



● **AUTHORITARIZATION OR DEMOCRATIZATION:
DIRECTIONS OF ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN PRESENT-
DAY SLOVAKIA**

Yevheniy HAYDANKA

● **THE CONCEPT OF NATION IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE SLOVAK
RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS**

Radoslav ŠTEFANČÍK and Eva STRADIOTOVÁ

● **IS CULTURE A SPECIAL 'HUB' POLICY AREA FOR CO-CREATION?**

Sanja VRBEK and Irene PLUCHINOTTA

● **POLITICAL MAP OF ARGENTINA AFTER 2019 ELECTIONS IN
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES**

Katarína BROCKOVÁ, Rudolf KUCHARČÍK and Tetyana ZUBRO

● **GLOBAL AND NATIONAL PARADOXES IN RESPONSES TO THE
COVID-19 CRISIS**

Marjan MALEŠIČ

● **COVID-19 AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (POLICIES): A
YEAR OF PERILOUS AD-HOC SOLUTIONS**

Milan BRGLEZ, Boštjan UDOVIČ and Amalija MAČEK

● **THE RUSSO-CHINESE AND CENTRAL ASIAN FOSSIL FUELS
TRADE: DIVERSIFICATION AND THE GEO-ECONOMIC BALANCE
OF POWER**

Davor BOBAN and Valentino PETROVIĆ

EDITORIAL TEAM**Editor-in-Chief**
Miro Haček

University of Ljubljana
Faculty of social sciences, CAAPPI
Kardeljeva ploščad 5
1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
miro.hacek@fdv.uni-lj.si

General Editor
Peter Csányi

University of Economics in Bratislava
Faculty of International Relations
Dolnozemska 1,
852 35 Bratislava 5, Slovakia
peter.csanyi@euba.sk

General Editor
Jurij Toplak

Alma Mater Europaea
European Center Maribor (AMEU-ECM)
Gosposka ulica 1
2000 Maribor, Slovenia
jurij.toplak@almamater.si

General Editor
Simona Kukovič

University of Ljubljana
Faculty of social sciences, CAAPPI
Kardeljeva ploščad 5
1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
simona.kukovic@fdv.uni-lj.si

Articles appearing in JCP, are abstracted and indexed in following bibliographical databases: Scopus (SNIP IF=0.55/2018), Web of Science ESCI, ERIH PLUS, EBSCO, International Political Science Abstracts, ProQuest Political Science, International Bibliography of Social Sciences (IBSS), JournalSeek, UlrichsWeb, IZOR Database and Universal Impact Factor.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Marjan BREZOVŠEK, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
Ladislav CABADA, Metropolitan University Prague, Czech Republic
Fernando CASAL BERTO, University of Nottingham, UK
Đorđe GARDAŠEVIĆ, University of Zagreb, Croatia
Victoria GRAHAM, University of Johannesburg, South Africa
Pavol HRIVIK, Alexander Dubcek University of Trenčín, Slovakia
Lars JOHANNSEN, Aarhus University, Denmark
Kenneth KA-LOK CHAN, Hong Kong Baptist University, China
Damir KAPIDŽIĆ, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Rudolf KUCHARČÍK, University of Economics Bratislava, Slovakia
Lisa McINTOSH SUNDSTROM, University of British Columbia, Canada
Riccardo PELIZZO, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan
Eric PHÉLIPPEAU, University Paris Nanterre, France
Meredith REDLIN, South Dakota State University, USA
Andrius ŠUMINAS, Vilnius University, Lithuania
Michael TKACIK, Stephen F. Austin State University, USA
Taro TSUKIMURA, Doshisha University Kyoto, Japan
Pablo VIDAL, Catholic University of Valencia, Spain
Nebojša VLADISLAVLJEVIĆ, University of Belgrade, Serbia
Werner WEIDENFELD, University of Munich, Germany
Reuben WONG, National University of Singapore, Singapore
George Vital ZAMMIT, University of Malta, Malta
Mattia ZULIANELLO, University of Birmingham, UK

Co-PUBLISHERS

Faculty of International Relations
University of Economics in Bratislava
Dolnozemska 1, 852 35 Bratislava 5, Slovakia

Centre for analysis of administrative-political processes and institutions (CAAPPI)
University of Ljubljana, Faculty of social sciences
Kardeljeva ploščad 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Alma Mater Europaea - European Center Maribor (AMEU-ECM)
Gosposka ulica 1, 2000 Maribor, Slovenia

DESIGN

CAAPPI, Ljubljana.

Journal of Comparative Politics is published twice a year, in January and July.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	4	AUTHORITARIZATION OR DEMOCRATIZATION: DIRECTIONS OF ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN PRESENT-DAY SLOVAKIA Yevheniy HAYDANKA
	17	THE CONCEPT OF NATION IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE SLOVAK RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS Radoslav ŠTEFANČÍK and Eva STRADIOTOVÁ
	34	IS CULTURE A SPECIAL ‘HUB’ POLICY AREA FOR CO-CREATION? Sanja VRBEK and Irene PLUCHINOTTA
	53	POLITICAL MAP OF ARGENTINA AFTER 2019 ELECTIONS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES Katarína BROCKOVÁ, Rudolf KUCHARČÍK and Tetyana ZUBRO
	66	GLOBAL AND NATIONAL PARADOXES IN RESPONSES TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS Marjan MALEŠIČ
	81	COVID-19 AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (POLICIES): A YEAR OF PERILOUS AD-HOC SOLUTIONS Milan BRGLEZ, Boštjan UDOVIČ and Amalija MAČEK
	98	THE RUSSO-CHINESE AND CENTRAL ASIAN FOSSIL FUELS TRADE: DIVERSIFICATION AND THE GEO-ECONOMIC BALANCE OF POWER Davor BOBAN and Valentino PETROVIĆ



AUTHORITARIZATION OR DEMOCRATIZATION: DIRECTIONS OF ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN PRESENT-DAY SLOVAKIA

Yevheniy HAYDANKA¹

V-Dem experts have proposed an empirical methodology to determine the dynamics of authoritarianism/democratization of the electoral process (Electoral Democracy Index). In the Slovak Republic, the successful institutional reforms of the late 1990s and early 2000s, followed by the deepening and implementation of Euro-integration processes, were among the main factors affecting the electoral process democracy level. Factors influencing the authoritarianization of electoral processes include the relationship between the voter turnout and the electoral process transparency, radicalization of the political party space, and the dominance of one political actor in the party system and government structures (SMER-SD). Slovakia managed to go through all possible stages in the electoral process dynamics, this accounting for the complex democratic transformation of the country, e.g.: the decline of authoritarianism (1993–2000), stagnation (2001–2016), and increasing authoritarianism (2017–2019). In early 2020, parliamentary elections, following a deep political and governmental crisis, became an electoral snapshot of Slovak society.

