus, it can be argued that gradually AI can replace, at least in certain domains, human expertise.

The implications of these evolutions can be unprecedented in the history of humanity. AI offers endless opportunities for the improvement of our lives, constantly upgrading its ability of presenting tools that can help us overcome the social or economic challenges that shadow the first decades of the 21st century: *„Communications, healthcare, disease control, education, agriculture, transportation (autonomous vehicles), space exploration, science, and entertainment are just a few of the areas already benefiting from breakthroughs in AI"* (Kavanagh, C., 2019, p. 13). On the other hand, as mentioned before, this process has also a dark side: *„As the scope, use, and usefulness of these systems have grown for individual users, researchers in various fields, companies and other types of organizations, and governments, so too have concerns when the systems have not worked well (such as bias in facial recognition systems), or have been misused (as in deepfakes), or have resulted in harms to some (in predicting crime, for example), or have been associated with accidents (such as fatalities from self-driving cars)."* (Manyika, 2022, p. 6)

Governments have the responsibility of identifying both the possible threats posed by the development of AI and the domains where algorithms can be used in the benefit of the public good. For instance, in the USA, the Department of Defense and the intelligence community are combining machine learning, image recognition, and natural language processing to boost the efficiency of the analytical activity (Hunter, A.P., Sheppard, L.R., Karlen, R., Hunter, A.P., Balieiro, L., 2018, p. 28).

In the last years, the development of AI also influenced national power projections. Political leaders like former US President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Chinese President Xi Jinping have stated that machine learning algorithms can be used as tools for promoting the strategic interests of their states. AI is slowly becoming a tremendous weapon in geopolitical conflicts. Therefore, members of the academic community and civil society organizations are claiming that this domain must be regulated through a clear and enforceable legal framework (Kavanagh, C., 2019, p. 14).

The future of AI, although linked to both optimistic and grim scenarios, is still quite misty. Some researchers suggest that in approximately 50 years, AI will be able to carry out most professions at least as well as humans. On the other hand, a global catastrophe like a nuclear conflict or an aggravation of the climate crisis could derail progress, which at this moment could seem unstoppable. Moreover, legal and ethical concerns could cause governments to abandon developing this field. This aspect highlights once again the necessity of a *„… responsible supervision, regulation, and governance of the design and deployment of AI systems…"*. (De Spiegeleire, S., Maas, M., Sweijs, T., 2017, p. 55)

In certain conditions, AI can become a threat to human rights. For instance, algorithms can be used for the surveillance of ordinary citizens; therefore, their right to privacy is denied. Furthermore, using AI in the legal system could create conditions for discriminating against certain social categories. These challenges require the development of the so-called „ethic of data”, which could minimize numerous risks that are posed by the utilization of AI. The European Commission already took important steps in this direction (Cataleta, M. S., 2020, p. 7). Another issue that needs the attention of governments and NGOs is one that was already mentioned above deep fakes.

b. Deep Fake

A deep fake is *„...a digital forgery created through deep learning (a subset of AI). Deep fakes can create entirely new content or manipulate existing content, including video, images, audio and text. They could be used to defame targets, impersonate or blackmail elected officials and be used in conjunction with cybercrime operations.”* (Smith, H., Mansted, K., 2020, p. 5)

Deep fakes first emerged in 2017 and made an important contribution to blurring the thin line between facts and fiction in the political arena. The so-called „democratization” of this tool allows even ordinary citizens to create and spread false messages that can alter the way public opinion sees certain political leaders or groups. Face swapping, lyp syncing, and image or audio generation are among the most common versions of deep fake (a detailed presentation of different types of deep fakes will be realized below). For example, a fake video presenting a speech of Richard Nixon regarding the Moon landing was created through lyp syncing (Smith, H., Mansted, K., 2020, p. 7).

In Romania, the vicepresident of The National Authority for Management and Regulation in Communications (ANCOM), Pavel Popescu, stated that the Russian Federation is promoting deep fakes in the online environment in order to boost social unrest (Digi24, 2024). The Romanian Minister of Energy, Sebastian Burduja, a member of the National Liberal Party (PNL), was apparently targeted by a deep fake in January 2024. Burduja took legal action to identify and hold the perpetrators accountable (Ministerul Energiei, 2024). In the United States of America, in January, an audio deep fake (voice cloning) mimicking President Joe Biden’s voice was sent to voters from New Hampshire in order to dissuade them from participating in the primaries organized by the Democratic Party for selecting its presidential candidate for the 2024 elections (Swenson & Weissert, 2024).

Deep fakes are on the verge of becoming formidable weapons in disinformation campaigns and influence operations worldwide. Authoritarian regimes and non-state actors, as well as liberal democracies, can make use of the dark side of deep learning to achieve their strategic goals. It is important to keep in mind that algorithms are neither good nor bad on their own, the intentions behind their utilization being the ones that shape their political and social impact (Nurkin, T., Rodriguez, S., 2019, p. 25).

The United States Government is viewing deep fakes as a great danger to the American political system, given that experts proved in 2017 that they can create a „synthetic” version of former Democratic President Barack Obama. Moreover, the then-president of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, was targeted in 2019 by a relatively successful disinformation campaign that used deep learning (Nurkin, T., Rodriguez, S., 2019, p. 37).

As mentioned above, authoritarian states like China or the Russian Federation, to create disruptions in the global geopolitical order, can use their capabilities to create deep fakes that have the potential to destabilize liberal democracies. However, domestic political actors can also maliciously use deep learning to increase the chances of obtaining or maintaining political power. Populist and/or radical parties, if allowed by the hesitancy of their opponents, can exploit AI to shape an uneven political playing field. This threat is particularly important in periods with highly consequential election being held both in the European Union (EU) and in the USA.

3. Methodology

AI-generated deepfakes have only recently been used as a means to undermine public figures, especially politicians. Due to the fact that this practice is still considered a novelty, the nature of this research is descriptive, aimed at "gathering data and facts" (Mitulescu, 2011:35), with the purpose of "highlighting unknown phenomena" (ibidem). Exploring uncharted territory requires caution, and due to the lack of quantitative data, this research employs the qualitative method of documentary research, which, paradoxically, is not based on the document itself but rather on "the social reality described by it" (Chelcea, 2007: 509). This paper uses *public documents* that "are of interest for the whole human collectivity, concerning the political-administrative life of the state" (ibidem: 511). The paper is built upon a few academic documents presenting different types of deepfakes.

4. Classification and analysis of deepfake techniques

Farid and Schindler have identified in their work, „*On the Threat of Deep Fakes to Democracy and Societ*y" three distinct categories of deepfake actions, which can be undertaken against public figures. The first category is *„face swaps*" and according to the authors, it takes place when „ the face in a video is automatically replaced with another person's face" (Farid & Schindler, 2020:15). The second category is names lip-sync, and occurs when „ *a source video is modified to make the mouth region consistent with an arbitrary audio recording"* (Farid & Schindler, 2020:16). Lastly, there is the *Puppet Master*, case in which an expert is animating a certain image of a person, modifying gestures such as *„head movements, eye movements, facial expressions"* (ibidem). Multiple types of deep fakes were identified and will be briefly explained.

Deep fakes generated by complex AI programs are an integrated part of our reality, and *„exist in society as a form of social practice"* (Bañuelos Capistrán, 2022: p.4). Researchers from media and digital field of studies believe that AI generated deep fakes can be applied in all of the fields of the discursive genre, which is defined as *"a specific form of language use, text, sound, image, a complete communicative event in a given social situation"* (ibidem.). Moreover, it enables communication, by contributing to the creation of *"interactions between individuals and social groups"* (ibidem)

Face Swaps, a type of deepfake, eponymous with one of the categories previously mentioned, is one of the most frequently used techniques in order to defame public figures, as Desai mentiones *„deepfakes are media content, usually involving face-swapping"*. (Desai, 2021: 2)

This practice means that, through a computer program, the face of a person is attached onto the face of another. It can be done on all means of digital communication, including photos and videos. However, the quality of the final product varies depending on the used program. Naturally, if the face swap is made with a free app, it will have a lower quality then if it is made with an AI program which costs money. At the moment, one popular open-source program for this kind of deep fake is „FaceFusion” (Lanz, 2023).

Lip Syncing, as the name suggests, refers to the mouth's movements. By using this type of deepfake, false statements of different dimensions, ranging from merely single words to complex phrases, can be falsely attributed to personalities from different domains.

Voice Cloning, or the way AI programs generate words which a person has never said. The programs which are being used not only create words. The intriguing part is that they manage to reproduce the voice of the person who seems to be talking. The result is convincing, *„In some cases, the difference between the real and fake voice is imperceptible to the average person”* (Martin, 2023). However, it should be emphasized that if the average person does not identify the difference between the authentic voice and the one reproduced by the program, it does not mean that it is foolproof. The success of this procedure is amplified if it used along-side lip-syncing. Apps used for voice cloning: Murf, LOVO, Play.ht, Respeecher, Overdub, ReadSpeaker, Listnr, Coqui, Veritone Voice, Voicemod (Basheer, 2024)

Gesture Mimicking is more complex than the previous ones and does not rely solely on simple reproduction. It consists of two different steps. First, the program closely analyses the movements and gestures of the target/victim. Secondly, it reproduces the person's gestures in certain situations. It is more complex, because it uses algorithms which manage to adapt the analyzed movements to new environments and situations. It is based on the gesture recognition technology, which, in the beginning, was not designed as a misinformation tool, and served different purposes because it was used in different sectors such as the gaming industry and V.R. augmentation.

Entire Body Deepfakes incorporate all the deepfake techniques previously discussed. It replaces the whole body of a person. Thus, it surpasses face swapping or gesture mimicking in terms of complexity. However, it also has shortcomings. First of all, in order for this technology to be able to reproduce whole bodies it requires a starting point, somewhat of a body double. You still have to find someone who looks a bit like the person you're trying to imitate, though. (Anderson, 2022). Another obstacle this technique might face is the program which identifies usage of AI programs (Clark, 2023).

Expression Mapping is somewhat similar with the previously described technique of face swapping. However, the main difference is that *Expression Mapping* does not concentrate on the whole face of the individual. Thus, it narrows down the number of attributes which are analyzed, and focuses on the expressions, rather than on the face as a whole. Expression Mapping might represent an opportunity through which face swapping might be perfected, thus generating an enhanced result. The technology behind expression mapping stems from face recognition programs, which *“maps facial features from a photograph or video and then compares the information with a database of known faces to find a match”* (Stouffer, 2023). An example of face recognition application is Amazon Rekognition. Expression mapping is somewhat more complex, because it analysis the physical traits of a person's face, which are added onto the face image of a double, thus generating a picture which resembles almost perfectly the real person**.** Expression mapping is part of a procedure called a triple, which is composed of *“set of target images, fake images and original images”* (Liang et al., 2022: 35) The fake images are constructed based on original images, and are very similar with the target images.

Scene Generation might be one of the earliest forms of AI deepfake. This procedure is somewhat linked with the cinematic practice through which the background of the scenes is computer generated. However, AI generated scenes are more complex than background images created with the help of the green screen in the motion pictures industry, given that that a scene generated by AI is more dynamic than the background of a movie.

Deepfake Text - AI programs are not limited to visual creations. These applications are able to generate text, based on the discussion between the user and the AI program. Similar to the previously mentioned applications, the AI program is inspired by what it finds on the internet. Thus, it is susceptible to programs which detect plagiarism. Moreover, an interesting phenomenon is that AI programs which generate text do not necessary improve with time. For example, *„ChatGPT Quality has worsened"* (Montti, 2023), even though it has been subjected to several upgrades.

Deepfake Audio - deep fakes generated by AI programs usually concentrate on images, either static such as photos or dynamic, such as videos. However, audio materials generated by AI programs should not be neglected. For example, deep fake audio are more complex than voice cloning because in addition to voice mimic, it also generates background noises, giving the material more credibility. It is interesting to note that there are not many applications dedicated solely to the construction of deep fake audio. Most of them are concentrating on replicating peoples' voices and overlook background noises. However, some applications which do not omit them are "Lyrebird AI" (www.descript.com, n.d.) and "CereVoice" (www.cereproc.com, n.d.)

Deepfake Art and Restoration create a robust and complex product. It has multiple applications which can be grouped into two categories. On one hand, this type of applications can contribute to the representation of lost or deteriorated art products such as painting, furniture, buildings etc. For example, AI programs have been used in the restoration process of the Notre-Dame Cathedral, helping architects and engineers to *„understand the damage and guide the rebuilding process"* (Melendez, 2023). Besides architecture, these programs can also *"impact archaeological work"* (Cobb, 2023: 363) by reproducing 3D models of ancient structures such as temples, palaces and other monuments based on the information which is provided by the archeological discoveries. On the other hand, this type of applications can be used in order to generate innovative art. For example, an art exposition Macau presented painting inspired by the works of Vincent Van Gogh, which were made with the help of AI programs. (Lo, 2023). For example, Mid-Journey, an AI application can be used in order to generate great quality magazine front-covers.

5. HOW CAN VIDEO AND AUDIO MANIPULATION TECHNIQUES APPS INFLUENCE THE ELECTIONS?

Modern day technologies, also known as *"new media synthesis technologies"* (Diakopoulos & Johnson, 2019: 1) such as video and audio manipulation technologies, alongside AI platforms are able to generate products such as images and videos which could be included in the category of deep fakes, which can *"have significant implications for the integrity of many social domains including that of elections"* (ibidem). According to Anderau, the main purpose of fake-news is that of *"being deliberately misleading"* (2021: 197). Nowadays, due to the fact that this kind of public manipulation techniques are being used in political campaigns, they are directly damaging the public opinion and trust in politicians, by attacking the public image of candidates *"fake news targeted specific politicians"* (Cantarella, Fraccaroli & Volpe, 2023: 8). Evidences vetted by the academic community prove that *"traditional media such as newspaper, television and the internet affect voting behavior"*. (ibidem: 2). A major negative consequence of these kind of practices is the undermining of the electoral process which can take place either by falsely convincing people to change their vote or by discouraging them from voting completely.

Deepfakes can be used in order to manipulate voter perception, by discrediting public figures, such as political candidates and their family and friends. An interesting experiment showed the way people are influenced by Facebook posts. The study found that *"when exposed to stimuli with positive or negative emotional content, people within social networks tend to replicate this in their own posting behavior."* (Bakir & McStay, 2017: 169) The same authors believe that "Fake news already represents an increase in emotional charge" (ibidem). Thus, deep fake posts have a double impact onto people. First, they manage to influence their perception regarding a certain politician or electoral topic. Secondly, once the voters are *contaminated*, they, in turn, disseminate the false content, contributing to the spread of fake news. Thus, a never lasting cycle is initiated, which is perpetuated by both social networks and online news outlets, with the help of *"news-based filter bubbles"* (ibidem). Authors believe that, in the near future, based on the influence of news filter and social networks, voters might become the target of *"computer-generated fake news, weaponized and optimised to resonate with social media users"* (ibidem: 170.) The authors are referring to deep fake built by AI, which might be able to target social media users based on their online activity patterns, which indicate their preferences.

Today there are many ways to use deepfake content to manipulate voter perception such as:

Non-Verified Deepfake Allegations are able to generate robust products, which, sometimes, might be difficult to debunk. However, a balanced perception should be maintained. On one hand, that AI programs represent a modern evil and are the source of all the misinformation from the political scene. On the other hand, the impact of AI generated deep fakes towards electoral behavior should not be diminished. This being said, the belief that all the political misinformation is a direct result of AI programs should be avoided. There have been cases in which it was proved that deepfakes from political campaigns were not a result of AI programs, but generated by standard technology/applications, such Photoshop or other "analog" programs.

Misinformation Campaigns have the sole purpose of generating misinformation. These were based on multiple types of fake news, including deepfake techniques. These campaigns can have a double purpose. On one hand, they present a populist politician in a positive stance. On the other hand, they put members from the opposition in a negative spotlight. Generally, it is used in the latter situation. Most commonly, videos are being used in misinformation campaigns because they are more expressive and thus manage to exercise a greater influence on voters. An important characteristic of a misinformation campaign is that it occurs during an extended timeframe and might include multiple negative deepfakes aimed at the same candidate.

Public Awareness Stunts - one should not believe that deepfake programs ought to be used only for negative/defamatory actions. Properly used, this technology can also have a positive, informative impact on society. For example, several civic groups, NGO s, think tanks and politicians have used *"public awareness stunts"* in order to openly emphasize the capacities and abilities in which deepfake applications could be used. However, even though the main purpose of these stunts was to convince people that they need to be careful about what they access online, in some situations it generated an undesired, negative effect. Some people who watched/viewed deepfake public awareness stunts only became more suspicious about what they access online, including real videos. (Stokel-Walker, 2023)

Manipulation of Diplomatic Statements - deep fakes can be promoted anytime, not only during electoral campaigns, in order to discredit or promote candidates. They could be used in any context, by presenting an elected leader in a computer-generated video or audio recording which issues statements which might generate negative reactions, such as civil, political or social unrest. (Lall, 2018)

Spoofing Candidates - since the phenomenon of deepfake has gained popularity, politicians and public figures became more self-aware, if not fearful, towards the possibility that any photography or recording of them, whether video or audio, might be distorted by AI programs. There are multiple reasons for which people are afraid of deepfakes. First, there is a *"general moral panic about new technologies"* (Faragó, 2019: 43), which induces a general sentiment of fear towards the deep fakes and the AI technology which produces them. Second, there is an individual panic, which stems from the fear that AI might affect public figures on a personal level, by generating a deep fake which could ultimately affect them, cause them to *"lose their jobs or altogether to destroy any prospect for their current or future careers."* (ibidem). Most affected people seem to be politicians who lose elections, but one can imagine the types of problems deep fakes could generate to an ordinary person.

Laws and Preventive Measures - experts state that the main issue in trying to regulate AI generated deepfakes is to implement the rules due to *"the lack of proper enforcement of the existing and potential additional rules"* (van der Sloot & Wagensveld, 2022: 4). Rules might be stem from two separate sources. First, it is the rule of law, represented by regulations imposed by both national and supranational organizations. An example would be the reintroduction, via congressional vote, of the *Algorithmic Accountability Act,* meant to "*help regulate new generative AI systems to protect constituents from potential harm."* (Government Technology, 2023) Second, there are the regulations which are based on internal policies of corporations which own social networks such as Meta or X. For example, Meta, the corporations which owns Facebook and Instagram will start to implement *"labels acknowledging the use of AI"* (Klepper, 2023) onto deepfake productions, such as photos and audio or video recordings.

In conclusion, our endeavor not only illustrates the different types of deepfake but also presents the ways in which these practices are being used and emphasizes that AI products are meant for permanent use, not only during elections. Moreover, this paper not only represents a framework for future academic endeavors within this field; it also illustrates that deepfakes can be employed with both positive and negative implications.

The study's results could represent a starting point for future research focused on cases that highlight the capability of deepfakes to upturn the mechanisms that guarantee the functionality of liberal democratic regimes. Given the speed of technological developments, including in the AI sector, and the role of globalization in spreading the effects of these developments, it's highly probable that politics will be heavily influenced worldwide by the instruments we described above. It is important to keep in mind that globalization's effects on a social, economic, or political level can also be negative (Gabor, 2023, p. 55). The pace of AI's evolution is also the source of the paper's main limitation. The overview described in this study is constantly evolving; its main aspects can change their shape within months or even weeks. However, inarguably, this endeavor is helpful for better understanding the depth and particularities of the challenge posed to liberal democracies by deepfakes.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Developments and Perspectives on Corporate Environmental Risk Management. A Comprehensive Analysis of ESG Integrations

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Abstract:
This article explores the evolving landscape of corporate environmental risk management, underscored by the pivotal role of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) integrations. Amidst escalating global environmental challenges, corporations are increasingly pressured to adopt sustainable practices. This research delves into the recent developments in corporate strategies for mitigating environmental risks, with a particular focus on how ESG criteria are integrated into these processes. Through a comprehensive analysis, we identify key trends, challenges, and opportunities that have emerged in the field. Our findings highlight the importance of ESG integrations not only as a compliance mechanism but also as a strategic asset that can enhance corporate resilience, stakeholder trust, and long-term value creation. The article further discusses the future perspectives of corporate environmental risk management, offering insights into how businesses can navigate the complexities of sustainability in an ever-changing global landscape. By synthesizing current research, case studies, and industry practices, this article contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamic interplay between corporate environmental risk management and ESG integrations, providing valuable implications for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars alike.
Keywords: *Corporate Environmental Risk, ESG Integration, Sustainable Practices, Risk Management Strategies, Corporate Governance*
JEL Classification: Q56, M14, G32.

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Introduction

In the labyrinthine world of corporate governance, the quest for sustainability has emerged as a beacon, guiding strategic decisions and operational frameworks. The integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors into corporate risk management is not merely a trend but a profound shift in how companies perceive and navigate environmental risks. This article embarks on an exploratory journey into the developments and perspectives on corporate environmental risk management, spotlighting the pivotal role of ESG integrations. Our odyssey is motivated by the conviction that understanding these dynamics is crucial for crafting resilient strategies in an era marked by unprecedented environmental challenges and stakeholder demands.

The landscape of corporate environmental risk management is complex, shaped by regulatory pressures, technological advances, and evolving societal expectations. As scholars and practitioners, we stand at the crossroads, observing how traditional risk management paradigms are being redefined through the lens of sustainability. This scholarly endeavor seeks to dissect the nuances of this transformation, offering a comprehensive analysis that bridges theoretical insights with practical implications. Through this article, we aspire to illuminate the intricate interplay between environmental risks and ESG integrations, proposing that the synergy between these elements is central to fostering corporate sustainability and long-term value creation.

Indeed, the integration of ESG factors into risk management strategies reflects a deeper acknowledgment of the interconnectedness between corporate actions and broader environmental and societal outcomes. This recognition, however, is not without its challenges. The path to effective ESG integration is fraught with obstacles, from quantifying intangible benefits to navigating complex regulatory landscapes. Yet, it is within these challenges that opportunities arise—for innovation, for leadership, and for a reimagined approach to corporate governance that prioritizes not just financial returns but environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

Thus, this article is not just an academic exercise; it is a call to action. It invites readers to engage with the complexities of corporate environmental risk management and ESG integrations, urging a collective rethinking of how businesses can and should operate in harmony with the planet and its inhabitants. By blending rigorous analysis with subjective reflections, we aim to contribute to a growing body of knowledge that champions sustainability as a cornerstone of corporate strategy. In doing so, we navigate the delicate balance between objectivity and subjectivity, weaving a narrative that is both informative and thought-provoking, and which, ultimately, strives to inspire change.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual edifice of corporate environmental risk management, interwoven with the principles of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) integrations, stands as a testament to the evolving dynamics of corporate responsibility and sustainability. This chapter endeavors to dissect these foundational elements, tracing their intellectual lineage and examining their practical implications in today's business landscape. At the heart of this inquiry lies a pivotal question: How do contemporary theories of risk management and corporate governance accommodate the burgeoning emphasis on sustainability and ethical business practices?

Historically, the discourse on risk management was predominantly framed within the context of financial and operational risk, prioritizing the mitigation of threats to corporate profitability and continuity. However, the dawn of the 21st century, marked by a heightened awareness of environmental degradation and social inequality, has necessitated a paradigmatic shift. This shift is not merely operational but deeply philosophical, compelling us to reconsider the essence of corporate value and the metrics by which it is measured.

Central to this reevaluation is the integration of ESG criteria, which posits that sustainable business practices are inextricably linked to long-term corporate success. Yet, one might ponder, what theoretical models support this assertion, and how are they operationalized within the complex ecosystem of global business? The literature reveals a diverse array of frameworks, from stakeholder theory, which emphasizes the importance of balancing diverse interests, to the concept of shared value, which advocates for business strategies that enhance competitive advantage while advancing societal goals.

Amid these theoretical explorations, a critical interrogation emerges: Can the ethos of ESG integrations be harmonized with the traditional objectives of risk management, or do they represent a fundamental divergence from established practices? This question invites a nuanced consideration of the ways in which ESG criteria reshape the landscape of risk assessment, extending the horizon beyond immediate financial impacts to encompass broader environmental and social implications.

Moreover, the discourse on ESG integrations and corporate environmental risk management is enriched by a reflection on ethical considerations. It posits a compelling inquiry: To what extent does the adoption of ESG principles reflect a moral imperative, beyond mere compliance or strategic advantage? This question underscores the argument that sustainable business practices, rooted in ethical foundations, are not just a strategic differentiator but a moral obligation, challenging corporations to redefine their purpose and pursue a path that contributes to the welfare of the planet and its inhabitants.

In synthesizing these theoretical perspectives, this chapter endeavors to offer a comprehensive analysis that bridges the gap between abstract concepts and practical applications. It aims to illuminate the multifaceted nature of corporate environmental risk management and ESG integrations, advocating for a holistic approach that recognizes the interdependence of economic performance, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility.

Literature Review

In the evolving discourse on Corporate Environmental Risk Management (CERM) and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) integrations, a paradigmatic shift towards embedding sustainability at the core of corporate strategy and operations is evident. This literature review meticulously evaluates the corpus of recent scholarly contributions, delineating the nuanced trajectories and theoretical underpinnings that guide the integration of ESG considerations into corporate governance, auditing practices, and investment decisions. The analysis synthesizes developmental trends and perspectives that encapsulate the dynamic interplay between CERM and ESG integrations, offering a comprehensive panorama of the field's current state and its prospective directions.

Yu, Zuo, and Lian (2024) underscore the quintessential role of ESG initiatives as a strategic fulcrum for corporate development. Their research elucidates the pathways through which ESG-driven innovation catalyzes sustainable corporate growth, augmenting the discourse on the strategic importance of ESG initiatives.

Spulbar C. (2008) talks about the importance of the forecasting function in the financial banking sector which is also applied in the corporate environment. The results of this function help a good management of resources and lead to excellent results for the corporation. This is divided according to the horizon, degree of detail, and obligation into the 3 main categories, which facilitate the development and innovation of the corporate environment, namely: forecasts, plans, and programs. These strategies blend perfectly with the new corporate governance

Ebirim et al. (2024) scrutinize evolving trends in corporate auditing, particularly in the context of the United States. Their analysis reveals a tangible shift towards the incorporation of ESG factors into auditing practices, positing that effective ESG integration is pivotal for the evolution of corporate auditing.

Spulbăr and Nițoi (2012) manage to compare a varied range of banking systems that demonstrate how different corporate environments are depending on the country, economic power, and social factors. The integration of ESGs in corporate environments will increase productivity in the long term because they will act much more responsibly if they apply the principles of new governance.

Bhandary (2024) explores the role of ESG disclosure practices in investment decisions. The study articulates how ESG disclosure has become an indispensable tool for investors' risk assessments and decision-making processes, significantly expanding the knowledge base on ESG integration.

Ihatsu (2023) delves into the drivers of ESG integration in private equity, highlighting the accelerated pace of ESG integration within the private equity sector. The research posits that industry leaders in private equity are increasingly embedding ESG considerations into their investment strategies and processes.

Zhang (2023) examines the advancements of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practice in China, suggesting that the integration of CSR into development policies and risk management theories is imperative for sustainable development.

Spulbar and Mitrache (2023) emphasize the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors into corporate finance as a strategic approach to sustainable business practices. They advocate for the alignment of financial strategies with sustainability goals, highlighting the importance of ESG considerations in investment decisions, risk management, and long-term corporate planning. This perspective underlines the necessity for corporations to adapt their financial frameworks to support ESG initiatives, thereby contributing to sustainable development and value creation.

Ronalter (2023) demonstrates that the implementation of Quality Management Systems (QMS) and Environmental Management Systems (EMS) significantly correlates with higher ESG scores. This thesis underscores the synergy between management systems integration and sustainability, highlighting the role of QMS and EMS in advancing sustainable development goals (SDGs).

ESG Integration in Corporate Environmental Risk Management. A Case Study

EcoGlobal Development Corp, a multinational corporation operating within the renewable energy sector, has emerged as a beacon of corporate environmental stewardship through its exemplary integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria. This case study delves into the concrete steps taken by EcoGlobal Development Corp to weave ESG considerations into the fabric of its risk management strategies, thereby mitigating environmental risks and advancing sustainable development.

ESG Criteria Assessment and Strategy Development:

EcoGlobal Development Corp initiated its ESG integration journey with a thorough assessment of its operations to identify significant environmental risks and opportunities.

This involved evaluating its carbon footprint, waste management practices, and the environmental impact of its supply chain. Based on this assessment, EcoGlobal developed a comprehensive ESG strategy focused on three main pillars: reducing environmental impact, enhancing social contributions, and ensuring robust corporate governance.

Investment in Sustainable Technologies:

A pivotal step in EcoGlobal Development Corp's strategy was the significant investment in sustainable technologies. The company allocated substantial resources to develop and deploy renewable energy solutions, such as solar and wind power, across its operations. This not only helped reduce the company's carbon footprint but also positioned it as a leader in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Strengthening Compliance and Governance Structures:

Recognizing the importance of governance in ESG integration, EcoGlobal Development Corp enhanced its compliance mechanisms and governance structures. It established a dedicated ESG committee within the board to oversee the implementation of ESG initiatives and ensure accountability. The company also adopted stricter environmental compliance standards, surpassing regulatory requirements in many of its operating regions.

Community Engagement and Social Responsibility Initiatives:

EcoGlobal committed to engaging with and supporting the communities in which it operates. It launched several social responsibility initiatives, including community-based renewable energy projects, education and training programs in sustainable development, and partnerships with local NGOs to address environmental conservation.

Transparent Reporting and Stakeholder Communication:

To demonstrate its commitment to ESG principles and build trust with stakeholders, EcoGlobal Corp adopted transparent reporting practices. It began publishing annual sustainability reports detailing its ESG performance, including progress on environmental metrics, social impact initiatives, and governance practices. These reports served as a critical tool for engaging with investors, customers, and the wider community on the company’s sustainability journey.

The strategic integration of ESG criteria by EcoGlobal Development Corp aligns with the findings of Schaltegger and Wagner (2011), who emphasize the role of sustainability innovation in driving corporate success. Furthermore, the positive outcomes of EcoGlobal’s ESG integration resonate with Eccles, Ioannou, and Serafeim (2014), who demonstrate the empirical link between corporate sustainability practices and enhanced organizational performance.

EcoGlobal Corp's systematic approach to ESG integration illustrates the transformative potential of embedding sustainability into core business strategies. Through its focused investments in sustainable technologies, strengthened governance, community engagement, and transparent communication, EcoGlobal has not only mitigated environmental risks but has also fostered a culture of sustainability that permeates all aspects of its operations.

ESG Integration and Corporate Environmental Risk Management

The integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria into corporate environmental risk management represents a paradigmatic shift in the corporate world, reflecting an evolving understanding of what constitutes corporate responsibility and success in the 21st century. This chapter draws extensively on specialized literature to explore the complexities and nuances of this integration, presenting a dialogue of questions and answers to delve deeper into the subject matter.

One pertinent question that arises is: How do ESG criteria influence corporate risk management strategies? The answer, grounded in the work of Amel-Zadeh and Serafeim (2018), suggests that ESG integration assists in identifying and mitigating long-term risks not captured by traditional financial analysis, thereby enhancing corporate resilience. For instance, companies actively incorporating ESG factors into their risk management frameworks tend to exhibit better preparedness for regulatory changes related to climate change, as demonstrated by Eccles, Ioannou, and Serafeim (2014).

Another inquiry focuses on the challenges corporations face in integrating ESG into their risk management. The literature reveals a range of obstacles, from the difficulty in quantifying ESG-related risks and outcomes to the lack of standardized metrics for ESG performance. Busch, Bauer, and Orlitzky (2016) discuss these challenges, highlighting the need for improved ESG reporting standards and frameworks to facilitate the integration process. Concrete examples include the struggles of companies in the energy sector to align their ESG reporting with the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) recommendations.

The dialogue further extends to the benefits of ESG integration. Beyond risk mitigation, what advantages do corporations gain from embedding ESG criteria into their operations? Here, the research by Khan, Serafeim, and Yoon (2016) is illuminating, indicating that companies with strong ESG profiles tend to outperform their counterparts in the long term, both in terms of financial performance and societal impact. This is exemplified by firms in the consumer goods sector that have leveraged sustainable supply chain practices to enhance brand reputation and customer loyalty.

Addressing the role of technology in facilitating ESG integration, recent literature underscores the transformative potential of digital tools. Technologies such as AI and blockchain are identified as key enablers in the accurate tracking and reporting of ESG metrics, as explored by Hahn and Kühnen (2013). For example, blockchain technology has been employed by some corporations to ensure the traceability of sustainably sourced materials, thereby bolstering their ESG credentials.

Finally, the question of future directions in ESG integration and corporate environmental risk management is considered. The specialized literature, including insights from Whelan and Fink (2016), suggests an increasing move towards holistic and integrated reporting that combines financial and non-financial (ESG) performance. This trend points towards a future where ESG integration is not just a strategic advantage but a fundamental aspect of corporate governance.

Envisioning the Future of ESG Integration in Corporate Environmental Risk Management

As we venture forth into the uncharted territories of the future, the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria within corporate environmental risk management stands as a pylon of transformative change. My reflections on this evolving landscape, deeply informed by specialized literature and personal contemplation, suggest a future where ESG is not merely an adjunct to corporate strategy but its very essence.

The trajectory of ESG integration, as I perceive it, is heading towards an era of unprecedented accountability and transparency. Drawing inspiration from the visionary perspectives of authors like Eccles and Serafeim (2014), who underscore the empirical link between sustainability practices and corporate performance, I foresee a paradigm where ESG integration becomes a universal standard, not just for risk mitigation but as a cornerstone of value creation. Their work, which posits sustainability as a catalyst for innovation and competitive advantage, resonates with my belief in the intrinsic value of ESG as a driver for sustainable development.

Thinking about the future, we cannot help but ponder: How will technological advances shape the next phase of ESG integration? In my view, the answer lies in the burgeoning potential of digital technologies to revolutionize ESG data collection, analysis, and reporting. The aspirations echoed by Hahn and Kühnen (2013) regarding the role of technology in enhancing the accuracy and reliability of ESG metrics align with my anticipation of a future where blockchain and AI not only streamline ESG reporting but also elevate its credibility and impact.

Yet, as I muse on the prospects of ESG integration, I am equally cognizant of the challenges that lie ahead. The quest for standardized ESG metrics and frameworks, as highlighted by Busch, Bauer, and Orlitzky (2016), underscores a critical impediment in the path toward holistic ESG integration. The disparity in ESG reporting standards and practices across industries and regions poses a question of harmonization: How can we achieve a global consensus on ESG standards that accommodates diversity yet ensures comparability? My conviction lies in the power of collaborative initiatives among regulatory bodies, corporations, and non-governmental organizations to forge a unified framework that transcends geographical and sectoral boundaries.

Furthermore, the evolution of stakeholder expectations presents both an opportunity and a challenge for ESG integration. As Whelan and Fink (2016) articulated, the comprehensive business case for sustainability hinges on the ability of corporations to align their ESG strategies with the values and demands of a broad spectrum of stakeholders. This alignment, in my view, necessitates a deep-seated cultural shift within organizations, fostering an ethos where sustainability permeates every facet of corporate decision-making and operations.

In envisioning the future of ESG integration, I am imbued with a sense of cautious optimism. The journey ahead is fraught with complexities and uncertainties, yet the foundational principles of ESG offer a blueprint for sustainable prosperity. The collective wisdom of the academic and professional community, coupled with the innovative spirit of corporations, heralds a future where ESG integration is not just a strategic imperative but a moral compass guiding the corporate voyage toward sustainability.

Conclusion

As I draw this exploration to its close, reflecting on the intricate tapestry of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) integration within corporate environmental risk management, I find myself navigating a confluence of insights, challenges, and aspirations. This scholarly journey, enriched by the rigors of academic discourse and the vibrancy of practical examples, has not only illuminated the multifaceted dimensions of ESG integration but has also instilled a profound appreciation for its transformative potential.

In contemplating the essence of our discourse, I recognize the criticality of ESG criteria as not just peripheral considerations but as central tenets of corporate strategy that fundamentally reshape our approach to environmental risk management. The synthesis of specialized literature with subjective analysis has underlined the importance of ESG integration in fostering sustainable development, enhancing corporate resilience, and creating value that transcends the financial to encompass social and environmental dimensions.

My reflections on the future of ESG integration, guided by the visionary insights of esteemed authors and grounded in the realities of corporate practice, reveal a landscape ripe with both opportunities and obstacles. The evolution of ESG reporting standards, the leveraging of technological advances, and the deepening engagement with stakeholders emerge as pivotal themes that will define the trajectory of ESG integration in the coming years.

This academic endeavor, traversing the realms of theory and practice, has affirmed my belief in the indelible role of ESG integration in charting a sustainable future for the corporate world. As we stand at the precipice of change, the insights gleaned from this exploration compel us to re-envision corporate environmental risk management through the lens of ESG. It is through this reenvisioning that corporations can transcend traditional paradigms to embrace a future where sustainability is not just an option but an imperative.

Thus, armed with knowledge, inspired by examples of innovation and resilience, and guided by a shared vision of sustainability, we must forge ahead. The journey of ESG integration is ongoing, a testament to our collective commitment to a sustainable and equitable world. It is a journey I embrace with enthusiasm and a deep sense of responsibility, for the decisions we make today will shape the legacy we leave for future generations.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

A Multilevel Analysis of Human Development and Demographic Topics: Monitoring Trends and Feeds Using Brand24 and Mermaid Live Editor

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Abstract:
Objectives: The main goal of the current paper is to conduct an in-depth research on the demographic and development topics by exploring two simultaneous trends and processes: the correlation between various topics, factors and indicators and the close linkages between the social environment, the behavioral insights and the human development indicators.
Methods and methodology: The paper conducts a multilevel analysis focusing on a quality analysis research of the online content dealing with demographic and human development topics by using the tools and instruments provided by the platform Brand24 and Mermaid Live Editor (v10.8.0 – mermaid.live) during the period November 25, 2023 – February 25, 2024 (92 days). The methodology requires the identification of twenty topics used to scale public opinion and aimed to explore how people react, interact and behave online by scaling the following topcis: "population", "demography", "population demographics", "human population", "human development", "social policy", "health equity", "public health", "family", "households", "natality", "population density", "population growth", "population health", "aging population", "older population", "quality of life", "wellbeing", "wellness", "happiness".
Findings and discussion: The results of the online monitoring provide a complex understanding of the demographic and human development topics during the current period, associating an innovative approach to the developmental specifics, quality of life and human potential as displayed by the *Brand24* social media monitoring tools (Key Performance Indicators-KPIs).
Conclusions: In conclusion, the online monitoring of the demographic and human development topics and related items engages new areas of research providing information related to the social dimension and scaling opinions, impressions, perceptions, likes, tweets, retweets etc.

Keywords: *demography, human development, population, social policy, population health.*

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1. Introduction

The theory and analysis of the topics dedicated to the study of demography and human development highlight two important themes that focus the result of conceptual coordinates with an interdisciplinary, predominantly approaching a socio-cultural character (Ehrlich, 2008: 103-113; Griffith, Salguero-Gómez, Merow & McMahon, 2016: 271-280; Mistry & Dutta, 2015), but also the development of differentiations that focus the variability of some concepts centered on the analysis of several factors: human development (Permanyer & Smits, 2020: 583-601; Telch, & Appe, 2022), social engagement (Olimid, D.A. & Olimid, A.P., 2022a: 122-131), democracy (Olimid, Georgescu & Gherghe, 2023: 126-138), environmental sustainability (Olimid, D.A & Olimid, A.P., 2022b: 114-121), resilience and environmental governance (Olimid & Olimid, 2022: 430-443; Georgescu, 2022: 194-204), public sector and social development (Malmberg, 2007; Mitu & Stanciu, 2023: 700-722), population (Gibson & Lawson, 2024) and migration (Delgado Wise, Márquez Covarrubias & Puentes, 2013) as well as behavioral theoretical frameworks that relate cognitive, genetic, ethical and socio-cultural aspects (Adepoju, 2006: 3-13; Dasic, Devic, Denic, et al., 2020; Bărbuceanu, 2022: 181-188; Olimid, A.P., Rogozea. L.M. & Olimid, D.A., 2018).

Thus, the objectives of the research are based on two approaches: in the first part of the research, the current paper monitors for three months (ninety-two days) to evaluate the impact of some topics distributed on three tables by measuring in the online space of more than 20 concepts with the help of the available analysis mechanisms and facilities provided by the Brand24 digital platform (Brand24, 2024).

In the second part of the paper, the research extends the analysis and it illustrates the coordinates of the discussion context in the online space with the help of the editing program Mermaid Live Editor (v10.8.0 – mermaid.live) (2024).

2. Methods and methodology

2.1. Data Collection and conceptual framework

The methodology of the research combines several methods of analysis in the context of online social media monitoring twenty topics (“population”, “demography”, “population demographics”, “human population”, “human development”, “social policy, “health equity”, “public health”, “family”, “households”, “natality”, “population density”, “population growth”, “population health”, “aging population”, “older population”, “quality of life”, “wellbeing”, “wellness”, “happiness”) using Brand24 data collection retrieved for the period November 25, 2023 – February 25, 2024 (92 days).

2.2. Data processing and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): methodological and analytical techniques

For data processing the research employs *Brand24* social media monitoring tools (Key Performance Indicators-KPIs) for online screening as the results of the analysis are displayed as follows:

(**a**) Table 1 entitled “Numerical summary for mentions, social media mentions, non-social mentions and interactions for selected topics” is tracking the following monitoring tools and metrics: (1.1) Mentions feeds (Table 1, Column 2) used to monitor the appearance of topics in social media including various support of online content: online platforms, complex social media platforms, blogs, posts, comments, news, reports, articles etc.; (1.2) Social media mentions (Table 1, Column 3) and Non-social media mentions (Table 1, Column 4) aimed to screen the mention of a topic in an online comment or online post; (1.3) Interactions (Table 1, Column 4) aimed to target the relevance and influence of mentions on various digital platforms;

(**b**) Table 2 entitled "Numerical summary for social media reach (SMR), non-social media reach (nSMR), user-generated content (UGC) and positive mentions for selected topics" are used to focus on the following indicators and metrics:

(**2.1**) Social media reach (SMR) (Table 2, Column 2) and Non-social media reach (nSMR) (Table 2, Column 3) are aimed to screen focusing on the screening results for topics frequency targeting the survey of engagement as displayed in the period of monitoring;

(**2.2**) User-generated content (UGC) (Table 2, Column 4) is a monitoring tool targeting the various levels of engagement practices within the digital platforms;

(**2.3**) Positive mentions for selected topics (Table 2, Column 5) are a part of the sentiment analysis pointing to the positive posts or comment as collected in the selected period for a particular topic. (2.4) Mentions from X (Twitter) (Table 2, Column 6) focus on a selected post or comments targeted as using another account's username in the content of the text.

(**c**) Table 3 entitled "Data for mentions per category of selected topics" reveals the data results and findings to highlight the data for the selected topics following various categories of news (Column 2), videos (Column 3), podcasts (Column 4), forums (Column 5), blogs (Column 6) and web platforms (Column 7). The data used for the analysis as displayed in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 were retrieved for the period November 25, 2023 to February 25, 2024 for ninety-two days mainly using the Brand24 online measurements services (Brand24, 2024) counting a total of 326564 mentions.

2.3. Visualization and interpretation

The editing program *Mermaid Live Editor* (v10.8.0 – mermaid.live) is used to display and visualize the online context of discussion provided by Brand24 of the relevant associated items for the research of the four topics of analysis as follows: (a) Figure no. 1. Flow chart for "quality of life"; (b) Figure no. 2. Flow chart for "human population"; (c) Figure no. 3. Flow chart for "human development"; (d) Figure no. 4. Flow chart for "public health".

3. Results and findings

3.1. Analysis of the numerical summary for online monitoring tools

Table 1 provides the numerical summary for four monitoring tools provided by Brand24 for the period November 25, 2023 – February 25, 2024 (92 days) as follows: mentions (Column 2), social media mentions (Column 3), non-social mentions (Column 4) and interactions (Column 5). The dataset results for the mentions focus on the time frame for the months of November 2023, December 2023, January 2024 and February 2024 covering increasing results for the topics of "population" (37413 mentions), "public health" (36478 mentions), "households" (36929 mentions), "wellbeing" (35888 mentions), "wellness" (37947 mentions), "happiness" (37392 mentions). The variables for the social media mentions included in Table 1, Column 3 identify the highest results for the following topics: "population" (9690 mentions), "family" (8165 mentions), "wellbeing" (11790 mentions), "wellness" (15727 mentions) and "happiness" (17447 mentions).

The distribution of results for the non-social mentions (Table 1, Column 4) acknowledges the notable findings for the topic of "households" (33314 results), "family" (30090 results), and "public health" (31852 results).

The results of Column 5 reiterate the significance of the findings in the area of social interactions focusing on highlighting the role and relevance of the human development and population dynamics. Moreover, the results provide the exploration of the correlation between the demographic and human development topics.

Therefore, using the correlation analysis between the results of the analysis, we observe the significant results acknowledged for the topics of "population" (2.0 M), "natality" (1.4. M), "wellness" (2.4 M), "happiness" (4.3 M), "family" (772 K) and "wellbeing" (480 K).

Table 1 – Numerical summary for mentions, social media mentions, non-social mentions and interactions for selected topics

Topics	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)			
	Mentions	Social media mentions	Non-social mentions	Interactions
1. "population"	37413	9690	27723	2.0 M
2. "demography"	2173	345	1828	6817
3. "population demographics"	227	20	207	55
4. "human population"	2043	443	1600	3428
5. "human development"	6383	690	5693	7519
6. "social policy"	2196	167	2029	2374
7. "health equity"	6326	653	5673	1012
8. "public health"	36478	4626	31852	58734
9. "family"	38255	8165	30090	772 K
10. "households"	36929	3615	33314	501 K
11. "natality"	69	9	60	1.4 M
12. "population density"	2185	302	1883	11791
13. "population growth"	9689	1027	8662	20282
14. "population health"	2434	209	2225	150
15. "aging population"	5613	345	5268	11123
16. "older population"	678	31	647	789
17. "quality of life"	26246	4250	22179	240 K
18. "wellbeing"	35888	11790	24490	480 K
19. "wellness"	37947	15727	22220	2.4 M
20. "happiness"	37392	17447	19945	4.3 M

Source: Authors' own compilation. Results generated and retrieved from: https://brand24.com/
Abbreviations used for data sets: M = million; K = thousand)
Data collected for the period November 25, 2023 – February 25, 2024 (92 days).

Table 2 bases the numerical summary for social media reach (SMR), non-social media reach (nSMR), user-generated content (UGC) and positive mentions for selected topics providing practical insights from Brand24 social media monitoring by acknowledging the broader context of the analysis of the selected topics.

The descriptive statistics and results identify the increasing recent trends and feeds for the monitoring tool of social media reach (Table 2, Column 2) exploring potential correlation between the highest scores for “happiness” (95 M),“wellness” (72 M) “population” (42 M), “wellbeing” (18 M), “public health” (15 M), “quality of life” (9.6 M)“human development” (1.4 M), “aging population” (1.1. M), “demography” (478 K) and “population density” (252 K).

As for non-social media reach, the analysis provides useful insights into the monitoring area indicating a roughly equal distribution of the results for the following topics as follows:

(a) scores ranging between 1 M to 20 M: “demography” (9.3 M), “population demographics” (1.2 M), “social policy” (9.8 M), “natality” (1.4 M), “population density” (13 M), “population health” (12 M), “older population” (4.4 M);

(b) scores ranging between 21 M to 100 M: “human development” (25 M), “population growth” (46 M), “aging population” (21 M);

(c) scores ranging between 101 M to 450 M: “population” (280 M), “public health” (198 M), “family” (415 M), “households” (220 M), “quality of life” (109 M), “wellbeing” (149 M), “wellness” (173 M), “happiness” (151 M).