Key words: V-Dem; Electoral Democracy Index; electoral process authoritarianization; electoral process democratization; Slovak parliamentary elections.

1 INTRODUCTION

A number of exogenous and endogenous factors determine the success or failure of transition countries on their path to a consolidated democracy. An effective and transparent electoral process is a necessary political mechanism that ensures political pluralism in the making. Eventually, the quality of the political elite and the level of political (electoral) activity of citizens can dramatically increase the new democratic regime legitimacy. On the other hand, in the post-socialist era, electoral fraud and administrative resource abuse are often looked upon as much more effective means of legitimizing hybrid political regimes

¹ Yevheniy HAYDANKA, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Trnava University, Slovak Republic. Contact: yevheniy.haydanka@truni.sk.

(those belonging neither to the old model of authoritarianism nor to underdeveloped political procedures of the new democracy).

Following more than two decades of democratic transformations, some post-socialist countries tend to lean to the authoritarian leadership. For instance, a more liberal type of the so-called “*illiberal democracy*” (Zakaria 2007) manifested itself in the Slovak Republic (Wiatr 2018, 8). Among other former socialist countries, Slovakia is the one with traceable struggles between authoritarian and democratic tendencies in electoral processes. The country was able to overcome the complexities of the post-socialist era and successfully complete the formation of new democratic elites in the 1990s. In 2000, Slovakia implemented effective institutional reforms with the purpose of Euro-Atlantic integration, trying to adapt to the new conditions, arising out of EU membership. In the second decade of the 2000s, the Slovak party system begins to display signs of monopolization, this fact leading to the development of what could be the biggest political crisis in the run-up to the 2020 parliamentary elections. Notably, electoral processes at both the national and regional levels proved utterly ambiguous (Martinkovič 2019). Eventually, transparency and honesty in electoral cycles testify to either the positive level of democratic dynamics in Slovakia or, conversely, confirm the authoritarian tendencies in the electoral space.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The global spread of authoritarian tendencies in various segments of both non-democratic (deepening authoritarianism) and democratic regimes could be yet another factor to account for complex trajectories of modern transformations. Proponents of the “three waves of authoritarianism” concept along with V-Dem Institute experts Lührmann and Lindberg (2019) point out that authoritarian tendencies are hard to identify due to various variations of modern democratic regimes. The third wave of authoritarianism, which began in 1993 and concerned post-communist transits, seems most threatening. The most prominent feature of the third wave of authoritarianism is its very nature. It presupposes that a certain level of authoritarianism is mainly typical of institutionally democratic countries due to the non-democratic activities of the political elite, rather than military coups or revolutions (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019, 1107-1108). That is, fatal changes for a democratic future are likely even in the format of a democratic state. For instance, a potential “authoritarian” or “autocrat party” can gain the highest level of electoral support on a completely legal basis (through elections). Their further actions do not de facto lead to the collapse of the democratic foundations of the country (elections, constitution, etc.). However, due to the available legal potential and political capital, the ruling elite will gradually reduce the overall level of political competition, creating a favourable electoral space. Experts note about 68% of all cases of “*third wave*” *power authoritarianisation* that took place in countries with future liberal democracy persecutors coming to power in democratic elections (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019, 1108). Therefore, it is hardly surprising that in the future, in countries with significant authoritarian tendencies, the practice of holding elections on a multiparty basis will remain unchanged. At the same time, the basic rules of political struggle are sure to be determined by the ruling forces or the leader, setting a priority goal – to maintain the balance of political forces with their dominance. In the event of either authoritarian elites coming to power or the situational pursuit of undemocratic policies, the country faces up against real threats of authoritarian transformation. In such a case, as Lührmann and Lindberg argue, the two most likely behavioural strategies of the political regime

can be distinguished. In the first case, the liberal democratic opposition wins in the struggle between authoritarianism and democracy due to the strong democratic institutions, and the country successfully resumes its previous democratic state. Alternatively, the onsets of authoritarianism penetrate firmly into the political system, gaining a high level of social legitimacy and becoming the future model of the political regime (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019, 1108). In both the first and the second cases, electoral processes play the leading role in determining the authoritarianism or democratization of the regime.

To gain a deeper insight into the nature of authoritarianism, it is necessary to consider political transformations (since 1993) from two different angles. Firstly, it is worth determining the so-called quality of a democratic regime (the actual political competition and the existence of liberal democracy). The existing number of democratic institutions (elections, multiparty system, parliamentarism or presidentialism, etc.) illustrates the normative character of a democratic regime, whereas democratic practices need empirical explaining. Secondly, growing is the weight of electoral processes, since a high level of Euroscepticism and populism in the electoral space often leads to non-democratic political forces in the higher echelons of power. Although the multipartisanship and competitive elections cannot fully protect the country from authoritarian threats, these mechanisms of recruiting political elites remain an effective tool of the modern democratic regime.

Undoubtedly, the V-Dem experts' concept of authoritarianism needs empirical confirmation. Although the conceptual basis of authoritarianism does not raise any objections – first of all, the “*waves of democratization*” by Huntington (1991) and the “*end of history*” by Fukuyama (1992) – modern political science prioritizes the empirical verification of any experiments. Also, transformations of many years in Eastern and Central Europe often facilitate the emergence of transitional or hybrid regimes, the term that needs explaining. Notably, determining the very forms of political regimes against the background of the systemic transformation is one of the priority tasks of modern comparative political science (particularly the “*meta-concept of 'hybrid regimes'*” (Procházka and Cabada 2020). Lührmann and Lindberg make methodological excursus into political science, primarily into F. Fukuyama's legacy, claiming that “*the end of history*” or “*the end of democracy*” statement by the American scholar is too precocious (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019, 1108).

Under the influence of both exogenous and endogenous factors, each political regime undergoes a permanent transformation. As a rule, the so-called young democracies strengthen the current level of democracy, leaning towards liberal democracy or, vice versa, the democratic regime is heading towards authoritarianism. In this light, it seems necessary to determine the amplitude of the political regime fluctuations (< democracy/authoritarianism >) at respective time intervals (preferably one year). If we apply the V-Dem empirical methodology, we can outline several blocks: a) a total of 182 countries are under study; b) the period covers the timespan from 1900 to 2018 (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019, 1100); c) the methodology takes into account 5 sub-indices and 25 indicators (Democracy Facing 2019, 57). The key indicator that determines the institutional difference between an operating democracy and the so-called democratic ideal is the *Electoral Democracy Index*. On its basis, experts find out the difference between the ways the state's democratic institutions implement strict requirements of Robert Dahl's *Polyarchy* (1972). The analysis considers 4 main attributes (requirements) of an efficient polyarchy: 1) universal suffrage; 2) free and fair elections; 3) freedom of speech; 4) freedom of association (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019, 1100).

Of course, the empirical method of calculating the *Electoral Democracy Index* measures the numerical values of the level of the political regime's authoritarianism. The proposed scale of the democratic institutions' authoritarianization metering enables us to fully assess either the positive or negative dynamics of the country's democratization. Primarily, it takes into account the minimum values (initial dynamics – 1% (0.01 of the index) and the beginning of systemic authoritarianism 10% (0.1 of the index). Secondly, it covers the indicative time frame of empirical analysis (the minimum monitoring period is 1 full calendar year, whereas the minimum period of invariance (statics) of the studied indicator is four years) (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019, 1100-1101).

Like any empirical methodology, based on the principle of rating democracy/authoritarianism of different countries (e.g., well-known world ratings by Freedom House: *Freedom in the World* (Freedom in the World 2019) and *Nations in Transit* (Nations in Transit 2018) or transitive studies of the *Bertelsmann Transformation Index* (Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index 2020), the V-Dem empirical method can also be the subject of constructive criticism (Coppedge et al. 2017). Having said that, we can provide a comprehensive analysis of modern political and economic transformations only from a comparative perspective. Firstly, we consider various instances of authoritarianizing the existing democratic regime, which, from our vantage point, can serve as a far better indicator of the country's transitive direction than that of modelling the democratization level. It's the V-Dem experts that point out four main benefits of the *Electoral Democracy Index* in modern comparative political science (Lührmann et al. 2019; Coppedge 2017), e.g.: 1) the analysis tackles the degree of authoritarianism in more than 200 hundred countries over 100 years; 2) it reflects the correlation between the actual and normative operation of democratic institutions; 3) the conceptual proximity of electoral democracy to the model of electoral democracy by Robert Dahl (1972); 4) the index of electoral democracy is a dynamic indicator that can capture the country's fluctuations towards authoritarian tendencies (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019, 1100).

Our first hypothesis concerns the subject of scientific analysis (regularities of the impact of electoral cycles on the level of democracy or authoritarianism in Slovakia) only indirectly. At the same time, we need to identify empirical material for analysis.

Hypothesis 1. The level of voter turnout in the parliamentary elections reflects the actual political orientations of the electorate and the allocation of political actors in the country.

According to the subject of election criterion, elections fall into four main groups: a) elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic (*Národná rada Slovenskej republiky*); b) elections of the President of the Slovak Republic (*Prezident Slovenskej republiky*); c) elections to self-government bodies of the Regions (*orgány samosprávnych krajov*); d) elections to the European Parliament. The election dates and, respectively, the procedures of elections to collegiate bodies or presidential elections considerably differ: e.g., the first competitive elections in Slovakia were the parliamentary elections of 1990 (the period of the Czechoslovak federal model). In 2004 and the latest of all, Slovakia began to elect delegates to the European Parliament. To conduct a comprehensive analysis of voter turnout, the year 2004 serves as the starting point, considering all the elections during 2004–2020.

Hypothesis 2. The decline of voter turnout leads to an increase in the degree of democratic nature of the electoral process (Free and Fair Elections).

To confirm this hypothesis, it is necessary to compare and analyse the main indicators that enable us to see the objective correlation between the increase/decrease in voter turnout and the increasing/decreasing democratism of the electoral process. V-Dem proposed a range of empirical indicators, among which it seems expedient to consider the following: a) free and fair election, b) election vote-buying, c) election turnout (Varieties of Democracy 2019). Based on the correlation of the three variables, we get an objective explanation of the 1994–2019 electoral cycles in the Slovak Republic.

Hypothesis 3. The radicalization of the political environment (the extreme right parties winning up to 1/6 of electoral support) does not significantly affect the level of the electoral process democratism in Slovakia.

In recent years, the factor of political environment radicalization in numerous post-communist countries is becoming far more conspicuous. With this in mind, it is sufficient to analyse the results of parliamentary elections in several Central and East European countries, as well as Western Europe (Germany, Austria, France). Of course, the popularity of far-right political ideologies at the electorate level should affect the level of authoritarianism of the country. Above all, it may lead to the polarization of the party system and the decline in democratic actions in the Government. Hence, it is important to find out the approximate quota of extreme right-wing parties in the Slovak parliament, which won't significantly worsen the democratic nature of the electoral process. The analysis (comparison) tackles a sample of seven extreme right-wing parties operating in the Slovak electoral environment, outlined by Kluknavska and Smolík (2016, 337) and the *Electoral Democracy Index* from V-Dem.

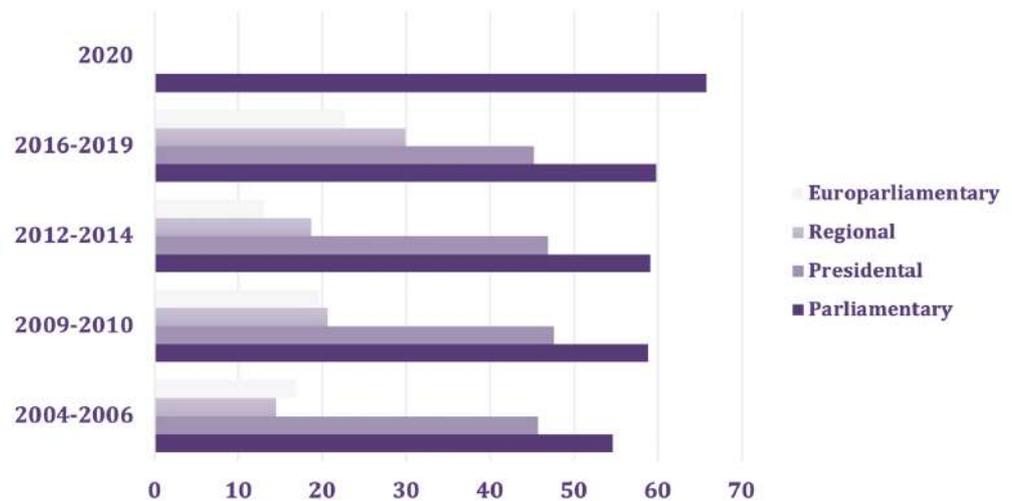
Hypothesis 4. The authoritarianization of the electoral process in Slovakia is declining and evolves with fits and starts.