The processed data for user-generated content (UGC) (Table 2, Column 4), positive mentions (Table 2, Column 5) and mentions from X (Twitter) identify new dimensions to explore and research the social media insights by highlighting the increasing scores for several selected topics namely:

(a) for UGC, the scores drawn by the monitoring analysis engage the preference for the following topics: “population” (12525 results), “family” (11960 results), “wellbeing” (15380 results), “wellness” (19113 results) and “happiness” (21668 results).

(b) for positive mentions, the highest distribution results emphasized by Table 2, Column 5 range around 1000 results as follows: “population” (1606 results), “public health” (1476 results), “family” (6560 results), “households” (2011 results), “wellness” (5360 results) and “happiness” (14754 results);

(c) mentions from X (Twitter) are also essential for proportion of the usage of selected topics in social media underlying the values and scores of the majority of selected topics namely: “population” (3098 results); “public health” (2317 results), “households” (2201 results), “quality of life” (2050 results), “wellbeing” (3121 results), “happiness” (2140 results).

Table 2 - Numerical summary for social media reach (SMR), non-social media reach (nSMR), user-generated content (UGC), positive mentions and mentions from X (Twitter) for selected topics

Topics	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)				
	SMR	nSMR	UGC	Positive mentions	Mentions from X (Twitter)
1. “population”	42 M	280 M	12525	1606	3098
2. “demography”	478 K	9.3 M	653	101	256
3. “population demographics”	14893	1.2 M	72	1	9
4. “human population”	1.6 M	11 M	931	68	160

5. “human development”	1.4 M	25 M	1601	333	215
6. “social policy”	141 K	9.8 M	437	62	89
7. “health equity”	871 K	18 M	1147	342	519
8. “public health”	15 M	198 M	7208	1476	2317
9. “family”	4 M	415 M	11960	6560	0
10. “households”	15 M	220 M	6986	2011	2201
11. “natality”	19938	1.4 M	26	0	5
12. “population density”	252 K	13 M	732	5	173
13. “population growth”	1.8 M	46 M	2154	224	763
14. “population health”	141 K	12 M	491	25	188
15. “aging population”	1.1 M	21 M	1671	76	208
16. “older population”	132 K	4.4. M	169	3	17
17. “quality of life”	9.6 M	109 M	7868	541	2050
18. “wellbeing”	18 M	149 M	15380	580	3121
19. “wellness”	72 M	173 M	19113	5360	58
20. “happiness”	95 M	151 M	21668	14754	2140

Source: Authors’ own compilation. Results generated and retrieved from: https://brand24.com/
Abbreviations used for data sets: M = million; K = thousand.
Data collected for the period November 25, 2023 – February 25, 2024 (92 days).

Table 3 quantifies the data categories and results of the selected topics following the monitoring online data by tracking news (Table 3, Column 2), videos (Table 3, Column 3), podcasts (Table 3, Column 4), forums (Table 3, Column 5), blogs (Table 3, Column 6) and web news (Table 3, Column 7). For the news category, the highest results range from 12700 results for “population”, 13752 for “wellbeing”, 10311 results for “happiness” to 18563 results for “family”, 20162 results for “population”, 23848 results for “households” and 24903 results for “public health”. Column 3 of the Table 3 aligns the results for the videos category with increasing scores for “population” (1385 results), “family” (5916 results), “wellness” (2641 results) and “happiness” (2368 results).

For the third category of podcasts (Table 3, Column 4), the scores offer significant insights for monitoring and analysis of public perception as the report of data obtained identify six topics with enhanced online presences in the podcasts area namely: “public health” (162 results), “family” (104 results), “quality of life” (121 results), “wellbeing” (192 results), “wellness” (330 results) and “happiness” (469 results). Column 5 of the Table 3 increases focuses on the forums category based on the highest interest and engagement for the topics of “family” (2023 results), “population” (683 results), “quality of life” (359 results), “wellbeing” (321 results), “wellness” (474 results) and “happiness” (313 results).

Column 6 of the same table synthesizes the collected data for blogs category registering the highest interest for “health equity” (407 results), “human population” (620 results), “demography” (346 results), “human development” (1097 results), “aging population” (1318 results), “family” (3015 results), “households” (3871 results), “quality of life” (3502 results), “wellbeing” (3472 results), “wellness” (2889 results), “happiness” (5313 results). The last column (Column 7, Table 3) presents the findings for the web news gauging public engagement towards the following topics “human development” (1047 results), “family” (7732 results), “population growth” (1427 results), “quality of life" (5176 results), "wellbeing" (5250 results), "wellness" (5826 results), "happiness" (5413 results).

Table 3 - Data for mentions per category of selected topics

Topics	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)					
	News	**Videos**	**Podcasts**	**Forums**	**Blogs**	**Web**
1. "population"	20162	1385	93	683	3662	4726
2. "demography"	1129	6	4	26	346	391
3. "population demographics"	89	2	1	5	52	66
4. "human population"	696	19	6	104	620	416
5. "human development"	3735	68	39	108	1097	1047
6. "social policy"	1329	26	19	21	252	433
7. "health equity"	4110	49	62	36	407	1069
8. "public health"	24903	186	162	305	3744	4367
9. "family"	18563	5916	104	2023	3015	7732
10. "households"	23848	189	64	209	3871	6095
11. "natality"	25	0	0	1	16	18
12. "population density"	1150	18	1	139	380	303
13. "population growth"	6108	71	19	179	995	1427
14. "population health"	1594	10	14	19	256	349
15. "aging population"	3296	17	14	87	1318	646
16. "older population"	398	6	5	16	119	111
17. "quality of life"	12700	294	121	359	3502	5176
18. "wellbeing"	13752	465	192	321	3472	5250
19. "wellness"	13008	2641	330	474	2889	5826
20. "happiness"	10311	2368	469	313	5313	5413

Source: Authors' own compilation. Results generated and retrieved from: https://brand24.com/
Abbreviations used for data sets: M = million; K = thousand.
Data collected for the period November 25, 2023 – February 25, 2024 (92 days).

3.2. Tailored network analysis of the online context of discussion

The second part of the research employs the editing program entitled Mermaid Live Editor (v10.8.0 – mermaid.live) used to reveal the netwrok analysis fot he context of discussion as generated by the Brand24 for four topics namely "quality of life" (Figure no. 1), "human population" (Figure no. 2), "human development" (Figure no. 3), "public health" (Figure no. 4). Therefore, first figure points a tailored network analysis for the online context of discussion for the topic of the "quality of life" developing the relationship of the relevant sub-topics namely: ("people", "community", "individual", "health" and "family") (Figure no. 1). Therefore, the results also identify more than twenty concepts used by influencers, online communities and online discussion within the topics of "quality of life" here including (selection of topics): "experience", "activity", "support", "need", "access", "development", "healthcare", "home", "study", "work", "place", "residence" etc) (Figure no. 1).

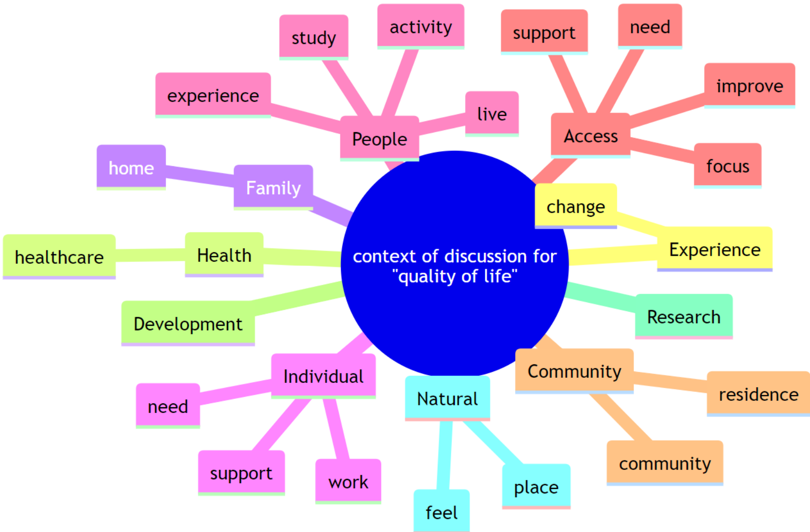

Figure no. 1. Flow chart for "quality of life" using the context of discussion of online monitoring data provided by Brand24 and Mermaid Live Editor (v10.8.0 – mermaid.live)

The second figure targets a tailored network analysis for the online context of discussion for the topic of the "human population" associating the relationship of the relevant sub-topics namely: ("human", "development", "state") (Figure no. 2). In this direction, the results develop a complex data and concepts analysis by identifying more other twenty items used in the online context of discussion for the topic of "human population" here including (selection of topics): "population", "habitat", "change", "protection", "relationship", "help", "life", "world", "process", "global", "history", "impact", "earth", "growth", "evolution" etc. (Figure no. 2).

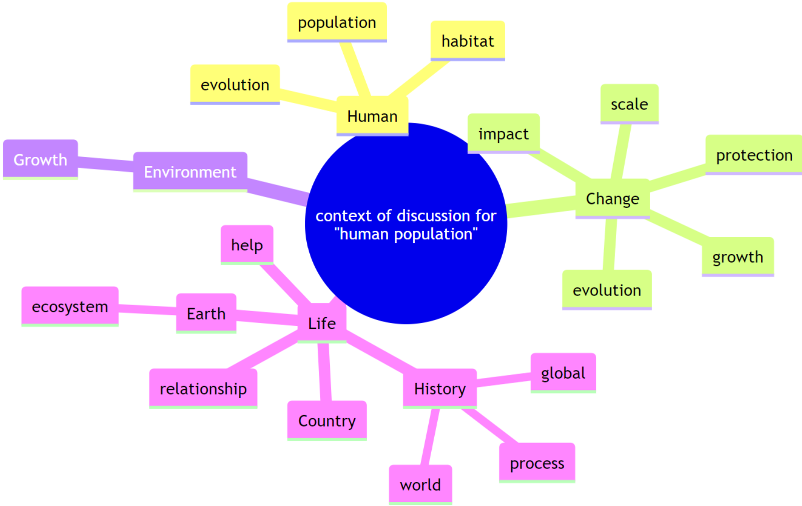

Figure no. 2. Flow chart for "human population" using the context of discussion of online monitoring data provided by Brand24 and Mermaid Live Editor (v10.8.0 – mermaid.live)

The third figure individualizes the network analysis for the concept of "human development" tracking the popularity in the context of discussion for the topic of "human development" and also identifying the level of interest for more than fifteen sub-topics as follows: "human", "development", "state", "public", "nations", "government", "quality", "organization", "health", "support", "life", "growth", "education", "university", "program", "impact" etc. (Figure no. 3).

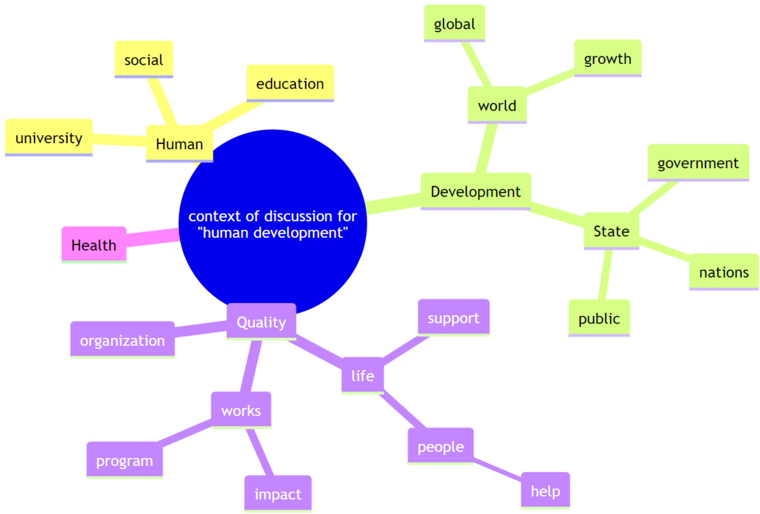

Figure no. 3. Flow chart for "human development" using the context of discussion of online monitoring data provided by Brand24 and Mermaid Live Editor (v10.8.0 – mermaid.live)

The fourth figure (Figure no. 4) tracks particular topics in the area of "public health" and related items by associating a complex conceptual framework based on more than fifteen keywords namely: "environment", "education", "right", "people", "pandemic", "risk", "crisis", "challenge", "time", "community", "human", "individual", "impact", "policy", "state", "system" etc. (Figure no. 4).

Figure no. 4. Flow chart for "public health" using the context of discussion of online monitoring data provided by Brand24 and Mermaid Live Editor (v10.8.0 – mermaid.live)

4. Conclusions

The summary of finding reveal a complex overview of the analysis of the social media monitoring tools as displayed by the online platform Brand24 by targeting the important trends, social media impact and identifying the emergent trends during the monitoring period of ninety two days. Following the results and findings as provided by the four tables, the analysis discusses the ascending trends of the majority of topics in the area of demographic and human development conceptual framework highlighting the significant insights of the Table 1 ranging around 38000 mentions for the topics of "population" (37413 mentions), "family" (38255 mentions), "wellness" (37947 mentions), "households" (36929 mentions) and "happiness" (37392 mentions). For the social media mentions, the key insights emphasize the implications of the following results for the topics of "wellbeing" (11790 results), "wellness" (15727 results) and happiness (17447 results).

The results of the findings of the two metrics (mentions and social media mentions) are of particular importance consider the need for further formal strategies, social policies, actions and programs, as well as decision-making strategies. The findings also suggest further research areas approaching the broader context of social media context of discussion and the refinement of the network analysis of concepts using online program Mermaid Live Editor (v10.8.0 – mermaid.live). Moreover, based on the online monitoring datasets, the two parts of the research emphasize the increased interest of the public towards the selected topics by identifyng the highest interests and scores and leveraging the various results of the online presence meeting the KPIs settings as registered by the three tables. Furtheremore, the three figures generate varous conceptual linkages established between the selected topics and related concepts addressing the main areas of concern ("quality of life", "human population", "human development" and "public health") (Figure no. 1, Figure no. 2, Figure no. 3, Figure no. 4). In conclusion, the research provide the relevant findings for the research of the demographic and human development topics by emphasizing the observed online trends and the patterns of the context of discussions in online environment.

Authors' Contributions:
The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Estimating Fluctuating Volatility Using Advanced Garch Models: Evidence from Denmark Stock Exchange

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Abstract:
In the stock market, volatility is a term used to describe the degree to which the prices of assets oscillate and determines the level of risk or uncertainty. The foremost objective of the present analysis is to model the behaviour of the Denmark stock market using data from December 20, 2016, to September 20, 2023. Through the application of GARCH family prototypes which, include GARCH/TARCH, EGARCH, Component ARCH (1,1), and PARCH. The analysis used a sample number of 1668 daily observations for OMXC 25 or OMX Copenhagen 25 Stock Index representing the Denmark stock market. We used some statistical techniques such as Phillips-Perron and Augmented Dickey Fuller tests, Kwiatkowski-Phillips-Schmidt-Shin test statistic, The ARCH Lagrange Multiplier (LM) test, PARCH model. We utilized the E-Views 12 Econometrics package. This empirical investigation adds to the corpus of financial econometrics and emphasizes the importance of precisely and painstakingly modelling the behaviour of stock markets. Our ability to forecast market movements and make informed decisions in a turbulent financial climate will be improved by the findings and research methodologies covered in this paper, which will serve as a solid foundation for future investigations.

Keywords: *Volatility, Uncertainty, Forecasting, GARCH family prototypes, stock marketplace, heteroscedasticity.*

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Estimating Fluctuating Volatility Using Advanced Garch Models: Evidence from Denmark Stock Exchange

Introduction

Kim & Won (2018) show that volatility in the stock market refers to how much the prices of assets—which are seen as unpredictable—variate and how much risk or uncertainty there is. Price fluctuations are brought on quickly by it (Badarla et al., 2021). A fortune may be made or lost in the blink of an eye in the complex and volatile world of global finance. In this erratic environment, the concept of stock market volatility is a critical factor in determining investment choices, risk, and mitigation tactics. It is crucial to quantify and examine volatility in the financial markets to appropriately mitigate against instability. It's also beneficial to comprehend the level of risk associated with any specific market (Badarla et al., 2021). In the financial markets, volatility is important for hedging techniques, portfolio risk management, and derivative pricing. As a result, accurate volatility prediction is paramount (Kim & Won, 2018). Since (Bollerslev, 1986) introduced model which is ARCH models, it is an econometrical prototype used to analyze leverage effect in time series to estimate future spillover. The parametric estimating approach is commonly used to estimate the parameters of the ARCH class models, if there exists a probability density function of the return's series. (Sun & Yu, 2019). Due to the capacity to capture spillovers persistence or clustering, the ARCH class prototypes are advantageous (Bollerslev, 1986; Vedat, 1989; Baillie, Bollerslev, & Mikkelsen, 1996). Nevertheless, some recent research has suggested that in order to get high predicting performance, the ARCH class models need to be modified. (Choudhry & Wu, 2008). For financial time series forecasting, researchers have recently coupled the GARCH model with computer AI intelligence-based methodologies. (Engle, 1982) Constructed on the hypothesis that the variance error is serially autocorrelated, the GARCH model is an econometrical prototype that is used to analyze time-series data.

The official securities market in Denmark is the Copenhagen Stock Exchange (CSE). In 1996, the CSE converted to a limited company and began trading shares, fixed income securities, and derivatives. Nasdaq Copenhagen, a division of Nasdaq Nordic, has the top-tier stock market index known as OMXC25, or OMX Copenhagen 25 Stock Index. The current project aims to mimic the Danish stock market's behaviour using data from December 20, 2016, until September 20, 2023. The thorough analysis for a certain market offers insightful information on past trends and volatility, assisting with any future decision-making. For predicting stock price volatility in the Danish stock market, we suggest using the generalized autoregressive conditional heteroscedasticity (GARCH) model.

Review Literature

Several studies have been carried out using different indices to assessment the instability of stock markets. (Birau et al., 2021) examined the Hong Kong and Spanish stock markets' GARCH-based behaviour. Furthermore, (Spulbar et al., 2020) used short-term momentum effects to study the dynamics of the Hong Kong stock market. (Meher et al., 2020) investigated the fluctuations in the marketplace throughout the COVID-19 epidemic outbreak. However, the adverse information has far stronger ramifications. (Sokpo, 2017). The analysis establish that the prototype series had strong perseverance, indicating that the market will be affected for some time by a positive or negative shock to the stock market yield series caused on by either good or bad news. According to (Spulbar et al., 2023) it is evident from the detrimental impacts of the world-wide financial crisis that investors were not able to make any significant profits from the Poland stock market. Moreover, negative shocks happen more often than positive ones

(Bonga, 2019). concluded that returns, risks, and volatility are positively correlated. The financial market gets more turbulent as market volatility rises.

Numerous studies carried out globally have investigated the volatility trends and dynamics of the stock marketplace through the application of the GARCH family model. Kumar et al. (2023) used the EGARCH, TGARCH, MGARCH, and PGARCH models to examine and find out the spillovers of the S&P / Toronto index. The outcome of the article indicates that the GARCH-GJR model is more appropriate. According to (Kumar et al., 2023) the IBOVESPA index's volatility is evaluated in this study using the GARCH (1,1), GJR-GARCH, EGARCH, M GARCH, and TGARCH models. Apart from that, this study evaluated the exactitude of spillovers projections using both univariate and multivariate models. The work by Maqsood et al. (2017) used GARCH-M (1,1), EGARCH (1,1), TGRACH (1,1), and PGARCH (1,1) to calculate the volatility of the Nairobi Securities Exchange. They concluded that the TGARCH (1,1) model is more suitable to capture the instability clustering and leverage impact of the NSE stock market out of various symmetric and asymmetric type heteroscedastic processes. The GJR-GARCH model was used by (Kumar et al. 2023) to assess the price volatility spillover transmission objectively or experimentally in the daily returns of the IPC Mexico index from the Mexican stock market. (Leite & Lima, 2023) shown the tremendous volatility of Brazil's spot pricing. This extreme volatility is a result of both institutional problems and the growing share of renewable energy in the electrical mix.
According to Birau et al. (2023) the perfect fit of the GARCH (1, 1) model, which accounts for the effects of both GARCH and ARCH, indicates that the volatility in the Sweden market has continued over time. (Bonga, 2019). Moreover, Trivedi et al. (2021) have also applied GARCH models in order to investigate the dynamics of the Indian emerging stock market. The GARCH family of prototypes is used to simulate the volatility of the Zimbabwean stock market. The EGARCH (1,1) model was determined to be the optimal model. It has been shown that the volatility that was noticed during the COVID-19 epidemic (Spulbar et al., 2022) formed a "V" shape array with an unanticipated, severe negative slope. Compared to the pattern established during the world-wide financial disaster, this was completely different. (Bonga, 2019) came to the conclusion that stock market returns are impacted differently by positive and negative shocks. To differing degrees, news that is both good and bad will increase the spillovers of stock marketplace yields.

Research Gap

This effort closes a large research gap in the field of financial econometrics. While an extensive amount of research has been done on forecasting stock market volatility, less focus has been placed on modelling and comparative analysis of volatility in Denmark. Furthermore, there is still a dearth of research on the use of complicated GARCH models, including TGARCH, EGARCH, and PARCH, in this particular setting. By bridging this gap, our study provides investors, policymakers, and financial analysts substantial understanding into the different dynamics and asymmetric volatility patterns within these two different markets.

Research Methodology

Using data from December 20, 2016, to September 20, 2023, the current effort concentrations on modelling the behaviour of the Danish stock market in order to apprehend fluctuations, spillover clusters, the suitability of econometric prototypes, and spillover patterns. We use GARCH models (Bollerslev, 1986). The study used a sample number of 1668 daily observations for OMXC25 or OMX Copenhagen 25 Stock Index representing the Denmark stock market. The time series data have been used for modelling volatility. The day-to-day returns were computed using the log of the first difference of the day-to-day closing prices. Before doing any of these tests, the daily returns were compiled since volatility has been evaluated on return (r_t). The log of first change of the daily closing price is used to compute the return series, which is as follows:

$$r_t = log\,\frac{P_t}{P_{t-1}}$$

Where,
r_t = Logarithmic daily return for time t,
P_t = Closing price at time t,
P_{t-1} = Corresponding price in the period at time t − 1.

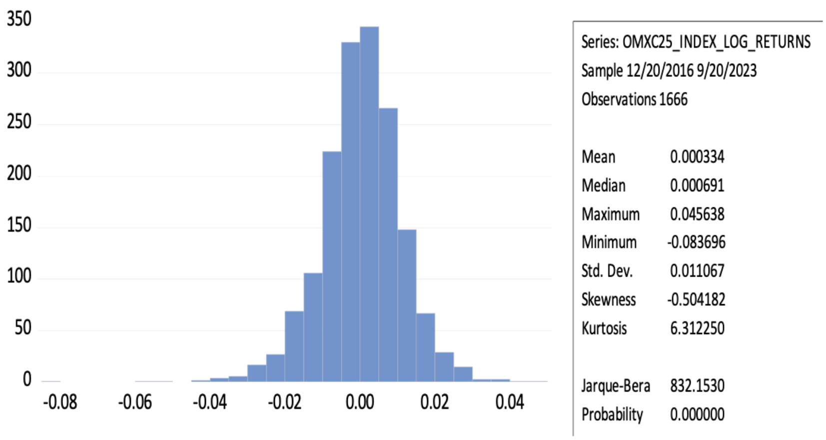
We utilized the E-Views 12 Econometrics package. This software package provides robust tools for econometric modelling and time series analysis. The selection of the most suitable GARCH prototype was based on the evaluation of four GARCH family models: GARCH/TARCH, EGARCH, Component ARCH (1,1), and PARCH models, all using the Student's Distribution.

Empirical Results and Discussion

In this paper, the day-to-day closing prices of the OMXC25 index, over the period from 20th December 2016 to 20th September 2023 resulted in total observations of 1666 excluding public holidays. Numerous descriptive statistics are computed and exhibited in Table 1 providing 0.000334 mean with 0.011067, degree of Standard Deviation. A high value of kurtosis 6.312250 which is greater than 3 indicates a leptokurtic distribution that is an apparent departure from normality while the skewness represents negative value it indicating data has long left skewed distribution.

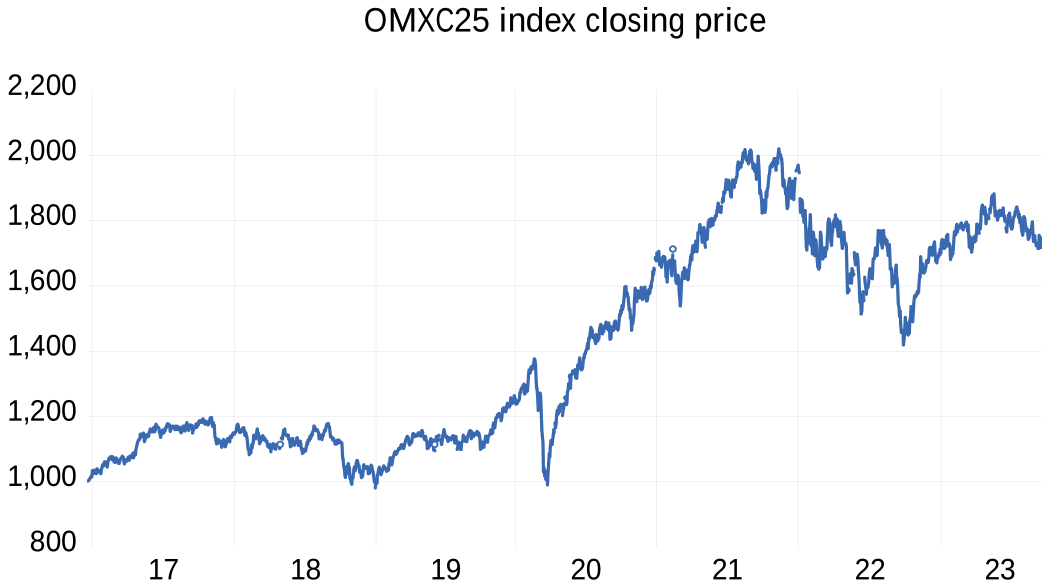
The Jarque-Bera statistic is a crucial normality test, the p-value of Jarque Bera is less than its critical value of 5% signifying the data is non-normal.

Graph 1: - Descriptive Statistics of the OMXC25 index



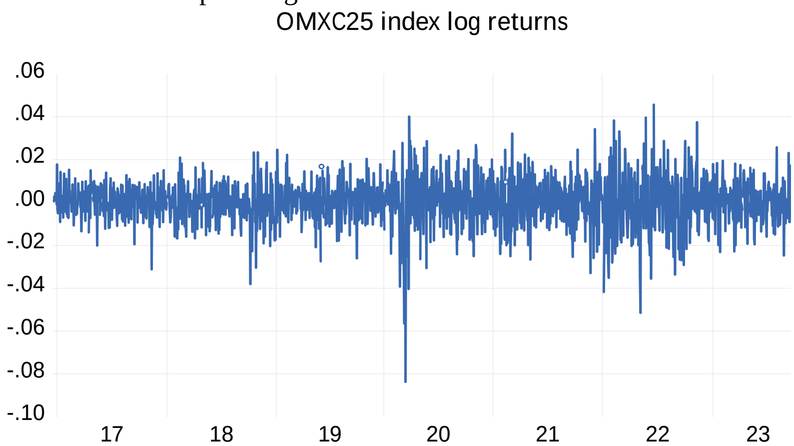
Source: Authors' Calculation using Eviews12

Graph 2: Movement Pattern of the OMXC25 Index



Source: Authors' Calculation using Eviews12

Graph 3: log returns of the OMXC25 Index



Source: Authors' Calculation using Eviews12

Graph 1 shows the movement patterns of the OMXC25 Index's Stationary Series during the hypothetical period from 20th December 2016 to 20th September 2023. Graph 3 shows the graphical presentation of the log returns of the presence of spillover clustering using the OMXC25 Index. In order to estimate the volatility of Denmark stock market, checking the stationary is the first step in the analysis of the return series (Maqsood, Safdar, Shafi, & Lelit, 2017). For this purpose, Augmented Dickey-Fuller (Dickey & Fuller, 1979) test, Phillips Perron test and Kwiatkowski-Phillips-Schmidt-

Shin experiment used to establish the stationarity of the OMXC25 index sample data series. The experiment results are presented with the help of following tables:

Table: 1: Unit root Test (Augmented Dickey-Fuller test, Phillips-Perron test and of OMXC25 index

Null Hypothesis: D(OMXC25_INDEX_LOG_RETURNS) has a unit root

Exogenous: Constant, Linear Trend

Lag Length: 13 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=24)

		t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic		-19.84532	0.0000
Test critical values:	1% level	-3.963611	
	5% level	-3.412533	
	10% level	-3.128223	

		Adj. t-Stat	Prob.*
Phillips-Perron test statistic		-40.63717	0.0000
Test critical values:	1% level	-3.963564	
	5% level	-3.412510	
	10% level	-3.128209	

Table: 2: Kwiatkowski-Phillips-Schmidt-Shin test of OMXC25 index

Null Hypothesis: D(OMXC25_INDEX_LOG_RETURNS) is stationary

Exogenous: Constant, Linear Trend

Bandwidth: 63 (Newey-West automatic) using Bartlett kernel

		LM-Stat.
Kwiatkowski-Phillips-Schmidt-Shin test statistic		0.024117
Asymptotic critical values*:	1% level	0.216000
	5% level	0.146000
	10% level	0.119000

Source: Authors' Calculation using Eviews12

Table 1 displays the Unit root Test (Augmented Dickey-Fuller test and Phillips-Perron test) of OMXC25 index. Table 2 shows the p values of Augmented Dickey-Fuller test and Phillips-Perron test and Kwiatkowski-Phillips-Schmidt-Shin test statistic are less than 0.05 which leads to reject the null hypothesis hence, the sample data were found to be stationary since the probability values are significant at 10%, 5%, and 1% levels.

Testing for ARCH Lagrange Multiplier Effect:

It is crucial to look at the residuals for signs of heteroscedasticity. If conditional heteroskedasticity is present, the results might be deceiving if it is not taken into consideration. (SOKPO, IOREMBER, & USAR, Inflation and Stock Market Returns Volatility: Evidence from the Nigerian Stock Exchange 1995Q1-2016Q4: An E-GARCH Approach, 2018). To ascertain whether heteroscedasticity is present in the residual of the return series, the ARCH Lagrange Multiplier (LM) test is utilized. It is necessary to test for conditional heteroskedasticity since adopting GARCH-type models would be incorrect if it were not included.

Table 3: Heteroskedasticity Test: ARCH

F-statistic	39084.87	Prob. F(1,1662)	**0.0000**
Obs*R-squared	1596.128	Prob. Chi-Square(1)	0.0000

Source: Authors' Calculation using Eviews12

Table 3 displays the result of the ARCH-LM test for OMXC25 index. It inferred that data is highly significant. The probability of F-statistic (0.0000) shows that p value is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis (i.e., no ARCH effect) is rejected at 1% level. The results support to estimate GARCH family models since, indicating the existence of ARCH effects in the residuals of time series models. This indicates the series under consideration is variable, requiring volatility modelling to account for volatility in the model.

Table 4: Selecting an appropriate model.

OMXC25 Index			
Estimated model	**Akaike info criterion**	**Schwartz criterion**	**Log Likelihood**
GARCH/TARCH	-6.354315	-6.334793	**5295.968**
EGARCH	-6.367335	-6.344559	**5307.806**
PARCH	-6.36757	-6.341539	**5309.002**
Component ARCH (1,1)	-6.355511	-6.32948	**5298.963**

Source: Authors' Calculation using Eviews12

Table 4 depicts four models of GARCH family models. PGARCH model with Student t's Distribution has the lowest Akaike info criterion with -6.36757 and Schwartz criterion with -6.341539 apart from that maximum Log Likelihood with 5309.002 when compared to the other three. As a result, this model is thought to be the best one. The results of the selected PARCH Model for the OMXC25 Index are shown in the table below.

Table 5: PARCH with Student's t distribution Error Construct of OMXC25 index
Dependent Variable: OMXC25_INDEX_LOG_RETURNS
Method: ML ARCH - Student's t distribution (BFGS / Marquardt steps)
Date: 10/18/23 Time: 07:06
Sample (adjusted): 12/22/2016 9/20/2023
Included observations: 1665 after adjustments
Convergence achieved after 153 iterations
Coefficient covariance computed using outer product of gradients
Presample variance: backcast (parameter = 0.7)
@SQRT(GARCH)^C(7) = C(3) + C(4)*(ABS(RESID(-1)) - C(5)*RESID(-1))^C(7) + C(6)*@SQRT(GARCH(-1))^C(7)

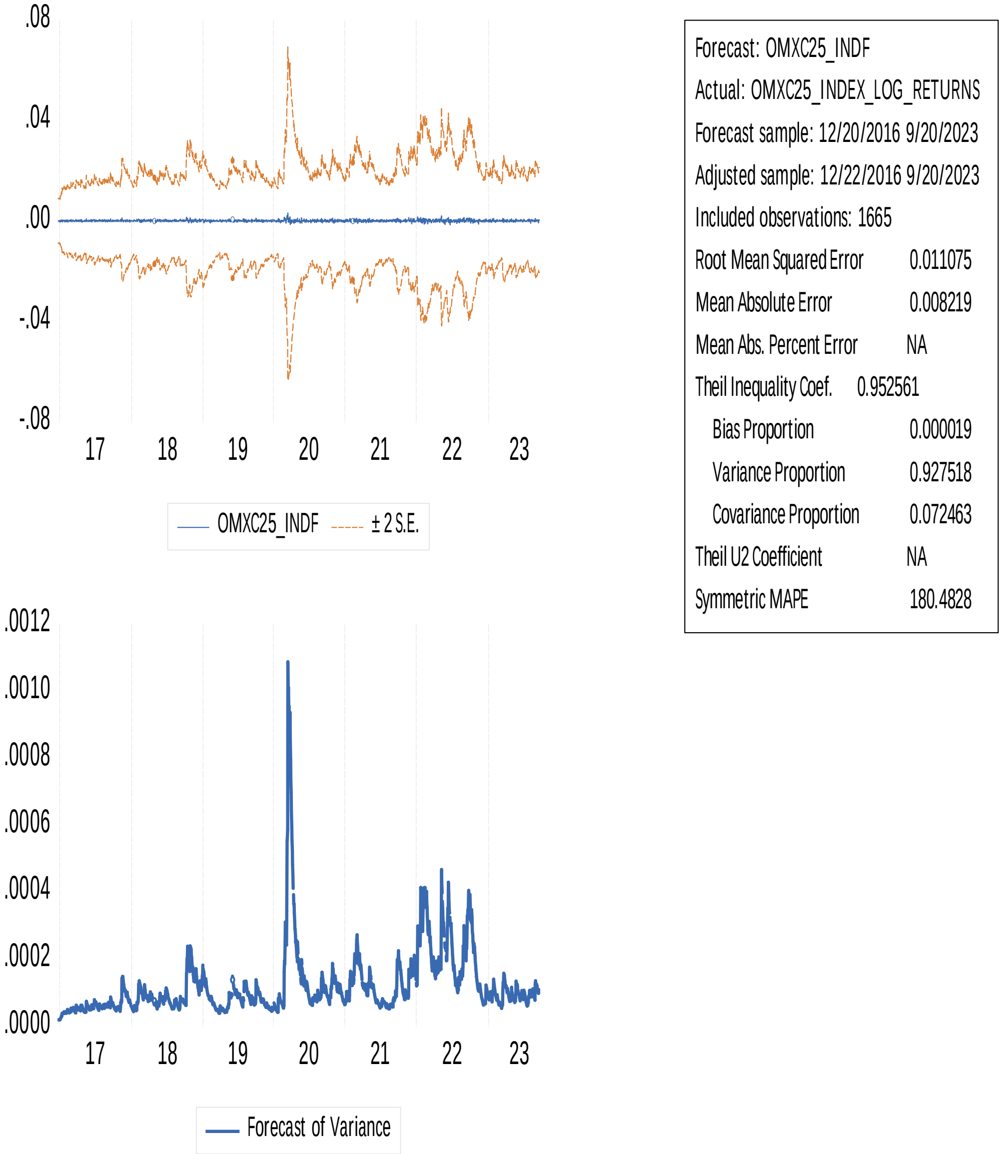
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	z-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.000393	0.000228	1.725467	0.0844
OMXC25_INDEX_LOG_RETURNS(-1)	-0.036309	0.025492	-1.424320	0.1544
	Variance Equation			
C(3)	3.05E-05	4.47E-05	0.683013	0.4946
C(4)	0.043537	0.021799	1.997218	0.0458
C(5)	0.857876	0.484705	1.769894	0.0767
C(6)	0.937568	0.011279	83.12756	0.0000
C(7)	1.399207	0.309030	4.527743	0.0000
T-DIST. DOF	11.47747	2.548399	4.503797	0.0000

R-squared	-0.001326	Mean dependent var	0.000334
Adjusted R-squared	-0.001929	S.D. dependent var	0.011071
S.E. of regression	0.011081	Akaike info criterion	**-6.367570**
Sum squared resid	0.204213	Schwarz criterion	**-6.341539**
Log likelihood	**5309.002**	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-6.357923
Durbin-Watson stat	1.924286		

Source: Authors' Calculation using Eviews12

Above table are representing the PARCH model with Student's t distribution error construct of OMXC25 index. Since Probabilities are lower than 0.05, the constant (C) is considered significant.

Graph 4: Estimating volatility patterns using PARCH models of OMXC25 index



Source: Authors' calculation using Eviews12

We can forecast the volatility of the Denmark Stock Exchange composite indices using the aforementioned methodology using a data set of 1666 days. The Graph 4 demonstrates the anticipated uneven price changes of the Denmark Stock Exchange.

Conclusions

To forecast variance using financial time series data, we used model i.e., GARCH, which is specifically designed for spillover forecasting. The foremost purpose of the present analysis is to model the behaviour of the Denmark stock market using data from December 20, 2016, to September 20, 2023.Through the application of GARCH family prototypes which, incorporate GARCH/TARCH, EGARCH, Component ARCH (1,1), and PARCH models. The analysis cantered on log returns derived from the OMXC25 Index. We used some statistical techniques to evaluate stationarity.
The Augmented Dickey Fuller test, and Phillips-Perron test, and Kwiatkowski-Phillips-Schmidt-Shin test statistic. Findings indicating that the sample data were stationary. The ARCH Lagrange Multiplier (LM) test was employed to investigate the presence of heteroscedasticity in the residual series of the return data. The results of this test revealed the presence of ARCH effects in the residuals of our time series models. The selection of the most suitable GARCH model was based on the evaluation of four GARCH family models that is GARCH/TARCH, EGARCH, Component ARCH (1,1), and PGARCH using Student t's distribution.

As a result, PARCH Model were selected with the help of the lowest Akaike info criterion, Schwartz criterion and maximum Log Likelihood. As demonstrated in Table 5, the outcomes of the PARCH model's application yield important insights into the dynamics of the OMXC25 Index. Our ability to forecast market movements and make informed decisions in a turbulent financial climate will be improved by the findings and research methodologies covered in this paper, which will serve as a solid foundation for future investigations. This work adds to the area of analysis in financial econometrics and emphasizes the importance of precisely and methodically modelling stock market behaviour. We have gained valuable insights into the US and Austrian stock markets using complex GARCH models and extensive statistical studies. These insights have improved our understanding of the intricate subject of stock market volatility prediction.

Authors' Contributions:
The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Key terms in European governance and Europeanisation theories. A conceptual analysis

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Abstract:
The analysis highlights the coining and usage of key specific terms in European governance and Europeanisation theories. The conceptual analysis uses special online instruments to account for the use and dynamics of terms from the following dimensions: (1) administrative convergence and Europeanisation studies, (2) European governance theories and models, (3) institutionalism theories. Methodologically, the analysis points out the frequencies associated to scientific terminology for the selected period 1951-2019. Consequently, this analysis based on political discourse analysis, concept stretching and frequency delves into Europeanization, agenda-setting, contingence and path-dependence theories and models unfolding the tendencies of interdisciplinary research using online tools. The results show systematic use of key concepts in European governance and Europeanisation theories which help to build the future trends of research.

Keywords: *Europeanisation theories, European governance, Member States, Candidate Countries, frequency.*

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Key terms in European governance and Europeanisation theories. A conceptual analysis

Introduction

The question of Europeanization phenomenon trended massively beginning with the 1990s, some publications devoting their entire thematic area or issues to the subject.

Thus, the *Journal of European Integration* published 1509 articles and 9 special issues and collections. Some of the most relevant researches tackle Europeanisation and integration process in the context of the Euro-crisis through the lens of neo-functionalism (Nicoli, 2020: 897-916) approaching explanatory variables "path dependency", "endogenous preference change" and "functional spill over" (Schimmelfennig, 2014: 321-337). The influence of crisis to "policy change" is a subject of seminal discussion and analysis especially on the new roles of national and supranational actors (Falkner, 2016: 219-235). Some of the most cited analyses of crises draw on the "critical junctures", "windows of opportunity" and "policy learning" literature for reviewing policy responses to major "existential" crises within a historical institutionalist approach contributing heavily to the pandemic literature (Ladi, Tsarouhas, 2020: 1041-1056; Schmidt, 2020: 1177-1193). Some papers especially describe EU action during pandemic in terms of "adaptability" to this state of threat (Wolff, Ladi, 2020: 1025-1040). In a different line of thought, "rule of law conditionality" and "financial conditionality" are other explanatory variables to policy change and "institutional design" (Blauberger, van Hüllen, 2021: 1-16).

Europeanisation is a top subject for the *Journal of European Public Policy*, featuring in 2408 articles and 20 special issues and collections. The most cited articles explore competition policy as influenced by (de-)Europeanisation within Brexit (McGowan, 2023: 2372-2396) or EU foreign policy experiencing a sense of (de-) Europeanisation within in the context of populist parties actions (Rivera Escartin, 2020: 1195-1214), or "domestic effects" and economic-social relations (Seikel, 2023), or the Europeanisation of national policy styles (Candel, Parsons, Barling, Loudiyi, 2021: 1748-1769), or the outlooks of regionalization process within European multi-level governance (López, Tatham, 2018: 764-786). Analyses explored the actions and resources that enhance Europeanisation such as national interest groups actions (Beyers, Kerremans, 2007: 460-481), correlate conditionality with agency "institutional capacity" in regulation assessing Europeanisation degree (Ozel, 2013: 741-759), discuss "EU rule transfer" as "conditionality" to candidate countries (Schimmelfennig, Sedelmeier, 2004: 661-679). Research on factors or conditions increasing "policy convergence" is consistent across countries (Holzinger, Knill, 2005: 775-796). Research analyses the influences of "ideational processes" and "institutional constraints" on reforms and policy change within historical institutionalism views (Béland, 2009: 701-718).

The *Public Administration* journal published 1911 articles and around 20 collections to the Europeanisation issue. Some of the most cited works analyze the (de-) Europeanisation process in conjunction to the "Open Method of Coordination (OMC)" (Copeland, 2016: 1124-1139) and try to label Europeanisation as "step-change" adaptation correlated to "public support for the EU" (Bulmer, Burch, 2005: 861-890). Europeanisation impact on national regulation in relation to the adoption of the *acquis communautaire* for candidate countries is a major theme for research accounting for national legislatives roles during the process (Jenny, Müller, 2010: 36-56; Müller, Bovens, Christensen, Jenny, Yesilkagit, 2010: 75-87), comparative analyses display a higher level of "partial Europeanisation" in "new" member states than "old" members (Meyer-Sahling, Van Stolk, 2015: 230-247).

The *West European Politics* journal published, 3031 articles and 9 special issues and collections. Works published in one of the special issues seek to find the manner and level of “diffusion” of EU institutions and policies (“emulation”) (Börzel, Risse, 2012a: 1-19) and shed light to “agencification” literature and “institutional convergence” Börzel, Risse, 2012b: 192-207). Some of the most cited articles also discuss the level of Europeanisation and the role of special national actors in preserving the established trend following accession (Sedelmeier, 2012: 20-38), thus observing the explanatory influence of “domestic power configurations”, “mediating domestic institutions”, and “actors' strategies” (Fischer, Nicolet, Sciarini, 2002: 143-170). Consequently, national actors are crucial in determining the rhythm of change which becomes obvious for explaining the formation of “clustered convergence” (Dyson, 2007: 417-442) which was also analysed in conjunction to political parties change over EU matters (Ladrech, 2012: 574-588).

The *Journal of Legislative Studies* published 759 articles and 1 special issue comprising 9 articles on Europeanisation and European governance. Researches focus broadly on legislatives’ organization, functioning, even staffing for supporting European democratic values (Peters, 2021: 577-594), in their response, or “adaptation”, to European institutions within the specificity of different systems of government, with a focus on parliamentary systems (Auel, Benz, 2005: 372-393).

The *European Law Journal* published 1160 articles and 12 collections in the field of Europeanisation and European governance, some of the most read papers devoting their attention on Europeanisation and the free movement regulations’ effects on different policy area and citizens’ rights (van Leeuwen, 2020: 61–82) or on discursive practices logic and changes in a changing European context (Schmidt, 2000: 277-300).

The *Journal of Common Market Studies* published 4126 articles and 23 collections featuring, among others, the issue of human rights diplomacy and national role in international organizations (Smith, 2017: 628–644), human rights and (de-)Europeanisation in the context of national regulation (Bodur Ün, Arıkan, 2022: 945–962) or societal role in democratization and Europeanisation (Noutcheva, 2016: 691–708).

The *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* published 539 articles on Europeanisation process, papers scrutinizing different types of Europeanisation, their efficiency and conditions for positive mark identifying “top-down” or “bottom-up” directions in a “contingent model” (Zahariadis, 2008: 221-238), in line with the approaches outlining the relation among “Europeanization, policy learning, and new modes of governance” in the “Open Method of Coordination (OMC)” (Radaelli, 2008: 239-254). It is arguably challenging to apply a single methodology in Europeanisation researches, since one has to account to differences in national contexts, domestic actors, policy fields, ideas, forces, competences etc. (Saurugger, 2005: 291-312). Researchers also draw attention upon “negative integration” and the impact of “legal uncertainty” (Schmidt, 2008: 299-308), while correlating the concepts of “Europeanization”, “goodness of fit” and “adaptation pressures” in several policy areas in cross-country comparisons (Mendez, Wishlade, Yuill, 2008: 279-298).

The *Governance* journal published 954 articles and 3 collections. Some of the most cited works explain Europeanisation by focusing on the “Multiple Streams Framework” and “policy stages” (Bérut, 2022: 1–19). Moreover, research has found differences in Europeanisation among Member States, with some states experiencing “reform policies and politics”, while others “incremental institutional change” (Trampusch, 2009: 369-395). Also, research has established that post-accession period has not always been synonymous to continuing Europeanisation in all sectors, with countries continuing pre-accession reforms, some "reform reversal", while others "reform reorientation" (Meyer-Sahling, 2011: 231-260). On the other hand, Europeanisation analyses also synchronize the evolution of EU competencies, especially those of the European Commission, as a central and visible institution in European action, and the EU different "methods of harmonization" (Majone, 2002: 375-392).

The issue of Europeanisation was also tackled in the *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* journal which published 1329 articles on the matter. Researches have address the issue of national and European citizenship in conjunction to those of sovereignty, national and European identity and solidarity (Dragoman, 2008: 63–78). Also, researches have accounted EU and NATO membership status, foreign and domestic evolution to the issue of sovereignty, democratization and Europeanisation of former communist states in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans (Ágh, 1999: 263–279). Valuable, extensive work have appeared in ARENA Working Papers, the European Integration online Papers (EIoP), and also in the Living Reviews in European Governance.

Objectives and scope

The paper aims at identifying the specific concepts in use in the scientific literature, while analyzing their frequency, associations and development. Thus, the analysis highlights the coining and usage of key specific terms in European governance and Europeanisation theories.

The conceptual analysis uses special online instruments to account for the use and dynamics of terms from the following dimensions: (1) administrative convergence and Europeanisation studies, (2) European governance theories and models, (3) institutionalism theories.

Research methodology

Methodologically, the analysis points out the frequencies associated to scientific terminology for the selected period 1951-2019. Consequently, this analysis based on political discourse analysis, concept stretching and frequency delves into Europeanization, agenda-setting, contingence and path-dependence theories and models unfolding the tendencies of interdisciplinary research using online search tools supplied by Google Ngram Viewer platform.

The research is disposed to identify the frequency of associations around some key concepts used within Europeanisation phenomenon and European integration process research: studies on administrative values, norms and convergence, Europeanisation and adaptation, different understandings of governance.

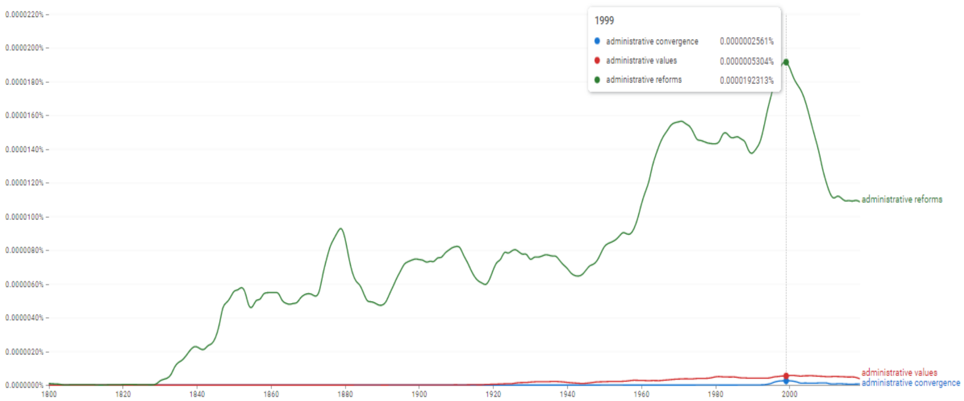
The analysis is consequently centred around identifying the frequency in the use of concepts: "administrative convergence", "administrative values", "administrative norms"; frequency of usage for concepts: "Europeanization" and "benchmarking"; frequency and comparison of usage for concepts: "Europeanisation", "goodness of fit", "adaptation"; frequency of usage for concepts: "transnational harmonization" (Majone, 2002: 375-392), "dependency" (Schimmelfennig, 2014: 321-337), "soft law", "centralization" (Majone, 2002: 375-392), "moderate convergence", "emulation" (Börzel, Risse, 2012a: 1-19), "basic convergence".

Another research direction aims at highlighting the most frequent association around some specific concepts. Thus, the research employs a wildcard search for the most frequent associations around the concept “administrative”, a wildcard search for the most frequent associations around the concept “*European administrative*”, a wildcard search for most frequent association around the concept of “convergence”, and a wildcard search for most frequent association around the concept “multi-level”.

Results analysis and discussion

This section presents the results of the key concepts frequency use and discuss the association values especially the peaks obtained in the Google N-gram Viewer searches.

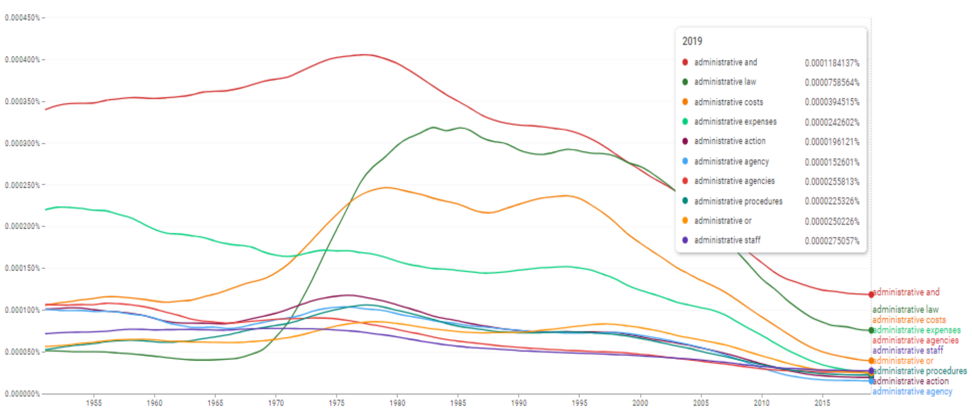
Figure 1. Frequency in the use of concepts: “administrative convergence”, “administrative values”, “administrative norms”



Source: Data search Google Ngram Viewer

The online search for establishing the frequency in the use of concepts “administrative convergence”, “administrative values”, “administrative norms” (Meyer-Sahling, 2011: 230-247; Peters, 2021: 577-594) has shown a peak around 1999 for “administrative reforms” (0.0000192313%).

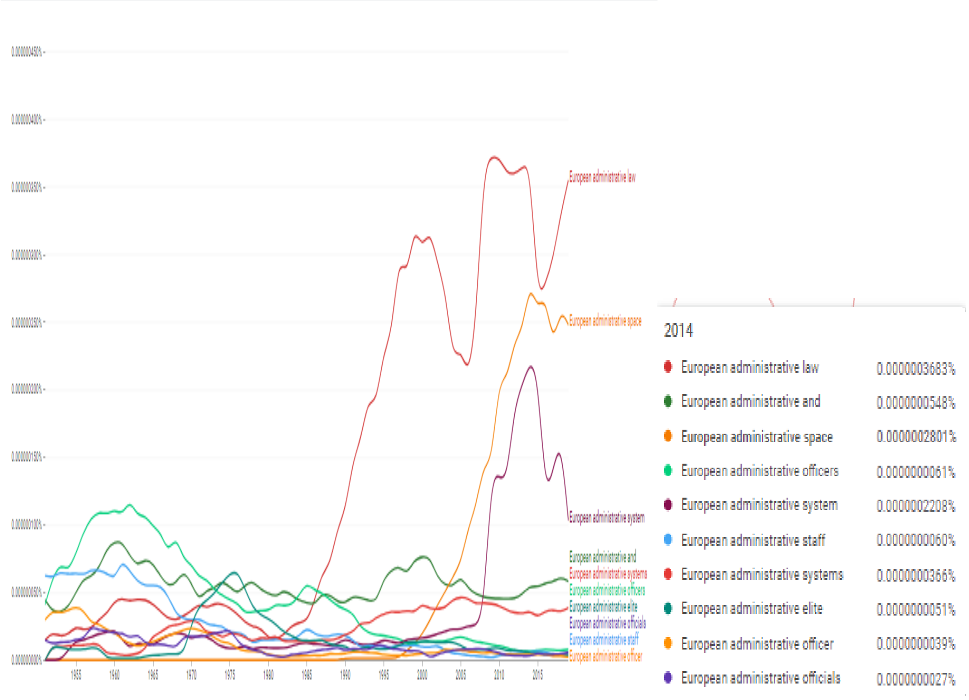
Figure 2. Wildcard search for most frequent associations around the concept “administrative”



Source: Data search Google Ngram Viewer

The Ngram wildcard search for most frequent associations around the concept "administrative" has identified the most frequent usage for "administrative law", "administrative costs", "administrative expenses", "administrative agencies", "administrative staff", "administrative procedures", "administrative action", "administrative agency". Since 1970, the term "administrative law" has shown a massive increase in usage, especially during 1985-2000.

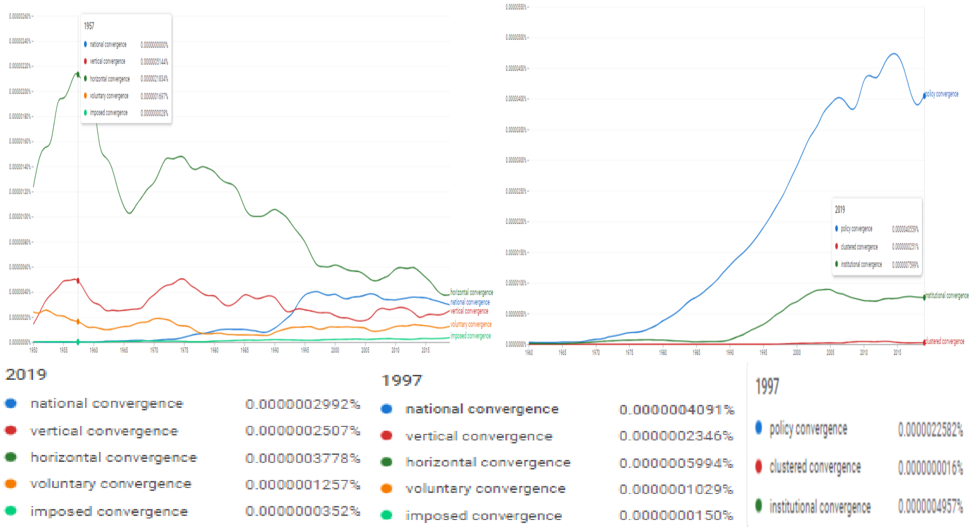
Figure 3. Wildcard search for most frequent associations around the concept "*European administrative*"



Source: Data search Google Ngram Viewer

Assuming there are frequent associations around the concept "European administrative", the Ngram wildcard search detected "European administrative law" (scoring highest between 1995-2000, then between 2005-2015), "European administrative space", "European administrative system(s)", "European administrative officer(s)", "European administrative elite", "European administrative officials", "European administrative staff".

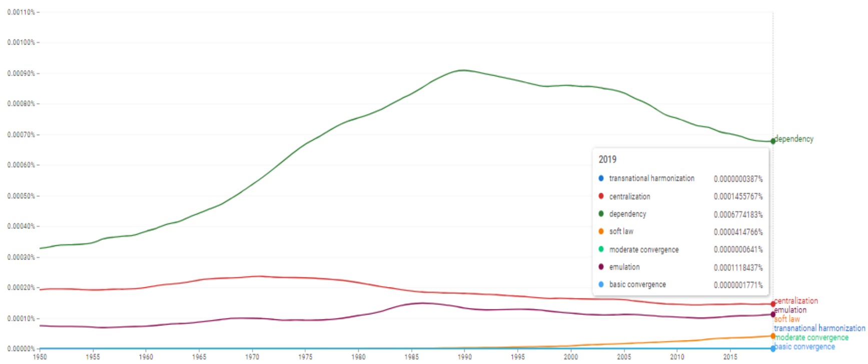
Figure 4. Frequency of associations around the concept "convergence"



Source: Data search Google Ngram Viewer

The search undergone for determining the most frequent associations around the concept of "convergence" has revealed the following phrases "national convergence", "vertical convergence", "horizontal convergence", "voluntary convergence" and "imposed convergence" (Bennett, 1991; Dolowitz, Marsh, 2000), "policy convergence" (Holzinger, Knill, 2005: 775-796), "institutional convergence" (Börzel, Risse, 2012b: 192-207), and "clustered convergence" (Dyson, 2007: 417-442).

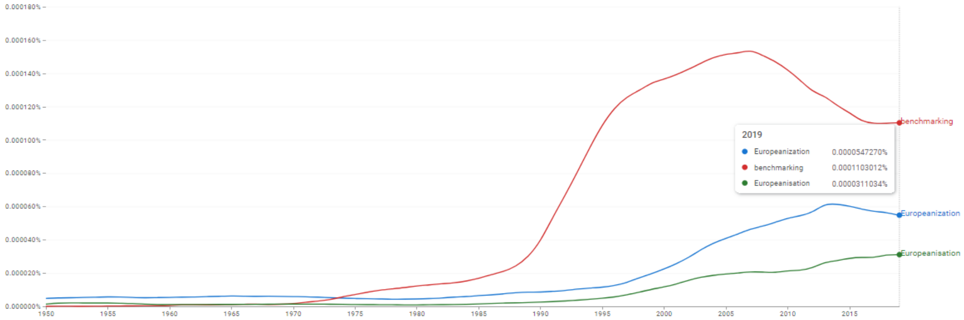
Figure 5. Frequency of usage for concepts: "transnational harmonization", "centralization", "dependency", "soft law", "moderate convergence", "emulation", "basic convergence"



Source: Data search Google Ngram Viewer

The frequency of usage for concepts search has determine the following situation identifying Ngram values for the concepts "transnational harmonization" (Majone, 2002: 375-392), "dependency" (Schimmelfennig, 2014: 321-337), "soft law", "centralization" (Majone, 2002: 375-392), "moderate convergence", "emulation" (Börzel, Risse, 2012a: 1-19), "basic convergence".

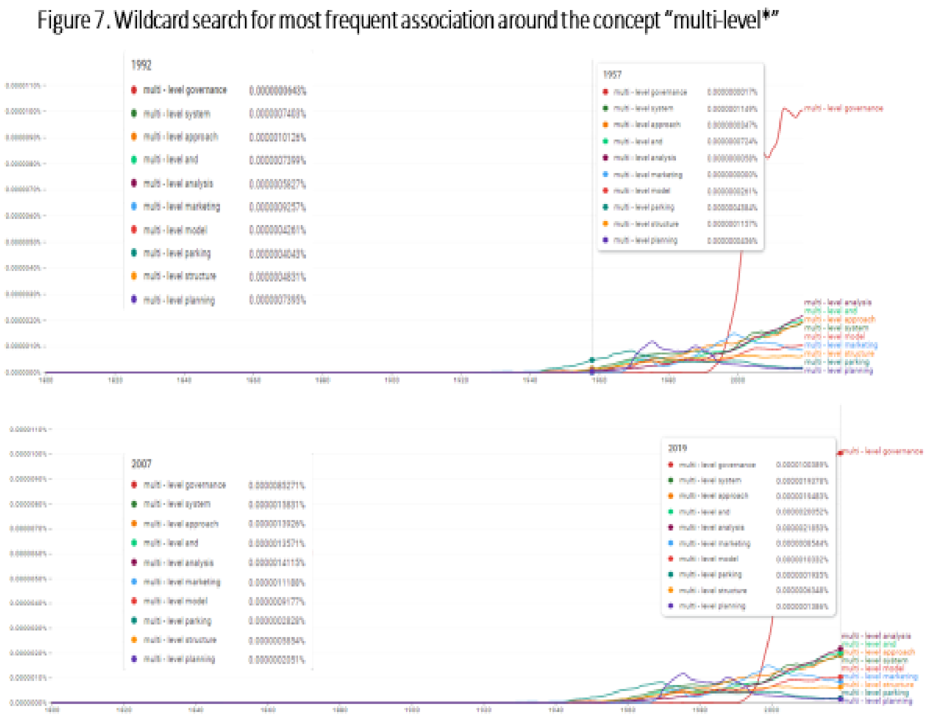
Figure 6. Frequency of usage for concepts: “Europeanization” and “benchmarking”



Source: Data search Google Ngram Viewer

Frequency of usage for concepts “Europeanization” and “benchmarking” has shown an increase for “benchmarking” especially beginning with 1990, while “Europeanization” experienced a relatively lower usage.

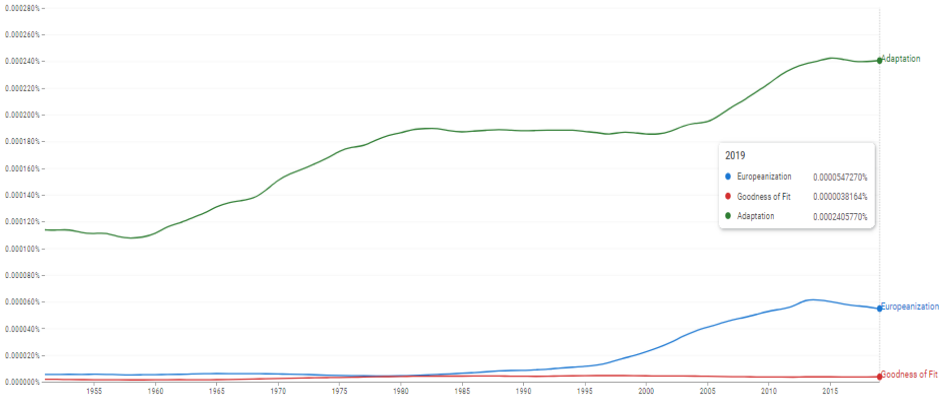
Figure 7. Wildcard search for most frequent associations around the concept “multi-level”



Source: Data search Google Ngram Viewer

The results of a wildcard search for the most frequent associations around the concept “multi-level” identifies the following uses: “multi-level governance” (López, Tatham, 2018: 764-786; Bache, 2008), "multi-level system", "multi-level approach" (Georgescu, Georgescu, 2021: 201-2014), "multi-level analyses", "multi-level marketing", "multi-level model", "multi-level parking", "multi-level structure" and "multi-level planning" (Olimid, Georgescu, Gherghe, 2023: 126 – 138). The concept of multi-level governance has been used intensely in the late 1990s and scored highest in 2019 (0.0000106389%).

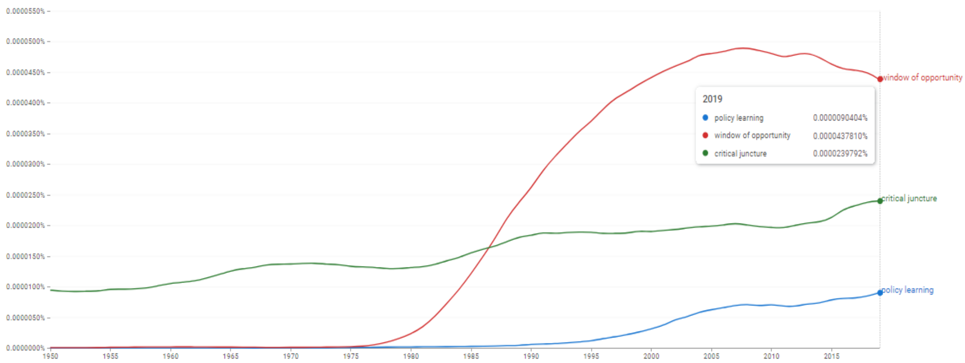
Figure 8. Frequency of usage for concepts: "Europeanisation", "goodness of fit", "adaptation"



Source: Data search Google Ngram Viewer

Frequency of usage for concepts interlinked in the literature "Europeanisation", "goodness of fit", "adaptation" (Bache, 2008; Mendez, Wishlade, Yuill, 2008: 279-298; Auel, Benz, 2005: 372-393; Olimid, Georgescu, Gherghe, 2022a: 38-51) has emphasized the scores obtained in 2019 by "adaptation" (0.000240577%) and the increase in usage in the second half of the 1990s for "Europeanization" with a relative steady value throughout 2014-2019 (0.0000038164%).

Figure 9. Frequency of usage for concepts: "policy learning", "window of opportunity", "critical juncture"

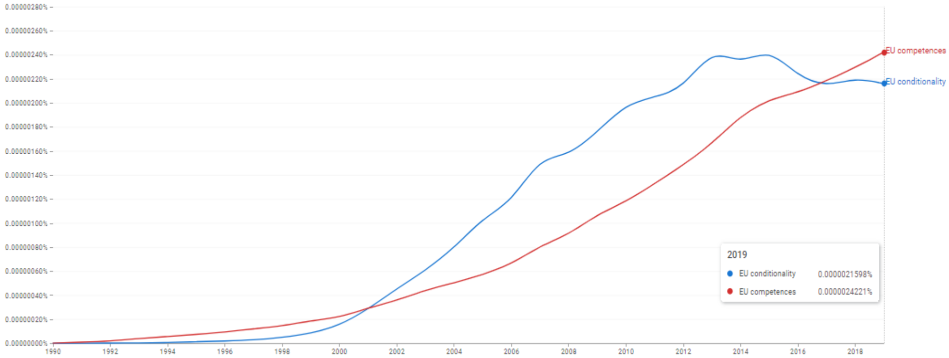


Source: Data search Google Ngram Viewer

Frequency of usage for concepts "policy learning", "window of opportunity", "critical juncture" (Ladi, Tsarouhas, 2020: 1041-1056; Radaelli, 2008: 239-254;

Schmidt, 2020: 1177-1193) shows a massive use of “window of opportunity” concept since 1975 with a highest occurrence during the 2000s, and a relative decrease after 2015 (the value for 2019 was 0.0000437810%). The policy learning literature emerged in the late 1980s, gre in the 2000s and scored highest in 2019 (0.0000090404%).

Figure 10. Frequency of usage for concepts: “EU conditionality” and “EU competences”



Source: Data search Google Ngram Viewer

The previous figure shows the results for the frequency of usage search for concepts “EU conditionality” and “EU competences”. This is in respect to Europeanisation scientific literature (Blauberger, van Hüllen, 2021: 1-16), different levels of Europeanisation are analysed as conditionality as regards agency “institutional capacity” in the legislative and law implementation processes (Ozel, 2013: 741-759; Olimid, Georgescu, Gherghe, 2022b: 34-46), Europeanisation as “EU rule transfer” and “conditionality” to candidate countries (Schimmelfennig, Sedelmeier, 2004: 661-679; Sedelmeier, 2012: 20-38) and addresses the issue of EU competences in European law matters (Saurugger, 2005: 291-312). Europeanisation, rule transfer and conditionality are thus more obvius during crisis (Burlea-Şchiopoiu, Ogarcă, Mihai, Drăgan, 2023: 1119–1140; Olimid, Georgescu, Gherghe, 2022a: 38-51), public investments and other financial contexts (Stanciu, Mitu, 2017: 7-20).

Limitations of the study

The study’s results and output are limited to the English language in use and the period of time covering scientific works until 2019. The online platform is programmed to show search results as recent as 2019 depending on the language corpus selected: English (different for British English or American English searches), French, Chinese, Hebrew, Italian, and Spanish.

Conclusions

The results of this study show systematic use of key concepts in European governance and Europeanisation theories especially beginning with the 1990s with an exponential growth during the 2000s which help to build the future trends of bibliometric research and political discourse analysis. The research has undergone a systematic overview of the conceptual usage in the scientific literature with online presence using Google Ngram Viewer platform. The research contributes to studies accomplished on the national responses to Europeanization issues, domestic changes in policies and institutions, actors's actions at home and abroad, but also changes at EU institutional and policy level, discourses, values or actions. The study has contributed to identifying the frequency of usage in the conceptualization of supranational-national relations conditioned by European integration and the labelling and analysis of transfer of competencies from the national to the European sphere in the context of multi-level governance.

Authors' Contributions:
The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

The Vietnam War. Social and Political Issues of an Anti-Communist War

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Abstract:
Objectives. This article presents an issue of the War of Vietnam (1955-1975), an anti-communist war. A crisis of veterans' social misconduct and rise in drug use in and after the War had started and was speculated by Soviets, using the movies about this war. The Vietnam War was not a typical one. It was a war of attrition, in which guerrilla fighting with line fighting and fighting in very difficult conditions (jungle) were combined.
Material and methods. The films investigated were "Taxi Driver" (1976), "Homecoming" (1978), "The Deer Hunter" (1979), "Platoon" (1986) "Born on the Fourth of July" (1989), "Casualties of War" (1989), "Dead Presidents" (1995), "We Were Soldiers" (2001).
Results. There was a connection between the post-traumatic shock, drugs use, war violence and veterans' social reinsertion after the war. The analyzed movies about veterans had strong psychological charge and they have translated on the screen their psychological and social drama of reinsertion, the tragedy of this war, considered to be one of weariness, even psychological.
Conclusions. The Vietnam syndrome was considered a complex of factors that made it difficult for Vietnam fighters to integrate into American society. The wounds were multiple, the danger imminent and the nervous overload of the fighters was permanent. All these issues were present on the American cinema movies.
This Vietnam syndrome was also called post-traumatic shock. Drug abuse was used to relieve the pain of dealing with nightmares, insomnia, physical, and mental pain. Also, drugs were used to relieve the stress of unemployment. It was an unsuccessful use that created a lot of drama and loosed destinies.

Keywords: *Vietnam, drugs, American Cinema, soldiers, veterans, anticommunist war*

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Introduction

The use of narcotics on the battlefield initially had a strictly military purpose. A derivative of the opioid class, morphine was used by the military physicians to anesthetize amputation operations, but also to relieve pain in soldiers (Stanton: 1976, 557) who had shrapnel from the projectiles that could not be extracted or had impaired psycho-somatic status. It was not until 1905, when procaine or novocaine, an unaddictive anaesthetic, was synthesized in Germany that opioid-based anaesthetics were used in military and civilian surgery.

The first recorded use of drugs was in the Arab world. There was a sect of "assassins", that is, those who committed criminal acts in the name of the Islamic faith after having previously consumed hashish.

The Vietnam War was not a typical war. It was a war of attrition, in which guerrilla warfare with line combat and fighting in very harsh conditions (jungle) combined.

The wounds were multiple, the danger imminent, and the nervous overstrain of the fighters was permanent.

Usually, on the battlefield, in the wars of the modern era, and even in the two world wars, soldiers received rum or vodka, and also cigarettes or money for tobacco.

Objectives

It was started from the premise that in Vietnam, ancient Indochina, not far from the opium and derivatives trade routes, the consumption of opium and derivatives was widespread among the locals.

In September 1971, a contingent of 13,760 Vietnam veterans (Robins, Davis, & Nurco: 1974, 38) was demobilized. The analyzes from the debriefing period, that set of investigations and therapies, analyzes after returning from the operating theater showed that 1400 of them, that is 10%, presented in the biological analyzes the proof of the fact that they had used drugs (Robins:1973, 61).

But why did the soldiers, especially the young ones, choose heroin? Paradoxically, in those years, in the US, restrictions were greater for young people between 19 and 21 years old when buying alcohol, and the illicit traffic in alcohol was much better controlled than, for example, heroin (Hunt & Odoroff: 1962, 43). And heroin was relatively cheap in the early 1970s (O'Donnell: 1969, 15). Admittedly, heroin's effects on young people were much more harmful in the long term, but in the short term, users believed it had stronger anti-stress effects than alcohol (Robins & Slobodyan: 2002, 1055).

Studies conducted on the social integration of veterans showed that they were addicted to narcotics and had the effects of post-traumatic shock. More than 30% of Vietnam veterans who had a girlfriend, a wife, or even a wife and children at home showed a colder, harsher behavior towards the family, especially towards the children (Stephens & Cottrell: 1972, 48). The veterans, taught with order, with hierarchy, could not bear to be contradicted.

Furthermore, even in the case of veterans who did not develop drug addiction but had post-traumatic shock, any problems their children or other family members may have had (third-party violence), they were found to become aggressive out of an exaggerated spirit of protection towards their children (Collection: 1976, 15). Especially veterans who noticed their children having problems with drugs or alcohol, sought to deal with them harshly, to catch them and teach them a lesson to the drug dealers (Wish:2010, 215-217).

Material and methods

The study operates with several categories of materials. First, in the study, the technical documents of the Vietnam War were used. These were the documents of the Department of Defense (Pentagon), the official classifications of the categories of veterans. Analyzes of the evolution of the number of military personnel followed. There followed documents of a medical nature in which the main types of injuries, physical and mental, were attested, as well as the way in which the narcotics began to be used.

In the second case, articles and studies directly connected to the PTSD definition set were used. After this post-traumatic shock was defined, the study and analysis focused on two complementary aspects. The first is that of opinions on the access to drugs of soldiers in Vietnam. The second was how drugs affected the physical, mental and physiological condition of soldiers engaged in the Vietnam conflict.

In the third case, the study analyzed the Hollywood movies perspective on the Vietnam War from two points of view. The first was related to active duty soldiers, the other was related to veterans. Obviously, all the films made about the Vietnam War were made in a system of introspection. The story begins in the modern day when the veteran is caught in the vortex of memories and he tries to find explanations for the states he goes through starting from the terrible days of the Vietnam War.

The analyzed films start from the idea that the Vietnam War was a deep, complex, attrition war, for which the American military system was not prepared. The American military system came after the successes in Europe, especially the D-Day landings in Normandy on June 6, 1944 and after the rejection in the winter of 1944-1945 of the German counter-offensive in the Ardennes Plateau.

The structural and basic difference between the two wars, the Second World War and the Vietnam War was related to several factors: first of all, the terrain, European towns in the case of the World War, the jungle in the case of the Vietnam War. In the case of the world war, the enemy was weakened, did not have enough material and human resources, in particular, fuel and ammunition. In the case of the Vietnam War, the North Vietnamese were much better supplied and knew the terrain they were fighting on.

The US, although allied with South Vietnam, also faced an aspect that the history of social structures has studied very well. The North Vietnamese, though communist, held to an ancestral set of rules, where the wisdom of the elders came first, where direct order replaced American decision-making analysis. Either the South Vietnamese, who wanted to maintain democracy and the democratic system, found that the American propaganda was not compatible with the way of thinking of the ordinary Vietnamese, whether they were from the North or the South, which in war diminishes the ability to gain empathy towards by the foreign army allied to the South, enemy to the North.

So, from the studies analyzed, from the articles studied and the films watched, because the study focuses on watching dozens of hours of art films and documentaries about the Vietnam War, the idea emerges that the Vietnam War was also a war of mentalities, of the mental health status, not only a war of men and techniques, of strategies and combat actions.

Another observation needed in this study was that of the circumstances that made the Vietnam War a resounding failure for the Americans. The first part of the discussion starts from the fundamental mistake of military strategists and politicians in Washington. They believed that the World War II supremacy of the American Army was a type of invincible armor capable of bringing success anywhere because North Vietnam was supported by the Soviets and China, states with a political doctrine and political system opposed to American, therefore, theoretically enemy states.

The Vietnam War was, during the Cold War, to test the ability of the American Army to directly confront the Red Army at some point.

A second fundamental mistake of American strategists at all levels of design and decision-making was that American society approved ab initio everything thought in the White House or the Pentagon and decided on Capitol Hill by the vote of senators and congressmen. That had happened in the Second World War, only the world had changed in the meantime. Soviet propaganda promoted positive human rights (work, housing, paid leave, care and education of children) in which the state had to be involved and in the 60s-70s of the 20th century, unemployment in the USA was increasing because the period of growth had ended and recovery after the world war. The Marshall Plan of 1947 had brought everything that could be brought economically from Western Europe.

In addition, American youth were no longer being educated according to the principles of their World War II veteran parents and World War I veteran grandparents. America was still accused in 1964-1965 (Vaillant: 1966, 727), a century after the American Civil War (1861-1865), of maintaining racial segregation. In World War II, it took artistic and televised propaganda for African Americans to be considered capable soldiers as the white soldiers. Or, now that racial problems persisted, both African-Americans and whites had to be on the front in Vietnam, there was born a solidarity that US civil society had to accept. The great demonstrations of the "hippie" and "flower-power" generations showed that America was socially vulnerable, and President Richard Nixon chose to cooperate with the People's Republic of China against the USSR, so the Vietnam War had to be a controlled failure.

So, from a media success heavily promoted on official channels, the Vietnam War became a resounding failure, promoted by American cinema with all its dramas.

It comes down to the main discussion, which is that drugs are the way many veterans tried to get out of the social and psychological carousel in which they had been caught. They had gone to war convinced that they would impose far away their democratic civilization, of European origin, and they returned home disappointed, sick physically and spiritually, the disappointment growing even more when society rejected them both as people and as a special category, that of war veterans.

This is another point of discussion. Already in vulnerable health, already affected by addictions, war veterans also received a social stigma from where they did not expect. That is, they came home from a devastating war and found themselves in a much tougher one, because it was carried with psychological weapons, much more effective and that hurt consciences.

So, wounding the conscience of a military man basically leads to his cancellation as a social being, as part of a social structure.

The Vietnam War found film, politics and society in different positions, not common as had been the case in the previous war. After the Vietnam War, directors criticized politics and did not make films that justified the war but, on the contrary, condemned it.

Only the American success in Iraq in the 90s-2000s, so at the end of the 20th century, could fade a little of the drama of Vietnam.

The great American political scientist and state adviser Henry Kissinger reproached the decision-makers in Washington (he had been the architect of the rapprochement between the US and Communist China and the end of the Vietnam War) in April 2021, when they decided to withdraw the US Army from Kabul-Afghanistan that they they had made the mistake of confusing the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe with the collapse of Islamic fundamentalism in North Africa and the Middle East. Above all, he reproached them for forgetting the "painful lesson of Vietnam."

Results

The films about the Vietnam War are hard films, films that have a strong psychological charge and that translate on the screen the psychological and social drama of the veterans of this war, considered to be one of weariness, even psychological.

The 11 films analyzed in this study were commented according to some criteria such as: the direct connection between the director and the war, as was the case of Oliver Stone, himself a veteran of this war, the soldier-soldier relationship, the soldier-superior relationship directly, the veteran-society relationship, the veteran-family relationship. It also captures, especially in Oliver Stone's film, the faithful reconstruction of reality, based on the testimonies of veterans.

There were cases in some films where the actors had to consume some substances considered prohibited in order for the effect on the small screen to be as close as possible to the sensations described by the veterans who entered rehab programs. Professional film criticism has shown that the military establishment has disapproved of Vietnam films. So, the situation did not happen in the Second World War, when the Pentagon gave its contest to the making of films. For example, director Oliver Stone had trouble getting uniforms that resembled the uniforms used in Vietnam by the US military.

An official U.S. statistic (What We Do:2000, 1) on the number of war veterans who entered in federal prisons shows: "*In 1998, an estimated 56,500 Vietnam War-era veterans and 18,500, Persian Gulf War-era veterans were held in State and Federal prisons*" (Mumola: 2000, 1).

The fact that Vietnam War veterans could not integrate into well-paying jobs that required theoretical knowledge and education meant that they had to turn to the social security system and fill out forms for employment. The jobs entailed physical labor, but on top of that (their military training and fitness was an ally), their bosses treated them with contempt. Those veterans who developed drug addictions and who had post-traumatic shock often rebelled and assaulted their employers. They were leaving their jobs and having problems at home. The big problem with all modern wars, but especially with contemporary ones, is the fact that when a large number of soldiers are needed, society and the economy lose in terms of productivity. After the conflict came to an end, military veterans can no longer find their previous jobs or are not considered by employers. They became a dangerous mass of potential but unresponsive labor force.

That's why they end up being easy targets for traffickers, those who practice robberies, robberies. The situations in which many of them became assassins paid by influential people against their enemies are eloquent. They were influential people from politics, the underworld.

Some veterans developed an aversion to their former bosses who, they felt, had sent them on risky missions, then gone into political office and forgotten about them.

There was another problem. The Vietnam War was a war lost by the United States of America. It was a war that civil society condemned, and the defeat caused an anathema cast upon it for causing too much damage and not bringing the intended benefits.

Even if the major criticism was directed at the political side, military veterans also unwittingly became the target of criticism from civil society, especially anti-war activists.

Obviously, a military man who came home from the conflict, defeated, but knowing that he did his duty, that he lost there dear friends, comrades, people he did not know before the war but to whom he had become very attached more inclined to antisocial behavior.

A special aspect could be presented here. Many mothers, many wives, many orphaned children looked at the surviving soldier with a kind of sadness, anger because he had had the chance that their son, husband or father had not, dying on the front.

That was why, in addition to the loss of a comrade, the soldier was regarded with hostility in the environment from which he returned.

Some have practically tried to rebuild their lives with the girlfriends or widows of the disappeared and from here, other traumas have arisen because a man could not bear to be compared to his predecessor, no matter how good a friend he was.

Discussions

If in the Second World War, the cinema was put at the service of the war, being revealed exclusively the heroic side of the war, the Vietnam War found the Pentagon-US Ministry of Defense and the Hollywood, the Californian fortress of the world film, on antagonistic positions.

The television that had "exploded" in the 60s (Hentea: 2014, 2), would contribute greatly to the transmission of the plight of the veterans. They could not integrate into a system of regular work, they could not fit into a discipline imposed by civilians who had not experienced their own dramas, and those of their friends and troop colleagues seriously wounded, taken prisoner, missing or dead in the war.

The films (Nichols: 2014, 9-12) that hold the attention of the study are "Taxi Driver" - 1976, with Jane Fonda and Robert de Niro, "Coming Home" from 1978, by Hal Ashby, with Jane Fonda and John Voigt, "The Deer Hunter" from 1979, by Michael Cimino, with Robert de Niro and Christopher Walken, "Platoon" from 1986, by Oliver Stone, with Tom Berenger, William Dafoe and Charlie Sheen, "Hamburger Hill"-1987, "Born on the Fourth of July" from 1989, by Oliver Stone, with Tom Cruise, "Casualties of War"-1989, "Jacob's Ladder", 1990, "Dead Presidents"-1995, "We Were Soldiers", made in 2001, with Mel Gibson, "American Gangster" (drug trafficking in the coffins of the dead in Vietnam), 2007.

"The Deer Hunter" (Nichols:2014, 145) is an extraordinary film about Vietnam. The second film by Michael Cimino, originally a talented Hollywood screenwriter, has been declared by some a cinematic masterpiece and by others a hateful film that grossly distorts historical reality. Somewhere, between these two extremes, "The Deer Hunter" also became a major commercial success, despite talking about the loss of the innocence, experienced by the United States of America in the Vietnam War.

In a small industrial town in Pennsylvania, three workers, Michael (Robert De Niro), Steven (John Savage) and Nick (Christopher Walken), weere called into the military to go to war. Before leaving his friends, Steven got married, and the marriage and wedding also became a farewell party for the new recruits.

The film then switched to the conflict in Vietnam (Hentea: 2014, 1). The three friends became prisoner and eventually manage to escape, but with tragic consequences. Steven remained paraplegic, Nick retreated somewhere in Southeast Asia, emotionally crippled, and Michael came back home, overcome with remorse for letting his friends fail. His fate was further complicated when, trying to resume his civilian life, Michael involved emotionally with Linda (Meryl Streep), once Nick's fiancée and had plans to marry her.

"The Deer Hunter" offers some remarkable acting performances and a series of scenes of overwhelming intensity, from the wedding party to the much-discussed sequence of the war prisoners playing Russian roulette.

The movie "Apocalypse Now" (Arvunescu: 2015, 1) shows how during the Vietnam War, Captain Willard (Martin Sheen) was ordered to find and "liquidate without any scruples" a Special Forces commander, Colonel Kurtz (Marlon Brando), who had said to have sided with the enemy. Willard's journey was ostensibly an adventure story, but equally obvious it was an allegory of the dementia of the war and the self-discovery. Finally, when Brando appears, the film becomes a philosophical interrogation of the insoluble mysteries of madness and evil in humans. "Apocalypse Now" also featured one of the scariest lunatics on the big screen, Colonel Kilgore (Robert Duvall), who likes “the smell of napalm in the morning”, is a demented, charismatic, surfing guy who wears a Stetson hat (Arvunescu:2015, 2).

The 1987 film Hamburger Hill (Arvunescu: 2015, 3) has an equally exciting subject. While the world wondered why the Vietnam War was happening, a troop of soldiers fought and died in the fiercest battle of America's bloodiest conflict. The drama directed by John Irvin follows the dramatic story of a division of American soldiers who, on May 10, 1969, participate in the battle to take over the Dong Ap Bia area, in the A Shau valley. This area was nicknamed Hamburger Hill because of the carnage that turned the combatants of one of the toughest battles of this war into a bloody mass (Nichols:2014, 245).

The comedy "Good Morning Vietnam" from 1987 starring Robbie Williams shows a new DJ, Adrian Cronauer (Robin Williams), coming to the radio station of an American camp in Vietnam. It would transform and revolutionize the way radio worked until then, and would soon become a real phenomenon in the American camp in Vietnam (Arvunescu: 2015,3). The film is by far Williams' best acting performance on the screen. Although he spoke non-stop into the microphone, director Barry Levinson managed to keep the character from saying anything about himself personally -they did not knew where he came from, what he did before the war, if he has a family, what dreams he has. His world was reduced to the material he makes for radio programs. The film received an Oscar nomination and a Golden Globe Award. Obviously, references to drugs and their use appear in the film (Hentea:2014, 1).

"Casualties of War" is an exceptional film by Brian de Palma. It is based on the true story of a platoon of soldiers trapped in the inferno of the war-torn Vietnam. Witnessing the murder of a civilian, private Eriksson (Michael J. Fox) was forced to confront his comrades and the commanding officer, Sergeant Meserve (Sean Penn), a powerful and charismatic man who has crossed the border of brutality, driven by the terror of war (Arvunescu:2015, 1).

Director Brian de Palma made a devastating and hard-to-forget story about one man's struggle for health and justice in the midst of the chaos of the war.

"Born on the Fourth of July" (Arvunescu: 2015, 2) is a landmark film among the dramas about the Vietnam War. Born on the Fourth of July is based on the best-selling autobiographical novel by Ron Kovic, who co-wrote the screenplay with the film's director, Oliver Stone, both veterans of the war.

The story begins on July 4, as Ron Kovic celebrates his birthday. Becoming a true hero of his hometown, young Kovic had shocked everyone he knows by enlisting in the Navy so he can fight against the communists in Vietnam. Unfortunately, he soon had learned that there it was a big difference between the ideal fighter and the experience of war, that the moral lines that had been induced by his parents and in which he had believed so strongly were actually nonexistent in the harsh reality of war. Kovic was first confused, then deeply disillusioned, discovering that many of his comrades are no superior to his enemies **(**Nichols: 2014, 78).

He got into a terrible mess when he accidentally had shot a colleague. He leaved the front on a stretcher, after a bullet in his spine paralyzed him from the waist down. Recovery was slow and hampered, especially by the inhumane conditions in the veterans hospital, most of which have no chance of social reintegration. Sent home to his hometown, Kovic could not reconcile with his family or civilian life, tormented everyone around him, became an alcoholic and had compassion for himself, got alienated himself more and more. Nearly dead at a special camp in Baja, California, Kovic finds hope and a reason to live when he becomes an anti-war activist.

"We Were Soldiers", made in 2001 (Arvunescu: 2015, 1), starring Mel Gibson, has the following subject. In 1965, the first battle between U.S. and Viet Cong soldiers took place. About 400 U.S. troops entered North Vietnamese territory and were surrounded by 2,000 enemies. Facing this predicament for a month were Harold Moore (played by Mel Gibson), commander of the 1st Battalion of the Cavalry, and Associated Press reporter Joseph Galloway (Hentea:2014, 2).

Mel Gibson's character has the following line:

"We will fight a strong and determined enemy. I cannot promise to bring you all home alive. But I swear to you that I will be the first to set foot on the battlefield and the last to leave. And I'm not going to leave anyone behind... alive or dead. We will all return home together" (Hentea:2014, 2).

Analysing all these films, historian Călin Hentea (Hentea:2014, 1) concludes: "*Scenes of extreme physical and psychological violence, a generally bleak image of the American army consumed by drugs and sadism, the absurdity of war and the inability of veterans returned home to heal their traumas and resume a normal life were the main images and messages of these films, some multi-Oscarized.*"

Radu Vrasti (Vrasti:2018, 1-2) believes that the suffering of soldiers in Vietnam should be understood as follows:

”Under the pressure of the pathology, increasingly common in soldiers returning home from the Vietnam War, a new clinical entity is taking hold, post-Vietnam syndrome, proving that post-traumatic consequences can occur even much later. The scientific world and the general public had to accept that those people in whom the traumas of war led to particular mental disorders were neither cowards or simulants, nor pension hunters, but sufferers in the true sense of the word and post-traumatic disorder or syndrome really existed as a nosological psychiatric entity”.

The author completed the definition of the post-traumatic shock:

”This reasoning has been extended to other traumatic situations and to other categories of individuals, especially children abused by parents, or sexually abused women. The problem of the post-traumatic disorder was one of the few situations, when social and political considerations imposed a nosological psychiatric category. It remains a politically sensitive psychiatric disorder today, although its acceptance is quasi-universal, with the reservation of endless discussion, (Vrasti:2018, p.3)

As the U.S. soldiers cooperated with the South Vietnamese soldiers against Viet Cong communists, they came into contact with narcotics trafficking networks. Even some of South Vietnam's political and military leaders were caught or had connections to those who exploited these networks.

Thus, American soldiers **(**Kamienski: 2015, p. 1) were able to come into contact with such trafficking networks, and became, some of them consumers, a habit that would continue when they became veterans.

In 2004, there were over 8.2 million Americans who were considered veterans of the "Vietnam era."

The veteran, according to the 1974 American classification (Vietnam Veteran Act:1974, 1), was:

"*The man who served on active duty anywhere in the world for a period of 180+ days, any part of which occurred between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975, and was discharged or released with anything other than a dishonourable discharge or was discharged or released from active duty for a service-connected disability if any part of such active duty was performed between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975*" (Vietnam Veteran Act:1974, 1).

Official statistics show that more than 100,000 Americans died or were jailed, after returning home, for crimes (the proportion is 50% to 50% approximately).

It is known that the worsening situation in Vietnam, due to the involvement of the Soviets, Chinese and some socialist states on the side of North Vietnam, led to an aggravation of the social crisis, especially since young people had to go to the front. Many came on leave or during periods of convalescence with the habit of consuming narcotics (cannabis, marijuana **-** the most widespread, but also heroin).

Cocaine from South America was also a drug, but it was intended for those who could afford to buy this cocaine, considered to be a "luxury commodity".

Young people stormed the amphitheatres where Mircea Eliade, who had had initiatory experiences in the ashrams of yogis in the Himalayan Mountains and who had consumed narcotics, taught. Young people wanted to reach states of exaltation, psychedelic music was on the rise, and, in addition to the marijuana consumed by Jamaicans, the synthetic drug called LSD appeared on a large scale (Hentea:2014, 2).

Obviously, these hippie communities that promoted nature, drug use, uninhibited love were supported by forces hostile to the U.S. as well, eager for the Vietnam War to end.

The slogan of those years was "Come Back Home America!"

In the end, the U.S. President, Richard Nixon, made the decision to withdraw the U.S. troops from South Vietnam (Hentea:2014, 2).

There is one problem that specialists have studied. The American failure in Vietnam.

Regarding the use of drugs by soldiers, Gabriela Alexandru (Alexandru:2020, 1) concludes:

"*The American soldiers in Vietnam began using drugs while off duty, to cope with all their wartime fighting. The Department of Defence reported in 1971 that, by then, 51 percent of soldiers had smoked marijuana, 28 percent had used heroin or cocaine, and 31 percent had used psychedelics such as LSD or mushrooms. In addition to illicit drug use, many soldiers became heavily addicted to amphetamines and sedatives. The Special House Crime Committee reported that approximately 225 million stimulant tablets were consumed by the armed forces between 1966 and 1969*" (Alexandru:2020, 1).

In her turn, Andreea Cuzub (Cuzub:2018, 1) believes that, amid the "flower power" and "hippie" periods, some soldiers were already consuming narcotics before reaching the front, but that they did not remove stress but only temporarily disconnected the user, which then created an increasing addiction:

"In addition, those who went on longer expeditions, also received injections of steroids. Research showed that 3.2 percent of soldiers arriving in Vietnam were already amphetamine users, but just one year into the war, the rate rose to 5.2 percent.

Psychoactive substances were administered not only to stimulate soldiers, but also to reduce the impact of the war on the psyche. To prevent these effects, the Department of Defense provided sedatives and neuroleptics. The use of all these medications explains the low rate of wartime trauma" (Cuzub:2018, 1).

The author emphasized that the effect of drug use were on short-term and created an addict attitude. 15,2% of Vietnam veterans had suffered by post-traumatic shock:

"*However, the results were on short term. The drugs administered do not eliminate the causes of stress, but only relieve the symptoms, and a few years later, the problems can explode with much greater force than they would have done the first time.*

The exact number of soldiers in Vietnam, who suffered from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) remains unknown, but according to the National Veterans Recovery Survey, published in 1990, about 15.2 percent of the soldiers involved suffered" (Cuzub:2018, 1).

The American literature (Kamienski:2015, 2) concluded:

"*The U.S. armed forces readily distributed large amounts of "speed" (stimulants), in the form of Dexedrine (dextroamphetamine), an amphetamine twice as strong as Benzedrine, to American servicemen. Soldiers embarking on long-range reconnaissance missions or ambushes, according to standard military instruction, were supposed to be given 20 milligrams of dextroamphetamine for 48 hours of combat readiness*". (Kamienski:2015, 2)

The author used the information gave by members of the most difficult missions entrusted by US Army during the Vietnam War:

"According to a member of a long-range reconnaissance platoon, the drugs "gave you a sense of bravado as well as keeping you awake. Every sight and sound was heightened. You were wired into it all and at times you felt really invulnerable." Servicemen who participated in infiltrating Laos, a secret intervention by the United States in the Laotian Civil War, on four-day missions received 12 tablets of an opioid (Darvon), 24 tablets of codeine (an opioid analgesic), and 6 pills of dextroamphetamine. Also, those serving in special units departing for a tough, long mission were injected with steroids" (Kamienski:2015, 2).