Authoritarianization or democratization of the electoral process correlates to the dominant trends in the political and party environment. Notably, the post-communist nature of the reforms, followed by the successful European integration, the dominance of one political actor in government structures, and the recent systemic crisis appeared the key factors influencing the authoritarianization of the electoral process in Slovakia.

3 ELECTORAL ACTIVITY OF A SLOVAK VOTER

In 2004–2020, the Slovak electoral preferences were quite heterogeneous, which is proved by voters' interest in the all-national level of politics. That is, the electorate associates parliamentary structures and the head of state with central authorities. The regional (Regional Assembly and the President of the Region) and the European (the European Parliament) levels are significantly lagging (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: THE LEVEL OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION OF THE SLOVAK VOTERS, IN % (2004–2020)



Resource: own calculation on the basis of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (Vol'by a referenda 2020).

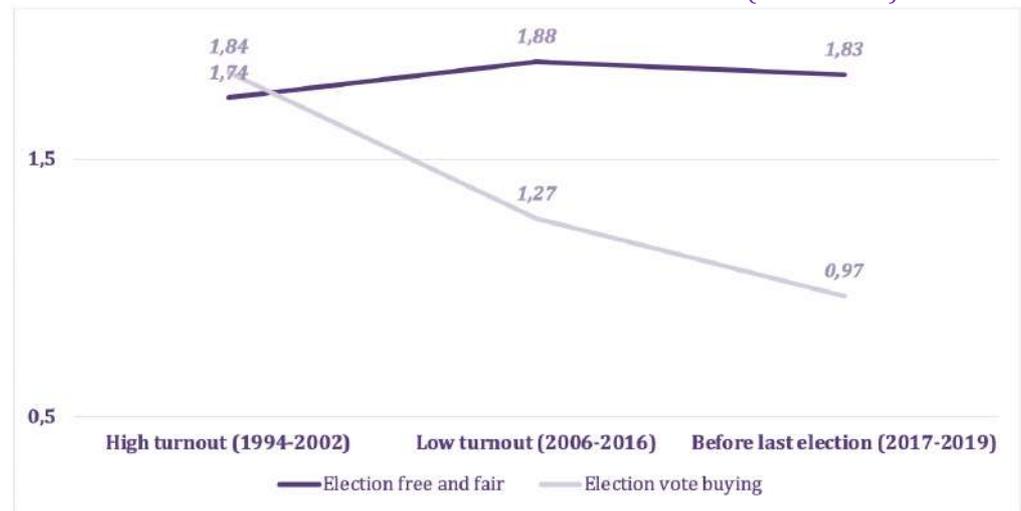
In general, we can calculate the average turnout for a specific type of election (according to the subject of election): 1) parliamentary elections – 59.6%; 2) presidential elections – 46.3%; 3) regional elections – 20.9%; 4) elections to the European Parliament – 18%. We can point out several trends in the electoral process. There has consistently been a high voter turnout in the parliamentary elections, however, electoral growth (+6% of voters) began only since the last elections. It is during 2018–2020 that the political crisis, stipulated by the assassination of journalist Ján Kuciak, has been running rampant. The desire to reboot the power and bring the ruling *SMER-SD* to the background significantly mobilized the electorate. At the same time, the non-systemic politician Zuzana Čaputová winning the presidency in 2019 never considerably increased the turnout. One way or another, every second voter votes in the presidential election. Elections to the Regional Assembly have never been a priority for Slovaks, as is traditionally the case in post-socialist countries. After all, the national level of politics is far less popular with the electorate than that of the regional. Only in the last 2017 regional elections voter turnout increased noticeably (+11% of voters). The “European elections” prove to remain the least popular among the Slovak population. Simultaneously, Slovakia demonstrated the lowest turnout among the other EU member states (European election results, 2019). Even though voter turnout nearly doubled in the last European elections, the country retains an outsider position in the European ranking. Among the reasons for a low voter turnout in the “European elections” has traditionally been a low interest of the Visegrad and Baltic countries in European politics, accompanied by quite a high level of Euroscepticism in Slovakia in the first decade of adaptation to the new EU requirements.

4 THE LEVEL OF AUTHORITARIANISM ACCORDING TO V-DEM AND ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

V-DEM experts perform calculations of the level of authoritarianism/democratization of countries based on the entire set of indicators, including those of the electoral process dynamics. Among electoral factors that comprehensively explain the electoral trends is “free and fair

election". This electoral process factor is traceable through the dynamics of voter turnout and vote-buying (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: CORRELATION OF INDICES ELECTION FREE AND FAIR AND ELECTION VOTE BUYING BASED ON THE SLOVAK PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (1994–2019)²



Resource: own calculation on the basis of V-DEM (V-Dem. Varieties of Democracy 2019).