The author presented also the liaison between drugs and the veterans life after the war:

"However, pumping the soldiers with speed and heavy anti-psychotics like Thorazine (Chlorpromazine) came with a price that veterans paid later. By alleviating the symptoms, the anti-psychotics and narcotics offered temporary relief. However, these serious drugs administered in the absence of professional psychiatric supervision and proper psychotherapy merely suppressed the problems and symptoms, but veterans years later often experienced those problems untreated and amplified. This is a large part of the reason why very few servicemen, compared to previous wars, required medical evacuation due to combat-stress breakdowns, but PTSD levels among veterans after the war are at unprecedented levels compared to previous wars"(Kamienski, 2015, p.2).

Bogdan Mînjină (Mînjină: 2020, 345), psychology specialist at the Ministry of Internal Affairs defines post-traumatic stress disorder as following:

"*It can be diagnosed, according to DSM-5, if, following the direct or indirect exposure of a person to a potentially psychotraumatic critical incident, specific combinations of symptoms from four categories (i.e., intrusive, avoidance, psychophysiological and reactive activation, negative changes in cognition and affective mood) with significant negative effects (i.e., distress and significant problems in social, occupational and family functioning)*".

The author presented that in 1980, post-Vietnam syndrome (five years afther the war) was recognised as a mental disorder:

"*It was officially recognized as a mental disorder in 1980, in the DSM-III, five years after the end of the Vietnam War, because the post-Vietnam syndrome, "characterized by intrusive, combat-related thoughts, nightmares, numb sensitivity, and some specific symptoms such as drug addiction, depression, anxiety, and anger" (*Mînjină:2020, 345).

About 1 million U.S. troops served permanently on the Vietnam front.

The Vietnam syndrome was considered the complex of factors that made it very difficult for the Vietnamese fighters to integrate into the American society, after years of frontline and extreme experiences. This Vietnam syndrome (American Psychiatric Association [APA]:2016, 10) was also been called post-traumatic shock. Drugs have always been a means of relieving the pains, of coping with nightmares, insomnia, physical and mental pain, where tobacco and alcohol abuse no longer gave the expected dose of comfort (Stanton: 1976, 558).

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a major type psychotrauma that needs to be prevented and, if it could not be prevented, to be managed through psychological support activities, dedicated to the personnel performing missions and operative activities.

Conclusions

Anthropologically speaking, the Vietnam War had a negative social projection also because of cinematography. The veterans began to come into contact with the tabloid press, which for a few extra dollars, for various benefits, hunted their statements about people who had become uncomfortable on the political or economic scene and a possible unprincipled attitude held in Vietnam (especially among officers who became politicians). It would have ruined their image and helped their rivals.

In this paper, was built a correspondence scheme between the character of the Vietnam conflict, a destructive one on the lives of combatants and the civilian population, and the post-traumatic effects and to see to what extent drug use contributed to this link between Vietnam and the post-traumatic shock of veterans.

American cinema has tried, as much as possible to show, despite the exaggerations specific to the seventh art, the most real situation of the drama of the Vietnamese veterans.

The study was able to demonstrate that post-traumatic shock was amplified by drug use, which accentuated deviant behaviour, isolation and vulnerability of veterans in the post-war period.

Another characteristic element of the situation, in which some of the veterans found themselves, was the fact that some of them ended up committing serious crimes that brought them sentences to heavy sentences. 56,000 American veterans in Vietnam ended up in federal prisons, and more than 15 percent of them had post-traumatic shock.

In 2004, federal censuses showed that as many as 8.2 million Americans were considered "Vietnam veterans". Nearly 3 million of them had served inside, USA.

Engaged in missions, there were at least 1 million American soldiers at all times.

In Vietnam, almost 60,000 American soldiers died (figure including the missing and the prisoners, seriously wounded, etc.). If we add the more than 50,000 veterans who arrived in prisons, it turns out that of the soldiers permanently active in Vietnam, about 250,000 of them were cumulated as dead, wounded, missing, affected by post-traumatic shock, imprisoned. That is almost 25% of all soldiers who fought exclusively on the Vietnam Front, between 1964 and 1975.

The main scientific gain of the period after the Vietnam War was that the American scientific world theorized the "post-traumatic syndrome" and, thus, research was able to find solutions for the future, because the US had other participations in heavy wars, after 1975, such as in Iraq and Afghanistan, after 1989.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Takaful Islamic insurance for life: Appraisal on the relevance of takaful models on financial markets behaviour

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Abstract:
The purpose of this study is to identify and describe the relevance of the takaful sector in terms of demographic features and geographical conditions. This study employs a qualitative, descriptive, literature-based approach to explore the significance and growth tactics used in this sector. The method is useful for reviewing specific situations and phenomena by assessing information and data from current literature. The study deliberates the elements that influence the efficiency level of the Takaful sector in terms of the benefits it delivers to investors, as well as the effects of Takaful insurance firms' special factors that make it a superior investment option. The findings testifies Takaful as a thriving insurance industry with enormous potential and a bright future in the global market. Industrial players, Sharia experts, and Takaful insurance businesses should work together to overcome inadequacies and loopholes that hinder the global evolution of this sector. The study supports the growth trajectory and advises Takaful operators to create more creative Takaful products and make them more accessible to consumers.

Keywords: *Takaful, Islamic insurance, Takaful models, Islamic finance, Sharia law, investor, global market.*

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1. Introduction

The phenomenon of an ageing population is attributed to the retirement of baby boomers, contributing to an increase in the old population (Rogers et al., 1999) affecting the future productivity and economic growth in countries (Cheng, 2007). According to the United Nations, all countries around the world are experiencing an increase in the number of elderly people in their populations, which has an impact on all societal sectors such as labour and financial markets, goods and services such as housing, transportation, and social protection, and changes in family structures (Mahmud, et al., 2019). There is no denying that old age will cause a decline in our overall health no matter how fit an individual is. Old age certainly comes with increased health risks, tendency of developing dementia and Alzheimer's disease, depression. Adequate planning for the security of financial outcomes can be rightly predicted by sound financial knowledge and clarity of the post-retirement goals. Mindful financial management and strategic planning for retirement will ensure a stable post-retirement life (Frank et al., 2023) and Takaful plays a vital role in bridging the gap between conventional plans and financial instruments based on Sharia law.

1.1 Overview of Islamic financial market

The Islamic Finance Market (IFM) is a vibrant and quickly growing sector that principally includes Islamic Banking, Sukuk (Islamic Bonds), Takaful (Islamic Insurance), and Islamic Mutual Funds. Liberalisation and globalisation have resulted in a homogenised financial system with the same set of incentives and motivations, contributing to global instability. The diversity in structure brought about by the financial instruments employed in Islamic Financial Markets contributed to the stability of the financial system (Ali & Nisar, 2016) by giving an alternative to existing financial services. According to Scott Schmith (2005), an international trade specialist at the International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce in the United States, the growth of Islamic finance has helped to diversify markets and institutional structures, particularly in oil-rich Muslim countries and countries with significant Muslim minorities. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) reports that cooperative banks, including local credit unions, and Islamic banks were among the financial institutions that survived the 2007-2008 economic crisis. They were somewhat isolated from the 'speculative' financial market, making them more resilient to any financial shocks. Both entities differ from commercial banks in that they share risk with depositors (Al-Muharrami, 2014). During financial crises, Islamic banks were less prone to deposit withdrawals, but their lending remains less responsive to changes in deposits. Samartha et al. (2022) explored the benefits of adopting technology to improve financial services in the banking sector.

1.2 Takaful – Islamic insurance

Takaful or Islamic insurance is a type of financial instrument that serves as a mutual guarantee for modern Muslim cultures in times of economic insecurity, illness, unemployment, widowhood, and old age.Its Islamic insurance businesses offer a variety of Islamic insurance products, including life and family (education funds), medical, maritime and aviation, property and accident, and auto insurance. Islamic insurance has been utilised to increase insurance penetration in various Muslim-majority countries.

Even in the most developed Muslim-majority countries, insurance markets in this sector are largely in their early stages of development, with relatively low insurance density (Farooq & Zaheer, 2015). Islamic insurance has grown significantly over the world, yet it has developed unevenly between countries. Some countries, such as Iran, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia, are Islamic insurance elites due to their relatively large number of Islamic insurance operators and houses, as well as the sustained growth of Islamic insurance sales within their borders, whereas others, such as Indonesia, Pakistan, and Sudan, have seen limited development. Moreover, Karbassi Yazdi et al. (2022) investigated the dynamics of the banking system in Iran considering the conditions of an uncertain environment.

While Islam believes that increasing income and riches through development is vital for meeting fundamental necessities and achieving equitable income and wealth distribution, this alone cannot realise its comprehensive goal of human well-being. It is also vital to meet both spiritual and non-material demands in order to promote true well-being and long-term economic progress. If all of these requirements are not met, there will be a fall in well-being, eventually leading to the demise of society and civilization (Abdou, 2014). Takaful markets have attempted to create a Sharia-compliant annuity product that achieves the same goal as a conventional annuity: guaranteeing a stream of payments at retirement age with optional riders to secure death benefits (Ismail, 2017). Some institutions provided a Shariah-compliant Public Mutual Private Retirement Scheme (PRS) that invested contributions in both sukuk and equities as a way to diversify profits given the volatility of the stock market. The International Shariah Research Academy for Islamic Finance collaborated with Prudential BSN Takaful to develop the conceptual framework and structure for a Shariah-compliant retirement annuity plan (Ali et al. 2014).

2. Conceptual Analysis

The preservation of wealth is critical in Islam for human well-being. The primary goal of Sharia (also known as Shariah - Islamic law) is to promote people's well-being by protecting their faith (din), self (nafs), intellect (aql), posterity (nasl), and riches (mal). Whatever protects these five pillars is in the public interest and desirable, whereas everything that harms these pillars is against the public interest and should be removed." (Chapra 2012). The preservation of wealth would also be considered one of the five crucial parts in Maqasid al-Shariah that designated it as daruriyyat, despite being put at the end of the book (Kamali, 2017). Further, Islamic wealth management essentially stems from the core notion of Islamic wealth in guaranteeing the sustainability and well-being, which extends towards Islamic financial products, asset allocation, portfolio management and financial planning (Alam et al., 2017). A comprehensive service of Islamic wealth management should include wealth generation, wealth protection, wealth accumulation, wealth distribution, and wealth purifying.

2.1 General and Family Takaful

Takaful products are divided into two categories: general Takaful and family Takaful (Alhabshi& Razak 2011; Htayet al., 2012). According to the IFSB, generic Takaful is a plan that consists mostly of short-term joint guarantee contracts (often one year) that provide mutual reimbursement in the case of a particular sort of loss. The schemes are intended to address the needs of individuals and corporate bodies seeking protection against material loss or damage caused by a catastrophe or disaster affecting participants' real estate, assets, or belongings. The Takaful contribution paid is pooled into the Participant Risk Fund under the idea of Tabarru (Fadzli, 2011) to match the risk elements of the business that are inherent in its underwriting activities.

Family Takaful is Shariah-compliant coverage based on the principles of mutual aid and risk sharing (Salman et al., 2015). In the event of an unexpected event affecting Takaful participants, financial assistance will be drawn from the Takaful fund provided by the participants under the notion of 'Tabarru', which signifies giving. In comparison to conventional life insurance, conventional insurance provides a death benefit in exchange for paying a premium (Fadzli, 2011). Thus, the risk is transferred from the individual to a traditional insurance provider. Having adequate retirement funds is crucial to ensure financial security in old age. Furthermore, Wanke et al. (2022) did a research study to analyse the banking performance of ASEAN countries based on the CAMELS Rating System, employing a unique framework based on MCDM / Z numbers. Spulbar et al. (2020), on the other hand, analysed important components of European Union member states' banking systems.

3. Model Fitness

The Takaful Models folow the teachings of the holy law of Islam called Sharia (or Shariah). The cooperative (Taa'wuni) model requires participants to make contributions, which are then accumulated in the participant risk fund (PRF), from which claims, Re-Takaful contributions, and running expenditures are paid. In addition, a percentage of PRF will be invested to produce revenue. Any PRF surplus will be divided among shareholders and participants (Frenz & Soualhi, 2010). The principal-agent relationship exists between Takaful operators (TOs) and participants under the Pure Wakalah (Agency) Model. TOs operate as agents for participants, making investments and managing assets (Sherif and Shaairi 2013). The contributions received from participants will be divided into three categories: Wakalah fee, PRF, and PIF. TOs do not share the investment profit or surplus from PRF. Claims will be reimbursed out of the PRF. In the event of maturity, the participant will receive his respective amount (portion of the contribution that has been invested and profit from the investment) from the PIF (if any) and the maturity value from the PRF.

The Modified Wakalah Model (Wakalah with Incentive Compensation) treats the relationship between TOs and participants as principal-agent; however, TOs are permitted to share the PRF surplus. The donations made by participants will be divided into three categories: Wakalah fee, PRF, and PIF. TOs divided the PRF surplus and investment gains. Claims will be reimbursed from the PRF. In the event of maturity, the participant will receive his respective amount (portion of contribution invested and profit earned) from the PIF (if applicable) and the maturity value from the PRF (Mohamed et al., 2015).Profit sharing is the foundation of the Pure Mudarabah (Investment Profit-Sharing) Model, which governs the contractual relationship between participants and TOs. Participants are capital providers, and TOs manage the funds provided by the participants. The TOs' income is entirely decided by their share of the profits from the PIF. There is no Wakalah fee for TOs. Claims will be reimbursed from the PRF. In the event of maturity, the participant will receive his or her appropriate amount (portion of the contribution deposited and profit from the investment) from the PIF (if applicable) as well as the maturity value from the PRF.

The Modified Mudarabah Model allows TOs to charge the direct cost of handling claims and administrative fees before calculating surplus or deficit. At the same time, TOs might split the PRF surplus and PIF profit. The contribution received from participants will be divided into three categories: monitoring charge (the direct cost of handling claims and administration fee), PRF, and PIF. In the event of maturity (Yusof& Majid 2020), the participant will receive his respective amount (percentage of contribution invested and profit earned) from the PIF (if any) and the maturity value from the PRF. The Hybrid Wakalah-Mudarabah Model combines the principles of Wakalah and Mudarabah. The Wakalah idea is utilised for underwriting, while Mudarabah is used for investment. When compared to the Pure Mudarabah model, TOs enjoy a more constant income, i.e. the Wakalah fee (Safdar2023).At the same time, TOs might split the PRF surplus and PIF profit. Claims will be reimbursed out of the PRF. In the event of maturity, the participant will receive his respective amount (portion of the contribution that has been invested and profit from the investment) from the PIF (if any) and the maturity value from the PRF. Waqf Model This model has more features than the Hybrid Wakalah Mudarabah model (Khairi et al. 2020). The additional requirement is that owners contribute an equal amount of money in the PRF to establish the waqf. Aside from the first waqf donation, the remainder will follow the Hybrid Wakalah-Mudarabah model.

4. Relevance of Takaful Islamic insurance in contemporary financial market

Finance and Takaful are becoming increasingly popular worldwide, contributing significantly to the global economy. The overall asset value of global Islamic finance markets was around 3.95 trillion US dollars in 2021, representing a 17% increase as compared to 2020. By 2026, the worldwide Islamic financial markets are expected to have a total asset value of $5.9 trillion. The Islamic banks use several asset arrangements, including Murabahah (profit margin sales), Ijarah (lease), Musharakah and Muḍarabah (profit-sharing), and Wakalah (service charge) to counter the cabalistic growth of the financial markets. Al Rajhi Bank, situated in Saudi Arabia, led the list of the world's largest Islamic banks, with total assets rising 22% to $125 billion in 2020. The challenge for the Takaful sector is to develop and align the Takaful criteria to be consistent with insurance standards established by IAIS, IRS, and others. Overcoming the problems is critical since takaful is an essential component of the global insurance sector, the fastest expanding and most likely to expand the overall size of the industry.

Islamic finance and Takaful have mostly spread throughout the Middle East, as well as sections of Asia, Africa, and Europe. The global Takaful market size is predicted to increase from $26.50 billion in 2022 to $29.73 billion in 2023 at a compound annual growth rate (CAR) of 12.2%. The global takaful market is estimated to reach $45.95 billion in 2027, with a CAR of 11.5%. The Russia-Ukraine war hampered the possibilities of global economic recovery from the COVID-19 epidemic, at least in the medium term. The battle between these two countries has resulted in economic sanctions against many countries, an increase in commodity prices, and supply chain interruptions, generating inflation in goods and services and hurting various markets throughout the world. Takaful is founded on the Islamic principle of shared responsibility towards one another, and as a result, it is frequently practiced among Muslims. For example, according to the Muslim Population by Country 2023 Report shared by the World Population Review, a US-based sophisticated demographics data supplier, Islam would be the world's second-largest religion after Christianity, with more than two billion followers.

Technological developments are a major trend gaining traction in the Takaful business. Major players in the industry are introducing technologically improved solutions to maintain their market position. Cyber Village Sdn Bhd (CBV), a Malaysia-based provider of digital engagement technology solutions, has created the industry's first peer-to-peer community-based family takaful app.The platform is built upon CV's Insurtech P2P technology. It integrates Takaful, mutual help, and the peer-to-peer concept into a single platform, allowing a group of people to pool their funds to insure against a risky event. Through the platform, the Takaful Operator may meet members' requests for mobile capabilities, self-service options, and proactive messaging, such as speedy and effective digital customer onboarding. Dar Al Takaful, a UAE-based Takaful insurance firm, merged with the National Takaful firm, strengthening both companies' standing in the insurance market and allowing them to develop technologies to improve their products.

5. Conclusions

The Takaful market has grown significantly, driven by increased demand from both Muslim-majority and non-Muslim-majority countries. This growth is fuelled by Takaful insurance's ethical and Shariah-compliant nature, which appeals to a wide range of consumers. Takaful providers have increased their product offerings to reach a larger market. This includes, among others, investment-linked Takaful, general Takaful, family Takaful, and health Takaful. Diversification has led to a larger client base. Furthermore, Takaful operators are expanding into markets beyond their own countries. They are reaching out to Muslims all across the world, as well as non-Muslims seeking inclusive and moral insurance options. Collaborations and mergers with overseas insurance businesses are also on the increase. Furthermore, the landscape of Takaful is changing due to digital technologies. Online distribution channels, smartphone apps, and digital underwriting procedures all contribute to increased accessibility and client involvement. Takaful providers can streamline operations and improve consumer experiences as insurance technology evolves.

The rise in demand for Takaful insurance in Muslim-majority countries is due to the fact that conventional insurance is sometimes rejected by Islamic Sharia law because factors such as uncertainty of business losses, medical conditions, hospitalisation, and others are against Islamic teachings. Takaful insurance distributes investment earnings across both participants. Because the premium is considered a donation by the members, a tiny portion of the surplus is provided to the Takaful organiser to manage the insurance procedure. The remaining cash is divided equally among the participants. The lack of standardisation in Takaful insurance due to regional differences is substantial, making the Takaful process difficult to standardise. In comparison to the traditional insurance industry in the region, Takaful insurance has seen significant adoption and penetration. Takaful insurance's prospective customer base includes the world's 1.5 billion Muslims. The target demographic is the young people, as they have the potential to become customers. The Takaful insurance industry should select the type of innovation that best suits the characteristics of communities and environmental conditions, taking into account customers' demographic and geographical conditions, in order to achieve the Takaful industry's goal of introducing Takaful and encouraging participation in Takaful activities.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Scenarios Regarding the Impact of Romania's External Relations, Considering the Framework of Human Society Globalisation

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Abstract:
The fundamental characteristic of contemporary society is the globalization process, generated mainly by economic globalisation. For this reason, I have chosen to relate the analysis of the impact of Romania's external relations with the major global actors to the framework of globalisation and not to a specific actor. The global governance model can be understood as a unit of all institutional processes, both formal and informal, that guide or constrain activities on a global or regional scale, thus influencing the organization of human society. The type of future global governance will be different from the current one, mainly because of the radical change in the world economic and political balance. The global balance will tilt more towards Asia and power will be much less concentrated than in the last century. On the other hand, globalization will lead to increasing interdependence among a number of key players.

Keywords: *scenario, global governance, regional blocs, national protectionism, the control of economic interests*

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Scenarios Regarding the Impact of Romania's External Relations, Considering the Framework of Human Society Globalisation

According to the model of global and European governance, our world will follow a more or less global course and be governed by more or less regulated systems. These, in their turn, will be influenced by economic growth, wealth redistribution and the sustainability of our activities. The process of globalization involves the exchange of knowledge and the acceleration of innovation, therefore, that developing countries will pick up a major speed catching up with the already developed countries. On the other hand, foreign trade and the development of global value chains will lead to the maximum development of production, that is, to effective globalization. In the scenarios I will develop, I will assume that an increase in the level of globalization is based on a development of foreign trade and supply chains. Globalization itself will not generate sustainability, and most likely, the reality of 2045 will be a combination of the proposed scenarios or one of them with unexpected nuances, or even an unforeseen reality, generated by disruptive elements or a black swan phenomenon.

The first scenario, that of global governance, is based on continued economic globalisation. Therefore, new effective mechanisms and institutions may appear to support globalization instruments. In this scenario the world is governed in a coordinated and constructive way by various organizations, including political institutions, during which the States of the European Union will flourish considerably. (OECD, 2008) In this scenario we encounter a remarkable economic growth worldwide, including for Romania, but we can witness an increase in inequality, since no state institution has redistributed wealth as a priority of national governments, and their room for maneuver is limited due to tax restrictions and the need to guarantee an attractive job market for companies. (OECD, 2008) For Romania, this scenario means developing over the principle of the European economy, ensuring an influence in the European institutions, proportional to its size. But the aging of the population and the concentration of wealth can represent a great risk for the sustainability of the pension system and other social policies. Between 2022 and 2045, the states of the European Union will drive the globalization process through a multilateral system of governance, in which international organizations will coordinate the world in a constructive way. Based on the agreements reached, the Great Powers will be able to manage the peaceful transition to a world in which the West will no longer be predominant. In 2045, a new, more inclusive notion of legitimacy will already be taking shape, leaving behind the distribution of power derived from the Cold War. The rebalancing of the world economy would be accompanied by a representation of the emerging economies, already consolidated. Paradoxically, the deepening economic globalization that will accompany this global governance will instead have an exacerbation of inequality on an intrastate scale, generated by a new productive model.

The European integration process will be completed in 2045, in a political union according to the economic, monetary, fiscal and banking organizations. As a result, the European Union will endow itself with a sizeable budget, financed by taxes and fees collected directly from Europe. The euro will become a world reserve currency, while the dollar will retain its position as the great leader. European GDP will be slightly lower than the American one, but it will maintain a growth of almost 2% as a result of the innovative character of the EU. In 2045, the European Parliament will continue to represent the center of European political life, trying to pursue a policy of defending its interests externally, which will add value to the member states. Due to this, European regulations will be taken as a model for international norms and standards. From a military point of view, the Union will represent a force capable of carrying out military operations around the globe. The balance between the actors will lead to a globalized world governed by multilateral institutions that will protect and strengthen the legal security of international investments. International agreements and bilateral negotiations will cease to be the norm, seeking to end the fragmentation of international trade by increasing economic interdependence. The new governance will bring together actors regardless of their nature and political level. Due to its open character, the society of 2045 will enjoy a similar education, and its most important values will positively influence national and international state institutions.

The possibilities regarding the existence of conflicts within the Union will be reduced, since the Great Powers will already agree on their peaceful settlement. (Nico Stehr, 2001)

For Romania, it will be a favorable scenario from a diplomatic, economic, political and military point of view. Increased competition will make our country's economy a specialized one that will lead to increased exports. With time passing, there will be an internal devaluation, which will generate a deep social discontent as a result of the appearance of duality in the labor market. Young Romanians will significantly increase their mobility, which will facilitate the internationalization of the Romanian economy. The country's economic development will allow Romania to benefit from its status as an elite state in European institutions. The capacity of the Romanian society to assume the migration phenomenon will, in turn, facilitate the transition towards a multicultural social structure suitable to compete on a global level. Despite growth above the European average, the increasing aging of the population and the concentration of wealth will jeopardize the sustainability of the pension system and other social policies. Romania will excel in sustainable technology and manage to curb the threat of desertification. Externally, Romania will be fully integrated into the Euro-Atlantic structures and will have a growing and more important presence in South-Eastern Europe.

In the second scenario, regional blocs, European integration will be a consolidated reality, accompanied by a proliferation of regional trade entities and agreements and intra-regional trade growth. Therefore, a new global order is emerging, structured around different regional blocs. Governance at the regional level will replace the ineffectiveness of multilateral bodies, either through generalist organizations or through ad hoc organizations. The Euro-Atlantic strategic agreements will be examples of this trend leading to bilateral trade negotiations. Increased intra-regional trade will promote formal integration led by the private sector and strengthened by states through open regionalism. In some cases, these processes will lead to further institutional consolidation and regulated economic coordination, just like the ones in the Western countries. In this scenario we are faced with a coherent European Union, ready to compete with the rest of the blocs. (OECD, 2008) Gradually, the monetary union will be completed with the creation of a common treasury in the euro area. Eurobonds will also be introduced, which will complement national bonds and increase the workforce. All these measures will be done taking into account requests from creditor countries, especially Germany. (OECD, 2008)

Stricter common financial standards and a liberal economic policy will be promoted, through which the state must create appropriate conditions for the development of economic activities, according to the principles of the free market, but with social equity, with special emphasis on price stability, limiting public spending, the strength of the euro and some market regulations. The strict implementation of these regulations and the strong coordination of national economic policies will lead to a European Union in which certain states will aim at the same goal. The exception will be Great Britain, which will prefer to remain outside the eurozone, and Serbia. The European Union will be an economically strong federation governed by states under binding rules, with compliant institutions overseeing its proper functioning. The EU will be seen as a model for other regional initiatives to follow. Sovereignty will be shared between nation-states and supranational regional entities. In the Enational sovereignty will be limited by common rules, while outside this framework, coordination between blocs will be encouraged by simplifying customs procedures.

A global order without a hegemonic country will, of course, increase the struggle for regional leaders: Brazil and Mexico; China, India and Japan; Nigeria and South Africa; Saudi Arabia and Iran; Turkey and Russia. Multilateral organizations will be ineffective in managing global challenges, especially the economic ones. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank will be irrelevant to the regional development banks, while the World Trade Organization will not be able to give impetus to global trade rules. Not all regions will enjoy the same way of integration, but intra-regional trade dynamics will turn reluctant countries into de facto members of trading blocs. Deterioration of relationships between the various blocs will be frequent as each promotes the development of its members, raising barriers to trade with the rest of the world. Non-tariff barriers to the rest of the trade areas will be erected to withstand the pressure of global competition. In order to reduce imports, the use of local technology will be mandatory, subsidies as well, thus limiting competition in national markets and reducing the prices of products and commercial services. (Institute for Security Studies, 2006) All these will lead to the encouragement of foreign investment. National policies will become much more predictable, which will lead to the acceleration of intra-regional investment. The regulations and institutional schemes of each bloc will provide a safety net for their companies that will stimulate trade flows within each zone. The need to supply large regional markets will lead to the concentration of business in each block. Technological development and innovation will continue rapidly in a context of global business technology transfer. (Millennium Ecosystems Assessment, 2005)

This scenario will generally be a positive one for Romania. Limiting global trade will not be good news for our country, which in 2045 will have an export-based economy. However, the exports that are addressed for this period, especially to the European Union, will not suffer as much as in other countries such as Germany. Having an extremely prolific geographical-commercial position, it will be considered a bridge or a mediator between the regional blocs of Western Europe and Asia and between those of Southern and Northern Europe. Romania will seek to position itself in Europe as a main supplier of goods. To do this, it will highlight its status as a great power in the agricultural field, being the main supplier in Europe for cereals.

Romanian products from different fields have started to become sought on international markets. The implementation of new technologies regarding the extraction of shale gas and the development of energy capacity has led to the emergence of companies with Romanian capital that produce ecological technologies. Following the war between Russia and Ukraine and the decline of Russia, Romania, following the close ties and unconditional support offered to Moldova and the union summit, will request the European Union to propose the integration of the Republic of Moldova into its structures. From the point of view of relations between states, we can talk about a multipolar world for the year 2045, with much more active regional blocs. International organizations are present in all security fields, and Romania is an active member of the EU and NATO. With a well-organized infrastructure, Cluj, the capital of Romania in 2045, actively promotes the integration policy of the Republic of Moldova in NATO.

The third scenario, national protectionism. For the year 2045, the lack of common values and interests between traditional and emerging powers will lead to irrelevance regarding the existence of multilateral organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, etc. Global problems such as climate change, the proliferation of nuclear energy, poverty-stricken states and new violent conflicts will remain without a concrete solution. (Nico Stehr, 2001) The United States of America will gradually lose the role as a dominant power and China will be unable to take its place. Each actor will pursue its own interests without fear of coercing or imposing new and common rules on other countries, and the world will experience a global upheaval that will move towards a less predictable and diplomatic situation. In the next two decades, due to increased trade barriers, emerging economies will reduce their growth rate and will be forced to please the new middle classes, who will demand better services for the population, an increased quality of public institutions, equal opportunities, a new transparent legal security in order to increase the fight against corruption. (Institute for Security Studies, 2006) In developed countries, increasing income inequality and a decrease equal opportunities will bring increased political instability. Before the destruction of the welfare state and given the unequal distribution of costs between different incomes, populist and nationalist political options will create a new path. In such a scenario, the economic growth of the European Union will be reduced by half compared to the previous projections provided by the financial crisis of 2008. In the next two decades of the deglobalisation process, the EU will clearly start from the position of the loser in front of China and the United States of America for its energy deficit.

The crisis created by the withdrawal of some countries from the euro zone will cause the creation of a new monetary zone in Central and Northern Europe. This will make the European Project less ambitious by redistributing powers to national governments and parliaments. The powers of the European Parliament and the European Commission will be greatly reduced compared to the Union states. Despite this, the market will remain common under some regulations. The members of the Union will use a variable geometry for improved cooperation, that is, there will be cooperation mechanisms for solving concrete problems. National economic policies will not be coordinated, which will generate a poor performance of the common market. The period before 2045 will be characterized by economic instability, which will lead to a widening of the gap between the north and the south. This phenomenon will also be stimulated by the success of Eurosceptic and populist parties, which will turn the arena of European politics into a dissonance of actors. In their turn, foreign policy and common security will show its lack of efficiency in the years leading up to 2045. This will accentuate the irrelevance in the world of member states. European public opinion will be very reluctant to participate in military interventions and will prefer the executive branch to focus on domestic issues. The world will forget about multilateralism. Diplomacy will be exercised in a bilateral form through ad hoc coalitions. The potential for conflict will remain high and the risk of a large-scale conflagration will increase in intensity. Democracy will lose ground to populist and nationalist countries. The US and EU political systems will not be able to cope with social discontent and will be forced to focus on domestic issues. Protectionism will increase and international trade will decrease.

Developed economies with large markets will continue to monopolize much of the world economy, but will be damaged by reduced exports, instability and corruption. The lack of a solid foundation in the financial systems and their poor coordination will lead to increased vulnerabilities in the system and the emergence of a major financial crisis. The phenomenon will be accentuated by the commitment of emerging economies to promote their national banks at the expense of large international financial entities. Some of the developing countries will suspend payments, unable to honor their external obligations. Multilateral bodies and banks will limit their lending, while multinationals will reduce their presence. Political fragmentation will lead to limited innovation. Increasing trade barriers will restrict the viability of global production chains, consequently having higher prices. The excess of tariff regulation will lead to the obligation of companies to impose themselves more and more on the markets in which they operate. The imposition of trade barriers will reduce the impact of competition on the wages of unskilled workers and mitigate the growth of social inequality. However, the limitation of international trade will mark a slow increase in poverty.

The existence of these phenomena, to which we can add the slowdown of technological development, are some of the main forms of social imbalance, especially in countries without democratic institutions, whose middle classes will feel this extremely frustrating barrier. Extreme poverty will not reduce and will further encourage migration flows to developed countries. (Millennium Ecosystems Assessment, 2005) Management of this phenomenon of migration by the government institution will be complex because of the boom of organized political groups that will promote racism on a large scale. Fragmentation will reduce trade and investment, profoundly slowing technological progress. The exploitation of shale gas and renewables will be limited, causing the overall cost of energy to rise. Competition caused by scarce resources will lead to food crises. It will increase the rivalry between China, Russia, Turkey and Iran for access to the energy resources of Central Asia. The lack of consensus will prevent the implementation of policies that reduce the impact of climate change, so the environment will continue to deteriorate. The dispute regarding exploitation rights over the Arctic will intensify. (Natural England Commissioned Report NECR030, 2009)

This is the bleakest scenario for Romania, with very little influence in Europe, it will see its international relevance diminished. Romania's economic horizon will be narrowed for many markets in Europe and the world. In the absence of a large internal market and without the existence of innovation capabilities, Romanian society will suffer considerable damage. Faced with populist pressure, the government will become less legal or moral. Companies will focus on the local market and lose share on those abroad. The middle classes of society will fall by leaps and bounds, giving rise to turmoil and tension that will prevent tranquility and the development of a normal life. In the year 2045 Romania is a country full of extremes and affected by pollution. More than 40% of the country's population lives, works and communicates in the virtual environment. Carelessness still characterizes the country's destiny, and the realities are devastating and unpredictable. Regarding Romania's bilateral relations, we can say that they continue to be cordial with countries such as France and the USA, but the rupture of relations with Russia led over time to the degradation of Romanian society in the Republic of Modova.

The fourth scenario, the control of economic interests, emphasizes the inefficiency of the global governance system, as a result of the lack of coherence at the multilateral and national level. However, there will be implicit and minimal agreements between the Great Powers, dominated by the economic interests of multinational companies and financial institutions. This will guarantee global stability, both political and economic. (Norman Palmer & Howard Perkins, 1969:9) The institutional 'architecture' will be similar to that of today, but the emerging powers will assume a much more relevant role. The status quo will be maintained, although there will be substantial distancing as a result of the divergences created between the relevant actors. Global dangers, threats and challenges will not receive a common response, although economic interdependence will force the Great Powers to coordinate in extreme need. Both the European Union and the US will be more reluctant to intervene outside their borders, their place being taken by regional leaders whose actions will create panic among their neighbors. In this context, large transnational companies will impose their own programs. (Institute for Security Studies, 2006)

The tax collection capacity of the states will be greatly reduced and will generate fiscal dumping (selling goods on the market at lower prices) which will lead to problems in bilateral relations. Public administrations and political organizations will no longer be able to attract labor, since they will be in a very weak position compared to large corporations. Weak competition will prevent the setting up of companies, a phenomenon that will reduce the ability of medium-sized companies to enter new markets. At the European level, there will be a trend towards greater economic integration, while relevant political decisions will be made through intergovernmental processes. (Institute for Security Studies, 2006) The decrease in the citizens' identification with the European project, especially in the economies hit with great cruelty by the Great Recession and the reluctance to increase solidarity with other member states, will lead to a totally wrong direction, that of hindering the process of political integration. Even in this situation, the loss of relevance on a global scale of the European states and the fear of the disintegration of the euro zone, will encourage a better coordination of the countries engaged in the European project. In this way, a two-speed Europe will be established.

The main core of states will be around the strongest Eurozone economies, while the rest will be much more reluctant to give up sovereignty, keeping their access to the single market by joining various European initiatives based on increased cooperation. The entry into the euro zone of some states that, from an economic point of view, do not fully meet the criteria of the European Union, will generate a deepening of dissatisfaction among the member states that have not yet adopted the euro currency. They will consider that their voice cannot be relevant in European institutions. Despite the low demographic dynamism, Germany will position itself as the main financial center of continental Europe. The low population growth rate, which we can consider three times lower than today, will reduce the labor force. The dynamics of the European population will be in the process of diminishing and in the inability to support the European social model. (Norman Palmer & Howard Perkins, 1969:11) Growth in gross domestic product (GDP) will be moderate because of modest productivity growth and the rapid aging of the population, which will prevent reductions in the substantially high levels of unemployment and public debt. Immigration will reach quite high levels, and debates regarding its flow will dominate the European dialogue between states. In a multifaceted world with divergent interests, the effectiveness of international organizations will be very limited, and the international community will not be able to take advantageous measures in the face of global crises of extreme gravity. The potential for conflict will diminish slightly in the years leading up to 2045, but civil wars will exist, and new threats such as cyber terrorism will intensify.

From an economic point of view, the process of convergence of emerging economies will continue, even if at a much slower pace. It will move timidly towards greater economic coordination, especially on a regional scale, with the aim of better solving financial crises, but will not limit the ability of global companies to act. (Natural England Commissioned Report NECR030, 2009) However, the creation of a complex investor will appear due to the fragmentation of international trade with the aim of helping the proliferation of free trade agreements and the greater inclination towards state capitalism. Competition between states, in fiscal matters, will increase even in Europe. The shift to an innovation-based production model will be the reality due to technological breakthroughs. Consequently, the income gap and inequality within each country will widen at a much slower rate than in the first decades of the 21st century. Major emerging economies will accelerate their plans to reorient to much greater domestic consumption based on new middle classes with the aim of developing new social protection systems that will reduce the need to save and free up disposable income. In the West, the deterioration of the professional prospects of the traditional middle classes and the decline in the quality of life will continue, albeit at a much slower pace, which will worsen and generate political instability. Governance will be complicated, and in some countries populist and nationalist options will gain electoral support.

In general, in this scenario, the dynamics do not differ from those exhibited in the Regional Blocs scenario. They will continue to advance post-materialist values and increase the decision-making capacity of individuals. Women will have access to much better job opportunities increasing their value in political life. The world's population growth rate will slow, while in developed countries the population will age. (Norman Palmer & Howard Perkins, 1969:11) Bad governance will not be able to create workable mechanisms to manage the problem of migration which, despite the development of emerging economies, will remain not only from south to north, but increasingly from south to south. The absence of effective political leadership will make it impossible to find consensus in the fight against climate change, and progressively the issues regarding these changes will disappear from the international agenda. The development of emerging economies will put more pressure on the environment, and making the new middle class aware of the environmental problems will be extremely difficult. Advances in the exploitation of non-conventional energy sources and the efficiency of renewable sources will be evident as a result of the private initiative that will support energy prices. Romania will seek its place on the international market dominated by commercial interest, projecting its own desire through the leading Romanian multinationals in this sector of activity. This way Romania will be able to diversify his exports to European markets. (Institute for Security Studies, 2006) By not investing enough in innovation, Romania will encounter numerous problems in 2045, which is why it will not be at the level of the countries around it. The monopoly of multinationals in business and their influence in politics will limit the possibilities of success for small and medium-sized companies. A dual economy will thus be imposed in which a small number of large companies will be able to compete on the global markets, coping with a lot of less productive Romanian companies that will not last.

The process of global warming, increasing water stress, fluctuating temperatures, weather uncertainty, will be just some of the problems because of pollution that will lead to serious damage of agriculture and tourism, directly affecting Romania. From a diplomatic point of view, in the bilateral relations between Romania and Russia we can talk about a deterioration, reaching the violation of borders and the appearance of blockades. Against the background of these problems, relations with the Republic of Moldova will be marked by a boundless fraternity. Meanwhile, ties with France will grow in intensity, which will encourage internal migration into the Union, but will wage a permanent struggle against the migration of the Chinese and African population. The relationship between Romania and China will increase in intensity also as a result of the deterioration of relations between Romania and Russia. Following a major cyber attack on Europe, Romania in partnership with the United States of America will be developing the largest cyber defense and IT research center in Europe.

Conclusions:

Security is the main concern of contemporary leaders, primarily because it is an essential condition for the development and nation’s well-being, therefore, we can say that it constitutes the main role in a world that is becoming more and more insecure. The main effect that led to the modification of the international system experienced in the last two decades, is the loss of predictability of threats and risks that mainly affect national states. In fact, the bipolar system prevailing until the end of the last century, granted numerous certainties that favored decision-making processes and strategic planning. However, today both the actors and the threats have multiplied and the states are the ones that have had the greatest difficulties to adapt to this new reality, forcing the leaders to accelerate the signals sent by the environment. Forecasting is therefore a discipline that uses various techniques and methods to expand the realm of possible futures. One of the methods available, that of the potentiality of a future hypothesis, applies a different concept from that of a probabilistic study, such as determining today a future scenario, which can be risk or opportunity. In other words, it's about finding a potential future condition now.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

When *more* might be *less*. The Strange Case of Independent Candidates in Romanian Local Elections

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Abstract:
In this paper we propose only a case study, without any comparative or generalizing claims. We will analyze the electoral system currently provided by Article 100 of Law no. 115/2015 on the election of local public administration authorities. We will focus on the provisions concerning the allocation of local council seats to independent candidates, to show how they are often disadvantaged, and more rarely, advantaged. Furthermore, we will bring several examples on how the regulations concerning the independents affect the allocation of seats as a whole, identifying some adverse effects that we may call paradoxes. Finally, we will make some proposals for their removal.

Keywords: *electoral system, independent candidate, formula, threshold, quota, seat, paradox.*

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When more might be less. The Strange Case of Independent Candidates in Romanian Local Elections

Local elections and independent candidates remain marginal topics in electoral studies. A recent report of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe notes that while "rather a marginal political force in national electoral races" (CoE, 2022: 12), independent candidates "are a central element of democratic pluralism, particularly at local and regional levels" (CoE, 2022: 15), as a "key element of the identity of grassroots communities, increasingly representing an important alternative to running in elections" (CoE, 2022: 12). The analysis focuses on the "significant obstacles to their electoral participation on par with candidates from political parties," emphasizing "administrative or legal obstacles affecting registration, campaigning, or access to the media" (CoE, 2022: 13). Thus, giving the concept of "electoral system" a very broad meaning, the technical aspects of transforming votes into seats – i.e., the "electoral system" in the narrow and hard sense – are left/sent into the background. There is much more interest in the conditions under which independents can run than in those under which they can be elected. For the latter, we have the clarification that "the choice of electoral system is at the discretion of states, as long as it meets the standards for democratic elections", with reference to the old Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters (CDL-AD, 2002), which, however, does not contain anything concrete. The only aspect addressed in the 2022 report is the need to harmonize proportional representation – in fact, list voting – with the possibility of independent candidacies.

This is most often put into practice by equating an independent candidacy with a "one-person party, presenting a list with only one name", which wins a seat "if he or she receives enough votes in the elections". This is also the case in Romania. But everything depends on what is meant by "enough votes"(CoE, 2022: 12-13). This is a discussion that we cannot avoid if we claim to take the issue seriously.

Earlier studies on independent candidates in national elections have undoubtedly provided valuable insights that cannot be ignored in future research. For example, based on a statistical analysis of elections in 34 countries between 1945 and 2003, Dawn Brancati's pioneering work concluded that majoritarian/plurality systems are more favourable to independents than proportional ones. She also observed that their positions were stronger in the first democratic elections than in subsequent ones, so transition periods can be considered conducive to them (Brancati, 2008: 652-653, 660). A few years later, a study commissioned by the European Parliament's Committee on Constitutional Affairs, at the EU-27 level, confirmed the positive association of independents' performance with plurality or preferential voting systems. Surprisingly, the multivariate analysis found no statistical significance for the average magnitude of constituencies, electoral thresholds and ballot structure (EP, 2013: 9). As we will see, magnitude and threshold will be at the centre of our discussion.

Even in highly ambitious works (Gendzwill, Kjaer, Steyvers, 2022), the electoral systems of different countries are presented in a rather general way (ballot structure, district magnitude, electoral formula), ignoring the details introduced by law in the electoral formulas. Attempts at statistical or comparative analysis should therefore be treated with caution. Their conclusions should not be absolutized.

What we propose in this paper is only a case study, without any comparative or generalizing claims. We will analyze the electoral system currently provided by Article 100 of Law no. 115/2015 on the election of local public administration authorities, identifying some adverse effects, even "paradoxes". We will focus on the provisions concerning the allocation of local council seats to independent candidates, to show how they are often disadvantaged, and more rarely, advantaged. But we will not stop there. Being generally referred to as “marginal vote-getters” (EP, 2013) or “marginal political force” (CoE, 2022: 12), the whole issue may seem marginal and can be overlooked, as has been the case until now. However, the regulations concerning independents affect the allocation of seats as a whole, making them “potentially important «game changers»“ (CoE, 2022: 17).

At first glance, the system established for local elections seems to be characterized by “the simplicity of proportional representation”, assuming a “simple ballot structure” (blocked lists and independents treated as single-name lists), which “translates into easy counting procedures and a relatively straightforward determination of the election results” (LR – Hare) (Stănuș, Gheorghiță, 2022: 543-546). It is difficult to assess how “relatively”, given that the legal doctrine in this field is limited to mere reformulations of the legal text (Preda, 2008: 224-227; Roș, 2015: 62-63), sometimes even with an erroneous understanding (Roș, 2015: 256; Apostolache, 2020: 288-289).

A first step towards understanding how things stand today is to look at how they stood before.

Brief History of the Local Election System

The first Romanian post-communist law (no. 70 of November 26, 1991) introduced a simple and fair system for both the direct election of local councillors and the indirect election of county councillors: the natural quota method with the largest remainder rule (LR - Hare), without any electoral threshold and any distinction between competitors. Each received as many seats as the electoral quota was included in the number of its votes, the quota being calculated by dividing the total number of valid votes cast by the total number of councillors in the constituency. Any remaining seats after this first stage were allocated to all participants in descending order of their unused votes (art. 66). This system was rightly considered to be one of the most favourable or “least unfavourable” to small parties (Martin, 1999: 79; Gallagher, Mitchell, 2005: 589) and to independent candidates, especially in constituencies with high magnitude (i.e., big cities). That law governed the local elections of February 1992 and June 1996, with a single clarification introduced by Law no. 25 of April 3, 1996, namely that the operation of the second stage of the allocation is repeated until the seats are exhausted. One consequence was that a large number of small parties, independent lists and independent candidates obtained only one seat in various local councils.

In 1998, an additional amendment was made to the law, which was ambiguous and revealed a misunderstanding of the mechanism: “in the second stage, the electoral bureau of the district will record the number of unused votes for each party, political formation, political alliance, electoral alliance or independent candidate; the unused votes of the independent candidate(s) who were awarded seats in the first stage will be divided equally among the parties, political formations, political alliances, or electoral alliances that obtained the electoral quota in the first stage, adding to their unused votes; the unallocated seats will be allocated to the political parties, political formations, political alliances, and electoral alliances that obtained the electoral quota in the first stage, in descending order of the number of unused votes, one for each political party, political formation, political alliance, or electoral alliance, until they are exhausted” (Law no. 164 of July 9, 1998).

The text represents an initial expression of hostility towards small parties and independent candidates by perverting the rule of the largest remainders. This is because they are excluded from the second stage if they have not already obtained a seat in the first stage. Furthermore, the amendment introduced some unnecessary operations: (1) It was pointless to determine the unused votes of those who had not reached the quota, if they were excluded from the further distribution. (2) There was no point in dividing "equally" the unused votes of the independents who had won seats, because this did not change the order of the parties that had reached the quota and did not make any difference between those that had not reached it.