The main regularities of the democratic electoral process in Slovakia (1994–2019):

- 1) over 1994–2002 (the period of high voter turnout), there was a consistently high level of “election free and fair” indicator (1.74). Likewise, the election vote-buying is high, comprising 1.84. This trend is typical of the three parliamentary election campaigns in the post-socialist period of the Slovak Republic.
- 2) since 2005, the level of electoral process democratism has been gradually increasing. This trend continued until the 2016 parliamentary elections (the average value of “election free and fair” indicator is 1.88) against the background of a significantly decreasing turnout (in 2006 the turnout dropped to 54% compared to 70% in 2002). Also, the indicator of election vote-buying depreciated from 1.83 in 2005 to 1.16 in 2006. Further on, the level of the vote-buying was fluctuating on the eve of the 2010 elections, it increased to 1.63 (2009), decreasing to 1.15 in the 2012 elections. Before the next election, it increased to 1.64 (2015). Already in the election year, it drops to a record low of 0.91 (2016–2018).
- 3) the last parliamentary elections in Slovakia in the focus of attention of the V-DEM experts were the elections to the People’s Council in 2016. The “election free and fair” indicator is gradually deteriorating, comprising 1.75 in 2019. Paradoxically, the value of “election vote-buying” index decreases and reaches 0.91 (2016–2018). Separately, we should call attention to the last year of V-DEM monitoring. It was in the period 2018–2019 when the political crisis in Slovakia was running rampant, leading to a declining trend in the level of the electoral process democratism. First of all, this is true of the “election free and fair” (-0.12) and “election vote buying” (-0.19) indices. It was under these conditions that the last parliamentary elections in Slovakia took place at the end of February 2020.

² Having analysed the turnout in Slovakia since 1994, we get two groups – high turnout and low turnout. By high turnout we mean the turnout of 70%>, low turnout covers the numerical area of 50–60%. Thus, the electoral cycles in the Slovak Republic should be divided into three groups: 1) high turnout (1994 – 75.6%, 1998 – 84.2%, 2002 – 70%), 2) low turnout (2006 – 54.6%, 2010 – 58.8%, 2012 – 59.1%, 2016 – 59.8%) and 3) high turnout (2020 – 65.8%).

5 RADICALIZATION OF THE PARTY ENVIRONMENT AND THE LEVEL OF ELECTORAL PROCESS DEMOCRATISM IN SLOVAKIA

We define the party system radicalization as the increasing weight of extreme right-wing political forces. The higher the electoral support for right-wing radical parties and, consequently, their growing representation in parliament, the more radical the Slovak electoral environment. Traditionally, right-wing radical parties have advocated socio-political values that are far from liberal, which results in society radicalization.

In the Slovak Republic, seven parties stand out as the most influential “extremist parties” (Kluknavska and Smolík 2016, 337). As the results of the 1994–2020 parliamentary elections indicate, right-wing radical parties displayed varying electoral support levels. From the spectrum of all right-wing parties, there are two the most influential parties that stand out – *SNS* and *ĽSNS*. Both the former and the latter were elected to parliament, particularly the *SNS* (won seats in parliament in 1994, 1998, 2006, 2010 and 2016). In the most recent 2020 elections, the *SNS*, headed by Andrej Danko, won only 3.16% of the votes and did not get into the parliament. Instead, *ĽSNS* led by Marian Kotleba almost replicates the 2016 result of around 8% (7.97%) in the region. On the whole, the 2020 elections proved the “stable instability” state (Gyárfášová 2020) in Slovak electoral sentiment and the need to form a parliamentary coalition to retaliate against political forces of the former Prime Minister Robert Fico. The other right-wing political parties did not play an important role in Slovak politics. For example, over 1994–2002, the closest to the parliament was the *PSNS* in 2002 with a result of 3.65% (Vol'by a referenda 2020).

The right-wing radical political parties triumphed in the 2016 parliamentary elections (together *SNS* and *ĽSNS* won 16.68%), the 2006 elections (*SNS* received 11.73%), and the 1998 elections (*SNS* won 9.07%) (Vol'by a referenda 2020). If we compare the data of the Electoral Democracy Index of Slovakia during the period of independence, we can see a weak correlation between the electoral process democratism and the level of electoral support for right-wing radical parties. Thus, in 1998 in Slovakia, a fairly high democratic electoral process index (Electoral Democracy Index) was recorded at the level of 0.74 (V-Dem. Varieties of Democracy 1993–2019). Moreover, until the 2002 election, the level of democratism displays positive dynamics, within 0.74–0.85. Already in 2006, the Electoral Democracy Index was at 0.83, and before the 2010 parliamentary elections, it ranged from 0.83 to 0.84. At the same time, the situation in 2016, with the best aggregate indicator of right-wing radical parties, looks illogical. After all, after the 2016 parliamentary elections, a high rate (0.84) of democratism is gradually deteriorating, and as of 2018, Slovakia received -0.03 (0.81). However, in 2019 there was a slightly positive dynamics of the electoral process democratism (+0.02).

It should be noted that the electoral support level of right-wing radical political forces does not depend on a significant deterioration in the level of electoral process democratism. The most noticeable decline in the dynamics of democracy occurred after the 2016 parliamentary elections, yet with no critical results. In the numerical plane, 1/6 of the electoral support of right-wing radical parties (2016 – 16.68%) does not lead to the authoritarianization of the electoral process.

6 AUTHORITARIANISATION OR DEMOCRATISM OF ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN SLOVAKIA?

The Slovak Republic belongs to a cohort of present-day post-socialist countries that have generally managed to step over the “socialist experiment” and overcome the complexities of the post-socialist period. It was also able to join the group of new national democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. Like any reform, the pluralization of the party environment and the electoral processes liberalization were going within two extremities – authoritarianism and democratization. Based on the V-Dem expert assessment, modern Slovakia bears relatively sufficient dynamics of electoral processes (Table 1).

TABLE 1: DATA OF ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY INDEX IN SLOVAKIA (1993–2019)

1993	0,76	0	2002	0,85	0	2011	0,86	+ 0,01
1994	0,73	- 0,03	2003	0,85	0	2012	0,85	- 0,01
1995	0,71	- 0,02	2004	0,85	0	2013	0,84	- 0,01
1996	0,71	0	2005	0,85	0	2014	0,84	0
1997	0,71	0	2006	0,83	- 0,02	2015	0,84	0
1998	0,74	+ 0,03	2007	0,83	0	2016	0,84	0
1999	0,83	+ 0,09	2008	0,83	0	2017	0,83	- 0,01
2000	0,85	+ 0,02	2009	0,84	+ 0,01	2018	0,81	- 0,02
2001	0,85	0	2010	0,85	+ 0,01	2019	0,83	+ 0,02

Resource: own calculations on the basis of V-DEM (V-Dem. Varieties of Democracy 1993–2019).

We believe that the results of the Electoral Democracy Index for Slovakia formed in the following three periods of socio-political transformation:

- 1) 1993–2000 – *decreasing authoritarianism* (a rapid decline of the electoral process authoritarianisation);
- 2) 2001–2016 – *stagnation* (weak dynamics of the electoral process authoritarianization);
- 3) 2017–2019 – *increasing authoritarianism* (a gradual increase of the level of the electoral process authoritarianization).

Also, for independent Slovakia, it is the most controversial period of electoral processes as in 1995 and 1996 the recorded level of authoritarianism was the highest. This is due to the turbulence of the Slovak political system in the first years of independence along with the strengthening of Vladimir Mečiar's executive power after the 1994 parliamentary elections. Despite the complexity of the economic transformation and the post-Czechoslovak period of development, Slovakia was able to achieve a rapid increase in the level of electoral process democracy. The political confrontation between Vladimír Mečiar and Mikuláš Dzurinda, reaching its peak in the 1998 parliamentary elections (Rhodes 2001), proved decisive for Slovakia not only in domestic policy but also in the search for real opportunities for the post-socialist Euro-Atlantic integration. Therefore, the second factor that led to the growing electoral process democracy was the country's preparation and the accession to the European Union. As a result, in the year Slovakia acquired membership in the European Union (2004), the total Electoral Democracy Index was 0.09 higher than in the year of its independence (1993).

In fact, the period of preparation for accession and adaptation to the new economic and political conditions of coexistence with the other EU countries had little to no effect upon either progress or regression of the electoral process democracy in Slovakia. Thus, the Electoral Democracy Index during 2001–2016 ranged from 0.83 to 0.86. Notably, two years when electoral process slightly leaned towards authoritarianization are the following: 1) 2012 (-0.01) – parliamentary elections, with *SMER-SD* winning 44%, and the second political

force *Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie (KDH)* – only 8% (Vol'by a referenda 2020), whereas Robert Fico heads the Slovak Government for the second time, 2) 2013 (-0.01) – “post-election” period caused by the *SMER-SD* single majority in parliament.

As of today, the third and final period of authoritarianism/democratism of the electoral process has lasted the shortest span of three years (2017–2019). The Electoral Democracy Index decreased noticeably in 2017 (-0.01), due to Robert Fico's premiership, and yet another victory of *SMER-SD* in the 2016 parliamentary elections. Since 2018, the growing political crisis has largely affected the results of the 2020 parliamentary elections, introducing a new configuration in the Slovak parliament. Lately, Slovak politics has borne elements of *soft populism (Obyčajní ľudia a nezávislé osobnosti (OLANO))* led by Igor Matovič, and *oppositional tendencies (SMER-SD)*. Based on these political dynamics, we can predict that the level of electoral process democracy in Slovakia will slightly improve after 2020, although V-Dem has not yet conducted empirical monitoring.

7 CONCLUSION

The level of the electoral process transparency and democracy in the country remains one of the most showcase indicators of the current political regime democratism. It is especially true of post-socialist countries, in particular Slovakia. On the one hand, the Slovak Republic had to introduce a competitive electoral system as an invariable attribute of the “*new democracy*” from scratch, on the other hand, during the late post-socialism period, the country had to ensure the proper level of the electoral process democratism to reduce the level of authoritarianism of either the ruling party or the Government. To gain insight into the logic of development and dynamics of electoral processes, particularly in Slovakia, V-Dem experts proposed the empirical methodology. Their Electoral Democracy Index reproduces the peculiarities of the country's leading political institutions formation (the Parliament and the Government), explains the behavioural patterns of the Slovak voter, and determines the level of the electoral process democratism/authoritarianism.

Firstly, parliamentary elections remain the undisputed priority of the Slovak voter. On average, this election provides about 60% of the turnout. In contrast to parliamentary elections, only one in five voters votes in the European Parliament elections (average 18%). On the one hand, such ambiguous data indicate the traditional interest of post-socialist countries in the national level of politics, as well as a significant weakening of electoral interest in regional elections. It means that the highest collegial institution of power epitomizes the future of both the democratic development and positive change in the country, rather than deepening local democracy and strengthening the foundations of administrative decentralization. On the other hand, the actual neglect of the “European elections” occurs due to a consistently high level of Euroscepticism and the so-called distancing of the Slovak voter from European politics. The last electoral situation ensures a favourable electoral field for the popularization of traditional Eurosceptics – right-wing radical political forces and populists.

Secondly, the “election free and fair” index, as well as the activity of the Slovak voter proved the most important factors, affecting the level of the electoral process democracy in the post-socialist Slovakia. Notably, the higher the voter turnout, the higher the electoral manipulation (e.g. election vote-buying),

whereas the lower turnout, the more transparent and democratic elections. It is during the high voter turnout in the parliamentary elections (1994–2002) that the level of election vote-buying remained high, although it is markedly decreasing now. This state of affairs is due to complex but on the whole successful democratic reforms in electoral processes (changes in electoral legislation, the search for the optimal electoral model). Preparations for the EU accession and adaptation to the new EU conditions have determined a fairly high level of the “election free and fair” index in Slovakia over 2005–2016. At the same time, voter turnout is falling considerably. Already in 2016–2019, the significance of the “election free and fair” index is slightly decreasing. We believe that this is due to the 2016 parliamentary elections and the dominance of *SMER-SD* in the party and government structures. Eventually, the level of election vote-buying is diminishing.

Thirdly, the popular electoral wave of right-wing radicalism in Europe has had little impact upon the level of the electoral process democratism in modern Slovakia. Undoubtedly, *SNS* and *L'SNS*, the two largest actors of the radical spectrum in recent years, are polarizing the Slovak Parliament. However, despite little support they gained in the 2016 parliamentary elections receiving a total of about 17%, did not become a factor, considerably changing the level of the electoral process democratism. Moreover, in the 2020 parliamentary elections, only the *LSNS* remained of the Slovak right-wing radical duo. The right-wing radical spectrum of Slovak politics may gradually lose its electoral support.

Finally, the bottom-line Electoral Democracy Index in Slovakia confirms the success of democratic reform in the post-socialist period (1993–2000), steady performance of democratic electoral mechanisms in the EU post-adaptation period (2001–2016), and growth of authoritarianism in recent years (2017–2019). Interestingly, the deterioration of the electoral process democratism in Slovakia is caused by a continual political crisis that began in 2018 and lasted until early 2020. The future monitoring of V-Dem experts in 2020 will clarify the situation regarding the Slovak electoral processes, illustrating either democratic or authoritarian tendencies.