These provisions were never applied, because shortly before the local elections of June 2000, an emergency ordinance brought a major change: the introduction of an electoral threshold, equal to "the 5% limit if the electoral quota is higher than the 5% limit" or to "the electoral quota, if it is lower than the 5% limit" (OUG no. 28 of April 12, 2000). Since both were calculated in relation to the total number of valid votes cast, it resulted that different thresholds were established depending on the magnitude of the constituency and, relatively, the population of the administrative division (Law no. 69 of the local public administration): 5% for constituencies with up to 19 councillors, 4.76% for 21, 4.34% for 23, 4% for 25, 3.22% for 21, 2.85% for 35 and 1.53% for 65 (Bucharest). In the first stage, the seats were allocated according to the quota and in the second stage, in the order of "unused votes", but only to parties that had passed the threshold, with the exclusion of independents who, in constituencies with up to 19 seats, were above the threshold, but below the quota. This rule was applied only to the 2000 local elections. Four years later, Law no. 67 of March 25, 2004 on the election of local public administration authorities generalized the electoral threshold to 5% of the total valid votes cast (with the exception of political or electoral alliances, which were required to have 7% for two members, and 8% for three or more), expressly stating that "the allocation of seats will be made taking into account only the political parties, political alliances, electoral alliances and independent candidates who have met the electoral threshold" (art. 92). Independents were admitted to the first stage, they received one seat each if they met the quota (the total number of votes of those who met the threshold divided by the number of seats), and if not, they were excluded from the second stage (the allocation of the remaining seats in the order of "unused votes"). The law was applied for the local elections of June 2004, 2008 and 2012.

Law no. 115 of May 19, 2015 for the election of local public administration authorities, for the amendment of the Local Public Administration Law, as well as for the amendment and completion of Law no. 393/2004 regarding the Statute of Local Elected Officials, in force today, has largely maintained the system, introducing a few detailed provisions that show some goodwill towards independent candidates. However, these may have much stronger effects on the election results and may create the "bizarre" situations we will discuss below. This time, "the allocation of seats is made taking into account only the *political parties, organizations of the citizens belonging to national minorities, political alliances and electoral alliances that have met the electoral threshold* [5%, respectively 7% or 8%][...] and the *independent candidates who have met the electoral quota*", the latter being calculated as "the whole number, without decimals, unrounded, resulting from *the division of the total number of valid votes cast for all the candidate lists and the independent candidates who have met the electoral threshold by the total number of councillors* in the respective constituency". "*The independent candidate who has obtained a number of votes at least equal to the electoral quota is declared elected*". Otherwise, he/she is excluded from the second stage (the allocation of the remaining seats in the order of "unused votes"). It can be intuited that, in certain cases, an independent may become a local councillor even if he/she has not reached the electoral threshold and, in others, he/she may remain outside, even if he/she has exceeded it. We will come back to this. For the time being, we specify that the mechanism is fully taken over in the legislative proposal "Law on the Electoral Code of Romania", currently under debate in the Chamber of Deputies, although, five years ago, through the initiative "New People in Politics", its signatories supported the abolition of the electoral threshold for local elections.

A little bit of constitutional case law on the side of the topic

Electoral thresholds are not uncommon in proportional systems and it can be said that, even if they are not provided for by law, they exist anyway in fact, implicitly, being determined by the very magnitude of the constituency. The formula, often contradicted in Romanian local elections, $p = 75/(m+1)$, where p = effective threshold, and m = number of seats in the constituency (Gallagher, Mitchell, 2005: 13-14), has become famous. Legal or effective, thresholds undoubtedly represent limitations of proportionality, but it is difficult to say from what level upwards they become serious distortions of representation. What is certain is that their importance varies depending on magnitude. The same legal threshold can be a solid barrier in a large constituency and may not matter in a small one. In our case, 5% can block access for many in a municipality with 31 councillors but can be practically non-existent in a commune with 9 councillors.

In 2001, the Constitutional Court has had to rule on an exception of unconstitutionality in which it was considered that "the establishment of an electoral threshold and the redistribution of unused votes exclusively to political parties excludes the possibility of independent candidates being elected" (Decision no. 103 of April 10, 2001 – AEP, 2013: 243). It was then considered that "the establishment of an electoral threshold that candidates must reach in order to obtain the position of councillor, as well as the establishment of the method by which unused votes are allocated in the first stage, is a matter of opportunity, on which only the legislator is called to pronounce; the exclusion of independent candidates from the redistribution of the unused votes was intended to concentrate the votes, because, without political support, the activity of independent candidates is inefficient" (AEP, 2013: 247).

The first part is understandable, but we can ask why the Court continued to speak on the "opportunity", especially since its assessment does not fit very well with the electoral practice, since it allows – we could even say that it favours – the allocation of seats to minor, non-parliamentary political parties with less local electoral support than that of some independents.

In 2009, a new exception was raised, in which it was argued that the law is discriminatory because it "does not allow independent candidates who have met the electoral threshold to be included in the vote redistribution operation, but only political parties, political alliances and electoral alliances" and thus creates "privileges in favour of citizens who are registered in political parties and on their lists compared to independent candidates".

Even the court before which the exception was raised, the Neamț Tribunal - Civil Section, was of the opinion that the legal provisions "are unconstitutional by violating the constitutional provisions on the equality of citizens before the law and the avoidance of any discriminatory situations. In this sense, the court notes that, if in the first stage of the allocation of seats [art. 96, par. 3.a] the number of seats that each list of candidates and independent candidate are entitled to is established on the basis of the electoral quota, in the stage of the allocation of unallocated seats [art. 96 par. 3.b], independent candidates are no longer found, their exclusion from the redistribution phase having no legal justification. A discriminatory regime is thus instituted between independent candidates and the other categories of candidates".

The Constitutional Court remained on the same position, ruling that: "This mechanism for allocating seats does not violate the equal rights of citizens and does not constitute discrimination, as claimed by the author of the exception and the court before which the exception of unconstitutionality was raised. The text does not establish discrimination in relation to the criteria of equality of rights enshrined in art. 4, par. 2 of the Fundamental Law, nor does it infringe the principle of equality of citizens before the law, set out in art. 16 of the Constitution, since it applies to all persons in the situation regulated by the hypothesis of the legal norm, without establishing privileges or discrimination on arbitrary criteria".

We first note the phrase "criteria of equality of rights", as if equality were conditional. Then, the implicit idea that the list of "criteria" in art. 4 of the Constitution would be exhaustive and, finally, the omission of the fact that among them is also listed "political affiliation". It is true that the mechanism "applies to all persons in the situation regulated by the hypothesis of the legal norm", but it does not take into account the possibility that the "hypothesis of the norm" itself may generate discrimination. The CCR also invoked the point of view of the People's Advocate, according to which "the situation of independent candidates is different from that of candidates proposed by political parties, political alliances and electoral alliances" (Decision no. 511 of April 9, 2009 – AEP, 2013: 305), without, however, explaining in any way the alleged difference.

We do not intend to discuss the constitutionality of the legal text on the mechanism for allocating local council seats. However, we believe that the CCR should, in the future, also consider the practical functioning of the system in order to evaluate whether its effects are consistent with legal and constitutional principles.

Some notes on electoral "rules" and "paradoxes"

The question of how to judge the "fairness" of an electoral system and what characteristics make a good system is a complex one. Here are some key criteria from the literature:

(1) *Representativeness***,** that is, the ratio between the votes transformed into seats and the total number of votes cast. For example, in a single-member district where the winning candidate has 60% of the vote, the representativeness index will be 60. In a multi-member district where parties with 45% and 35% of the vote get all the seats, respectively, the index will be 80 (Martin, 1999: 92).

(2) *Avoiding biases*, that is, ensuring neither those with many votes nor those with few votes are significantly over- or under-represented (Balinski & Young, 2001: 105; Smith, 2007).

(3) *Proportionality*, that is, the ratio/ratios between the percentages of votes parties get and the percentages of seats they win. Several *indexes* have been developed to assess (dis)proportionality, each with its own strengths and weaknesses, depending on the particular situation (Gallagher, 1991; Kalogirou, 1999). Proportionality increases with the magnitude of the district and decreases with the electoral threshold.

(4) *Quota rule*. This means allocating each competitor a whole number of seats that's

close (either up or down) to the result of dividing their votes by the district's electoral quota. For example, if the calculation gives 8.45, the party should get either 8 or 9 seats (Smith, 2007).
(5) *Monotonicity*. This means respecting the hierarchy of votes when allocating seats. A party with more votes should get more or the same number of seats as a competitor with fewer votes. Otherwise, it is an illogical situation, or, as American electoral studies often call it, a "paradox". In the late 1800s, when discussing how seats were distributed among states in the House of Representatives, two specific forms have been identified:
(i) *House Monotonicity*: as the total number of seats increases, no competitor should lose seats compared to before, assuming their number of votes (population in the US) stays the same or increases. If they do lose seats, it's called the "Alabama paradox". In 1880, calculations showed Alabama should have gotten 8 representatives out of 299, but only got 7 out of 300 (Caulfield, 2010).
(ii) *Population-Pair Monotonicity*: no competitor should lose seats if its number of votes (population in the US) increases and other competitors' votes decrease or increase proportionally less (Smith, 2007). There is also a concept called the "new state paradox" (Caulfield, 2010) which is not relevant here and seems like a variation of one of the first two paradoxes anyway.

Before we look at the Romanian case, it is important to note that the LR-Hare system, while less proportional or representative than others, especially in small districts, is used widely around the world. It tends to favours smaller parties (Martin, 1999: 77; Gallagher & Mitchell, 2005: 589), always respects the quota and satisfies the overall monotonicity, but it produces paradoxes in terms of house and population monotonicity (Martin, 1999: 77-79; Smith, 2007). We need to keep these points in mind to distinguish between the distortions inherent in the formula and those created by the rules set by the Romanian legislature. It will be obvious from the figures that the legal provisions leave room for significant distortions of representativeness proportionality. However, we will not insist on them, following only the paradoxes.

Romanian Cases

The famous "Alabama paradox" is usually illustrated with hypothetical examples that are hard to believe in electoral reality. I prefer a Romanian example.

Table 1. Local Council Election – Siliștea Crucii (Dolj), 2020

Candidate	Votes	%	Seats/Quota	Seats I	Seats II	Total
PSD	275	34.37	3.13	3	0	3
PNL	272	34.00	3.09	3	0	3
PRO România	206	25.75	2.34	2	0	2
PMP	47	5.87	0.53	0	1	1
Total	800	100	Quota: 88	8	1	9

Data Source: BEC 2020

Siliștea Crucii is a small commune with nine councillors. In 2020, 800 citizens voted and all parties passed the electoral threshold; therefore, the quota was 800/9 = 88. In the first stage, eight seats were allocated. The ninth seat was allocated in the second stage to the smallest party, with the most unused votes. Let's imagine that Siliștea Crucii would have had 11 councillors (the next legal step) and the votes had been the same!

Table 2. Electoral Simulation – Siliștea Crucii (Dolj), 2020

Candidate	Votes	%	Seats/Quota	Seats I	Seats II	Total
PSD	275	34.37	3.82	3	1	4
PNL	272	34.00	3.77	3	1	4
PRO România	206	25.75	2.86	2	1	3
PMP	47	5.87	0.65	0	0	0
Total	800	100	Quota: 72	8	3	11

The electoral quota would have been 800/11 = 72. In the first stage, eight seats would still have been allocated, and the ninth would have gone, in the second stage, to the third-place party, for the highest number of unused votes. PMP obtained one council seat out of a total of nine, but would not have obtained it out of a total of 11.

It can be said that this example is just for entertainment, since the allocation of seats in elections does not involve the same risks as the apportionment of seats between states. I agree and yet I will go ahead with a new example, from which it can be seen that, due to the restrictive provisions applied to some candidates, the Romanian system is more prone to what might seem like an Alabama-like paradox than the simple LR-Hare/Hamilton.

Table 3. Local Council Election – Almăj (Dolj), 2020

Candidate	Votes	%	Seats/Quota	Seats I	Seats II	Total
PSD	454	43.23	4.83	4	1	5
PNL	369	35.14	3.92	3	1	4
USR PLUS	128	12.19	1.36	1	1	2
Tălăban Aurică	91	8.66	0.96	0	-	0
PRO România	8	0.76	-	-		
Total	1050	100	Quota: 94	8	3	11

Data Source: BEC 2020

This time we have a slightly larger commune, with 11 councilors and 1050 voters, of which eight voted for a party that did not reach the threshold, so the quota was 1042/11 = 94. In the first stage, only eight seats were allocated. The remaining three were allocated in the second stage to the parties in the top three places, although the independent candidate in fourth place had the largest number of unused votes. This is because the law does not allow independents access to the second stage. What if the constituency had 13 seats?

Table 4. Electoral Simulation – Almăj (Dolj), 2020

Candidate	Votes	%	Seats/Quota	Seats I	Seats II	Total
PSD	454	43.23	5.67	5	1	6
PNL	369	35.14	4.61	4	1	5
USR PLUS	128	12.19	1,60	1	0	1
Tălăban Aurică	91	8.66	1.13	1	-	1
PRO România	8	0.76	-	-	-	-
Total	1050	100	Quota: 80	11	2	13

The quota would have been 1042/13 = 80. In the first stage, 11 seats would have been allocated, one of which to the independent candidate, who would have met the quota. The remaining two seats would have been allocated to the first two parties, because they would have had the most unused votes. We note that the party in the third place, which received two seats out of 11, would have received only one out of 13. Apparently, it's an "Alabama paradox". In fact, the real case was a paradox, artificially created by the legal provisions, and the hypothetical example is a correct form.

This type of situation has happened many times in the Romanian local elections of the last two decades. It can be said that there is no risk for a competitor to lose a seat, since the total number can only change in another election, when the distribution of votes would be different. However, one can ask whether the intuition of the paradox could favour malapportionment operations.

For the population paradox, we will go to the commune of Cârna, where in 2020 the following results were recorded:

Table 5. Local Council Election – Cârna (Dolj), 2020

Candidate	Votes	%	Seats/Quota	Seats I	Seats II	Total
PSD	441	55,12	5,01	5	0	5
PNL	309	38,63	3,51	3	0	3
PRO România	50	6,25	0,56	0	1	1
Total	800	100	Quota: 88	8	1	9

Data Source: BEC 2020

With a quota of 800/9 = 94, the first two parties received five and three seats, respectively. The ninth seat was allocated in the second stage to the third party, as it remained with the most unused votes. Here is what would have happened if the first party had lost 25 votes, 20 in favour of the second party and five in favour of the third!

Table 6. Electoral Simulation – Cârna (Dolj), 2020

Candidate	Votes	%	Seats/Quota	Seats I	Seats II	Total
PSD	416	52.00	4.72	4	1	5
PNL	329	41.12	3.73	3	1	4
PRO România	55	6.88	0.63	0	0	0
Total	800	100	Quota: 88	7	2	9

In the first stage, the first two parties would have received four and three seats, respectively, and in the second stage, they would have taken the two remaining seats, because they would have had the most unused votes. The smallest party, with five more votes (10% increase), would have remained unrepresented. The second party, with 20 more votes (6.5% increase), would have received one more seat. The first-place party would have remained with the same number of seats, despite the loss of votes. Again, a question: can this paradox be tactically exploited? Can one party pump votes to another to disadvantage it?

In none of the examples so far have we seen a violation of the overall monotonicity or the quota rule. In a pure application of the LR-Hare/Hamilton method, this can only happen if a list is allocated, according to the quota, more seats than candidates (in the case of independents, more than one). In the Romanian system, it happens frequently, even outside of such a situation, and to illustrate both violations at once, we will refer to the Plenița case (2016).

Table 7. Local Council Election – Plenița (Dolj), 2016

Candidate	Votes	%	Seats/Quota	Seats I	Seats II	Total
PSD-UNPR	1017	45.85	6.47	6	1	7
PNL	489	22.04	3.11	3	1	4
Didu Florin	150	6.76	0.95	0	-	0
Marcov Claudiu	138	6.22	0.87	0	-	0
Șerban Victor	135	6.08	0.85	0	-	0
ALDE	119	5.36	0.75	0	2	2
Guran Eugen	63	2.84				
PNȚCD	53	2.38				
PMP	31	1.39				
Partida Romilor	9	0.40				
PRM	9	0.40				
PPU(SL)	5	0.22				
Total	2218	100	Quota: 157	9	4	13

Data Source: BEC 2016

We have a total of 2218, so a threshold of 110. There are 2048 votes over the threshold and 13 seats to be allocated, so the quota is 2048/13 = 157. In the first stage, according to the quota, six seats are allocated to the first party and three to the second.

There are four left. In the second stage, three are allocated to the three parties that have passed the threshold. For the last seat, the operation is repeated and it is allocated to the smallest party, because it has the most unused votes.

The quota rule is violated, because a competitor who should have had at most one seat has two. This is a rather rare situation. Monotonicity is violated because a competitor has more seats than others who have more votes. This is a fairly common situation. It has happened several times, during the last two decades, that parties that have passed the threshold have obtained seats and independents with more votes than them have not, because the law does not allow independents to enter the second stage. Should they be admitted? At first thought, the answer would be affirmative, but we go to the other end of the country and find an opposite example.

Table 8. Local Council Election – Certeze (Satu Mare), 2016

Candidate	**Votes**	**%**	**Seats/Quota**	**Seats I**	**Seats II**	**Total**
PNL	250	16.88	4.81	4	0	4
PSD	204	13.77	3.92	3	1	4
ALDE	145	9.79	2.78	2	0	2
Partidul Verde	110	7.42	2.11	2	0	2
Moiș I. Gh.	81	5.46	1.55	1	-	1
PRM	72	4.86	1.37	-	-	-
PMP	72	4.86	1.37	-	-	-
UNPR	71	4.79	1.36	-	-	-
UDSCR	70	4.72	1.35	-	-	-
Moiș G. Gh.	68	4.59	1.31	1	-	1
Pop Vasile	52	3.51	1.00	1	-	1
PND	49	3.30				
Ferne Dumitru	43	2.90				
PPAC	42	2.83				
Sas Dumitru	41	2.76				
PNȚCD	34	2.29				
Seleveschi Gh.	27	1.82				
Sas Daniel	26	1.75				
Mihoc Vasile	24	1.62				
Total	1481	100	Quota: 52	14	1	15

Data Source: BEC 2016

This large commune (15 seats) had a low turnout, with a total of 1481 votes cast a threshold of 74. A significant number of votes were cast for competitors who did not reach the electoral threshold. The electoral quota was calculated as 790/15 = 52. In the first stage, 14 seats were allocated to parties that passed the electoral threshold, as well as to independent candidates who obtained the electoral quota, according to a new provision of the 2015 law. The violation of monotonicity here comes from the total exclusion of parties that did not reach the threshold and the allocation of seats to independents (two in our case), for which the law only set the quota condition.

According to the regulations in force between 2004 and 2015, the last two independent candidates would not have obtained seats, and the seats would have been distributed to the parties ranked first and third. This situation is not uncommon, it occurs frequently, especially in large constituencies (with 21 or more councillors), but, as can be seen, it can also occur in smaller ones. A particular aspect of the situation in Certeze is that the last two winning independent candidates obtained the necessary electoral quota, but their votes were not taken into account when determining this quota. In the case of the last candidate, he would not have reached the quota if his votes had been included in the calculation. However, the law provides for the inclusion of independent candidates' votes in the calculation of the quota only if they exceed the electoral threshold.

Without commenting on the fairness of this situation, we ask the following question: is it possible for an independent candidate to win a seat by reaching the quota, but not the electoral threshold, and then lose that same seat if he/she reaches the electoral threshold, but no longer reaches the quota, due to the additional votes received? In other words, is it possible for a candidate to lose a seat precisely because of the additional votes he/she receives?

A Romanian Paradox

It can happen in cases where the quota and the threshold are close and the quota can be both below and above the threshold, therefore in constituencies with 19 councillors or less. The situation depends on the turnout at the elections and, especially, on the number of votes for the competitors who do not reach the threshold (the smaller the magnitude, the larger it must be). There is always an interval where adding a number of votes to the total previously considered and dividing by the number of seats gives a result higher than the number of votes added. If the difference between the threshold and the quota overlaps, totally or partially, with that interval, an independent candidate is at risk of losing the seat by winning a few more votes. It's a kind of hole that he/she can fall into, if he/she doesn't manage to jump over it, obviously. We will not go into arithmetical details – which, by the way, are beyond us – and we will move on to examples, with the mention that we have not identified a clear case where this has happened. We will go on to close cases and hypotheses.

First, a situation from 2012, when the current system did not apply!

Table 9. Local Council Election – Șimleu Silvaniei (Sălaj), 2012

Candidate	Votes	%	Seats/Quota	Seats I	Seats II	Total
PDL	2428	33.67	6.63	6	1	7
PSD	1304	18.08	3.56	3	1	4
UDMR	1115	15.46	3.04	3	0	3
PNL	623	8.63	1.70	1	1	2
PPDD	432	5.99	1.18	1	0	1
Jurcau Victor	361	5.01	0.98	0	-	0
< threshold	948	13.15	-			
Total	7211	100	Quota: 366	14	13	17

Data Source: BEC 2012

According to the law of 2004, independent candidates were required to reach the threshold, in our case, 360, exceeded by Jurcau Victor, who however was below the quota (366). He still needed five votes, if they came from parties above the threshold or six from below the threshold or from outside because, in this case, the quota would have risen to 367. If the current law had been applied, in which independents are awarded seats if they have met the quota, without the threshold condition, he could have won with any number of votes from 345 to 359. He would have lost with 360-366 and would have won again from 367. We can therefore say that he lost because he had too much rather than too little.

To work with larger numbers, we go to the 2016 elections in Sinaia.

Table 10. Local Council Election – Sinaia (Prahova), 2016

Candidate	**Votes**	**%**	**Seats/Quota**	**Seats I**	**Seats II**	**Total**
PNL	2653	46.68	9.57	9	1	10
PSD	1435	25.25	5.18	5	0	5
ALDE	328	5.77	1.18	1	0	1
UNPR	299	5.26	1.08	1	0	1
Dan Septimiu	257	4.52	0.93	0	-	0
< threshold	711	12.51				
Total	5683	100	Quota: 277	16	1	17

Data Source: BEC 2016

Based on the total of 5683 valid votes cast, the threshold is 284. With a total of 5715 votes above the threshold, the quota is 277. The independent candidate was both below the threshold and below the quota. It is easy to see that he would have won with 20-26 votes (for simplicity we assume that they would have come from below the threshold), exceeding the quota without his votes having yet been taken into account. From 27 onwards, exceeding the threshold and his votes being added, the quota would have increased. The independent with 284 votes would have given a quota of 293. He would have missed the seat with 284-294 votes and would have won it again from 294 onwards.

But let's get back home!

Table 11. Local Council Election – Calafat (Dolj), 2016

Candidate	**Votes**	**%**	**Seats/Quota**	**Seats I**	**Seats II**	**Total**
PSD	2792	37.70	7.65	7	1	8
PNL	2216	29.92	6.07	6	0	6
ALDE	1198	16.17	3.28	3	0	3
Roșu R.M.	305	4.11	0.84	0	-	-
< threshold	894	12.07				
Total	7405	100	Quota: 365	16	1	17

Data Source: BEC 2016

In Calafat, the electoral threshold was 370 and the quota was 365. This means that the independent candidate would have won the seat with 60-64 additional votes (assuming they came from below the threshold). If he had reached 370, his votes would have been added to the calculation of the quota, which would have become 386. He would have won the seat with 365-369 votes, missed it with 370-386, and won it again from 387 onwards.

For one last example, we come in 2020 to meet the luckiest man or the best jumper in Beiuș.

Table 12. Local Council Election – Beiuș (Bihor), 2020

Candidate	**Votes**	**%**	**Seats/Quota**	**Seats I**	**Seats II**	**Total**
PNL	2343	45.39	8.97	8	1	9
PSD	880	17.05	3.37	3	1	4
USR PLUS	616	11.93	2.36	2	0	2
Degău Al.	350	6.78	1.34	1	-	1
Maior Călin	261	5.05	1.00	1	-	1
< threshold	711	13.77				
Total	5161	100	Quota: 261	15	2	17

Data Source: BEC 2020

The threshold in Beiuș, in 2020, was 258 and the quota was 261. The second independent candidate barely passed the threshold, so his votes were used to calculate the quota, which he also hit exactly. What if he had not reached the threshold, so if he had had at most 257 votes? The quota would have dropped to 246, so he would have afforded to lose even more votes. He would have won with 4-15 fewer votes (246-257) and would have missed with 1-3 fewer (258-260). So he narrowly avoided danger.

Final thoughts

In Romanian local elections after 2015, it has become much more common for independent candidates to be eliminated from the allocation of seats, even if they have met the threshold, than to receive seats, even if they have not met it. We know from the Constitutional Court that the first situation is not unjust. The second situation has not been noticed until now. Statistically, the electoral system is rather unfavourable to independents.

In both cases, we are dealing with arithmetic anomalies in the "determination of election results". They affect not only independents, but also parties, favouring some and disfavouring others in the most diverse, surprising ways (unrelated to the will of the electorate). We presume *bona fide*. However, we cannot help but think how competitors can play with the votes. The scenarios would be countless. We will present only two.

First, we return to Plenița in 2016.

In the real situation (see Table 7), we had three independents who passed the threshold, but did not receive seats because they did not meet the quota. Instead, the party behind them obtained two seats, violating the quota rule. In the scenario, we keep the overall total, and therefore the threshold, but we take all the votes above the threshold of the independents, thus eliminating them completely from the calculation of the quota, and we give them to the smallest party above the threshold.

Table 13. Electoral Simulation – Plenița (Dolj), 2016

Candidate	**Votes**	**%**	**Seats/Quota**	**Seats I**	**Seats II**	**Total**
PSD-UNPR	1017	45.85	7.7045	7	1	8
PNL	489	22.04	3.7045	3	1	4
ALDE	215	9.69	1.63	1	0	1
Didu Florin	109	4.91				
Marcov Claudiu	109	4.91				
Șerban Victor	109	4.91				
Guran Eugen	63					
PNȚCD	53					
PMP	31					
Partida Romilor	9					
PRM	9					
PPU(SL)	5					
Total	2218	100	Quota: 132	11	2	13

In this way, the quota decreases from 157 to 132. The three independent candidates do not meet it, so they are eliminated. In the first stage, 11 seats are allocated, one of which goes to the third-place party. The remaining two seats are allocated in the second stage to the top two parties, which have more unused votes. The third-place party remains with a single seat (instead of two), although it is the only competitor with more votes (all the others decreasing or remaining the same), and the first-place party gains a seat, although it has the same number of votes (which we can even slightly decrease). Again, we are faced with an apparent population paradox, but, in fact, the real situation is paradoxical.

And finally, let's go back to Certeze to play dangerously!

In reality (see Table 8), we had three independent candidates who received seats, of which only one passed the threshold, and five who did not receive seats, not meeting the quota. In the scenario, we keep the overall total, the threshold, and the votes of all parties above and immediately below the threshold; we put the only candidate who had passed it below the threshold, decreasing the quota from 52 to 47, and we distribute his surplus votes and those of the parties located well below the threshold to the independent candidates, so that they all meet the quota.

Tabelul 14. Electoral Simulation – Certeze (Satu Mare), 2016

Candidate	**Votes**	**%**	**Seats/Quota**	**Seats I**	**Seats II**	**Total**
PNL	250	16.88	5.31	5	0	5
PSD	204	13.77	4.34	4	0	4
ALDE	145	9.79	3.08	3	0	3
Partidul Verde	110	7.42	2.34	2	0	2
PRM	72	4.86	1.53	-	-	-
PMP	72	4.86	1.53	-	-	-
UNPR	71	4.79	1.52	-	-	-
UDSCR	70	4.72	1.48	-	-	-
Moiș I. Gh.	51	3.44	1.09	1	-	1
Moiș G. Gh.	50	3.37	1.06	1	-	1
Pop Vasile	49	3.31	1.04	1	-	1
Ferne Dumitru	48	3.24	1.02	1	-	1
Sas Dumitru	47	3.17	1.00	1	-	1
Seleveschi Gh.	47	3.17	1.00	1	-	1
Sas Daniel	47	3.17	1.00	1	-	1
Mihoc Vasile	47	3.17	1.00	1	-	1
PND	38	2.57				
PPAC	36	2.43				
PNȚCD	27	1.82				
Total	1481	100	Quota: 47	22	0	22

We have maintained the violation of monotonicity, but it no longer seems spectacular, compared to the fact that no less than 22 seats should be allocated from the first stage (14 to the parties that passed the threshold and eight to the independent candidates who met the quota). The 2015 law does not provide for overhang seats and, although it seems to have solutions for any situation, it does not have a method of elimination. It simply states that: "in the first stage, the electoral bureau of the constituency establishes *the number of seats allocated to each list of candidates*, as well as to the *independent candidates*, *based on the electoral quota*, which is the whole number, without decimals, unrounded, resulting from the division of the total number of valid votes cast for all lists of candidates and for independent candidates who have met the electoral threshold by the total number of councillors in the respective electoral constituency; the electoral bureau of the constituency allocates *to each list as many seats as the electoral quota is included in the total number* of valid votes cast for the respective list; also, *the independent candidate who obtained a number of votes at least equal to the electoral quota is declared elected*". Most likely, the electoral bureau of the constituency would declare only the first independent candidate elected, but, just as likely, the others would challenge the decision in court and, since the same law states that "there is no appeal against the final decisions pronounced by the courts according to this law", it could once again reach the CCR, which ruled, decades ago (Decisions 103/2001, 332/2002, 325/2004, 150/2005, 1128/2008) that the lack of appeal is not unconstitutional.

As I have already said, the risk of paradoxes can only be avoided by completely changing the system. For example, we could adopt the d'Hondt method, which is known to favour the top-ranked parties and is not immune to violating the quota rule. The risk can be mitigated and all other oddities can be eliminated by amending the law to: (1) Establish a threshold (the current 5%, lower and possibly differentiated, as in 2000, or even no threshold, as in 1991) from which all votes are added up to calculate the quota and completely eliminate all those whose votes are not added up to calculate the quota; (2) Allow all competitors whose votes are added up to calculate the quota to enter the second stage.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

From clicks to convictions: investigating the spread and influence of political messages on social media

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Abstract:
This research seeks to understand the effects of social media on political discourse, information access, and democracy by examining the interplay between message spread, algorithms, and citizen behaviour. To clarify the complex relationship between online platforms and political activity, this study draws on examining theoretical concepts such as agenda-setting (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020), echo chambers (Sunstein, 2009), social media filtering algorithms (Bozdag, 2013), and digital citizenship (Ribble & Park, 2022). This study aims to investigate how political messages are disseminated and how public attention is drawn to particular messages, thus influencing the political discourse in online spaces. It will also explore how social media algorithms filter and deliver content to users, possibly forming echo chambers that limit exposure to opposing points of view and strengthen pre-existing ideas.

Keywords: *agenda-setting, echo chambers, social media algorithms, digital citizenship.*

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From clicks to convictions: investigating the spread and influence of political messages on social media

Introduction

Even though social media sites are frequently cited as drivers for more political activity (Getachew & Beshah, 2019; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012), especially among youth, the nature of this engagement is still intricate and multidimensional. This theoretical analysis dissects the different ways social media platforms and young political activity intersect by exploring the body of existing literature. The paper offers a critical grasp of the theoretical environment beyond straightforward like-and-share interactions, examining ideas like digital citizenship, information filtering, and agenda-setting. The current study intends to shed light on the route of political communications within the complex digital ecosystem, from clicks to potential convictions, by bridging the gap between social network analysis and political communication research. These insights will be useful for future research and practice.

When analysing the impact of political messaging on social media, Romania is an intriguing case study. With an estimated 13.50 million active social media users as of January 2023, the nation enjoyed a thriving online community that included a sizeable section of the population (Data Reportal, 2023). The current internet world creates a special setting for political discourse.

Research indicates that individuals have a strong inclination to use social media as a means of obtaining information (Bakshy, Rosenn, Marlow & Adamic, 2012; Data Reportal, 2023). A comparable receptivity to political messaging is indicated by the fact that over half of the world's social media users actively look for brands on these networks (Statista, 2022). Moreover, more than half of internet users attribute their knowledge of current events, both locally and globally, to social media. This demonstrates how political players have the power to use social media to influence public debate strategically.

However, the sheer amount of data available online demands a critical approach. Given that Romanians use the internet for more than six hours a day on average (Statista, 2022), political messages compete for users' attention with an endless supply of content. When evaluating a message's potential impact, it becomes essential to comprehend how it breaks through the clutter and engages users.

The following segments of this research will examine the factors that need to be taken into consideration when analysing the influential power of social media to deliver political messages in greater detail.

Understanding the influence

Understanding the political messages on social media allows individuals to critically evaluate information, make informed decisions, actively participate in public discussions and develop effective communication strategies (Ausat, 2023). Individuals are empowered by social media literacy (Cho, Cannon, Lopez & Li, 2024), particularly when it comes to political messaging. Citizens can become skilled information consumers by deconstructing these messages and distinguishing between fact and fake.

Gaining an understanding of how political statements are received on social media is essential for at least two reasons. Firstly, s*ocial media political messaging can influence public opinion* (Neubaum, 2022). People can share information, have conversations and voice their opinions on social media platforms. Thus, people's perceptions of political topics, candidates and policies can be influenced by these messages. Comprehending this influence enables people to assess messages critically, take into account various viewpoints and arrive at well-informed judgements. A social media campaign that emphasises a candidate's perspective on a vital subject, for instance may resonate with people and impact their thinking. However, if the campaign uses emotionally charged language or omits crucial elements, a well-informed individual can see these approaches and seek extra information before forming an opinion.

Secondly, *political messages can be amplified and made viral through social media* (Larsson, 2020). Users who find a message meaningful may like, share, or comment on it which expands its visibility and audience. Political statements have the ability to go viral and swiftly reach a large audience, overcoming barriers like geography and conventional media outlets (Mwangi, 2023). These messages therefore have the power to greatly influence public opinion and public conversation. Consider a social media post on a political scandal. If the message is written boastfully and appeals to users' emotions, it may be extensively spread, potentially harming a candidate's reputation or changing public opinion against a specific proposal. Understanding how communications spread allows people to be more cautious about the information they share and promotes appropriate online behaviour.

Effective critical thinking encourages informed decision-making and increased participation in public discourse. Furthermore, understanding the tactics utilised in political messages allows people to devise communication strategies for effectively advocating their ideals in the digital age. The following section looks into the architecture of social media influence, looking at how filter bubbles, fake news, and AI algorithms contribute to the transmission and reception of political content.

Beyond clicks: exploring the architecture of social media influence

When diving into the diverse landscape of social media's impact on political decision-making, it is necessary to examine various major aspects. The most prominent of these is the *filter bubble*, a phenomenon in which users only come across content that primarily confirms their own opinions and views. Pariser (2011) first used the term "filter bubble" to describe the personalised material that social media sites show their users according to their past interactions and preferences. This phenomenon, which is characterised by information uniformity, presents a significant obstacle to the development of varied perspectives that are necessary for sound decision-making operations.

Social media platforms' inherent design encourages the development of filter bubbles (Kitchens, Johnson & Gray, 2020). Similar to independent information ecosystems, these bubbles typically provide consumers with content that supports their pre-existing opinions. There are multiple methods in which this occurs. First, in order to customise news feeds and recommendations, algorithms monitor user behaviour such as likes, shares, and comments. This produces an echo chamber effect by giving priority to content that is similar to previous exchanges. It is a common occurrence for social media users to choose communities and groups that align with their viewpoints (Kitchens, Johnson & Gray, 2020; Helberger, 2021). This further reduces the exposure to different points of view. Lastly, there is a role for the prevalence of *confirmation bias*, which is the cognitive propensity to favour information that validates our pre-existing ideas (Wason, 1960). As a result, when contradicting information emerges within the filter bubble, individuals may dismiss it as untrustworthy, confirming their biases. Users may thus get more and more cut off from a variety of perspectives, which impedes critical thinking and well-informed decision-making.

From clicks to convictions: investigating the spread and influence of political messages on social media

While social media platforms provide unrivalled access to news and viewpoints, they also serve as breeding grounds for *fake news*. Fake news is defined as inaccurate or deceptive material that is reported as noteworthy events (Molina, Sundar, Le & Lee, 2021). Because of their extensive user bases, ease of sharing content and lax content management, social media platforms have come under fire for contributing to the rapid spread of false information (Rhodes, 2022).

The ease with which false or misleading information may be produced and disseminated online allows it to readily pass for real news (Zhang & Ghorbani, 2020). Thus, individuals can use technology to build narratives that change images, videos and emotions, which are typically intended to target specific groups or exploit pre-existing biases.

The spread of fake news has altered global electoral processes, as misinformation operations target vulnerable groups to manipulate their political choices (Grinberg, Joseph, Friedland, Swire-Thompson & Lazer, 2019). The speed and scope of social media platforms allow politicians and interest groups to sway public opinion by spreading false narratives. As a result, voters' political perceptions become narrowed, influencing their voting behaviour and undermining overall trust in democratic institutions. This action further exacerbates the *echo chamber effect* by increasing isolation and perpetuating the spread of misleading data. The fast dissemination of fake news on social media platforms creates echo chambers and polarises society (Kaylor, 2019). Echo chambers are environments in which people associate mostly with those who share their views, reinforcing their previous beliefs (Sunstein, 2009).

Researchers are concerned about social media's ability to produce echo chambers and filter bubbles, which promote *the polarisation effect* (Arguedas, Robertson, Fletcher & Nielsen, 2022: 11). A major source of worry is ideological polarisation, which refers to the growing disparity in political opinions between competing parties (Spohr, 2017). Social media algorithms typically present users with content that promotes their existing beliefs, restricting exposure to competing opinions and instilling a sense of "us *vs.* them". This can result in more entrenched political viewpoints, making compromise and common ground more difficult.

Moreover, social media users are subjected to information that is biased and reinforces their preconceived notions, which erodes trust in traditional media sources and fragments social perspectives, eroding the shared reality that we once shared (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). In addition, the prevalence of fake news feeds conspiracy theories, further dividing society and impeding constructive dialogue and cooperation (Spohr, 2017). According to recent studies, Romania's digital landscape is characterised by increasing fragmentation and polarisation within media settings (Buturoiu, Corbu, & Boțan, 2022). In line with worldwide trends (Van Aelst, Strömbäck, Aalberg, Esser, De Vreese, Matthes & Stanyer, 2017), Romanian media consumers prefer attitude-consistent information, which contributes to the spread of politically biased and fraudulent content across several channels. Notably, social media platforms appear to have a substantial role in increasing political polarisation, outperforming established media in this regard.

Biased content promoted by fake news is not the only factor contributing to the breakdown of shared realities and the decline in confidence in conventional media. Algorithms on social media platforms are also extremely important. These AI-driven systems prioritise content that supports a user's pre-existing opinions in an effort to keep them interested (Tomar, Raj, Singh, Marwaha & Tiwari, 2023). Social media networks employ artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms that examine user behaviour and preferences to present tailored information. Content that is more likely to engage users is given priority by these algorithms, resulting in a more customised and individualised user experience (Bozdag, 2013).

Additionally, AI algorithms prioritise interaction metrics, resulting in sensationalised and false content gaining greater awareness than genuine information (Dujeancourt & Garz, 2023). As a result, disinformation propagates quickly across social media platforms, influencing public opinion, intensifying societal polarisation, and weakening trust in institutions, with possible political and economic consequences (Serrano-Puche, 2021). This emphasises the necessity to investigate solutions that target both the platform and user levels. Social media businesses must prioritise credible sources, remove incorrect content, and invest in fact-checking tools.

However, the responsibility does not rest simply with platforms. Equipping users with social media literacy (Cho et al., 2024) and critical thinking skills is just as crucial in the fight against fake news. The following section will look at the agenda-setting theory and the role of digital citizens in navigating the complex world of political communications on social media.

From passive consumers to active citizens: agenda-setting theory and the importance of digital citizenship

In the ever-changing sea of online information, especially when it comes to political messaging, digital citizens – those who actively participate in the online world – can benefit significantly from understanding *the agenda-setting theory*. This theory postulates that the media, especially social media platforms, play an important role in influencing public opinion by selecting which subjects receive the greatest attention (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020). Understanding how agenda-setting works can help digital citizens become more discerning consumers of online information and navigate the complexity of political discourse on social media.

Using digital technologies – including social media – responsibly and ethically is known as *digital citizenship* (Ribble & Park, 2022). Despite the initial appearance of disconnection between these two ideas, the agenda-setting theory can influence digital citizenship in various ways. Firstly, realising that social media platforms prioritise specific themes and impact public debate through the use of algorithms and artificial intelligence (Bozdag, 2013) encourages digital citizens to critically evaluate the material they receive and interact with online. This understanding enables consumers to navigate the carefully selected information environment with judgment, lowering the chance of falling victim to echo chambers and filter bubbles (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

Furthermore, understanding the mechanisms by which agenda-setting operates in digital spaces promotes a sense of responsibility in digital citizens to actively shape the online narrative and advocate for diverse perspectives and issues that are consistent with democratic values and principles (Lee, White & Dong, 2021: 326). Digital citizens can strive to share reliable and verified information, avoiding the unintentional amplification of misinformation or biased content. By being responsible in their sharing practices, individuals can contribute to a more accurate and balanced digital discourse (Choi, Glassman & Cristol, 2017).

Additionally, individuals who are aware of the media's influence on public opinion might develop critical evaluation and analysis skills (Martens & Hobbs, 2015). Thus, developing social media literacy is critical in navigating the intricacies of digital communication landscapes. Drawing on Cho et al.’s (2024) conceptual framework, *social media literacy* goes beyond traditional media literacy paradigms, focusing on the user’s active engagement with social media platforms, as well as the dynamic interplay between individual choices, values and the evolving characteristics of those platforms. This comprehensive understanding enables digital citizens to negotiate the social media environments with discernment, successfully limiting the effects of agenda-setting mechanisms while fostering a more educated and participatory online conversation.

By actively participating in digital conversations, individuals can influence the issues that gain prominence and challenge the dominance of certain agendas, fostering a more diverse and inclusive online environment (Aichholzer & Rose, 2020). This active interaction is consistent with the idea of digital citizenship in which individuals not only consume but also contribute to the building of digital places (Ribble & Park, 2022). Through their interactions and content creation, digital citizens shape the public agenda, boosting marginalised voices and tackling societal injustices (Choi, 2016). This participatory approach to agenda-setting emphasises the mutually beneficial relationship between digital citizenship and agenda-setting theory, as well as the transformational power of community action in transforming online discourse and furthering democratic principles.

Finally, understanding agenda-setting theory provides digital citizens with the critical thinking abilities required to successfully navigate the online environment. Recognising the forces that affect online information consumption enables users to make more informed decisions, engage in constructive conversation, and contribute to a healthier online information environment.

Conclusions

The complex reality of political messaging on social media necessitates a diversified strategy. Recognising that political messages do not only propagate and have a negative or positive impact on social media platforms is crucial. As shown in the studies presented in this article, social media can increase polarisation, disinformation, and manipulation while also promoting the sharing of important information and democratic engagement. As a result, a critical study should take into account the complex character of political messaging on social media and acknowledge both their advantages and disadvantages. While developing critical thinking abilities and fact-checking systems is vital for countering the spread of misinformation, further research is needed. Investigating the impact of algorithms in affecting the distribution of voices and content is critical to establishing a fairer online conversation.

While this analysis uses a comprehensive literature review to investigate the complex impact of social media on political messages, it has to acknowledge certain constraints. While the study’s theoretical approach has merit, it may benefit from more empirical research, particularly in light of Romania’s upcoming elections. Investigating real-world social media data and user engagement patterns during the election period would provide useful insights into how these platforms influence voter behaviour in Romania.

Future study options could include conducting surveys and interviews with Romanian social media users during the forthcoming electoral cycles. Furthermore, investigating the perspectives of political parties and social media platforms active in Romania would provide a more complete picture of the environment that influences political messages online. Additional studies might build on this theoretical framework by including these factors, providing a more nuanced picture of Romania's complicated interaction between social media and political discourse.

Finally, maintaining a healthy online environment necessitates teamwork. Social media platforms must invest in effective content moderation systems and prioritise the spread of reliable information. Citizens, on the other hand, must become more discriminating consumers of online content, using critical thinking abilities to assess the messages they encounter. Only through a collective effort will we be able to realise the full promise of social media for political discourse while also avoiding its potential drawbacks. The path towards a more responsible and balanced online environment necessitates continuous research, teaching, and adaptation. As technology advances, so will our understanding and approach to the complex realm of political communications on social media.

Authors' Contributions:

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Teaching Greetings to Foreign Students in the Preparatory Year of the Romanian Language

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Abstract:
The article provides an extensive exploration of the significance, utilization, and cultural implications of greetings in the Romanian language, particularly in the context of teaching Romanian to foreign students. It delineates the theoretical underpinnings of greetings, emphasizing their dual nature as linguistic constructs and social behaviors embedded within cultural norms. Furthermore, it examines the practical considerations involved in teaching greetings, advocating for a structured instructional approach that integrates theoretical concepts with experiential learning opportunities. The article also delves into examples of iconic greetings in Romanian culture and explores the nuances of ironic greetings. Overall, it serves as a valuable resource for language educators, students, and researchers seeking to understand the multifaceted nature of greetings and their role in communication, social interaction, and cultural identity within the Romanian context.
Keywords: *greeting in Romanian, teaching techniques, specific vocabular*

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1. Preliminary Considerations:

This article can serve as a tool for teachers instructing foreign students the various types of greetings in the Romanian language. Our concern was to explore tools and techniques for designing course material for the learning of greetings. The study encompasses several guiding principles in the development of a course material, particularly from the perspective of how greetings should be approached, along with practical examples of how course activities should be designed to ensure specific ways of mastering greetings in the Romanian language.

I also attempted to make an analysis of greetings in the Romanian language, considering a dual aspect of the language: language as a system of signs with its own structure, both grammatical and semantic (greeting formulas representing a corpus of linguistic data of the Romanian language), and the second aspect - language as a constituent part of social behavior, specific to native or non-native speakers of the Romanian language.

Language as a quintessentially social phenomenon, is grounded in social relationships and interactions, whereas language, as a system of communication through words, serves as an integrated tool within the culture of people.

One of the potential challenges that a teacher may encounter in the act of teaching is to clarify the significance of greetings in the Romanian language, as an integrated part of our culture and social life, where greetings represent a form of respect by which interest is shown towards a person or group.

The diversity of greeting formulas in the Romanian language necessitates a nuanced understanding of the norms of politeness and the dynamics of social relationships. Greetings in the Romanian culture are deeply embedded in a framework of social norms that reflect attitudes of kindness, hospitality, and friendship. These norms serve as guiding principles for individuals as they navigate various social contexts, shaping how greetings are expressed and received. Moreover, the intricate nature of Romanian greetings mirrors aspects of the national psychology, based on the values and priorities held by the Romanian people. It is within the realm of greetings that one can discern the subtle nuances of interpersonal dynamics, as individuals negotiate the delicate balance between tradition and innovation in their interactions.

Furthermore, the formulas of salutation in Romanian culture offer insights into the unique manner in which relationships are established and maintained. Romanian greetings often transcend mere formality, embodying genuine expressions of warmth and camaraderie. This characteristic of Romanian greetings underscores the importance of sincerity and authenticity in interpersonal communication. Additionally, Romanian society exhibits a propensity for both preserving traditional norms and challenging conventional boundaries, a dynamic reflected in the way greetings are exchanged. Thus, an examination of Romanian greeting customs provides not only linguistic insights but also deeper cultural and sociological understandings of the complexities inherent in human interaction.

The purpose of greeting formulas is to initiate a discussion or conversation: ”In most cases, if not all, greeting formulas serve as a means to initiate conversation, while farewell greetings may indicate its conclusion. Moreover, speakers are often keenly aware of the role played by these greeting formulas in conversation dynamics.”. (G. Caragață, op.cit.:73).

The rules of politeness are deeply rooted in the unique conception of humanity held by each society, serving as a manifestation of its cultural ethos and ethical principles. These rules reflect the values and norms upheld by the community. Through the application of politeness norms, individuals demonstrate their respect for societal conventions and their acknowledgment of others' dignity and autonomy. Moreover, politeness rules serve as a mechanism for maintaining social harmony and cohesion by regulating interpersonal relations and minimizing conflict. As such, they play a fundamental role in shaping social interactions and facilitating smooth communication within a society. Additionally, the adherence to politeness norms not only reflects the cultural identity of a people but also reinforces and perpetuates shared ethical standards, contributing to the preservation of social order and stability.

Greetings, as a mode of expressing politeness, exhibit various cultural particularities across different societies, which are elucidated by socio-cultural factors and entrenched traditions. Politeness is influenced by both objective and subjective factors, which intersect to varying degrees. While factors such as the level of intimacy, age, gender, social status, mental state, and level of education influence polite address in any language, there are also factors specific to the traditions and customs of a particular people that dictate certain conventions in respectful addressing within that language community. The ways in which people greet each other upon meeting or parting reveal much about their relationship dynamics and the type of society in which they reside. In Romanian culture as well, politeness entails the obligation of individuals to greet one another.

2. Theoretical Considerations:

”Greetings are communicative behaviors, whether gestural, verbal, or both, with a known significance within a micro or macro social group, through which an expression of attention, respect, or politeness is conveyed to an individual or a group.” (Pietreanu, 1984: 29)

Undoubtedly, greetings constitute a form of communication grounded in specific behaviors exhibited by both the message sender (the emitter) and the message receiver (the recipient). Greetings are often mundane, especially in the case of individuals who are unfamiliar with each other or know each other only superficially, yet personalized in the case of individuals who have known each other for an extended period.

Social functions of language are fulfilled through greetings, including:

• *In the communicative function of language*, neutral formulas known to speakers are utilized: *Bună dimineața*!; *Bună ziua*!; *Bună seara*!;

• *In the phatic function of language*, both verbal and nonverbal or paraverbal language (through intonation, facial expressions, and gestures) are utilized;

• *In the conative function of language*, the aim is to engage and attract the recipient(s) of the message. This function is primarily utilized in greeting/addressing formulas used by radio or TV presenters, especially in interactive shows. (Pietreanu, 1984: 28)

These examples are commonly used in everyday interactions to establish rapport, acknowledge others, and create a sense of social connection. They often serve to facilitate communication rather than convey specific content or information.

Two main types of greetings can be distinguished:

– *Conventional greetings*: These are formal greetings, for example, official or traditional greetings in written communication such as diplomatic or business correspondence, predominantly serving communicative functions. They are characterized by a higher degree of respect and politeness. (example: *Bună ziua!*, *Sărut mâna!*, *O seară bună!*, etc.);

– *Nonconventional greetings*, also known as informal greetings, are utilized with the aim of capturing attention and making an impression. The tendency to use this type of greeting is persuasive, sometimes ironic, fulfilling the conative function. They are characterized by a more relaxed tone and may include phrases such as: *Ciao!*, *Hi!*, *Hai noroc!*, *Pa!*, etc.

In the Romanian language, there are numerous forms of greetings used by speakers based on several selection criteria:

- Depending on time: *Bună dimineața!; Bună ziua!; Bună seara!; Noapte bună!,* etc.
- Depending on space: *Servus!* (a greeting formula commonly used in Banat and Transylvania)
- In relation to the participants' relationship:

a) Discursive equality: *Baftă!; Hai noroc!; Hai pa!; Pa!; Salut!; Salutare!*, etc.

b) Discursive inequality: *Să trăiești!/Să trăiți!; Te salut!/Vă salut!*, etc.

- Depending on age or gender: *Sărut mâna!* (for greeting a lady:); *Bună!* (for greeting a girl), *Noroc!; Salut!* (used to greet a boy).
- Depending on the moment of the conversation:

a) Opening a conversation: *Bună!, Salut !*– greeting formulas that can be used at any time of the day;

b) Closing a conversation: *La revedere!, Cu bine!, Pa!, Pe curând!, Pe mâine!* – as well as the opening formulas can be used at any time of the day.

Greetings formulas must respect various sentiments and interpersonal relationships. ”Within this communication context, messages of sincerity, openness, trust, friendship, hostility, power, safety, fear, dominance, submission, irony, flattery, and many others can be conveyed.” (Constantinovici 2014: 57)

Greeting formulas are considered ”linguistic clichés” (Pietreanu 1984:29), and Maricica Pietreanu groups the greeting formulas into categories:

1) *Daily greetings* (morning, daytime, evening greetings);

2) *Annual greetings* - related to traditional holidays - are organized according to the model: *Sărbători fericite!; La mulți ani!; An Nou fericit!(* New Year), *Paște fericit!* /*Christos a înviat!* (Easter), *Crăciun fericit!* (Christmas);

3) *Occasional greetings* - related to family events, such as: *Casă de piatră!* (the wedding), *Condoleanțe!, Sincere condoleanțe!, Condoleanțele mele/noastre!*; *Dumnezeu să-l ierte!* (the death), *Să crească mare!; Să vă trăiască!; Să fie sănătos!* (the baptism);

4) greetings addressed to those who perform a certain work: *Mai bun lucrul!; Spor!* (Pietreanu 1984:105)

3. Practical considerations

The lesson on greetings is taught to foreign students in the early stages of learning the Romanian language and should be associated with concepts of Romanian culture and civilization so that students understand the contexts in which different greeting formulas are used.

The students need predictability, and greeting formulas are learned according to the time of day (*Bună dimineața!*; *Bună ziua!*; *Bună seara!*; *Noapte bună!*), age or gender (*Sărut mâna!* - for greeting a lady; *Bună!* - for greeting a girl; *Noroc!*; *Salut!* -

used to greet a boy) to create a routine for the students. This means that the response to the greeting is also - predictable.

Acquiring a set of predetermined greeting formulas often proves effective in teaching Romanian to foreign students. By familiarizing students with standardized responses to various greetings, teachers provide them with a structured framework for engaging in everyday interactions. This approach not only facilitates language acquisition, but also instills a sense of confidence and predictability in students as they navigate social encounters in Romanian-language contexts. In addition, the use of predetermined responses reinforces the cultural norms and conventions associated with greetings, thereby enhancing students' understanding of the wider socio-cultural landscape in which language use occurs. In general, the integration of predetermined response patterns in foreign language teaching contributes to the development of students' communicative competence and cultural competence in the Romanian language.

For Romanians, especially, greetings represent the first sign of good manners. Therefore, it is important for foreign students coming into contact with Romanian civilization to understand that based on the way we greet those around us, they can form an opinion about us. In Romania, politeness dictates that we greet unknown individuals when entering an institution, an office, a train compartment, an elevator, or a small shop. Unknown individuals use greetings especially when seeking to establish social contact.

Learning with the greatest impact occurs through imitation. Therefore, the teacher must ensure that students practice greeting formulas in a manner that reflects how real people use them. To consolidate the learning of greeting formulas, after the first week's familiarization with new classmates and Romanian language preparatory year teachers, a university tour is organized. During this tour, preparatory year students interact with personnel from various departments and structures (the Faculty of Letters Secretariat, the Department of Applied Modern Languages Secretariat, the University Central Library, and the university cafeteria). The students are required to fulfill the task of greeting when entering or exiting spaces with specific functions (office/secretariat, lecture hall, cafeteria, canteen, entrance gate, etc.).

The initial contacts with university staff, with whom students will interact throughout an academic year, serve the purpose of establishing visual connections. These early interactions play a significant role in facilitating communication and fostering a sense of familiarity and belonging within the university community. By greeting and engaging with university personnel in various departments and facilities, students begin to establish rapport and build relationships that are essential for navigating academic and administrative processes effectively. Moreover, these visual connections contribute to creating a supportive and inclusive environment where students feel valued and supported in their academic endeavors. Thus, the emphasis on establishing visual connections underscores the importance of interpersonal communication and relationship-building in the university setting.

I consistently advocate for students to initiate their interactions by greeting familiar figures such as teachers, secretaries, and cleaning staff, prioritizing adults initially, given the predictability of their responses. However, as students progress towards independence, their social engagement will broaden to encompass interactions with other university staff members within the campus environment, as well as with fellow Romanian students.

Greeting exercises will be conducted during the morning meeting with colleagues, as well as upon arrival and departure. Additionally, specific scenarios may be arranged where students communicate messages to individuals within the building. By actively participating in these exercises, students not only refine their linguistic skills but also develop their social competence, contributing to their overall integration into the university community.

Among Romanians, greetings serve as the initial indicator of etiquette and social decorum. Consequently, it becomes imperative for foreign students encountering Romanian culture to comprehend that their manner of greeting others provides an opinion about them.

In the pedagogical framework of teaching foreign students, the sequential acquisition of greeting customs emerges as a pivotal component. This process entails a structured approach, where learners progress through distinct stages of proficiency. Initially, students are tasked with mastering the art of responding to greetings, which serves as a foundational step in their linguistic and cultural assimilation. This phase enables learners to familiarize themselves with the nuances of appropriate responses, thereby establishing a solid groundwork for further development. Subsequently, as students advance to the second stage, they are encouraged to take on a more active role by initiating greetings themselves. This transition signifies a deeper level of integration into the socio-cultural fabric of the target language, empowering learners to engage confidently in social interactions within the linguistic community.

To facilitate the successful attainment of these learning objectives, a comprehensive instructional approach is essential. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding students through each phase of the learning process, providing structured guidance and feedback to promote gradual skill acquisition. Integral to this approach is the provision of theoretical knowledge as a precursor to practical application. By equipping students with a solid theoretical understanding of greeting customs, instructors lay the groundwork for effective learning outcomes. Through a combination of theoretical instruction and practical exercises, students are equipped with the necessary linguistic and cultural competencies to navigate real-world social interactions with confidence and proficiency.

To understand the use of greetings, I provide examples of less-known greetings to foreign students:

- Andreea Esca became famous through her signature greeting: *Bună seara România, buna seara București!* (Good evening Romania, good evening Bucharest!). Esca established a strong connection with viewers across the nation. This iconic salutation, delivered with poise and professionalism, served as the opening refrain of the evening news broadcast, setting the tone for the program and signaling the commencement of important updates and events. Esca's articulate delivery and warm demeanor endeared her to audiences, making her a familiar and trusted presence in Romanian households.
- Traian Băsescu, a prominent figure in Romanian politics who served as the country's president, notably garnered public recognition through his distinctive and personalized greeting: *Să trăiți bine!* This salutation, which translates to "Live well!" in English, became closely associated with Băsescu's public persona and communication style. This personalized

greeting played a significant role in shaping Băsescu's public image and contributed to his widespread popularity among Romanian citizens.

In Romanian culture, sometimes ironic greeting is used to express certain negative feelings towards someone. Most often, such formulas are said at parting: *La revedere şi să ne vedem când mi-oi vedea ceafa!; Drum bun cale bătută*!; *La revedere poate te grăbești*! and an ironic Oltenian greeting: *Adio şi-un praz verde!* – the expression is composed, as can easily be observed, of an innovative combination of a neologism "adio" with the typical Oltenian " green onion" - the traditional symbol of Oltenia made famous by the Oltenian actor Amza Pellea.

All these farewell greetings express displeasure at meeting someone or the desire not to see a person again soon. Speakers deliberately exaggerate, jest, and of course, use irony when addressing the farewell formula, aiming to convey an impolite, unkind attitude when they wish to mock someone. From the linguistic expression, the speaker's behavior towards a certain circumstance is reflected.

Drum bun, cale bătută!, typically means "safe journey," and it is uttered when a person's departure is not of particular interest or is welcomed, with the irony stemming from the context of the situation rather than being literal.

These examples of humorous greetings and the explanation of their context lead students to realize that all these constructions have an ironic connotation, some of them expressing the categorical desire not to see someone again or even the dismissal of the interlocutor. Although they include authentic farewell formulas such as "*La revedere!*", "*Drum bun!*", "*Adio!*", "Te *salut!*", they are actually non-greetings. Thus, they acquire a different significance than the inherently positive nuance contained in proper farewell greetings uttered at parting.

In the last part of this article, I want to present some examples of exercises for students where the teacher puts them in various communication situations or contexts to appropriately use greeting formulas:

- Role-Playing Scenarios: Students are assigned different roles (examples: customer and cashier, interviewer and interviewee) and must greet each other appropriately based on the scenario.
- Dialogues: Students work in pairs or small groups to create dialogues set in different contexts (examples: at a restaurant, in a classroom) and practice using greeting formulas naturally within the conversation.
- Flashcards: The teacher provides flashcards with different situations or contexts written on them (examples: meeting a friend, meeting a stranger) and students must match appropriate greeting formulas to each scenario.
- Situational Discussions: The teacher leads discussions about various social situations (examples: attending a party, or meeting a colleague for the first time) and prompts students to suggest appropriate greeting formulas for each scenario.
- Cultural Comparisons: Students compare greeting customs and formulas in different cultures and discuss when and how they are used, helping them understand appropriate greetings in various contexts.
- Video Analysis: Students watch videos depicting different social interactions and analyze the greetings used, discussing their appropriateness and effectiveness in each situation.

- Writing Exercises: Students write short paragraphs or dialogues using greeting formulas in different contexts, focusing on incorporating appropriate language and tone for each situation.

These exercises provide students with practical opportunities to practice and apply greeting formulas in various communication contexts, helping them develop their language skills and cultural awareness.

4. Conclusions

This article provides a comprehensive overview of the significance, usage, and cultural implications of greetings in the Romanian language, particularly within the context of language instruction for foreign students. Through a thorough examination of the linguistic, sociocultural, and practical dimensions of greetings, the article offers valuable insights into the role of greetings as a fundamental aspect of communication and social interaction.

From a theoretical perspective, the article underscores the dual nature of greetings, both as linguistic constructs and as social behaviors embedded within cultural norms and conventions. By delineating the communicative functions of greetings and exploring their diverse forms and cultural particularities, the article elucidates the intricate interplay between language, culture, and social behavior. Moreover, the article highlights the role of greetings in establishing rapport, conveying respect, and fostering interpersonal connections, underscoring their significance in shaping social dynamics and relationships.

Practical considerations outlined in the article emphasize the pedagogical strategies and instructional approaches employed in teaching greetings to foreign students. By integrating theoretical concepts with practical exercises and real-world scenarios, teachers facilitate the acquisition of linguistic and cultural competencies necessary for effective communication in Romanian-language contexts. The article advocates for a structured approach to teaching greetings, encompassing sequential learning stages and experiential learning opportunities to reinforce understanding and application.

Furthermore, the article examines examples of iconic greetings in Romanian culture, such as those used by prominent figures like Andreea Esca and Traian Băsescu, illustrating the cultural significance and symbolic value of greetings in shaping public discourse and identity. Additionally, the article explores the nuances of ironic greetings and their role in expressing subtle social dynamics and attitudes.

Therefore, it is important for foreign students to know how to use greeting formulas in Romanian for different contexts and settings because it prepares them to avoid awkward situations and helps establish a framework for clear and efficient communication. The learning of formal and informal greeting formulas by students facilitates easier integration into the community. Therefore:

- Greeting remains a form of good manners and an expression of politeness.
- Often, greeting is seen as a mechanized, learned act aimed at socializing, and societal changes have sometimes rendered it an impersonal act with few emotional implications.
- For Romanians, greeting represents a means of expressing politeness and simultaneously a tool for sociolinguistic integration.
- Greeting is subject to dynamics and reflects the way people think, behave, and interact at a given moment in society.

In conclusion, this article serves as a valuable resource for language teachers, students, and researchers interested in the multifaceted nature of greetings in the Romanian language. By elucidating the linguistic, cultural, and practical dimensions of greetings, the article deepens our understanding of their role in communication, social interaction, and cultural identity.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

UEFA Euro 2012 - the first big sporting project in Poland after communism

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Abstract:
Poland's first major sports event after the fall of communism was the organization, together with Ukraine, of the UEFA European Football Championships in 2012 (Euro 2012). This third most popular sporting event in the world, after the FIFA World Cup and the Summer Olympic Games, brought many image-related (prestigious) benefits to Poland, from which the Polish economy and society benefited. The organization of Euro 2012 created opportunities for strategic investments, that led to the acceleration of the country's civilizational development. The event, took place eight years after Poland joined the European Union, and constituted a significant impetus to develop a model of sports policy implemented by the Polish state. It also had long-term political consequences, especially in initiating Ukraine's European integration.
Thise article aims to outline organizing the event and analyze the consequences of Euro 2012 for Poland from a political science's perspective, using historical, decision-making, and institutional-legal methods.

Keywords: *sports policy, UEFA Euro 2012, Third Republic of Poland, Ukraine, football, history of sport.*

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Introduction

The previous practice of organizing major sports events – organized by international federations of sports associations on a global scale, held cyclically, attracting great public interest and global media attention (Woźniak, 2015: 61) – indicates the multidimensionality of their consequences.

The issue of choosing a host for an event usually has a political context and is often controversial. The most classic negative examples are the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin and the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow, which promoted Nazism and Communism, respectively. The organization of the Winter Olympics in Sochi (2014) and the FIFA World Cup in Russia (2018) should already qualify as examples of contemporary Russian imperialism under the guise of so-called Putinism. On the other hand, the organization of the Summer Olympic Games in Rome (1960), Tokyo (1964), and Munich (1972), cities from the former Axis powers, which through the games showed their new democratic political quality as a counterbalance to the actions of Italy, Japan, and Germany from the first half of the 20th century, are positive examples (even despite the tragic terrorist attack in Munich).

The primary measure of obtaining, or even competing for, the organization of a major sports event is the economic potential, organizational capabilities, and – not insignificant given the constantly growing number of participants and fans – the geographical and demographic potential. All these criteria emphasize the political importance of the state. Therefore, the organization of the Games has ceased to be solely the domain of the national Olympic committee or national sports federations and has become primarily the responsibility of the state authorities (Jung, 2010: 166). As a result, governments vie to organize major sports events using various diplomatic means (sports diplomacy) (Kobierecki, 2018: 293-303). These events are usually associated not only with the highest level of national and international prestige, and therefore with image benefits for the host country (country branding), but also with real profits in the form of infrastructure development or revitalization, increased tourist traffic, or the inflow of foreign capital (Woźniak, 2015: 62-63). Moreover, this occurs despite the ever-increasing cost of hosting major sporting events in countries. We must remember the sports factor: traditions, successes, or the sportiness of the organizer's society, although the practice of recent years indicates that this factor is often neglected, and the final argument is money (e.g., Qatar, Saudi Arabia). A symptomatic example was the organization of the Summer Olympic Games in Seoul 1988 by South Korea, which brought the country long-term multidimensional success: significant support for democratization processes, acceleration of the process of opening up to the world, including communist countries, a flourishing of the innovative economy there; and, incidentally, activation of the relaxation process in East-West relations; and an excellent sporting result (Jung, 2010: 159-160, 166). These examples testify that professional sport, in particular, is a crucial component of the state's soft power, and Euro 2012 in Poland should be seen in this context.

Background

In the interwar period, sport became an object of Polish state interest. The rebirth of the state in 1918 intensified interest in sport among Poles, becoming an essential identity and integration factor after 123 years of German, Russian, and Austrian captivity. The enormous problems resulting from the devastation of World War

I and the need to unify a country divided between three states meant that it was only after Marshal Józef Piłsudski's so-called May Coup of 1926 that the Polish state took a more active role in organizing amateur and competitive sport. Subordinating it entirely to the army (the Ministry of Military Affairs), it became the leading creator of sport policy through the established chief authority for sport, the State Office of Physical Education and Military Training (Szujecki, 2018: 58). Its expression included the organization of international sporting events in Poland (Table 1). However, the young country's ambitions reached the organization of the Summer Olympic Games, which were announced during the June 1937 Warsaw 36th Session of the International Olympic Committee. The Games were planned for the Polish capital in the 1950s. (Szujecki, 2018: 76).

World War II in 1939 ended the Second Republic of Poland, nullifying Olympic plans. The communist government from 1944 (between 1952 and 1989 under the name People's Republic of Poland), which were subordinate to the Soviets, lacked such ambitions and opportunities. The interest in sport, both amateur and competitive, organisationally already based on Soviet models, did not diminish among Poles; nevertheless, the sports policy pursued during the communist state period was strongly ideologized (Pasko, 2012: 467). Thus, international sporting events at the masters level organized in Poland also promoted communism (Table 1). They took place despite the great devastation of war and the permanent economic and socio-political crisis.

After the fall of communism, sports in Poland, like all areas of life, experienced the organizational, financial, and infrastructure problems characteristic to the countries in political, social, and economic transition. Especially in the 1990s, Polish sport, particularly devastated during the last decade of communist rule (due to the imposition of martial law in 1981 and the boycott of the Summer Olympics 1984 in Los Angeles) - could not count on particular state interest. The sport was subordinated to the Council of Ministers, but only at the office level (since 1991. - Office of Physical Culture and Tourism; since 2000. - Office of Physical Culture and Sport) or department (since 2001, the Department of Physical Culture and Sport within the Ministry of National Education). This has led to an increasing decentralization of decision-making concerning sport. However, given the growing role of sport in the world at the beginning of the 21st century, the Polish political elite came to believe that sport should be made institutionally independent. The interim solution was the creation of the Ministry of National Education and Sport in 2002, and the final solution was the Ministry of Sport, established on 1 September 2005 (Gołdys, 2021: 19-22). This was linked to the Polish authorities deciding to apply to host Euro 2012.

Euro 2012 preparatory political process in Poland

The proposal to host the European football championships came from the president of the Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU), Hryhoriy Surkis, one of Ukraine's most important oligarchs with business and political ties to pro-Russian politician Viktor Medvedchuk. Surkis, who was then a member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on behalf of Medvedchuk's party, the United Social Democratic Party of Ukraine, hoped that the organization of the Euro 2012 would strengthen his position in both the political world in Ukraine and the sporting world - in Europe (Włoch, 2016: 75-76). The co-organisation of the Euro 2012 was initially proposed to the Russians. Still, the proposal was eventually accepted by the Polish Football Association (Polski Związek Piłki Nożnej, PZPN) - after a joint meeting of the boards of both federations in

Lviv on 27 September 2003, at which the two unions signed a five-year cooperation agreement (Szczepłek, 2016: 305-306).

The idea of organizing a major sporting event in a state that, after the collapse of communism, had some experience of sporting events - after 1990, Poland hosted several international tournaments in various sports (Table 1) - but not on such a large scale seemed absurd for economic reasons. The Polish public was generally sceptical and even derisive about the project, aware of the shortcomings of the stadium infrastructure and the road, rail, and hotel infrastructure. The Polish political world also had significant doubts. The unrealistic nature of the Polish-Ukrainian candidature meant that serious work on the project had yet to be inaugurated in Poland by the end of 2004. This can partly be explained by the fact that critical decisions were being taken at the time concerning Poland's accession to the European Union (Poland became a member on 1 May 2004). It was only when the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) sent the first application forms to be completed to the football federations of Poland and Ukraine at the turn of 2004 and 2005, together with the requirement that the government and some state and local government institutions provide political and economic guarantees, that the final political decisions had to be taken. This challenge was faced by the minority government of the post-communist party, the Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej, SLD), headed by Prime Minister Marek Belka. Distrustful of the project, the politician nevertheless decided to go ahead with it, despite ambivalence from other political quarters (e.g., the Chief of the Civic Platform, Donald Tusk, had the most reservations) or even reluctance from ministerial officials. It is difficult to say which arguments prevailed, and among the key ones were both political issues - the need for a new dynamic in Polish-Ukrainian relations after the 'Orange Revolution' in Ukraine as support for the country's more comprehensive integration into European political and economic structures - and economic (modernization) issues for Poland (Włoch, 2016: 78-83). Not exactly anecdotal, but reflecting the 'spirit of the time' was Belka's later statement that the decisive argument for Finance Minister Mirosław Gronicki, who agreed to financial guarantees for UEFA, was that there was no real chance of hosting the tournament (Woźniak, 2015: 65).

After the Polish government adopted a resolution supporting the organization of Euro 2012 in Poland on 25 January 2005 and PZPN submitted its application to UEFA, it became apparent that the Polish-Ukrainian candidature would compete with Italy and Croatia-Hungary. The timing coincided with the appointment of a new government after the parliamentary elections in the autumn of 2005, formed by a conservative coalition of the Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS), the League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin, LPR) and Self-Defence (Samoobrona RP). The new Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PiS) stepped up his efforts by appointing the Euro 2012 Advisory Council with the participation of representatives of eight ministries, the Polish Football Association, the Polish Olympic Committee, and the mayors of the six cities bidding to host the championships (Chorzow, Gdansk, Cracow, Poznan, Warsaw and Wroclaw) with a budget of around EUR 2,5 million. Its tasks included the development of Polish-Ukrainian bid documentation for the UEFA Executive Committee, the preparation of a plan for the presentation of the candidature to the UEFA Congress in March 2006, and the agenda for the final presentation, which took place at UEFA headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland, in April 2007. (Włoch, 2016: 83-85).

However, significant political obstacles emerged despite the preparatory work's progress. At the turn of 2006/2007, as a result of the suspension of the PZPN board and the appointment of an external curator to the federation by the Minister of Sport due to a corruption scandal in Polish football, there was a threat that Poland would be suspended from UEFA and FIFA structures and that the Polish-Ukrainian candidature would be rejected, eventually, after mediation involving the President of the Republic of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, and FIFA President Joseph Blatter, the conflict resolved. Interestingly, a similar situation occurred a year later, when the Minister of Sport in the new liberal government formed in the autumn of 2007 by the Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska, PO) and the Polish Peasant Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, PSL) reappointed a curator in the PZPN. At the time, this threatened to take away the tournament already awarded to Poland and Ukraine (Szczepłek, 2016: 307-308; Włoch, 2016: 87).

In the increasingly conflicted Polish political world, all political groupings formed a common front for action on the Euro 2012. Politicians, the event was seen as a potentially main political goal right after joining NATO and the European Union. It resulted in the provision of more than twenty UEFA-required government guarantees between 2005 and 2007, which included support from the public administration in the areas of, among other things, financing the construction or modernization of stadiums, providing security and safety and medical care; preparing accommodation centers for the football teams; organizing appropriate transport, developing air, road, rail and hotel infrastructure and communications in and between host cities; ensuring ticket distribution with UEFA requirements; and securing intellectual property rights (Włoch, 2016: 95).

Nevertheless, given the decision on the selection of the Euro 2012 organizer, which was to be made on 18 April 2007 at a meeting of the UEFA Executive Committee in Cardiff, Wales, both the political spheres and public opinion in Poland did not believe in the success of the Polish-Ukrainian candidature. What a surprise there was, also among the members of the Polish delegation headed by President Kaczynski, when UEFA President Michel Platini announced that the tournament organization had been awarded - not to Italy, widely regarded as the favorites - but to Poland and Ukraine. Despite many doubts following this verdict - raised mainly against Surkis and his alleged corrupt activities in the case - preparatory work for the Euro 2012 should have started as soon as possible (Szczepłek, 2016: 309).

A week after UEFA's surprising decision, Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński (PiS) appointed the Organising Committee for the organization of Euro 2012, and the Ministry of Sport and Tourism coordinated all government work. It prepared a special law on preparations for the tournament, adopted by the Polish parliament in September 2007, a detailed 'operational' document. It was a tool that significantly accelerated the decision-making process in the form of the possibility of establishing companies through which investments in the governmental area could be carried out more efficiently. It is worth mentioning that the investment plans were primarily correlated with the objectives of the disbursement of EU funds from the first significant perspective from 2007-2014 (Poland was guaranteed, among other things, EUR 7,3 billion under the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment). Based on this law, special purpose departments were established in the first instance: PL.2012, responsible for coordinating most projects and liaising with UEFA; and the National Sports Centre for the construction of a new football facility in Warsaw (Włoch, 2016: 107-112).

The awarding of the right to host Euro 2012 to Poland and Ukraine also necessitated the conclusion of an international agreement between the two countries on framework cooperation and coordination of preparations for the tournament. Following an initiative by the presidents of Poland and Ukraine, Lech Kaczyński and Viktor Yushchenko, the agreement was signed on 28 March 2008 by the prime ministers of both countries, Donald Tusk and Yulia Tymoshenko. The main body responsible for coordinating cooperation was the Polish-Ukrainian Committee for the Preparation and Conduct of Euro 2012, headed by the prime ministers of both countries. Concretization of the collaboration, on the other hand, was to take place through executive agreements concluded between the respective governmental and local administrations of Poland and Ukraine (Malinowski, Tomanek, Pawlak, 2014: 47).

The impetus for preparatory work was halted with the early parliamentary elections held in October 2007. The new government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk (PO) slowed down the preparations, which involved disputes over competencies between PL.2012, a state-owned company working under the corporate system, and the government and local government administrations. The problems were compounded with the departure of the then Minister of Sport Mirosław Drzewiecki due to the so-called gambling scandal in autumn 2009. As a result, investments in the host cities, which were of crucial importance for Euro preparations - eventually, in an aura of internal Polish conflict, UEFA decided that the tournament would be held in four Polish cities (Gdansk, Poznan, Wroclaw, and Warsaw) and four Ukrainian ones (Kharkiv, Donetsk, Kyiv, and Lviv) - were delayed. It was not until mid-2009 that work gathered pace after an agreement on close cooperation was signed between the four host cities, the Ministry of Sport, and PL.2012. On the other hand, a company set up by the PZPN, Euro 2012 Poland, was established on UEFA's initiative in May of that year, through which UEFA intended to supervise preparations for the 'sporting' part of the event, competence disputes with PL.2012 began, which lasted until the inauguration of the tournament (Włoch, 2016: 119-129).

It can be assumed that the 'institutional structure for the organization' of Euro 2012 in Poland was closed two years before the start of the event. The most crucial role in it was played by the governmental Euro 2012 Organising Committee, with the Prime Minister in charge. The Ministry of Sport fulfilled the operational role within which the Euro 2012 Office functioned. It supervised another operator, the PL.2012 company. The Minister of Sport also co-created, together with the mayors of the host cities, the Decision-making Committee for the strategy of activities at the governmental and local governmental level. In addition, there was the so-called G5 group, consisting of representatives of the Euro 2012 municipal offices and the management board of PL.2012. In May 2010, another essential entity was established - the Security Committee, the Medical Committee, and the Committee for the Protection of Rights, which comprised several dozen institutions. Four months before the event's start, most of its competencies and general coordination functions were taken over by the Committee for the Coordination of the Organisation of the Final Tournament of the UEFA Euro 2012. It was headed by the Minister of Sport and included the Ministers of Administration and Digitisation, Interior, Transport, Construction, and Maritime Economy; Health, as well as representatives of the Ministers of National Defence; Justice; Foreign Affairs, Head of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister; and the Governors of Lower Silesia, Lesser Poland, Mazovia, Pomerania and Greater Poland. It had the support of the National Operations Staff. A special parliamentary Sub-Committee played an essential role in Poland's preparations for the organization of the championships within the Committee on Physical Culture, Sport and Tourism, which was an informative and consultative forum for all political groups in the Polish parliament, the Sejm (Włoch, 2016: 130-135).

Euro 2012 Effects for Poland

The organization of Euro 2012 in Poland was a complicated, heterogeneous process taking place in changing internal political conditions. It was determined by the possibilities and interests of the Polish state and local governments on the one hand and the requirements and expectations of UEFA on the other. In the political sphere, disputes between parties over preparations for Euro 2012 usually did not go beyond the ritual of the current political struggle. With changes in government configurations, organizational and institutional continuity was maintained. Conflicts and disputes were more evident at the level of the entities preparing the event, and they were primarily of a competence dimension. Given that more than 170 institutions were involved in the event's organization, they seemed inevitable.

Euro 2012 was supposed to confirm Poland's status in the international arena as a mature and trustworthy country that can handle this challenge and testify to the rightness of the chosen path of systemic transformation. At the same time, politicians pointed to an unprecedented opportunity for a leap in Poland's civilization and modernization, especially concerning transportation and sports infrastructure. During Poland's preparations for UEFA Euro 2012, 219 investments were planned. Eighty-three of these were considered crucial for the smooth organization of the tournament, with a total value of EUR 21 billion (Malinowski, Tomanek, Pawlak, 2014: 47). Of these, 69% of crucial investments were completed before the tournament began. The value of all investments carried out before Euro 2012 to the total planned extent during the 5-year preparation period amounted to almost EUR 12 billion, unprecedented in Poland's infrastructure development history. In terms of the structure of outlays related to the organization of the tournament, the vast majority of costs were for road transportation - 58% of total outlays, followed by rail transportation (13%), urban transportation (10%), stadiums (6%), hotels (6%), airports (5%) and sport-residential centers (2%) (Żuryński, 2014: 129).

In the short term, the balance of infrastructure investment associated with Euro 2012 could have been more clearly favorable. The cost of building stadiums in Poland - a total of more than EUR 1 billion - was high, and four of the tournament arenas did not prove profitable after Euro 2012. This was the case for the stadium in Poznan (capacity: 43,000; cost: EUR 160 million), Gdansk (capacity: 43,500; cost: EUR 205 million) and Wroclaw (capacity: 43,000; cost: EUR 215 million). The most expensive of these, the National Stadium in Warsaw (capacity: 57,000; cost: EUR 455 million), surprisingly proved to be the least loss-making (Żuryński, 2014: 139-141). During the tournament, 15 out of 31 matches were played in Polish stadiums and watched by 673,000 spectators, which were almost 99% full. This balance was excellent. Still, UEFA took over most of the ticket sales profits. Incidentally, it should be pointed out that during the championships, fans from abroad - from 127 countries (!) - accounted for 48% of the match audience. 3,2 million fans visited fan zones in the largest Polish cities. Another positive point is that as many as 12 out of 14 foreign national team staff chose the Polish sport-residential centers, created or modernized before Euro 2012, as the place of their stay during the tournament (Borowski, 2012: 6-13).

The new road infrastructure - 1,400 km of highways and express roads, among others- were built between 2007 and 2012. It directly contributed to increased travel comfort for visitors to Poland and the Poles themselves. The results significantly reduced travel time between Poland's largest agglomerations. However, not all investments could be completed before the championships (Malinowski, Tomanek, Pawlak, 2014: 53). In contrast, there was only a slight increase in the number of passengers traveling by rail after the tournament, despite the modernization of approximately 780 km of railway lines and 36 railway stations. Also, the number of air operations at Polish airports, after an increase during Euro 2012, remained at a similar level as before the tournament. Macroeconomic data indicated that between 2010 and 2013, Poland's economic growth averaged around 3% of GDP per year and was about 1% higher than the Eurozone average (Żuryński, 2014: 134-138, 144).

Thanks to Euro 2012, Poland's image abroad has improved significantly. According to the Social Research Centre, in a survey conducted among foreigners during the tournament, 85% of foreigners felt safe in Poland, 92% assessed our country's atmosphere as excellent, and 85% rated the organization of the championships in Poland highly. As a result, 92% of respondents were willing to recommend Poland to their friends as a country attractive for tourism and worth visiting, and 79% would like to visit again. Interestingly, Poles' evaluations were very similar; only the level of road infrastructure was assessed more critically. The generally positive assessment of the organization of Euro 2012 translated into Poland's progress in prestigious national brand rankings, such as the 'Country Brand Index' and the 'Future Brands Index' (Płonka, 2019: 42-46). The contribution of a usually foreigner-friendly society, including the work of 2,800 volunteers - 90% from Poland - was also crucial in this image's success (Borowski, 2012: 13).

In absolute numbers, Poland did not earn much from the organization of Euro 2012. The benefits were recorded primarily in tourism - according to the Polish Institute of Tourism, the expenditure of foreign tourists, numbering around 660,000 who visited Poland during Euro 2012, amounted to over EUR 230 million (Forbes, 2012). The event provided a significant boost in many areas in the long term. Euro 2012 helped to open up considerable investment in transport infrastructure, which continues to this day. This includes constructing roads and highways and modernizing railways and air transport. There has been an increase in investment in sports infrastructure, including the construction of many modern multi-purpose sports arenas and stadiums, which have seen a steady increase in attendance. This has multiplied the number of international sporting events Poland hosted after 2012 (Table 1). This results from Poland's continuous GDP growth (average annual GDP growth between 2004 and 2018 was 3.92%), also thanks to European funds.

After 2005, sports in Poland enjoyed institutional independence through a separate ministry. Professional sports are steadily rising thanks to financial support from large state-owned companies such as Orlen. It is at a good or excellent level in many sports, as evidenced by successes in the international arena (athletics, volleyball, handball, tennis, canoe, rowing, speedway, ski jumping, swimming, and cycling).

The co-organisation of Euro 2012 with Poland was also an essential impetus for Ukraine's European choice. The opportunity to participate in a significant event with many foreign guests in a sporting festive atmosphere indicated their European ambitions, especially for young Ukrainians. One can risk the claim that the co-organisation of Euro 2012 together with Poland contributed to the firm opposition of the majority of Ukrainian society to the decision of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych in late 2013 to postpone the signing of the Association Agreement with the European

Union. It manifested itself in the so-called Revolution of Dignity of 2013/2014, which defined Ukraine's anti-Russian and, at the same time, European aspirations. The result was a rapprochement with Poland.

Summary

The organization of the European Football Championship in 2012 in Poland should be assessed as decidedly positive. The economic, social, and image effects (Table 2), the so-called Euro effect, proved to be essential for the country's sustainable development in the long term. Euro 2012 gave another vital pro-development impulse in Poland's significant modernization project after the communist-era stagnation. It also turned out to be a success for the entire political class, which proved that, despite substantial differences in worldview, it is possible to cooperate on implementing major projects - even with the reservation that the need for cooperation was also due to pressure from UEFA. What could have been a success, however, was the participation of Polish footballers in the tournament, who lost their rivalry in the weakest group of the championship (against Czechia, Greece, and Russia), failing to advance to the tournament's knockout stage...

Table 1. Organization of international sports events of masters level in Poland in popular sports (1918-2023)

Own preparation based on: 100 lat polskiego sportu. Kronika (2021); Michalik, M.B. (1993); Szujecki, K. (2018).

	Second Republic of Poland (1918-1939)	**People's Republic of Poland (1952-1989)**	**Third Republic of Poland (1990-2023)**
Archery	WC: Lwów 1931; Warszawa 1932		WC: Kraków 1991 EC: Legnica 2018
Athletics		EC: (I) Katowice 1975	WC: (I) Gdańsk/Sopot 2014 EC: (I) Toruń 2021
Basketball		EC: (M) Wrocław 1963; (W) Łódź 1958; Poznań 1978	EC: (W) 1999[1]; 2011[2]; (M) 2009[3]
Boxing		EC: Warszawa 1953; Katowice 1975	
Canoe		EC: Poznań 1961	WC: Poznań 1990; 2001; 2010; 2012 EC: Poznań 2000; 2004; 2005; 2021
Cycling			WC: (T) Pruszków 2009; 2019 EC: (T) Pruszków 2010
Fencing	WC: Warszawa 1934	WC: Gdańsk 1963	EC: Kraków 1994; Gdańsk 1997; Toruń 2016
Figure Skating			EC: Warszawa 2007
Football			EC: (M) 2012[4]

1 Katowice, Poznań, Pruszków.
2 Bydgoszcz, Katowice, Łódź.
3 Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Katowice, Łódź, Poznań, Warszawa, Wrocław.
4 with Ukraine; Gdańsk, Poznań, Warszawa, Wrocław.

Gymnastics		EC: (W) Kraków 1959; (M) Warszawa 1969	EC: Szczecin 2019
Handball			WC: (M) 2023[5] EC: (M) 2016[6]
Ice Hockey	WC/EC: Krynica 1931	WC (A): Katowice 1976	
Judo			EC: Gdańsk 1994; Wrocław 2000; Warszawa 2017
Luge	EC: Krynica 1935	WC: Krynica 1958; 1962	
Rowing	EC: Bydgoszcz 1929	EC: Poznań 1958	WC: Poznań 2009 EC: Poznań 2007; 2015; 2020
Sailing		WC: (F) Gdynia 1965	WC: (F) Gdańsk 1997
Shooting	WC: Lwów 1931		
Ski	WC: Zakopane 1929; 1939	WC: Zakopane 1962	
Speed Skating			WC: Warszawa 1997
Swimming			EC: (S) Szczecin 2011
Table Tennis			EC: Gdańsk/Sopot 2011[7]; Warszawa 2021
Wrestling		WC: (c) Katowice 1974; 1982 EC: Katowice 1972; (f) Łódź 1981	WC: (c) Wrocław 1997; (f) Poznań 1998 EC: Poznań 1990; (f) Warszawa 1997; 2021
Volleyball			WC: (W) 2022[8] (M) 2014[9]; 2022[10] EC: (W) 2009[11]; 2019[12] (M) 2013[13]; 2017[14]; 2021[15]

Legend:
A - group A
c - classic style
EC - European Championships
F - Finn class
f - freestyle
I - indoor
M – men's
S - short course
T - track cycling
W – women's
WC - World Championships

5 with Sweden; Gdańsk/Sopot, Katowice, Kraków, Płock.
6 Gdańsk/Sopot, Katowice, Kraków, Wrocław.
7 with Turkey.
8 with the Netherlands; Gdańsk/Sopot, Gliwice, Łódź.
9 Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk/Sopot, Katowice, Kraków, Łódź, Warszawa, Wrocław.
10 with Slovenia; Gliwice, Katowice.
11 Bydgoszcz, Katowice, Łódź, Wrocław.
12 with Hungary, Slovakia and Turkey; Łódź.
13 with Denmark; Gdańsk/Sopot, Gdynia.
14 Gdańsk/Sopot, Katowice, Kraków, Szczecin, Warszawa.
15 with Estonia, Finland and Slovakia; Gdańsk/Sopot, Katowice, Kraków.

Table 2. Poland's economic effects of Euro 2012
Source: Żuryński, R. (2014). Ekonomiczno – organizacyjne efekty UEFA Euro 2012. Ekonomia XXI Wieku, (3), 143.

Pre-event effects	Effects during the event	Post-event effects
new road rail, air infrastructure	inflow of foreign tourists	increased tourism traffic
new sports arenas	growth in internal consumption	greater accessibility of regions - influx of investors
new accommodation	increased tourist spending	increased number of events at new arenas
growth in internal consumption	widespread optimism and pride	increase in travel comfort
growth in employment	Poland's promotion in the international arena	increased Poland's visibility
modernised tourism infrastructure	strengthening social ties (through social action, volunteering)	greater profit from tourism
general economic growth (mainly due to the constrution sector)	**traffic difficulties**	**difficulty in maintaining sports infrastructure**

positive
negative

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RSP

ORIGINAL PAPER

Unlocking Economic Growth: The Benefits of Digitalization for Public Institutions in Romania

Oana Stăiculescu [1)]

Abstract:
In recent years, the process of digitalization has transformed numerous aspects of society, including the way public institutions operate. In Romania, this shift towards a more digitalized approach has become increasingly important. The present article examines the impact of digitalization on public institutions in Romania, focusing on its economic implications. One of the key benefits of digitalization for public institutions is its potential to improve efficiency and reduce costs. By digitizing processes and services, public institutions can streamline their operations, leading to increased productivity and cost savings. In turn, can free up resources that can be allocated to other areas, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of public services. Furthermore, digitalization can also help public institutions in Romania better meet the needs of their citizens. By offering digital services and tools, such as online portals and mobile applications, public institutions can provide more convenient and accessible services to the public. This can result in higher levels of citizen satisfaction and engagement, ultimately leading to a more responsive and citizen-centric government. From an economic perspective, digitalization can also have broader implications for the Romanian economy as a whole. By investing in digital technologies and infrastructure, public institutions can contribute to the development of a more competitive and innovative economy. This can attract foreign investment, stimulate entrepreneurship, and create new opportunities for growth and development. However, challenges remain in fully realizing the economic benefits of digitalization for public institutions in Romania. These include issues related to infrastructure, digital literacy, and data security. By embracing digital technologies and investing in digital infrastructure, public institutions can enhance their efficiency, effectiveness, and overall impact on the economy. It is essential for Romania to continue on this path of digital transformation to fully reap the economic benefits that digitalization can bring.
Keywords: *digitalization, public institutions, economic growth, Romania*

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Unlocking Economic Growth: The Benefits of Digitalization for Public Institutions in Romania

Introduction

Digitalization has emerged as a critical driver of economic growth and efficiency across various sectors, including public administration. In the context of Romania, where the digital transformation journey is gaining momentum, exploring the economic implications of digitalization for public institutions becomes essential. This article delves into the economic perspective of digitalization, focusing on its impact, challenges, and opportunities within the Romanian context.

The COVID-19 pandemic has sparked significant changes in the global landscape, including in Romania. The pandemic has caused subtle shifts in various aspects of life, such as psychosocial, economic, and geopolitical changes, and taught us ”that we can never be 100% sure of certain instances or events and we have the ability to quickly adapt to a new context” (Ghionea, 2022: 101). One noticeable change is the widespread adoption of virtual and digital workplaces, leading to an increase in cybernetic attacks and feelings of insecurity. Despite these challenges, the crisis presents an opportunity for digitalization and computerization which could pave the way for new scientific discoveries and innovations (Toderean et al., 2020:25), highlighting a concrete valorization of of all this process (Stuparu, 2023:105).

In the context of public administration, digitalization emerges as a transformative force and offers a wide range of benefits to both employees and citizens. In Romania's public institutions, it has the potential to streamline resource allocation and facilitate the creation of cutting-edge public services. Citizens, too, have become increasingly demanding, expecting simple, fast, and transparent interactions with public administration. Therefore, efficient digitalization must be an integrated process - one that not only streamlines administrative procedures but also prioritizes citizens' needs and clearly defines them. Trust in institutions is shaped not only by direct interactions but also by their reputation and confidence. Digitalization impacts employees and citizens alike, making activities more efficient and providing prompt answers to citizens' queries (Baesu, 2021:215).

As Romania navigates this digital transformation, strategic institutions and their managers play a crucial role. By embracing digitalization, public institutions can significantly improve their activity, optimize resource utilization, reduce costs, and drive technological and socio-economic progress. Moreover, digitalization creates opportunities to make public services more accessible and citizen-centric. The journey toward efficient digitalization requires a holistic approach - one that fosters transparency, accountability, and simplicity in administrative processes (Frățilă et al., 2023:75). As we explore the theoretical background and practical implications, it becomes evident that digitalization is not just a policy initiative; it is a catalyst for positive change, shaping the future of Romanian public institutions.

Legal requirements for the digitalization process

The digitization process of Romanian public institutions is guided by both European and national legislation. In Europe, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is one of the most important pieces of legislation that governs the processing and protection of personal data in the digital era. Additionally, the European eGovernment Action Plan aims to promote the use of digital technologies in public administration to improve efficiency and transparency. Also, The European Commission’s Digital Single Market (DSM) strategy aims to create a seamless digital environment across the EU. While DSM focuses on areas such as e-governance, interoperability, and cybersecurity, Romania have to align its digitization efforts with DSM principles to ensure harmonization within the EU. European Interoperability Framework (EIF) provides guidelines for achieving interoperability across European public services and emphasizes standards, data exchange, and seamless collaboration. Undoubtedly, Romania must adhere to EIF principles in its digitalization initiatives. Therefore, according to National strategy in the field of artificial intelligence 2024-2027, the key pillars of AI regulation at EU level are:

- The European AI Strategy from April 2018 (COM(2018)237);
- Artificial Intelligence for Europe (SWD(2018)137);
- The White Paper on Artificial Intelligence - A European approach to excellence and trust (2020);
- EC Communication on data, 2020 (COM (2020) 66);
- Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence from April 2021;
- Action Plan for Digital Education 2021-2027 (COM(2020) 0624).

Romania must also comply with various legal requirements to ensure data protection, privacy, and the security of electronic transactions. The most important Romanian legislation and initiatives are:

- Law No. 242 of 20 July 2022: which aims to foster interconnectivity between IT systems of public administrations. It facilitates data exchange, transparency, and efficient resource utilization;
- Emergency Ordinance setting up the Government cloud no. 89/2022;
- National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR): allocates funds for digital transformation and include e-governance, cybersecurity, and enhancing public services. PNRR aligns with European objectives for economic recovery and resilience;
- National strategy in the field of artificial intelligence 2024-2027: aims to provide strong support to the central public administration in efforts to standardize, operationalize, and regulate the development of AI. This will help enhance the positive impacts of AI while effectively managing associated risks. Additionally, the strategy will play a crucial role in showcasing and leveraging Romania's innovative potential in AI, and ensuring alignment with European strategic directions for implementing common rules for digital services;
- e-Government Strategy: Romania has been working on developing e-government services to streamline public administration processes and improve accessibility to government services online;
- Electronic Signature Law: Romania has legislation in place to regulate the use of electronic signatures, providing a legal framework for electronic transactions and document authentication;
- National Cybersecurity Strategy: Romania has been focusing on strengthening its cybersecurity capabilities to protect digital infrastructure and combat cyber threats etc.