REFERENCES

- Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI). 2020. Available at <https://www.bti-project.org/en/home/>.
- Coppedge, Michael, John Gerring, Staffan Lindberg, Svend-Erik Skaaning and Jan Teorell. 2017. “V-Dem Comparisons and Contrasts with Other Measurement Projects.” *V-Dem Working Paper* 45: 46. Available at <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2951014>.
- Coppedge, Michael. 2017. “Eroding Regimes: What, Where, and When?” *V-Dem Working Paper* 57: 30. Available at <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3066677>.
- Dahl, Robert. 1972. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Democracy Facing Global Challenges. 2019. *V-Dem Annual Democracy Report*. Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg.
- European election results. 2019. *European Parliament*. Available at <https://europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/turnout/>.
- Freedom in the World. 2019. *Democracy in Retreat*. Available at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/democracy-retreat>.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press.
- Gyárfášová, Olga. 2020. *Slovenské voľby 2020: potvrdenie “stabilnej nestability” (Slovak Elections 2020: Confirmation of “Stable Instability”)*. Kancelář v Praze: Heinrich Böll Stiftung. Available at [https://cz.boell.org/cs/Slovak elections 2020](https://cz.boell.org/cs/Slovak%20elections%2020).

- Huntington, Samuel. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Kluknavska, Alens and Jozef Smolík. 2016. "We Hate Them All? Issue Adaptation of Extreme Right Parties in Slovakia 1993–2016." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 49 (4): 335–344.
- Lührmann, Anna and Staffan Lindberg. 2019. "A Third Wave of Autocratization is Here: What is New About It?" *Democratization* 26 (7): 1095–1113.
- Lührmann, Anna, Sandra Grahn, Richard Morgan, Shreeya Pillai and Staffan Lindberg. 2019. "State of the World 2018: Democracy Facing Global Challenges." *Democratization* 26 (6): 895–915.
- Martinkovič, Marcel. 2018. Regionálne voľby do VÚC ako prejav krízy funkčnosti strán v Slovenskom straníckom systéme (Regional Elections as a Manifestation of the Crisis of Party Functionality in the party system of the Slovak Republic). In *Politologická analýza regionálnych volieb 2017 na Slovensku (Political Analysis of Regional Elections 2017 in Slovakia)*, eds. Dudinská, Irina, Michal Cirner and Székely, Gabriel, 39–49. Prešov: Vydavateľstvo Prešovskej University.
- Nations in Transit. 2018. *Confronting Illiberalism*. Available at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit>.
- Procházka, David and Ladislav Cabada. 2020. "Exploring the "Grey Zone": The Theory and Reality of "Hybrid Regimes" in Postcommunist Countries." *Journal of Comparative Politics* 13 (1): 4–22.
- Rhodes, Matthew. 2001. "Slovakia after Mečiar: A Midterm Report." *Problems of Post-Communism* 48 (4): 3–13.
- V-Dem. *Varieties of Democracy. Country Graph*. 2019. Available at <https://www.v-dem.net/en/analysis/CountryGraph>.
- V-Dem. *Varieties of Democracy. Electoral Democracy Index, Slovakia, 1993–2019*. 2019. Available at <https://www.v-dem.net/en/analysis/VariableGraph/>.
- Vol'ba a referenda (Elections and Referenda). 2020. Štatistický úrad SR (*Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic*). Available at <https://volby.statistics.sk/>.
- Wiatr, Jerzy. 2018. "Democratic Experience in Central Europe: 25 Years Later." *Journal of Comparative Politics* 11 (1): 5–11.
- Zakaria, Fareed. 2007. *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*. New York: W.W. Norton.



AVTORITATNOST ALI DEMOKRATIZACIJA: SMERI VOLILNIH PROCESOV V DANAŠNJI SLOVAŠKI

Strokovnjaki, ki delujejo v projektu V-Dem so predlagali empirično metodologijo za določanje dinamike avtoritarnosti oz. demokratizacije volilnega procesa (indeks volilne demokracije). Na Slovaškem so bile med glavnimi dejavniki, ki so vplivale na demokratičnost volilnega procesa, uspešne institucionalne reforme poznih devetdesetih in prvih letih tega stoletja, ki jim je sledilo poglobljanje in izvajanje evro-integracijskih procesov. Dejavniki, ki vplivajo na avtoritarnost volilnih procesov, vključujejo razmerje med udeležbo volivcev in preglednostjo volilnega procesa, radikalizacijo prostora političnih strank in prevlado enega političnega akterja v strankarskem sistemu in vladnih strukturah (SMER-SD). Slovaška je šla skozi vse možne faze v dinamiki volilnega procesa, kar je pomenilo zapleteno demokratično preobrazbo države, npr. upad avtoritarnosti (1993–2000), stagnacijo (2001–2016) in ponovno večanje avtoritarnosti (2017–2019). V začetku leta 2020 so parlamentarne volitve po globoki politični in vladni krizi postale volilni posnetek slovaške družbe.

Ključne besede: V-Dem; indeks volilne demokracije; avtoritarnost volilnega procesa; demokratizacija volilnega procesa; slovaške parlamentarne volitve.

THE CONCEPT OF NATION IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE SLOVAK RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS¹

Radoslav ŠTEFANČÍK and Eva STRADIOTOVÁ²

The aim of this study is to find out how the Slovak right-wing extremists perceive the term nation. We assume that nation is the crucial communication category of the Slovak right-wing extremists. In researching the language of right-wing extremists, we proceed from the hypothesis that this kind of political language has specific features, especially in the lexical level. Since the political communication of extremists is based on provoking the fear of an (often fictitious) enemy, we assume the existence of a dichotomous definition in the sense of a friend vs. an enemy, more precisely we vs. they, or us vs. others. This means that extremists perceive the nation as a homogeneous group of people who are threatened by external or domestic enemies. In this context, we are discussing who is in the perspective of the right-wing extremism marked as the nation's enemy and what kind of communication means extremists use to designate these social groups.

Key words: nation; right-wing extremism; Slovakia; political communication; enemy; LSNS.