In summary, the legal framework at both European and national levels underscores the importance of digitalization for efficient public administration. Romania’s journey toward digital transformation requires strategic planning, capacity building, and alignment with European standards.

Benefits of digitalization for economic growth

The digitalization process of Romanian public institutions has numerous benefits that can greatly enhance the efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of government services. One of the key advantages of digitalization is the streamlining of bureaucratic processes, which can reduce the time and resources needed to complete tasks such as applying for permits, licenses, or other government services. By moving these processes online, citizens and businesses can access services more quickly and conveniently, leading to increased satisfaction and improved public perceptions of government efficiency.

Furthermore, digitalization can also improve the transparency of public institutions by providing easy access to information and data. By making government operations more transparent, citizens can hold public officials accountable for their actions and decisions, ultimately leading to increased trust in government institutions. Additionally, digitalization can also facilitate better communication between government agencies and stakeholders, allowing for more effective collaboration and coordination on important issues.

Another important benefit of digitalization is the potential cost savings for public institutions. By moving to digital platforms, government agencies can reduce the need for paper-based processes, leading to lower operational costs and increased efficiency. This can free up resources that can be allocated to other priority areas, such as healthcare, education, or infrastructure development.

Also, digitalization plays a pivotal role in driving economic growth, contributing to prosperity and innovation:

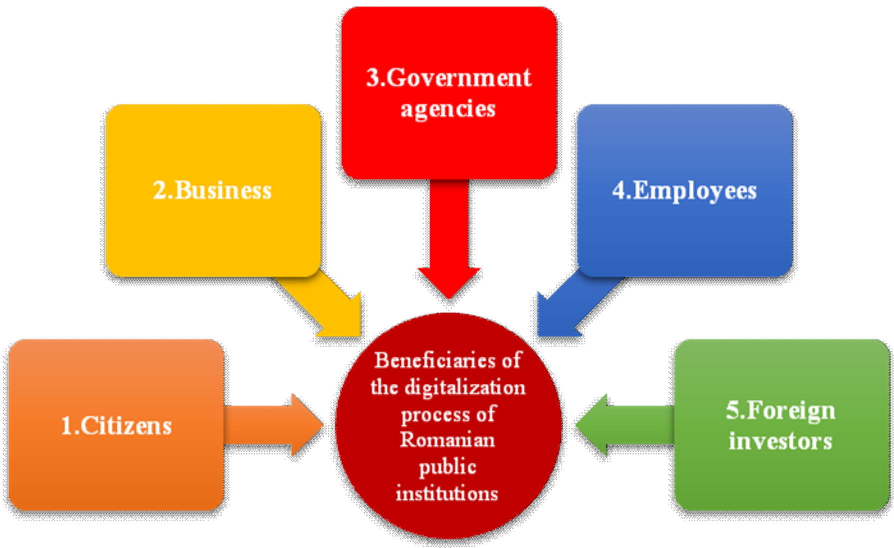
- boosting productivity, because digitalization streamlines processes, automates tasks, and reduces manual work, increasing efficiency translates to higher productivity across sectors;
- creating new opportunities: digital markets emerge, connecting businesses and consumers globally. E-commerce, digital services, and online platforms can open up new revenue streams;
- digital technologies foster innovation, enable creativity, and disrupt traditional models;
- digitalization generates jobs in technology, data analytics, cybersecurity, and digital marketing, supporting economic diversification;
- digital services improve healthcare, education, and public services. Smart cities enhance citizens' well-being through efficient infrastructure;
- digitalization bridges geographical gaps, connecting businesses and consumers worldwide and the export opportunities expand, contributing to economic growth;
- resource optimization: data-driven decision-making optimizes resource utilization. Sustainable practices emerge, benefiting both the economy and the environment.

Moreover, digitalization can also enhance the overall quality of government services by providing citizens with access to more personalized and tailored services. By leveraging technology, public institutions can better understand the needs and preferences of citizens, leading to the development of more user-friendly and responsive services. This can ultimately improve citizen satisfaction and trust in government institutions.

Beneficiaries of the digitization process of Romanian public institutions

Several groups can benefit from the digitalization of Romanian public institutions, including: citizens, business, government agencies, employees, foreign investors (Figure 1).

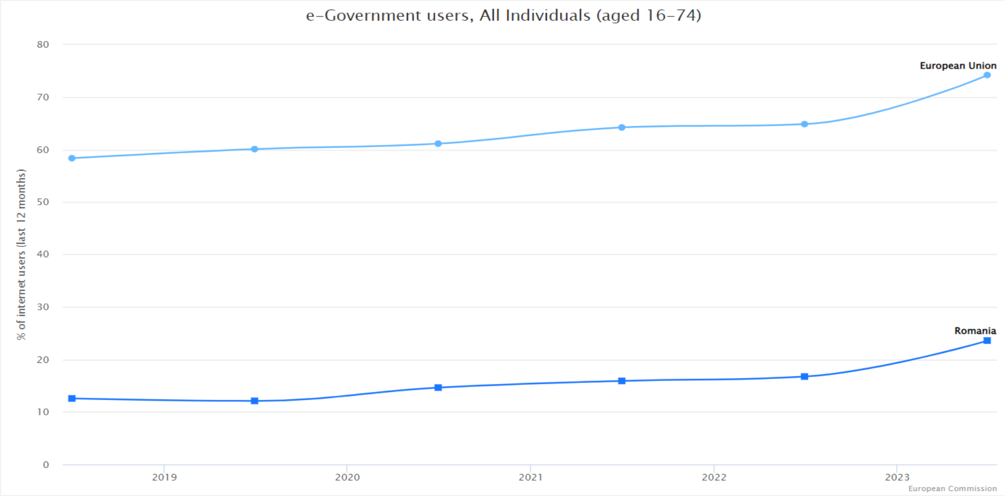
Figure 1. Beneficiaries of the digitization process of Romanian public institution



Source: Author's own compilation

1. Citizens: digitalization can enhance the accessibility and efficiency of public services, making it easier for citizens to access information, apply for different documents, pay taxes, and interact with government agencies. Firstly, by making services more accessible online, citizens no longer have to physically go to government offices to access important services and information. This can save time and money for individuals who would otherwise have to take time off work or travel long distances to access these services. For example, individuals can now apply for various documents online, reducing the need for in-person visits to government offices. In Romania, the share of e-Government users has been steadily increasing. As of 2022, approximately 24% of the population actively engages with e-Government services, compared with the European Union average standing at 74%. This marks a positive growth compared to the previous years (Figure 2).

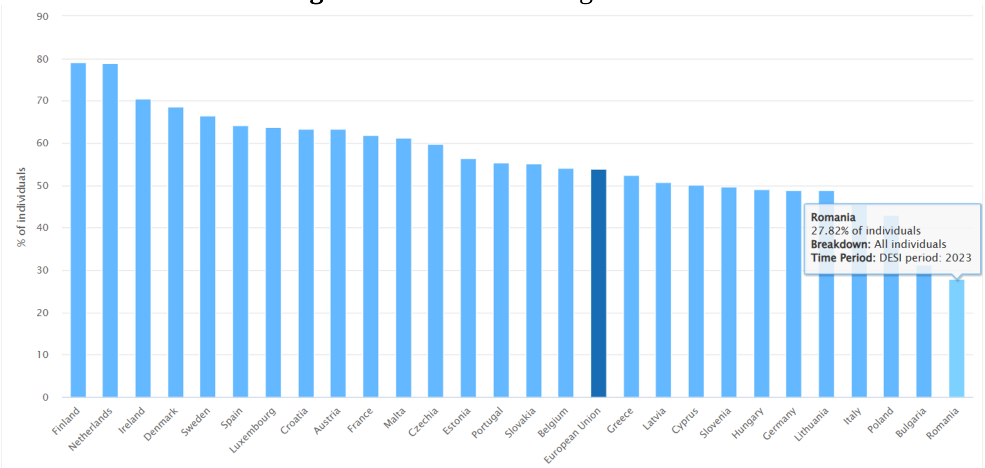
Figure 2. E-Government users between 2019-2023 (last data from 2022)



Source: https://digital-decade-desi.digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/datasets/desi/charts

Furthermore, the digitalization of public institutions in Romania can also lead to more transparency and accountability and citizens can easily access important data and information about government activities and decision-making processes. This increased transparency can help to build trust between citizens and the government.

Figure 3. At least basic digital skills



Source: https://digital-decade-desi.digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/datasets/desi/charts

However, as can be seen from the figure below, Romania ranks last in the EU in terms of Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) indicator ”at least basic digital skills” (Figure 3). Only a quarter of the population possesses basic digital skills (aprox. 28%), significantly lower than both the EU average of 54% and the EU's goal of reaching 80%. This information suggests that Romania has some work to do in improving its population's basic digital skills. This could be a result of factors such as limited access to digital tools and resources, lack of digital literacy programs, or inadequate education and training opportunities in the country. Addressing this issue is important in order to ensure that Romanian citizens are able to fully participate in the digital economy and society, as digital skills have become increasingly essential in today's world. It may require investments in education, training, and digital infrastructure to bridge this gap and improve Romania's overall digital competitiveness.

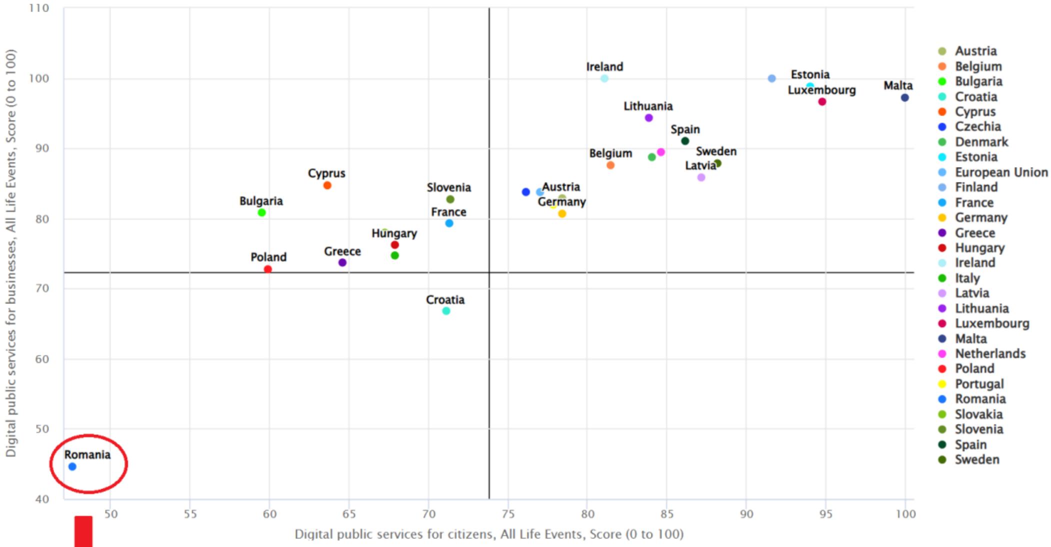
2. Businesses: digitalization can simplify administrative procedures, reduce bureaucratic red tape, and streamline processes for businesses, thus improving the overall business environment and fostering economic growth. By streamlining processes and making information more readily available, businesses can experience improved productivity, reduced costs, and increased competitiveness in the market. The most requested digital public services were information extracts in the cadastral field, registration in the land register, information from the Trade Register, obtaining court records of natural persons, documents and procedures regarding vehicle registration, registration numbers.

Regarding non-digital services, the most accessed services were single payment requests at Payments and Intervention Agency for Agriculture (a.k.a. APIA), medical consultation programs and various medical services, assistance regarding National Trade Register Office (a.k.a. ONRC) registration formalities, services regarding sports activities and events. (Voinea, 2023:275). One significant benefit of the digitalization process is the enhanced efficiency of government services. Digital platforms enable businesses to interact with public institutions more quickly and easily, reducing the time and resources required to complete administrative tasks. For example, electronic filing systems can streamline the process of submitting applications for permits, licenses, and other regulatory approvals, saving businesses valuable time and reducing bureaucratic red tape. Moreover, digitalization enhances the transparency of public institutions, making it easier for businesses to access information and track the progress of their interactions with government agencies.

By providing real-time updates on the status of applications and requests, digital platforms enable businesses to stay informed and make more informed decisions about their operations. This increased transparency also helps to build trust between businesses and government institutions, creating a more favorable environment for investment and economic growth. Also, digitalization improves the accessibility of government services, particularly for businesses operating in remote or underserved areas.

Online portals and digital communication channels make it easier for businesses to access information and services without the need for physical presence, reducing barriers to entry and facilitating business development in regions where access to government resources may be limited.

Figure 4. Digital public services for citizens vs. Digital public services for business



	Romania			EU	EU
	DESI 2021	DESI 2022	DESI 2023	DESI 2023	2030 target
4a2 Digital public services for citizens	NA	44	48	77	100
Score (0 to 100)		2021	2022	2022	
4a3 Digital public services for businesses	NA	42	45	84	100
Score (0 to 100)		2021	2022	2022	

Source: Author's processing after the data from DESI 2023 - Compare two indicators - Digital Decade DESI visualisation tool (europa.eu)

Romania's digital public service scores for citizens and businesses are significantly lower than the EU averages (Figure 4). Specifically, Romania scores 48 for citizens (compared to the EU average of 77) and 45 for businesses (compared to the EU average of 84). While there is progress in catching up with the EU average for businesses, overall, Romania's scores in dimensions such as user support, mobile friendliness, transparency of service delivery, design, personal data, and pre-filled forms remain consistently low.

3. Government agencies: digitalization can increase the efficiency and transparency of government operations, leading to cost savings, improved decision-making, and better service delivery to citizens. By digitizing services, such as online applications, payments, and information access, citizens can interact with government agencies more easily and conveniently. This can lead to higher levels of citizen satisfaction and engagement with the government, as well as increased transparency and accountability. Furthermore, by implementing secure digital systems and protocols, the risk of data breaches and cyberattacks can be minimized. This can help protect sensitive information and ensure compliance with data protection regulations. Digitalization can also promote innovation and collaboration within government agencies by using digital tools and technology. ”By analyzing and comparing different approaches to e-democracy, we can learn and adapt strategies that have proven effective in different contexts” (Voican, 2023:394). This can lead to improved decision-making and policy development within government agencies. Also, digitalization can lead to greater sustainability and environmental benefits for government agencies by reducing the need for paper-based processes and physical infrastructure, in order to reduce carbon footprint and adopt more eco-friendly practices.

4. Employees: digitalization can enhance the productivity and job satisfaction of government employees by automating routine tasks, reducing paperwork, and enabling remote work capabilities. As Romania continues its digital journey, employees who adapt and leverage technology will thrive, contributing to economic growth and efficient public services. Key advantages can be:

- efficient resource management: digital tools streamline processes, optimizing resource allocation and reducing costs;
- enhanced productivity: faster data processing and seamless collaboration lead to increased productivity;
- improved service delivery: accessible online services enhance citizen satisfaction and trust;
- transparency and accountability: digital systems ensure transparency and compliance;
- skill development: exposure to technology enhances technical competencies;
- remote work flexibility: digitalization enables remote work, balancing personal and professional life;
- reduced administrative burden: automation minimizes paperwork, freeing time for strategic tasks;
- career advancement: proficiency in digital skills opens up better career prospects;
- innovation and job satisfaction: employees contribute to positive changes through digital initiatives.

5. Foreign investors: a more efficient and transparent public sector can increase investor confidence in Romania, attract more foreign investment, and help stimulate economic development. Foreign investors can benefit from the Romanian digitalization process in the public sector by tapping into new business opportunities, collaborating with local partners, improving efficiency and cost savings, enhancing reputation and credibility, and contributing to knowledge transfer and skills development. Therefore, the following should be considered:

- access to new business opportunities: the digitalization of the public sector in Romania can create new opportunities for foreign investors to offer their technology solutions and services. This includes providing tools for e-government services, digital identity management, cybersecurity, data analytics, and automation;
- collaboration with local partners: foreign investors can collaborate with local companies or startups that are already involved in the digitalization process. This can help them understand the local market better and navigate the regulatory environment more effectively;
- improved efficiency and cost savings: digitalization of the public sector can lead to increased efficiency, reduced bureaucracy, and cost savings. Foreign investors

can benefit from these improvements by offering innovative solutions that help streamline government processes and improve service delivery;

- enhanced reputation and credibility: by participating in the digitalization process of the Romanian public sector, foreign investors can enhance their reputation and credibility as technology leaders. This can help them attract more customers and partners both in Romania and internationally;
- knowledge transfer and skills development: foreign investors can contribute to the digitalization process by transferring knowledge, expertise, and best practices to local stakeholders. In this way it can be build the skills and capabilities of the local workforce, leading to long-term sustainable growth in the digital economy.

Conclusions

In the 21st century, the digitization of public administration has emerged as a top priority for the European Commission. With concrete strategies in place, the goal is to transform administrative processes, enhance citizen services, and drive economic growth. Romania, however, faces a paradox: despite leading in internet speed and coverage, it lags behind in implementing digitalization within its public institutions.

In conclusion, the digitalization process of Romanian public institutions offers a wide range of benefits that can greatly improve the efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of government services. By embracing digital technologies, public institutions can streamline processes, enhance transparency, and deliver more personalized services to citizens. Ultimately, these benefits can lead to a more efficient and effective government that meets the needs and expectations of its citizens.

Overall, unlocking economic growth through digitalization can bring numerous advantages to public institutions in Romania, benefiting both the government and its citizens. By embracing innovation and technology, Romania can position itself as a leader in the digital economy and pave the way for a brighter future.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Digital Performance Analysis of Public Administration: Romania's Ranking in DESI

Raluca-Camelia Voinea[1)]

Abstract:
The present paper is an X-ray of the digitalization of public administration in Romania, within the context of the Decade of Digital program committed by the European Commission for the year 2030. The process of digital transformation in public administration has visibly accelerated over the past three years, with one of the favorable factors being the COVID-19 pandemic, which imposed physical restrictions on citizens and forced public administration to migrate their interactions with citizens online. The paper highlights the monitoring indicators and progress regarding Europe's digital performance, specifically analyzed for the domain of Digitalization of Public Services. For each of the five indicators, Romania's achievements are presented based on data from the Authority for Digitalization in Romania (ADR). Despite our country's significant accomplishments in this field, visible to Romanians and appreciated by citizens who use technology in their interactions with government institutions, Romania still ranks last in the EU concerning digital public services in 2023.

Keywords: *public administration, digitalization, reform, DESI indicators.*

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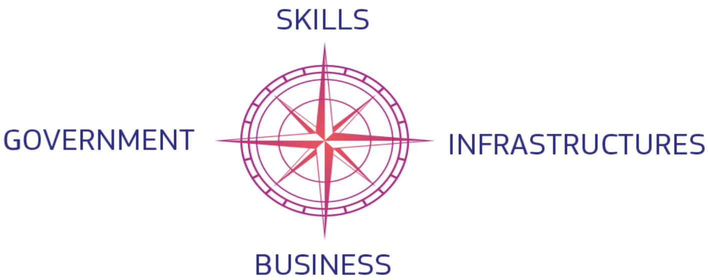
Introduction:

The digital society knows a sharp development, and the technologies on which it is based bring with them new methods and means of evolution. Exploring digital innovation could be an important area of research and may include: the use of digital platforms for crowdfunding, social impact measurement tools and the application of artificial intelligence to improve social impact and operational efficiency (Staiculescu, 2023:134). All sectors of life are adapted to these trends, although there are many challenges and many limits.

In the process of modernization of European states, the digitization of public administration is appreciated by the European Commission as an objective of the digital decade that will be monitored according to a series of performance and progress measurement indicators, based on the DESI exercise, a set of tools that measures Europe's digital transformation.

The 2030 Digital Decade is a European policy program that aims to achieve concrete ambitious targets by 2030 in 4 different areas:

Figure 1: Concrete objectives for 2030 of the Digital Decade program (commission.europa.eu)



Source: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/europes-digital-decade-digital-targets-2030_ro

For the field of public administration, it is aimed to obtain by 2030 some

- Key public services: 100% online
- E-health services: 100% of citizens should have access to online medical records
- Digital identity: 100% of citizens should have access to electronic identification

To achieve these objectives, the European Union outlined the levers applicable at European and national level, especially monitored through DESI, created the basis for cooperation between member states and provided for various investments supported by the private sector as well, signed the European Declaration on Rights and Principles digital (digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu) which will complement the existing rights resulting from the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and data protection and privacy legislation.

In order to measure progress in the field of digitization, the European Commission published, on 30.06.2023, the Decision on the establishment of key performance indicators to measure progress towards the digital objectives set out in Article 4(1) of Decision (EU) 2022/2481 of the Parliament European and Council (eur-lex.europa.eu) defining 16 new indicators and recommended their inclusion in the DESI. It also recommended that they be modified and adjusted in relation to technological developments or European socio-economic changes.

Also, the Commission proposes to evaluate the achievements of the member states every two years and to analyze the possibility of reaching the objectives proposed for the year 2030, depending on which to propose new trajectories, operations and additional efforts through the completion by each state of the roadmaps that will it includes internal policies and programs and levers to achieve the country's goals in the field of digitization.

The first Report on the digitalization of Europe under the provisions of the digital decade should be published in 2023.

DESI - Public Sector Digital Economy and Society Index

The Digital Economy and Society Index - DESI - includes monitoring and progress indicators on Europe's digital performance. It is calculated every year for each country and takes into account four cardinal points of analysis, four areas of reference:

- Human capital
- Digital infrastructure
- Integration of digital technology
- Digitization of public services

For the specifics of our work, we will limit ourselves to the analysis of the digitization of public services, emphasizing the interference with other fields.

The public sector is marked by increasingly advanced digital technologies and increasingly appreciated by users of public services. (Damaschin, Mihailă, 2020: 62). Using them to their maximum potential in public administration presents more and more advantages: transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, economy. The context of the Covid 2019 pandemic has accelerated the digitization of some public administration services, with some countries reaching close to 100% in online use of public services, other countries being below the European Union average. In order to reduce these disparities, the recovery and resilience plans were designed and became applicable for the financial programming period 2021-2027 as investment measures in the digitalization of the public sector for government services and processes, including e-health, e-justice, digitalization of transport, energy systems. The aim is to modernize public services for citizens and the business environment.

- To measure the performance and progress of the public sector, DESI includes the following indicators:
- E-government users – monitor the degree of internet use by citizens in their interaction with public authorities, compared to 12 months.
- Pre-filled forms - involves the application of the "One time" principle, which refers to the completion by citizens and companies of personal data for an authority, and it uses them as many times as needed without requesting them a second time.
- Digital public services for citizens – indicator that measures the accessibility of public services for citizens in the online system. Public

services are considered in relation to the most important events in a person's life. It includes partially provided services.

- Digital public services for businesses – indicator that measures the degree to which public services for businesses are interoperable.
- Open data – indicator that measures the government's commitment to data transparency, analyzed and evaluated based on four sub-indicators: 1. Transparent data policy; 2. The impact of transparent data; 3. Transparent data portal; 4. Transparent data quality.
- Use of IDs – involves the process of using personal identification data in electronic format.
- Benchmark for e-government – indicator that monitors the improvement of platforms used by citizens. The measurement considers the collection of the following data: 1. Centering on the user – provision of online services to the citizen regarding the availability of the service (Online availability: the extent to which informational and transactional services and information related to these services are provided online and can be accessed through a web portal; User Support: the extent to which online support, help functions and feedback mechanisms are available on government portals; Mobile Ease: the extent to which services are provided through a mobile-friendly program). 2 Transparency - assesses the extent to which services are transparent, services are designed with user involvement, and users can manage their personal data. 3 Key factors – electronic identification, electronic document recognition, digital mail communication. 4 Cross-border services – the same services for citizens of other European countries as for nationals.

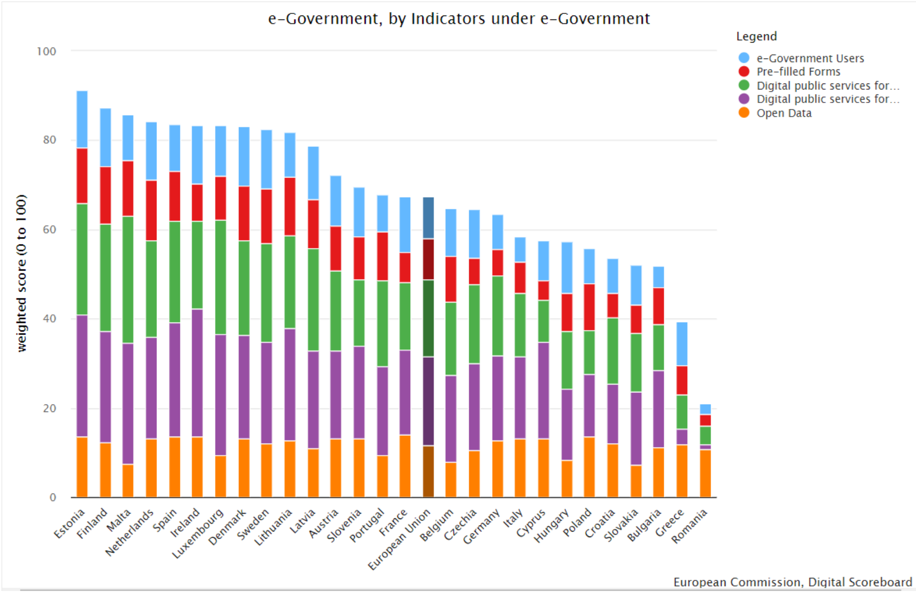
Member countries have been monitored, in terms of digital evolution, since 2014. On the basis of DESI, country reports and state profiles are carried out to provide support to countries in identifying areas that require priority interventions. The latest report available is DESI 2022 which is based on data collected in 2021.

Romania's ranking in DESI regarding the digitization of public services

In the general ranking of European Union countries that provide digital public services, Romania has experienced an evolution since 2017, when it totaled below 10 cumulative points for all sub-indicators and until 2022, when it accumulated slightly over 20 points, still remaining the last country in EU, after Greece and Bulgaria. At the opposite pole, Estonia remains the first country in the ranking from 2017 to 2022, with more than 85 points.

In the DESI 2022 ranking regarding the sub-indicators for measuring the digitization of public services, Romania is in last place, slightly more than 20 points accumulated compared to the penultimate ranked country, Greece with almost 40 points and Bulgaria with more than 55 points.

Figure 2: DESI 2022 ranking – digitization of public services by sub-indicators



Source: https://digital-decade-desi.digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/datasets/desi-2022/charts

An analysis of each measurement indicator and progress in the field of digitization of public services in Romania is required by reference to the other 27 states.

- e-Government users: Thus, in 2022, Romania records a percentage of 2.39% of citizens who interact with public authorities via the Internet.

We appreciate this alarmingly low percentage, not because it is the lowest in the EU, but in relation to Romania's high degree of connectivity, to high-speed internet services that covered 87% of the country's territory and which places Romania in 6th place in the ranking , as well as the percentage of 16.7% of 16-74 year olds who used the internet in the last 12 months.

So, out of the 16.7% Romanian internet users, only 2.39% use the internet in their relations with public authorities.

For the DESI 2023 report, the percentage of internet users increased to 23.55% of Romanian citizens, but the number of those who use the internet to collaborate with public services is still very small.

One of the most well-known platforms used by particles to avoid physical interaction with the local administration and made available to individuals and legal entities is GHIŞEUL.RO, which operates on the basis of the National Electronic Online Payment System (SNEP) (https://www. giseul.ro/giseul/public/). Within this platform, in January 2023, 1 million 6 hundred thousand Romanians were registered, of which more than 1 million had activated their accounts and used the platform at the end of March 2023, and at the beginning of January 2024, just over 2 million users were registered active.

Figure 3: number of active users on the ghişeul.ro platform

Source: www.ghiseul.ro

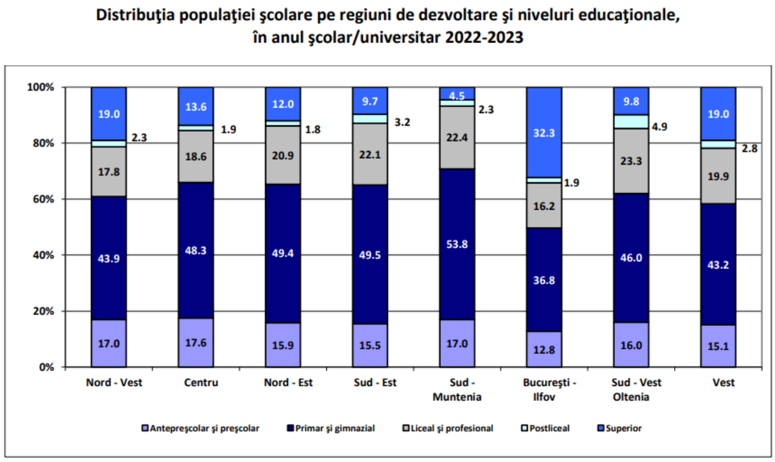
The platform began to gain notoriety among individuals only in the last 3 years, after the Covid-19 Pandemic, although it has been operational since 2011.

Another platform used mainly by private commercial companies and other economic entities is the Public Procurement Electronic System (SEAP).

If in April 2018 (https://www.e-licitatie.ro/pub), the platform was used by 20,851 contracting authorities and 158,991 economic operators, in January 2024 209,534 accounts of individuals and 22,596 accounts of public authorities were registered .

Also, in the relationships of education providers, especially higher education, with young participants in the educational process, each person has a student account through which they communicate with the educational institution. At the level of pre-university education cycles, each student has a student account through which they have access to at least the online catalog, in the educational units where it was implemented.

Figure 4: Distribution of the school population by development regions and educational levels, in the school/university year 2022-2023

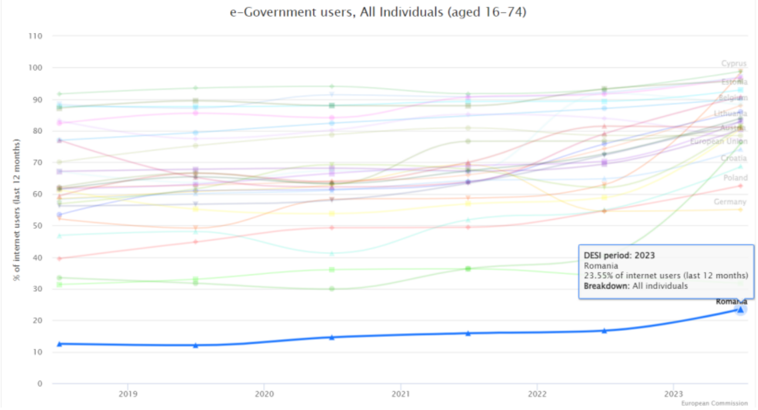


Source:https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/com_presa/com_pdf/sistemul_educational_2023_r.pdf

In the school/university year 2022-2023, the school population in the national education system was 3472.8 thousand pupils and students ().

Even with these conditions, the number of the population that uses the Internet in relations with public institutions ranks Romania in last place in the DESI ranking for the E-governance user indicator 2023.

Figure 5: Progress of countries on the E-Government indicator in 2023 – internet users

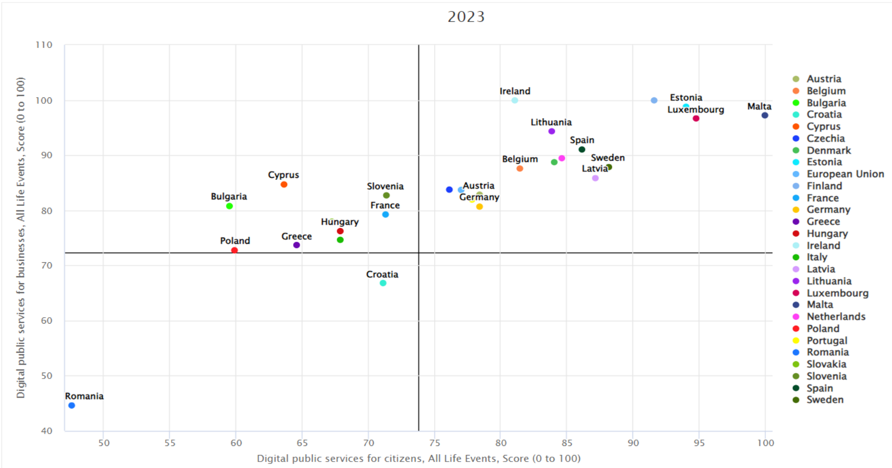


Source: https://digital-decade-desi.digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/datasets/desi-2022/charts

- Digital public services for citizens: in 2022, the accessibility of public services for citizens in the online system reached a percentage of 44.24% and increased by slightly over 3% in 2023, registering a percentage of 47.58% as the share of administrative procedures that can be done online for major life events (birth of a child, new residence, studies, appointment of identity documents, etc.) for citizens
- The increase is also due to the greater number of internet users compared to 2022, but also to the improvement of online platforms to satisfy various needs through online public services.
- Digital public services for businesses: in addition to natural persons as citizens of the European state, businesses are also individuals who need various public services for establishment, development, and carrying out activities. That is why the indicator is included in DESI monitoring and refers to The indicator broadly reflects the share of public services needed to start a business and carry out regular business operations that are available online to both domestic and foreign users. Services provided through a portal receive a higher score, services that only provide information (but must be completed offline) receive a more limited score. According to the 2022 ranking, Romania ranks last with a share of 42.27%, which increases slightly in 2023, up to 44.61%

Comparing the two indicators, we notice that, for the year 2023, the percentages are not very different. Even in this context, Romania is in last place, at least 20 points away from the penultimate ranked Croatia, with 30 percent compared to the EU and more than 50 percent compared to the first ranked in these indicators, namely Finland.

Figure 6: DESI Ranking 2023: Digital public services for itizens/businesses



Source: https://digital-decade-desi.digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/datasets/desi-2022/charts

According to the Electronic Single Contact Point Information System - PCUe, established by Law no. 49/2009 on the freedom of establishment of service providers and the freedom to provide services in Romania (Law no. 49/2009) which aims to carry out by the providers some remote procedures and formalities regarding access to the service activities of of them: declarations, notifications, applications necessary to obtain authorizations, applications for registration in the registers, other than the application for authorization, PCUe is designed as a catalog of all public services provided at the level of the central and local public administration in Romania, which includes the public services offered of 16 ministries and 33 subordinate institutions, offering a total of over 2300 public services and over 6000 procedures.

The areas of interest are very varied, from cross-border and national services to hobby or leisure services, for both citizens and businesses.

Returning to the tax payment service, giseul.ro, this platform interconnects several state institutions, such as the institution of the mayor and the local council, with ANAF, the traffic police, the judicial police, public utility providers and home insurance providers , so that all taxpayers, by registering in the platform, can pay various fees and taxes, fines, invoices in the online system.

Figure 7: Types of public services accessible on giseul.ro (www.ghiseul.ro)

Sours: Figure www.ghiseul.ro

If 10 years after the establishment and start of use of the platform, 492,990 users were registered and 1,416,226 transactions had been made, in October 2023 the system had 1,925,445 users and over 1 billion 700 million lei collected, and in March 2024 the number of accounts that appear in the gişeul.ro system is 2155988 active users and

786,756,747 lei collected (Voinea R, 2023: 270). This evolution registered at a high rate proves the increase of citizens' interest in using online services, due to the awareness of the benefits brought by these services.

- Pre-filled forms: considering the increase in the use of online public services by citizens and businesses, and for this indicator, Romania has a significant increase compared to 2022, from 19.05% and the last place, up to 40.74 in 2023 and ranking in second last place, ahead of Croatia. For this indicator, Romania registers the highest growth in the EU, followed by Cyprus and Greece. Even in this context, Romania is at the bottom of the ranking. The EU average for this indicator is 68.18%. In the leading place is the Netherlands with a percentage of 94.01% of the amount of data that is filled in beforehand in the online forms of public services, the percentage being in a slight increase compared to that of 2022.

Steps for de-bureaucratization include accepting copy after e-mail bulletin, eliminating legalized copies of documents, providing e-mail addresses for electronic communication with citizens, making available alternative payment methods for public services, in addition to paying in cash at the counter. These are possible through the creation of the legislative framework at the national level. Thus, the Adoption of Emergency Ordinance no. 38/2020 regarding the use of documents in electronic form at the level of public authorities and institutions confers safety and legality on the activity of public institutions and authorities by electronic means (Baesu, 2021:215).

Other measures: Ex officio publication of information and forms or request models related to all public services provided, in electronic format, on the single electronic contact point, managed by the Digital Agenda Agency of Romania; Eliminating the requirement to submit legalized copies of documents; Requesting the extract from the criminal record from the competent police units with the express consent of the person, where the public institution/authority requests the criminal record; The obligation to use mainly electronic means for communication with the beneficiaries of public services, if the beneficiary has an email address and agrees to communicate it; The obligation to offer alternative payment methods for public services provided for a fee, either by card payment or through other payment systems.

- Open data: The indicator measures the way in which the service process and expectations are clarified, users are informed and involved in policy and service design processes and can manage their personal data held by government organizations. Romania ranks penultimate and has seen an insignificant evolution since 2022, from 41.02% to 43.82% in 2023.

For this indicator, among the 28 states, Poland has a 14 percent evolution, the rest of the states having an almost linear path.

Although, for this indicator, the increase in the ranking is not spectacular, at the national level, Romania adopts Law no. 179/2022 on open data and the reuse of public sector information with applicability from June 17, 2022, which transposes into national legislation the provisions of Directive (EU) 2019/1024 on open data and the reuse of public sector information. In the sense of the law, open data means data in an automatically processed format that can be freely used, reused and redistributed by anyone for any purpose (law 179/2022).

The law provides, in the annex, the list of thematic categories of data sets with high value in the economic and social field, in the field of health, education, public administration, property, agriculture, statistics, environment, research and sport. These data are made available free of charge, with certain exceptions expressly provided by law and can be processed automatically;

In the field of public administration (law no. 179/2022), the law provides for a series of open data that can be processed automatically and that can contribute to increasing the benefits in the economic field, the environment and innovative services, including the generation of income. The following are open data within the meaning of the law: structured data that are the basis of public procurement, the distribution of public money, the register of loans and guarantees granted by the state; register of protocol, travel and accommodation expenses of dignitaries and high-ranking civil servants; records of claims, securities and state bonds (value, maturity); structured data that form the basis of the annual report on strategic/major projects initiated by the Government; structured data that form the basis of the annual studies on the rate of the poor population, by counties/localities; structured data on public expenditures made at the local level; strategic directions, metrics and criteria for measuring urban development; evaluation of schools. All these data are corroborated with the data expressly provided in the provisions of art. 5 of Law no. 544 of October 12, 2001 regarding Liberal access to information of public interest.

Conclusion

By analyzing Romania's positioning within the DESI indices, we can obtain a complex picture of the country's progress in terms of digital transformation and e-government development. These assessments can provide important clues about the directions in which Romania can improve its efforts to remain competitive in today's digital economy and society. (Manda, 2021: 47)

This evolution was influenced by several factors, such as the health crisis: The COVID-19 Pandemic imposed physical restrictions, which forced the public administration to migrate interactions with citizens to the online environment and the constant digitization efforts: both at the level of the central public administration , as well as the local one, efforts were made to digitize services.

In addition to the internal achievements imposed by the analyzed contexts, the EU states also cooperate in other fields. As an example, in an attempt to simplify judicial cooperation in criminal matters among themselves, the member states have chosen to abandon the difficult way of cooperation by administrative means specific to extradition by introducing in the matter of the European arrest warrant the procedure of reporting in the SIS system (DUMITRESCU. L , 2011: 149)

According to the data of the Authority for the Digitization of Romania (ADR), at the time this material was created (March 2024), the official results (https://www.adr.gov.ro/rapoarte/) registered quantifiable are presented as follows:

- Almost 2.5 million active users on Ghiseul.ro.
- Over 200,000 entities registered on the SEAP (Electronic Public Procurement System) public auctions platform.
- More than 8,300 public institutions present on e-guvernare.ro, the National Electronic System (SEN) through which all taxpayers can submit their ANAF Declarations.

- Over 5,300 procedures and formalities for access to central and local administration services, available through the electronic Single Contact Point.
- About 1.8 million requests submitted on aici.gov.ro. This intermediate mechanism allows the registration of documents addressed to public institutions that do not have their own online registration system.
- More than 1.7 million transport authorizations issued through SIAE (Electronic Assignment Information System in Transport).

ADR marked every important result recorded, including the launch of the National Interoperability System and the first version of the National Catalog of Public Services, which inventoried a total of over 2500 services.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Didactic Game in the Teaching Process

Ileana Mihaela Chirițescu[1], Floriana Anca Păunescu[2]

Abstract:
The didactic game is an attractive activity in a lively, humorous and motivating atmosphere where the teacher and students carry out instructive-educational tasks. This prevents fatigue and monotony in language classes. We use educational games as a method to reinforce knowledge, whether it's spelling, grammar or vocabulary. The games maintain the feeling of challenge – a mix of skill, difficulty and continuous feedback. This activity is part of the action-based approach to the teaching/learning process, as described: learning by doing.
During language classes, role-play exercises help the teacher in creating concrete communication situations, to facilitate the transmission of information. Students are actors who play specific roles to develop their linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic skills. Role-playing can be used in language classes motivating students to express themselves in a language other than their native language and by encouraging to interact with their classmates. Teaching must always be based on a specific context, always in accordance with the communication needs of the students, favoring the vocabulary and the communicative approach. When a teacher engages his students by his way of teaching his discipline, we say that he "has method," not particularly referring to a specific method, but simply to the totality of his knowledge and skill, to the way in which the teacher manages to apply the theoretical methods in teaching practice. There is no perfect teaching method, be it traditional or modern. There are ways to apply one or more teaching methods to suit students' needs, potential, aptitudes and abilities.

Keywords: *didactic game, teaching method, traditional, modern.*

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Introduction

We live in complicated times, marked by instability and change. There are challenges that extend beyond school boundaries, such as the Covid pandemic, online and digital teaching. First of all, formulas such as online or hybrid courses, starting from 2020 and up to now, have led to a reduction in student motivation in terms of learning. And, as a consequence, it was necessary for teachers to renew their methods and find new ways to interact with students. It is obvious that we must not neglect students' dependence on technology, which makes them impatient and rebellious, and develops their ability to operate with several things simultaneously (multitasking). All these changes converge towards increasing pressure on teachers who have to deal with the unpredictability because students differ from one series to another, from one faculty to another, according to specialization. Professors' classroom experiences with students are under the sign of renewal and adaptation.

Teachers must be agile and spontaneous because interaction with students requires *hic et nunc* action. But what could be the tool in the immediate vicinity of the teacher, which would respond to these increasing pressures? The answers are multiple, but the focus is on teaching approaches and methods. The teacher must have a multitude of methods, processes and techniques to use carefully, while adapting them to the specifics of each class and varying them when he feels it is necessary, because that variety, together with progress and challenge represents one of the basic conditions of effective teaching. It is said that the teacher must not only be a good connoisseur of his own discipline, but he must know how to transmit his own knowledge to his students and adapt it according to their needs and intellectual potential.

> According Stoian, "although it is true that in the learning process, intelligence plays a major role, we as teachers should not make differences between students". (Stoian, 2023:93)

Didactic theorists have classified foreign language teaching methods into four categories: 1. Informative-participatory methods (dialogue, conversation, demonstration, text commentary); 2. Informative-non-participatory methods (explanation, presentation, story); 3. Formative-participatory methods (action, game, research, discovery); 4. Formative-non-participatory methods (exercises, algorithm).

These methods refer to the transmission of information (conversation, approach to texts, solving exercises), which allow students to explore individually or in teams, or which put students in various life situations, such as role-playing (at the market , at the theater, at the cinema, at the airport, at a restaurant, at a meeting, at a job interview, at the town hall, at the dentist, visiting grandparents or parents, etc).

Among the most used methods are exercises, conversation, demonstration, didactic play and learning through play. At any age, man loves to play, and through play, man manages to learn information that he can retain more easily.

The didactic game is useful both at school and at university. Role-playing games have multiple benefits, they are very easily adaptable according to age, environment, needs and intellectual abilities. Teachers must adapt didactic games according to the potential of their students, but also according to the level of the foreign language, the needs of the students and their culture.

According Bălănescu, "coming from various countries around the globe, the students have different nationalities, different linguistic, cultural, social, ethnic, religious backgrounds". (Bălănescu, 2022:35)

Didactic game

The didactic game is an attractive activity in a lively, humorous and motivating atmosphere in which the teacher and students carry out instructive-educational tasks.
This is the element that prevents the appearance of fatigue and monotony in foreign language classes.

> According Farber "teachers, most of the time, use didactic games at the beginning of lessons, as an introduction. Didactic games are used less during lessons involving the acquisition of new knowledge set". (Farber, 2019:270)

We use educational games as a method to reinforce knowledge, whether it's spelling, grammar or vocabulary. For the younger generation, puzzles, puzzle games, crosswords and games played with visual support are the fascination of the moment.
In today's times, we can use didactic games that are motivating and informative, with rich vocabulary, with various life situations.

This didactic action is based on teacher-student cooperation.
At the end of the didactic game, triumph will go to both of them, but (we have a big *but* here) the teacher only wins if the student wins. The conditions of the game are set by the potential of the student: he is the one who must be the winner, through his skills, through his own intellectual forces, he must acquire knowledge himself.

The teacher is responsible for checking whether the student has really mastered the subject, whether he has understood what he has learned and whether he is able to use the acquired knowledge.

> According Cuq, "the advantage of the game is intrinsic motivation, it allows students to "use all their communicative resources in a collaborative and creative way".(Cuq, 2003:160)

The games maintain a sense of challenge – a mix of skill, difficulty and continuous feedback. This activity is part of the action-based approach to the teaching/learning process as described: learning by doing.

> The goal of learning is not only to acquire skills, but according Weiss is "to act and react appropriately in different communication situations or in areas where they will have to use the foreign language". (Weiss, 2002:7)

To start a game sequence, it is necessary to know your target audience well and then try to answer some questions aimed at how to use it.

There are six factors to consider:

1. The objective of the game: the skills we want to develop (oral/written production; oral/written comprehension; grammar, vocabulary);

2. Number of students in the group – to decide whether the game will be individual or team;

3. The level of the group and the personality of the students: some will be open to the game, others less receptive, and the rules of the game must be adapted to the profile and specialization of the students;

4. The time available to practice the game: there are some that require more explanations and a warm-up round, others in which the teacher will have to unlock the reluctant groups, relax them and only then get them used to the idea of the didactic game;

5. The available space: the size of the classroom, if the students' desks or chairs are fixed mobile – all these influence the movement of students, their gestures and their way of acting;

6. Involvement of the teacher in the game: his participation in the game, his reactions, facial expression guide the game and simplify the challenge.

Moreover, the didactic game succeeds in breaking down the barriers and removes the stage fright of the learners, and in this way they will be able to highlight their skills and emotions better.

The role play was created as a psychotherapeutic method by Jacob L. Moreno in the early 20th century, who used dramatic play to develop spontaneity in his subjects.

From the point of view of educational use, the didactic game is a creative-interactive method based on the direct or indirect experience of students, which takes place by considering a scenario or roles inspired by reality or imagination. It is about the technique of simulating real trials, of dramatization in the form of a game that explores certain situations or social relationships.

> According Burtea-Cioroianu "social and cultural integration is considered today more and more as a process of communicative integration, in which the degree of tolerance towards certain groups increases by initiating certain linguistic and discursive practices". (Burtea-Cioroianu, 2022:138)

Depending on the behavior required by the role played, there are four types of role play: dramatization (improvising behaviors in a given situation); training, with the aim of forming specific skills (to appear at an interview, for example); acquiring certain roles with a variety of specific behaviors (experiencing a profession); transposition into a real, literary or imaginary character, which helps the teacher to assess students' knowledge of the indicated character.

During foreign language classes, these role-playing games help the teacher to create concrete communication situations to facilitate the release of words. Students are actors who play specific roles to develop their linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic skills. They are encouraged to express themselves, react to unexpected situations and interact with their peers in the target language. Students should be encouraged. Teachers must say that they are allowed to make mistakes because only in this way, they can learn a foreign language correctly and coherently.

> According Chirițescu, "we must realize that we are imperfect and we must fight to defeat our fears. It is true that we can all control our emotions. We need to try to control our vulnerabilities". (Chirițescu, 2013:29)

Among the role-playing games that we offer in foreign language classes, we give as examples: on the phone (we suggest a friend to go to the cinema), at the store, at a culinary competition (the student explains what he prepared: the appetizer, the main course, the dessert and method of preparation: ingredients, equipment, procedure), the interview.

Role-playing games are educational recreational games that require time and patience on the part of both the teacher and the students.

Their advantage is represented by the use of a foreign language without the existence of a language barrier. All we need is a good mood and the rules of the game.

Planning the game will make it better received by the students and bring success to the activity.

Let's follow the stages of integration in the didactic game:

1. Describe the situation we will address!
2. Secure the materials you will need to complete the tasks!
3. Decide on the vocabulary used!
4. Exemplify the situation in context!
5. Make activity balance!

To make the games more interesting, various props related to the topic can be used, and as vocabulary prepared for the game situation, it will be discussed in class, while adding new words to the list.

> According Lăpădat&Lăpădat "it is indeed evident that a healthy society demands strong dialogue and an exploration of relevant topics". (Lăpădat&Lăpădat, 2022:148)

For small group work, students have the opportunity to choose their partners to be on the same team with.

The teacher will help them prepare the didactic game, but it is recommended that, during the performance, they do not immediately correct errors related to the didactic game itself, but only grammatical mistakes.

The conclusions will be discussed at the end, and the teacher's recommendations should preferably be written in their notebook by the students. In this way, students will have the opportunity to review at any time both the rules of the didactic game they played, as well as any difficulties they had, and how to avoid them in the future.

Types of didactic games

We will give examples of some didactic games preferred by students.

Icebreaker games bring together a complex array of elements, incorporating simple processes and independent methods. Trying to classify them, didacticians talk about three categories of icebreaker games: collaborative and non-competitive exercises, competitive games whose goal is to win, and simulation games. Considered as short interaction activities before the start of the lesson, these games give students a little relaxation and enough energy and motivation to leave their comfort zone and adapt to start the actual activity. Drawing attention to what is to come and making the transition to the new targeted content is an intrinsic value of icebreaker games that can be addressed whenever we feel the need to pique learners' interest and refresh their minds or combat "social laziness". For the teacher, who integrates this activity into the foreign language class, it is easier to assess the language level of the students and build group cohesion.

For a beginner level, ice breaker activities should be simple without much explanation (the ball game, getting to know us: the teacher says his name and then throws the ball to a student while saying his first name, the bingo game , etc.).

From A2 level, the games are formulated as language sessions to work on oral expression: coat of arms (on a sheet of paper, each student creates his own coat of arms on the theme defined by the teacher. The objective is not to write complicated sentences, but developing ideas orally, brainstorming, speed dating (the act of telling a story) are all possibilities to attract students' attention.

Story cubes are a great way to mix up your classroom conversation by adding a little spontaneity to the questions you ask. Teachers and students can create conversation cubes that include questions that cover everything from the student's goals to what they already know about a particular topic. When students roll the cubes, they can answer the question, tell a fact about themselves, a goal they have, or something they learned last year, depending on what is written on the faces of the cube.

It is preferred that conversation cubes are used at the beginning of a new chapter. This method provides compliance and stimulation in foreign language classes. Used frequently, the method can be effective in speaking.

Brainstorming is work done in a group that aims to solve a clearly defined problem.

The teacher proposes a topic to the students and then, using the technique of brainstorming, they express their opinions on it. The activity is carried out through collaboration between team members.

Brainstorming is a method that teams use to generate ideas to solve clearly defined problems. Under controlled conditions and in a free-thinking environment, teams approach a problem by asking questions like "How could we do…"

They produce a wide range of ideas and make connections between them to find potential solutions.

The usefulness of this didactic game in large groups is clear, because each individual student can propose one or more ideas, and in the end, the most effective solution can be found.

Action learning belongs to the active pedagogy of role-plays and simulations for beginners and intermediates and dramatizations for advanced ones. This type of method, which "plays theater" and uses everyday events, makes speaking much easier. These situations mobilize language skills by practicing exchanges between learners while maintaining motivation. What must be emphasized is the fact that the more expressive an action of this kind is, the richer the linguistic exploitation, it requires a lot of physical and intellectual dynamism on the part of the actors and has an important role in strengthening interpersonal relations.

Group interaction of "actors", development of social and civic competence of students - are some of the advantages of this method. The method requires creativity from the members of the teams involved in the didactic game.

> According Scorțan "These positive and activating emotions promote the use of cognitive strategies that are more beneficial for learning. They promote both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. They promote self-regulation of learning.

> They are linked to a greater effort provided as well as greater attentional resources allocated to the task". (Scorțan, 2022:148)

Drama technique as a didactic game

This technique is specifically used by teachers who are familiar with the idea of drama modules in foreign language classes. The road that leads the dramatic art to the teaching of a foreign language is a winding one and loaded with specialized techniques and ideas.

Usually, role-playing games are used to prepare students for communication situations in the target language, situations that they often find in everyday life.

> According Chirițescu, "the theater represents a real support facilitating the acquisition of new information about the traditions and history of a people by integrating them in foreign language classes. The motivation of approaching the roots of a language and the traditions and history of a people is a concept on the one hand intrinsic that depends on the desire of each individual to study, and on the other hand extrinsic being caused by an external force that can be embodied by the teacher which has the capacity to induce students to love theater and to be aware of its importance in learning a foreign language". (Chirițescu, 2022:6-7)

The exercise is the way to learn about the language system, to understand how it works in order to be able to apply it to the foreign language class.

Exercises develop intellectual skills and help to better order mental operations.

During the lesson, the teacher must alternate between group exercises and individual exercises, to make the foreign language lesson more dynamic.

Depending on the grammatical problem, on a sentence or on a text, the exercises are classified into:

- cognitive exercises (explanation, identification, analysis), directed exercises, semi-directed exercises, application exercises on the structure of a sentence (contracting, transformation, correction);
- creativity exercises (compose, invent, imagine).

The exercise, in whatever form it appears – written, audio, online – is an interactive and relaxing activity that promotes writing and maintains students' foreign language level.

The demonstration in the foreign language class represents the teaching/learning process using traditional (tablets, markers, chalk/colored marker) or modern (short films, videos) or authentic documents (cooking recipes, press articles, culture and civilization texts).

In this way, students learn to communicate faster and are in direct contact with authentic interactions. Furthermore, access to information is easier and learners' interest increases when they work in this efficient way.

Discovery learning method is made possible by fun pictures that depict adventures, projects or journeys. The joy of learning is triggered by approaching these games and non-formal activities such as visits to the library.

Knowledge transfer occurs through discovery, and the goal is to make the student enjoy learning and improve what he has learned by applying it to different situations.

Based on three stages of cognitive development, this type of method develops the ability to learn to learn, but also the spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship.

The first of the stages, the inactive stage, captures the manipulation of objects, the imitation of gestures, the pronunciation of words or a sports movement. All this allows students to be dynamic and not get bored during classes.

The purpose of the main stage is to read pictures. Observing and interpreting images qualitatively or quantitatively develops oral communication skills, especially imagination and critical thinking.

The last is the symbolic stage which deals with concepts and the capacity to conceptualize. Through this stage, students are stimulated by activities of associating phenomena with words. This is the stage of representation where each object has its mental image.

The symbolic stage takes into account the semiotic approach, it is the system of signs that is based on the signifier/signified dichotomy, the first with symbol value, the second considered as a preconcept.

During discovery learning, the child plays the role of facilitator and the teacher is the mediator who makes the environment conducive to his students, who makes them find pleasure in discovery and who helps them connect the knowledge they possess with discoveries. The student expresses himself in the foreign language, thinks and becomes aware of what is happening around him. He develops his research skills, which facilitates better understanding and easier memorization.

If the above methods use the visual and auditory faculties, a new method called *multisensory activation* is being tested around the world and facilitates learning by using the five senses. Known in the specialized literature as VAKT (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, Tactile), this method is based on the idea that students learn better when information is presented in different sensory modalities.

The advantages of this method are appreciated for all age levels, as the ability of the human being is part of the possibility of learning with the whole body coordinated by a multisensory brain.

As examples of activities for this approach, there are some for each sensory modality.

> According Turkington, students are encouraged to “see the words (visual), hear the words (auditory), write the words with their fingers in the air (kinesthetic), and leave a trace of the word on a surface with some texture (tactile)”. (Turkington at el., 2006:234)

For visual stimulation we use images, drawings, posters, colored pencils with which we underline parts of sentences in the texts. Songs, mini-stories, word games are used for auditory stimulation, and movements related to didactic tasks are specific to kinesthetic simulations.

The snowball method is an interactive technique for developing critical thinking. As its name suggests, it describes how knowledge assimilation takes place – like rolling a snowball that gets bigger and bigger: everything starts with an information/observation/question that generates new ideas/opinions thanks to cooperation with students and thanks to discussions /conversations that take place in the classroom.

This technique can be launched during a new activity because it is easy to do. Students are placed in a reflection process and must reach a consensus of ideas together.

The snowball method allows students to express their opinions in a debating setting, including in their mother tongue. They need to be mobilized by the teacher, put aside frustration and generate ideas, discuss and talk. This method can be applied inclusively in the context of a descriptive, literary or informative text. The snowball method can also be used in a grammar problem.

If we take, for example, a text about the villages of France, we can outline some tasks after reading the text:

1. Specify three ideas from the text about the villages of France; 2. Mention three new words you encountered in the text; 3. Formulate three questions related to the text, the answer to which can be seen in the sentences; 4. Specify the picture in the book that helped you the most in understanding the text; 5. What do you think about the usefulness of the information in the text?

After reading the text, students are grouped into pairs of four and begin to discuss the answers. At the end, each group's answers will be discussed with the whole class, and the teacher will moderate the discussions.

Among the advantages of this method, we mention the involvement of the whole class in the activity, cooperative learning, flexible and attractive for all students; the systematization of information and the development of communicative competence. But at the same time, there is also the disadvantage that this method takes up too much time, so the teacher must be careful about time management in the foreign language class.

> According Bărbuceanu "allowing students this flexibility transforms them from passive learners into active ones, from reproducers of information to producer of information, from depended learner to selfdirected one, from individual learner to cooperative one". (Bărbuceanu, 2022:244)

Collective discussion involves the organized exchange of ideas, impressions, information and criticism, the purpose of which is to deepen or study a notion, concept or theory.

Oral expression is the targeted skill of this work technique that explores creativity. The teacher can organize the discussion in small groups (each team gets a different approach to the topic) or in a large group (the goal is for the whole class to express their views on the proposed content).

The role of the teacher in these discussions defines their types and there are at least three: directed discussion – the teacher is active and direct; structured discussion – the teacher allows the students to lead the discussion, taking into account the established rules; open discussion – students lead the discussion.

> According Bărbuceanu "today's teachers must learn to communicate in the language and style of their students, re-thinking old-style teaching in education in the digital age, where educators often find themselves as immigrants trying to cope with the digital natives that are no longer engaged with chalk and blackboard and one educational flow from the teacher to the student". (Bărbuceanu, 2020:136)

Debate-style discussions encourage teamwork and are a reference tool for critical thinking. But for any kind of discussion you need preparation before the lesson, the teacher and students need to do research to avoid downtime and a void of ideas.
In order for the dialogue to be instructive, theorists mention four necessary conditions for didactic coherence: the nature of the questions; focusing on the learning objective, promoted through dialogue; encouraging cognitive skills; guidance and teacher training. The plan of questions that trigger the discussion should be developed based on different points of view and well-reasoned arguments.

Conclusions

Any method of teaching a foreign language justifies its effectiveness due to a good systematization of learning: creating or looking for diverse, dynamic and sufficiently repetitive activities for students to assimilate language structures and vocabulary, with the aim of using them orally and in writing. Always teaching in context, following the communication needs of the audience, means promoting the vocabulary of a foreign language and, subsequently, the communicative approach.

When a teacher conquers his students with the discipline he teaches, we say, and the expression is Romanian, that he "has a method", without specifying any particular method - be it the expository, the affirmative, the active or the discovery method, but purely and simply summarizing his knowledge, interpersonal skills and know-how in pedagogy and teaching that he applies to foreign language classes.

Each teacher organizes his foreign language classes taking into account several factors - the needs of the students, the intellectual potential of the students, the number of hours he has allocated for the foreign language course, the possibility of using one or more of the methods specified above.
Whatever is the teaching method or methods used in foreign language classes, is necessary a very good collaboration between the teacher and his students, a mutual understanding, a special desire to learn on the part of the students.

Authors' Contributions:

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Societal Security, Participation and Women's Representation in Political History. A Conceptual and Graphical Analysis Using Data Collection Methods in Google Ngram Viewer

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Abstract:
Introduction: An important field of research on the role of women in contemporary political history centres on participation and representativeness, as well as the analysis of involvement in public policy and decision-making. **Research objectives:** The paper aims to analyse the participation and representativeness of women in political history by developing three research directions focused on: (a) examining the status of women in recent historiography (1950-2019); (b) analysis of the main concepts and associated topics in contemporary scientific literature; (c) analysis of some emerging constructs associated with the "gender history" field. **Research methodology:** The research uses the Ngram collection technique within the Google Books platform for the period 1950-2019. The analysis also reveals the frequencies of the analysed concepts and the conceptual associations that derive from the analysis of the literature published in the period at the centre of the analysis. **Results and discussions:** The results of our research are relevant in the much broader context of the analysis of women's participation and representativeness, as well as for the implications for contemporary political history, two patterns of analysis being identified: (a) women's participation and social changes and b) female political representation and the role of public policies in the contemporary period. **Conclusions:** The research highlights the role of female participation and representativeness arguing the need for proportional access of women in public life.

Keywords: *society, representativeness, participation, women, political history.*

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Introduction

An important area of research on the role of women in contemporary political history centres on participation and representativeness, as well as the analysis of women's involvement in public policy and decision-making. The paper aims to analyse the participation and representativeness of women in contemporary political history by developing three research directions: (a) examining the status of women in recent historiography (1950-2019) following a multidimensional framework and pointing on political systems and structure of society, social and political participation, role of local governance for women's participation; (b) analysis of the main concepts and associated topics in contemporary scientific literature gathering more than thirty topics; (c) analysis of some emerging constructs and analytical concepts associated with the "gender history" field.

Methods and methodology

The research uses the Ngram collection technique within the Google Books platform. The Google Ngram Viewer method displays the key concepts or phrases selected for research and analysis (ngram) in a graph showing the frequency of occurrences over a given period of time. An n-gram reveals a sequence of words/concepts. For our analysis, the research introduces ngrams aimed to analyse the period 1950-2019. The language selected for viewing the research results is English. Moreover, the ngrams will be identified for each exposed graphic (Figure 1-Figure 15). In this context, the X-Axis identifies the year of the publication. Therefore, the analysis reveals the frequencies of the analysed concepts and the conceptual associations that derive from the analysis of the literature published in the period at the centre of the analysis (examples: "women's participation", "women's representation", "women and governance", "women and social history", "female leadership" , "women and social history" etc.).

Literature review and analysis of the main concepts and associated topics in contemporary scientific literature

The concepts of women's representation and participation in contemporary political history require a complex, multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral analysis that focuses on the multidisciplinary nature of the two concepts, as well as the integrated pattern of women's involvement at the level of policies and political decisions requiring an analysis of multiple guidelines needed to research the interconnections between:

(a) women's representativeness and the structure of political systems (Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler, 2005; Mechkova, Dahlum & Petrarca, 2022; Childs & Krook, 2009; Lùhiste & Kenny, 2016: 626-641);

(b) women's political participation, legitimacy and local governance (Bilodeau, 2016; Celis & Childs, 2012; Stockemer, 2008; Stockemer, 2008: 65-73);

(c) women's public participation, human development and involvement in organizational and public management (Neureiter & Bhattacharya, 2022; Saeed, Riaz & Riaz, 2023; Olimid & Olimid, 2023: 60 – 67);

(d) the relationship between state, society, participation and women's representation (Gushchina & Kaiser, 2021: 934-953; Salmond, 2006: 175-204);

(e) the status of democratic governance and women's representation in political history (Monk, 2004: 1-22; Olimid, Georgescu, Gherghe, 2023: 126 – 138; Sainsbury, 2004: 65-87; Scharfenkamp, Wicker & Frick, 2023: 783–806), in the context of community, societal and governance, in general, and Euro-Atlantic security and institutional resilience (Olimid, Georgescu, Gherghe, 2022a: 38-51; Olimid, Georgescu, Gherghe, 2022b: 34-46; Georgescu, Olimid, Gherghe, 2022: 82-96), peace-building, Europeanization and local self-government empowerment (Georgescu, 2015: 21-40).

Results and discussions

The research phases engage a four-dimension framework pointing on:

A. the analysis of the frequency of use regarding the representation and participation of women, as well as the complementary analysis regarding some associated concepts and phrases such as: “gender and history”, “gender history”, “gender issues”, “gender quotas”, “gender studies” and “gender”. This perspective includes:

A1. the analysis of the frequency of use of the concepts “female candidates”, “female participation”, “female representation” (“gender and history", (the research results are presented in Figure 1);

A2. the analysis of the frequency of use of concepts “gender history”, “gender issues”, “gender quotas”, “gender studies” (Figure 2);

A3. the analysis of the frequency of associations with the concept of “gender” (Figure 3).

B. the analysis of the frequency of use of concepts related to the political representation of women, the social context and human development. This perspective includes:

B1. the analysis of the frequency of use of the concepts “balanced representation of women”, “substantive representation of women”, “under-representation of women” (Figure 4)

B2. the analysis of the frequency of association of the concepts “women and child development”, “women and children”, “women and development”, “women and equality” (Figure 5)

B3. researching some mentions associated with the phrases “women and equality” and “equality of men and women” (Figure 6)

C. the analysis of the frequency of use of concepts related to the representation-participation-good governance nexus. This dimension points on:

C1. the analysis of the frequency of use of the concepts “women and diplomacy”, “women in society”, “women and governance” (Figure 7)

C2. the analysis of the frequency of use of the concepts “women and public policy” (Figure 8)

C3. the analysis of the frequency of use of the phrases “women in politics”, “women and media”, “women leadership” (Figure 9)

D. the identification of the most frequent terminological associations with the concept “women...”. This dimension includes:

D1. the identification of the most frequent associations with the concept “women” (Figure 10)

D2. the identification of the most frequent associations with the phrase “women of all *” (Figure 11)

D3. the identification of the most frequent associations with the phrase “women of the*” (Figure 12)

D4. the results of the search for conceptual associations centered on: “women in * politics” (Figure 13)

D5. the identification of the frequency of use of the phrase "women who enter(ed) politics" (Figure 14)

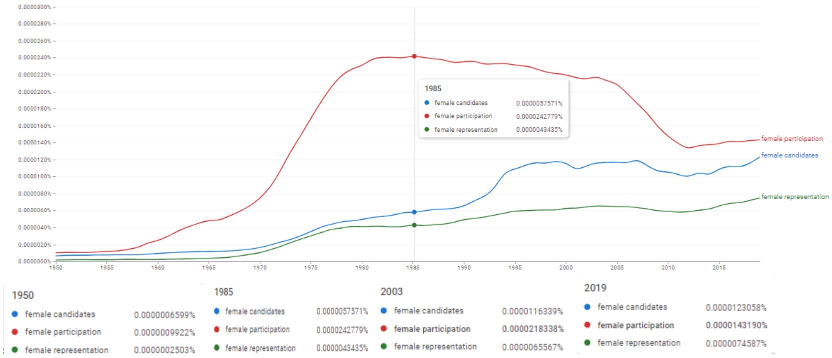
D6. search results for the phrase "women are generally more*" vs. "men are generally more*" (Figure 15)

D7. Search results for the associations between women and the concept of security (Figure 16).

Graphical representation and data analysis

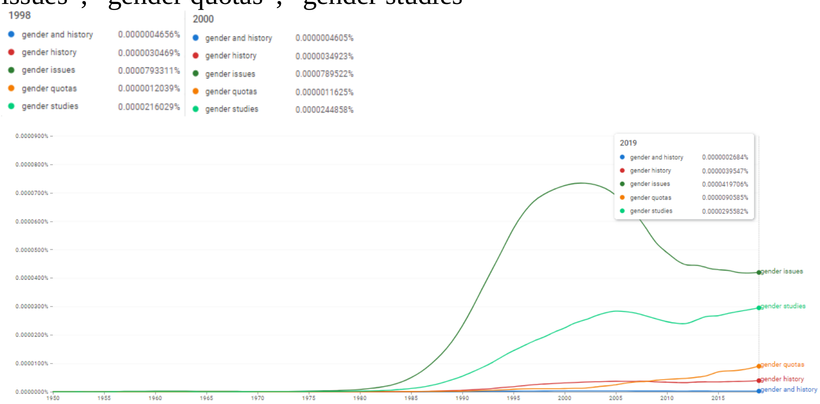
The next section discusses the results of the extensive online search using Google Ngram Viewer software for the concepts under scrutiny.

Figure 1. Concept use frequency for "female candidates", "female participation", "female representation"



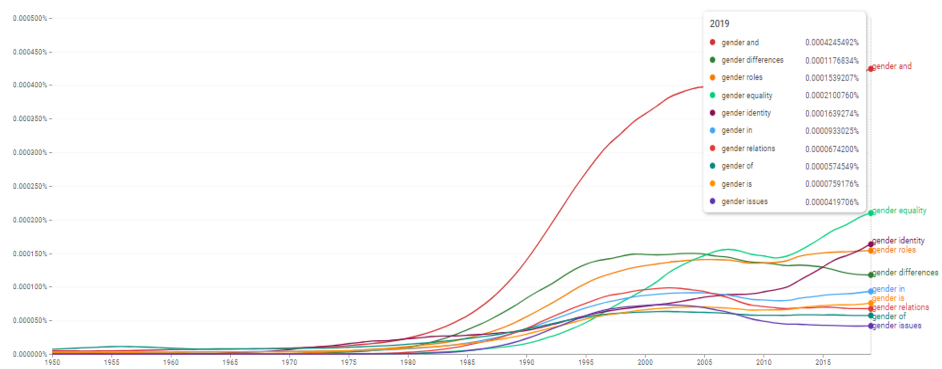
The analysis of concept use frequency for women's in politics literature for the period 1950-2019 shows interesting results for "female candidates", "female participation", "female representation"; especially relevant for 1985 "female participation" reaches 0.0000242779%, while in 2019 the value decreases at 0.0000143190%. However, the highest values for "female candidates" and "female representation" are obtained in 2019 (with 0.0000123058% and 0.0000074587% respectively).

Figure 2. Concept use frequency for "gender and history", "gender history", "gender issues", "gender quotas", "gender studies"



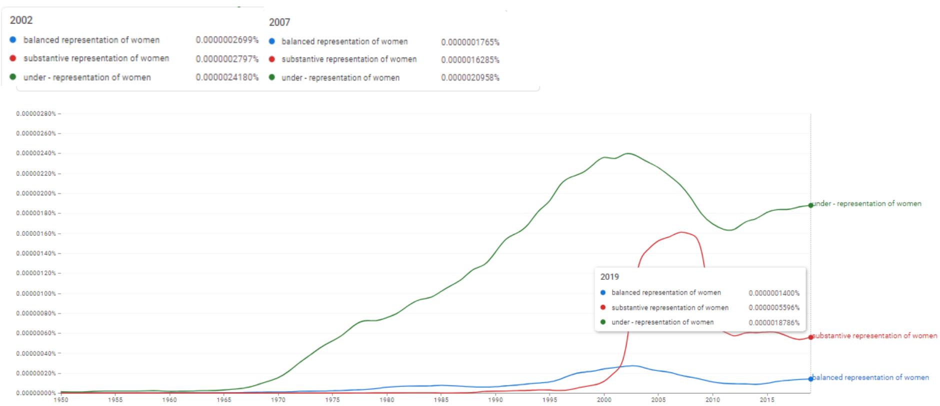
The results of concept use frequency search during 1950-2019 for "gender and history", "gender history", "gender issues", "gender quotas", "gender studies" are peculiarly interesting as shown in figure 2: for "gender issues" the peak was identified in 1998 (0.0000793311%, with an appreciable decrease until 2019 at 0.0000419706%). For "gender studies" the search shows a relative continuous growth in use with 0.0000295582%.

Figure 3. Frequency of conceptual associations with "gender" concept



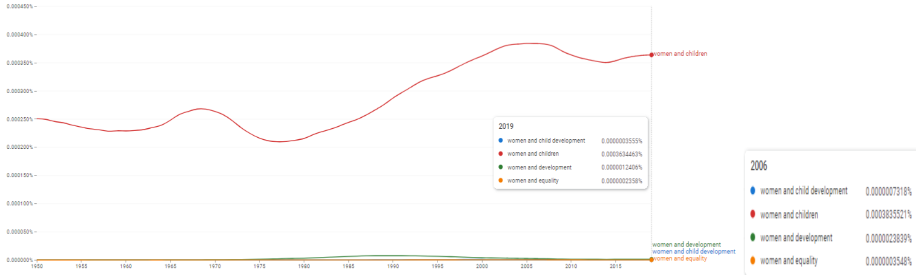
The search for the most frequent associations of nouns with the concept of "gender" has revealed the following situation: "gender differences", "gender roles", "gender equality", "gender identity", "gender relations", and "gender issues". During the period 1950-2019 "gender equality" and gender identity" spiked in 2019 with 0.000210076% and 0.0001639274% respectively).

Figure 4. Concept use frequency for "balanced representation of women", "substantive representation of women", "under-representation of women"



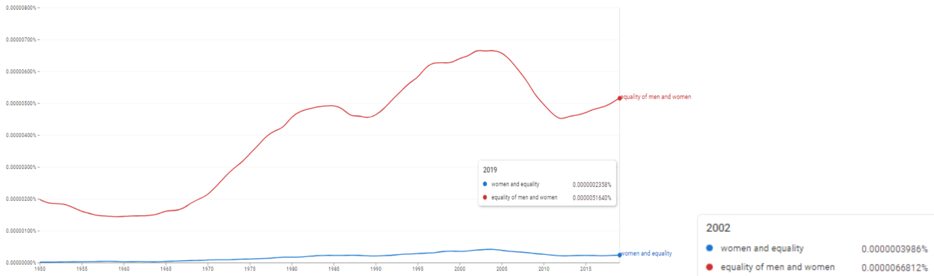
As regards the phrase "representation of women", the analysis of concept use frequency for "balanced representation of women", "substantive representation of women", "under-representation of women" shows significant results especially in 2002 for "under-representation of women" (0.000002418%) and 2007 for "substantive representation of women" (0.0000016285%).

Figure 5. Frequency of conceptual associations between "women and child development", "women and children", "women and development" and "women and equality"



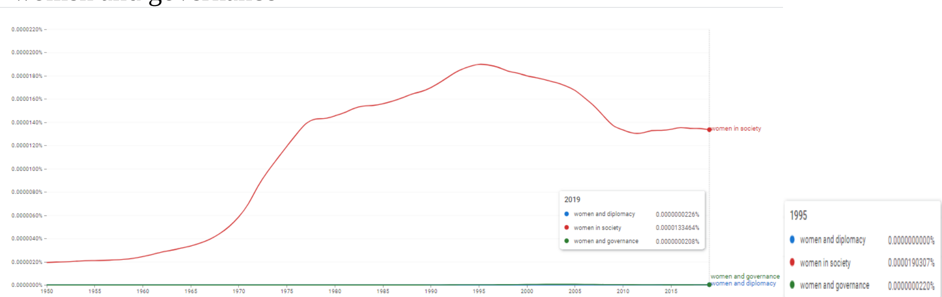
Next, the analysis of the frequency of conceptual associations between "women and child development", "women and children", "women and development" and "women and equality" between 1950-2019 shows that their use reached a peak in 2006 (for "women and children" 0.0003835521%).

Figure 6. Syntagms mentions of "women and equality" and "equality of men and women"



Moreover, regarding the search for equality, the analysis employed the search for syntagms mentions of "women and equality" and "equality of men and women" and revealed the highest number of mentions in 2002 (0.0000003986% and 0.0000066812% respectively).

Figure 7. Concept use frequency for "women and diplomacy", "women in society", "women and governance"



A noteworthy situation is represented in figure 7 which shows the concept use frequency for “women and diplomacy”, “women in society”, “women and governance” and which highlights the placement of “women in society” concept at its peak in 1995 (0.0000190307%), with a relative minimal use for the concept “women and governance” and null results for “women and diplomacy”.

Figure 8. Concept use frequency for “women and public policy”

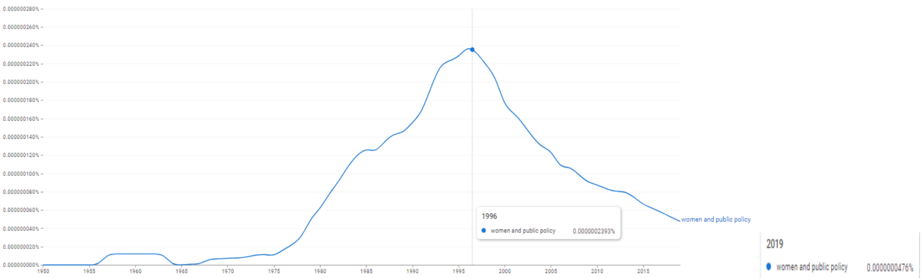


Figure 8 shows the frequency of mentions for “women and public policy” manifesting a steep increase in usage since 1975, a peak in 1996 (0.0000002393%) and a gradual decrease until 2019 (0.0000000476%).

Figure 9. Frequency of syntagms use “women and/in politics”, “women and/in media”, “women and/in leadership”

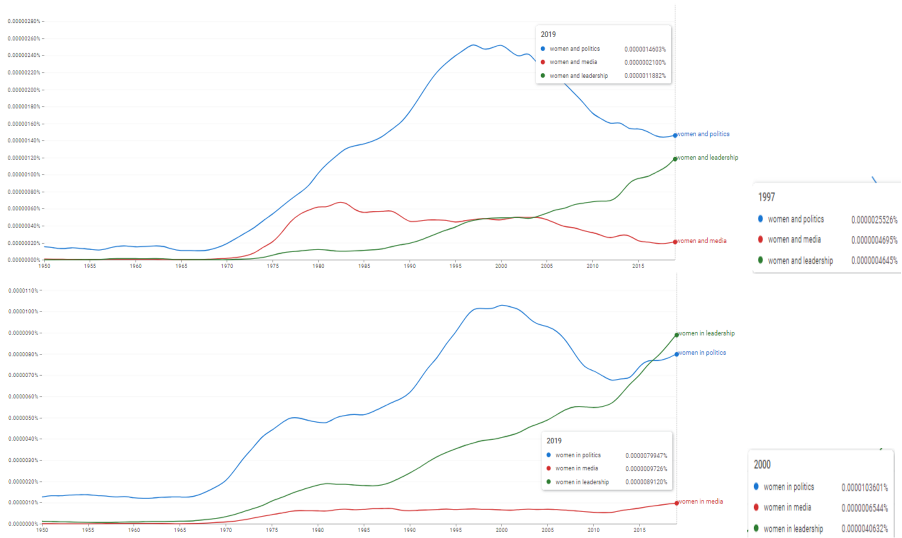


Figure 9 represents a comparative analysis of the usage of terms “women and politics”, “women and media”, “women and leadership” against the frequency of use for “women in politics”, “women in media”, “women in leadership”. The results show a peak in the use of “women and politics” in 1997, while for “women in politics” in 2000. “Women in media” on the other hand shows a continuous growth until 2019.

Figure 10. Identifying the most frequent associations with the concept "women"/ "woman"

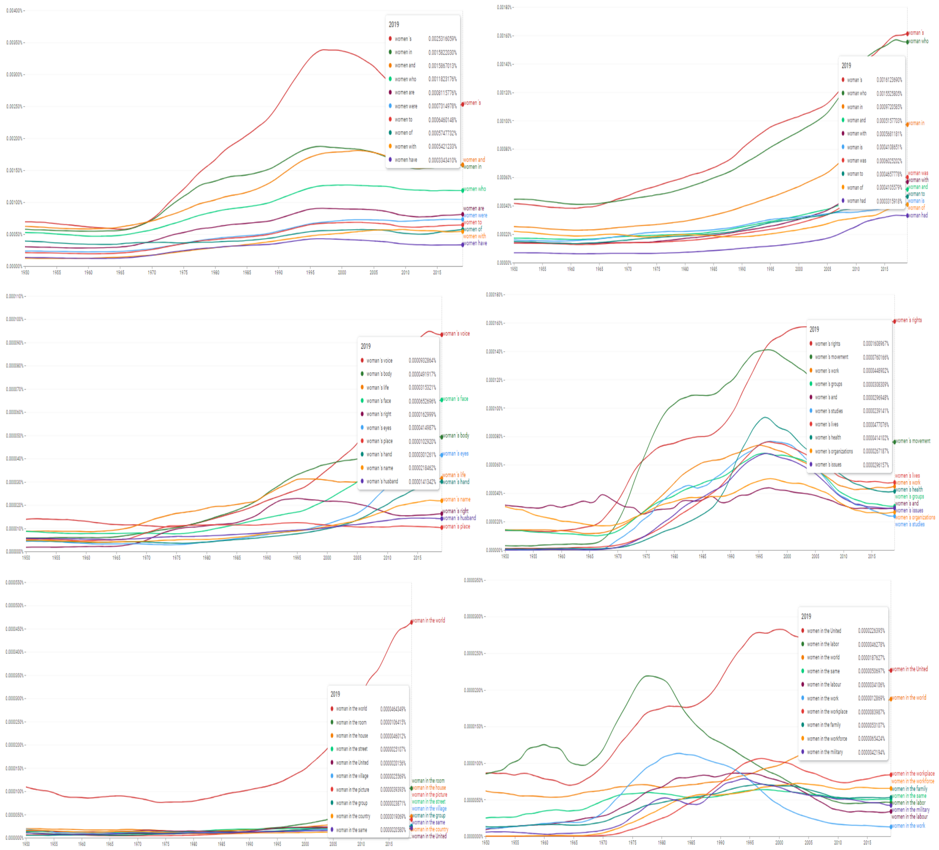
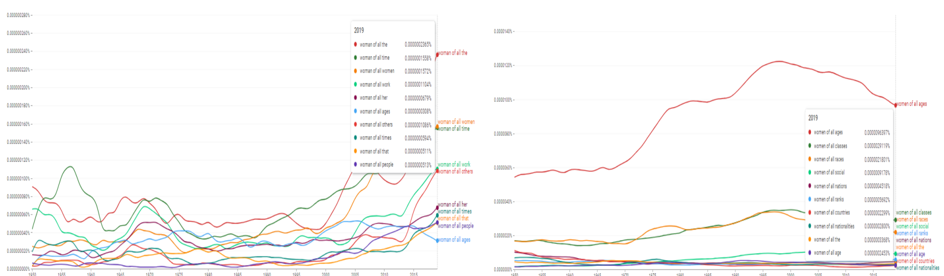


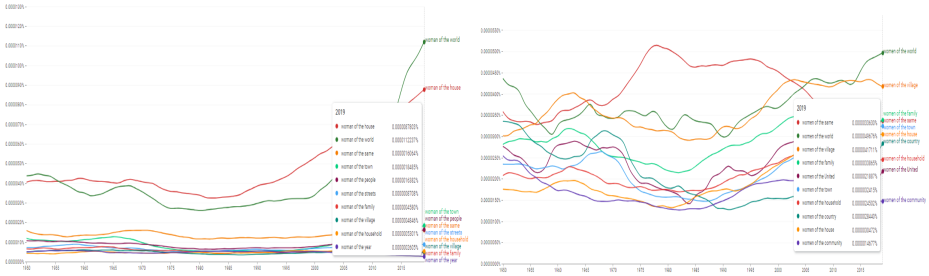
Figure 10 presents a refined comparative analysis of identifying the most frequent associations with the concepts "woman" and "women". It is interesting to discuss the associations of the singular "woman's": voice, body, life, face, right, eyes, place, hand, name and husband, as against the plural form "women's": rights, movement, work, groups, studies, lives, health, organizations, issues.

Figure 11. Identifying the most frequent associations with the phrase "woman of all" versus those with "women of all"



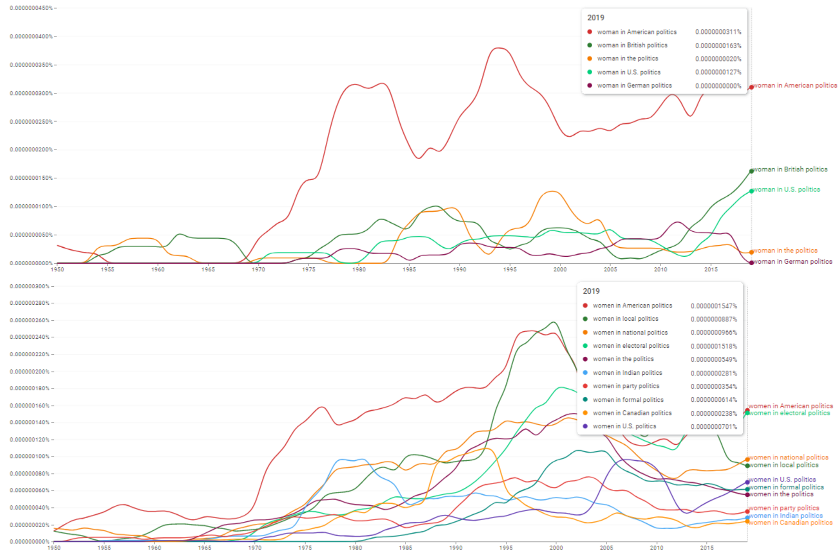
Identifying the most frequent associations of singular forms versus the plural was another issue, in this regard the search for associations with the phrase "woman of all" compared to those with "women of all" rendered obvious the following: the singular form was associated to nouns such as work, ages, others, times, people, while the plural was associated to the following nouns: ages, classes, races, social, nations, ranks, countries, and nationalities.

Figure 12. Identifying the most frequent associations with the phrases "woman of the" versus "women of the"



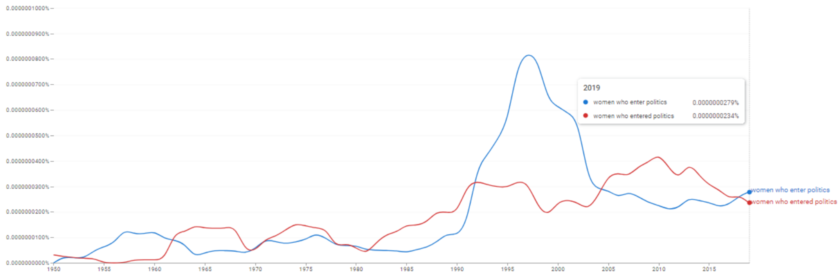
Another interesting discussion could be raised by the results of the comparative search presented in figure 12, which shows that the singular form is associated to the house, world, town, people, streets, family, village, household and year, while the plural form is associated to the concepts of world, village, family, United (States, given the search in the English language repositories), town, household, country, house and community.

Figure 13. Conceptual associations for woman/women in politics



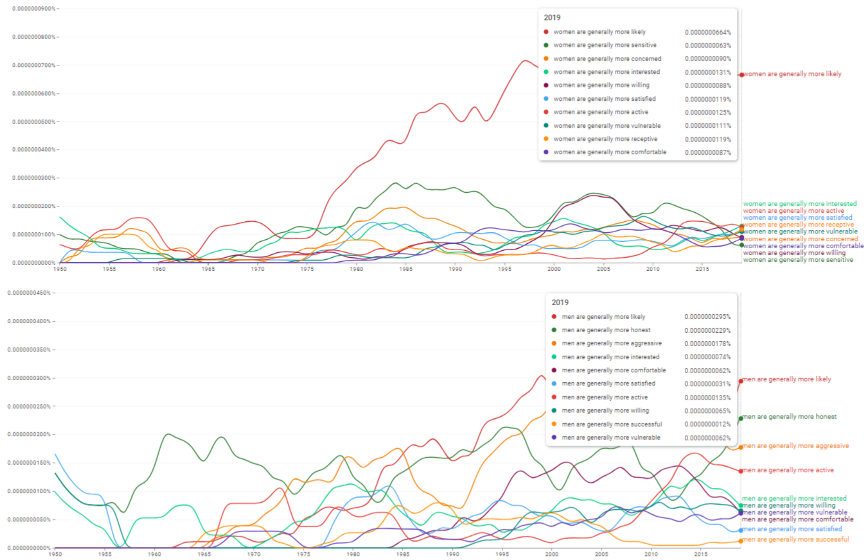
The search for the term "woman in politics" returned results such as American, US, German and British politics. The plural term, however, was more generously associated to American politics, electoral politics, national politics, local politics, US politics, formal politics, party politics, Indian politics and Canadian politics, taking into account the fact that the search was done exclusively for English language in use.

Figure 14. Identifying the frequency of usage for the "women who enter(ed) politics"



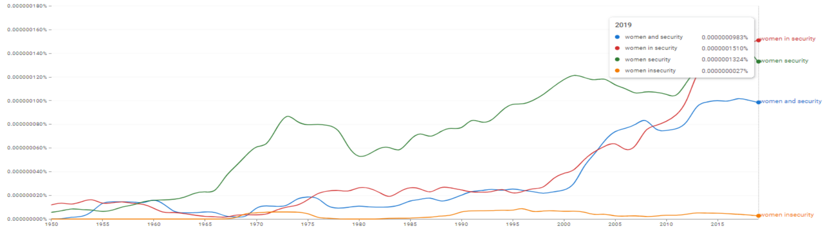
The search aimed at identifying the frequency of usage for the phrases "women who enter(ed) politics" shows a downturn in their usage towards 2019.

Figure 15. Comparing the associations for "women are generally more*" and "men are generally more*"



Furthermore, another aspect to note was the search undergone for comparing the associations for "women are generally more*" and "men are generally more*". The results of searches for ngram occurences during 1950-2019 show women to be generally more frequently associeted to the following concepts: interested, active, satisfied, receptive, vulnerable, concerned, comfortable, willing, sensitive, while for men, the most frequent associations are: likely, honest, aggressive, interested, comfortable, satisfied, active, willing, successful, vulnerable.

Figure 16. Results for the associations between the concepts of women and security



The results of the search for the associations between the concepts of women and security show that the issue of security has gained momentous attention with the highest values registered towards 2019.

Conclusions

The research highlights the role of female participation and representativeness, arguing the need for women's proportional access to public life. Moreover, the results of our research are relevant in the much broader context of the analysis of women's participation and representativeness, with a special focus on politics, the media and leadership, two patterns of complementary analysis being identified (a) women's participation, political history and social environment and b) female political representation, community encounters and the role of women in public policies and in public debates during the last decades.

The analyses show an increasing interest in women's roles in public life in recent history and multiple conversations regarding the women's presence in politics, governance, society, work space, within the aggregate discourse centred on equality, diversity, development and inclusiveness. The paper has succeeded in showing the most frequent conceptual associations centred on women's security, participation and representation in political history focusing on different layers of implication in the politics, policies, polity nexus filtered by Ngram Viewer search engine of the Google books platform.

Authors' Contributions:

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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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&rfr_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

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_1000000000726583

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=44WHELF_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

Wissenschftszentrum Berlin fur 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

Elektron ische 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 Pulications
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=0displayMode%3Dfull&displayField=all&pcAvailabiltyMode=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=Z39.88-2004&url_ctx_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&ctx_enc=info:ofi/enc:UTF-8&ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&rfr_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]

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]

Bibliothek der Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Universitätsbibliothek der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Berlin, Germany
https://hu-berlin.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-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

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 (2014-2024)

CEPOS Conference 2024

The **Fourteenth International Conference** After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 15-16 March 2024) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 11 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

Indexation links:

CEEOL https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=1195305

ProQuest, Part of Clarivate

https://www.proquest.com/docview/2863220849/CC02F21AE4DB44F1PQ/1?accountid=50247&sourcetype=Scholarly%20Journals

Oxford Academic (Oxford University Press)

https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/csad066

Oxford Journal of Church and State-Oxford Academic (Oxford University Press) (Vol. 65, nr 4/2023) în secțiunea Calendar of Events JCS (publicare 28 Noiembrie 2023)

Conference Alerts

https://conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=254313

Science DZ

https://www.sciencedz.net/.../100575-14th-international...

10 Times

https://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-under...

The Free Library

https://www.thefreelibrary.com/CEPOS+NEW+CALL+FOR+PAPERS...

Conference 365

https://conferences365.com/.../14th-international...

World University Directory

https://worlduniversitydirectory.com/edu/event/...

Conferences daily

https://conferencesdaily.com/eventdetails.php?id=1625192

Gale Cengage Learning USA https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA766112846...

CEPOS Conference 2023

The **Thirteenth International Conference** After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, 17-18 March 2023) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 5 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

Oxford Church & State Journal:
https://academic.oup.com/jcs/articleabstract/65/1/168/7044222?redirectedFrom=fulltext

10 Times: https://10times.com/after-communism-east-andwest-under-scrutiny

Conferencesite.eu:
https://index.conferencesites.eu/conference/57510/13th-international-conference-after-communism-eastand-west-under-scrutiny;

Schoolandcollegelistings
:https://www.schoolandcollegelistings.com/RO/Craiova/485957361454074/Center-of-Post-Communist-Political-Studies-CEPOS

Conferencealerts : https://conferencealerts.com/showevent?id=247851

CEPOS Conference 2022

The **Twelfth International Conference** After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, 18-19 March 2022) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 6 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

https://www.conferenceflare.com/events/category/social-sciences-and-humanities/art-history/

Vinculation International Diciembre 2021 newsletter n 99
https://issuu.com/fundacionargeninta5/docs/diciembre_2021_fundaci_n_argeninta-ai_ok?fr=sZjg2NjE5NTg3OTY

https://www.schoolandcollegelistings.com/RO/Craiova/485957361454074/Center-of-Post-Communist-Political-Studies-CEPOS

https://10times.com/company/cepos
https://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

https://conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=238529

https://www.sciencedz.net/conference/82995-cepos-international-conference-2022-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

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

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-intradersorg.cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/www.intraders.org/news/romania/10th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-westunderscrutiny/amp/?amp_js_v=a2&_gsa=1&usqp=mq331AQCKAE%3D#aoh=15737604302246&referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&_tf=De%20pe%20%251%24s&share=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.intraders.org%2Fnews%2Fromania%2F10th-internationalconference-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-internationalconference-

after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

Scirea
https://www.scirea.org/ConferenceInfosByConferenceCountryId?c
onferenceCountryId=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_INTERNATIONA
L_CONFERENCE_AFTER_COMMUNISM_EAST_AND_WEST_UNDER_SCRUTI
NY_2019?_iepl%5BviewId%5D=sjcOJrVCO8PTLapcfVciZQsb&_iepl%5Bcontexts%5
D%5B0%5D=publicationCreationEOT&_iepl%5BtargetEntityId%5D=PB%3A3279057
33&_iepl%5BinteractionType%5D=publicationCTA

The Free Library
https://www.thefreelibrary.com/9th+INTERNATIONAL+CONFERENCE+AFTER+C
OMMUNISM.+EAST+AND+WEST+UNDER...-a0542803701
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, 24-25March 2017) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 10 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

Ethic & International Affairs (Carnegie Council), Cambridge University Press-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:-securiteee-&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

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) 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/.

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E.g.: Anca Parmena Olimid*, Cătălina Maria Georgescu**, Cosmin Lucian Gherghe***

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For books
Olimid, A. P. (2009a). *Viaţa politică şi spirituală în România modernă. Un model românesc al relaţiilor dintre Stat şi 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 Ştiinţe 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 Ştiinţe Politice. Revue des Ştiinţe Politice*, 39, 49-58.

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E.g.: Table 1. The results of the parliamentary elections (May 2014)

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