1 INTRODUCTION

Right-wing extremism has also become a challenge in Slovakia not only for professionals in the social sciences and humanities, but also for the political elite from the democratic centre. Although in the Slovak Republic it captured the general public attention only after the parliamentary elections in 2016, the research in the right-wing extremism has a long tradition in Western Europe (e.g. Backes 1989; Backes and Jesse 1993; Mudde 2000a, 2000b, 2007; Jesse and Thieme 2011; Pfahl-Traughber 2001, 2019). The right-wing extremism caught the scientific community's attention in the mid-1990s because of the achievements of originally marginal political parties. A part of the general public

¹ This research was carried out within the project VEGA 1/0344/20 *The language of right-wing extremism. A View of Political Linguistics*.

² **Radoslav ŠTEFANČÍK**, Ph.D, is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Applied Languages at the University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia, Department of Intercultural Communication. Contact: radoslav.stefancik@euba.sk. **Eva STRADIOTOVÁ**, PhD, is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Applied Languages at the University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia, Department of English Language. Contact: eva.stradiotova@euba.sk.

ceased to trust in the established ways of addressing some of the obvious problems not only associated with the social situation but also with European integration, international migration and began to believe in the simple suggestions how to solve the complex issues. Presenting simple solutions for solving complex problems is one of the characteristic features of the political communication of far-right populist parties.

In the social sciences and the humanities, there are various methodological approaches to research of right-wing extremism. Generally, the authors from Slovakia and Czech Republic deal with the historical context of right-wing extremism (Drábik 2019), the causes of the success of contemporary right-wing extremists (Kluknavská 2012; Strážnická 2017), the structure of the party organization and the electorate (Mesežnikov and Gyárfášová 2016), the relationship of extremists to certain national, ethnic or sexual minorities (Mareš 2014), or compare several extremist parties in a particular region (Smolík 2013). However, we believe that in the context of research into right-wing extremism, political communication of this type of political actors can also be explored from the perspective of political linguistics.

In view of the fact that exploring all aspects of the political communication of right-wing extremists would go beyond the scope of this study, we decided to introduce only the view of the Slovak right-wing extremists on the nation. We assume that the priority of right-wing extremists is nation as the main communication category, which is the basis for their thinking in relation to other themes (history, minorities, religion, conspiracy theories). Our research into the language of right-wing extremists is based on the hypothesis that this kind of political language has specific features, especially in the lexical level. Since the political communication of extremists is based on provoking the fear of an (often fictitious) enemy (Wodak 2016; Kluknavská and Smolík 2016), we assume the existence of a dichotomous definition in the sense of a friend vs. an enemy, more precisely we vs. they, or us vs. others.

In the text, we focus primarily on the content analysis of the program documents of the political party Kotlebovci – ĽSNS (People's Party Our Slovakia). This party is the main representative of the right-wing extremism in Slovakia. Until 2016, it was only a marginal subject. Right-wing extremists from ĽSNS experienced extraordinary success in the 2016 parliamentary elections, when they entered parliament for the first time and won 15 seats in the 150-seat national parliament. ĽSNS repeated its success in February 2020, when the right-wing extremists won two more seats in the Slovak parliament.³ In the European elections in 2019, this party took third place and won two seats in the European Parliament. ĽSNS manages to maintain a stable electorate but according to Peter Csanyi (2019, 71), "there is a serious threat that Kotleba becoming more mainstream may contribute to growth in support, especially among the youngsters, who have long been his loyal base. Many from the young generation are frustrated, but they don't ask questions and are not interested in politics. They just follow the person who gives the simplest answers".

³ The party's parliamentary group was extremely unstable after the 2020 elections. First, three parliamentarians left the group, in January 2021 another five parliamentarians left the party. The main reason was that the party leader Marian Kotleba had extraordinarily strengthened his leadership in the party.

In the first place, we looked into the election documents published on the ĽSNS website.⁴ In addition to the party documents and periodicals, we also analyse parliamentary speeches given by the members of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on behalf of the ĽSNS. With respect to the fact that some of the relevant topics of the right-wing extremists are not included in the party manifestos (for example, because of the fear of criminal proceedings for statements related to repressing the fundamental human rights of certain groups of people), the research corpus is also made up of speeches published as videos and the comments posted on Facebook. Nowadays, the internet, and in particular the social networks with their interactive functions comprise an important communication tool (not only) for the right-wing extremists (Schuppener 2013; Seresová 2017; Kluknavská and Hruška 2019). The Internet communication, used by political advocates, is a natural means of influencing public opinion in the period of digital media (Salzborn and Maegerle 2016). The profiles of the members of the ĽSNS and their voters, which are published on Facebook, are suitable material to prove the extremist orientation of this party.

We understand the following considerations as our contribution to the study of political language, which is the focus of politolinguistics research. Political linguistics is one of the young (Niehr 2014) but rapidly developing sub-disciplines of linguistics (Zavrl 2016). The main goal of this young border discipline between linguistics and political science (Burkhardt 1996; Kvapil 2017; Cingerová and Dulebová 2019), which was defined in 1996 by the German scholar Armin Burkhardt (1996), is the investigation of political language, political media language and the language of politicians (Niehr 2014). Research into the political language and communication of one political party is important in order to create a basis for further comparative research. We consider that the communication strategies of right-wing extremists are similar across Europe. Emphasizing the importance of one's own nation is, in our view, an important common feature of right-wing extremists from several European countries. In this text, we will present how Slovak right-wing extremists perceive the importance of the Slovak nation.

In this paper, we do not have the ambition to compare the political communication of ĽSNS with some other ideologically similarly oriented party in another European country. However, we will use the diachronic comparative method to identify content and language changes in the political communication of the same party over several years. Specifically, from the election campaign before 2016 to the present. In this period, three fundamental factors have influenced the style of political communication of Slovak right-wing extremists appeared. The first, the success in the parliamentary elections in 2016. The second, the proposal of the Slovak General Prosecutor Jaromír Čížnár to dissolve this party. However, the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic rejected it. Finally, the third factor comprises the lawsuits against the party's leaders for spreading extremism. We believe that extremists under the influence of these three factors have changed communication strategy, from the open spreading of hatred, which we can identify in their statements before elections in 2016, to moderate, albeit still radical expressions of certain ethnic, national, religious, or sexual minorities.

⁴ The analysed website of Slovak right-wing extremists (naseslovensko.net) no longer works at this moment (October 2020). Due to criminal proceedings against the chairperson of the ĽSNS, Marian Kotleba, extremists turned this web page off. There was a lot of evidence on this website about the anti-democratic thinking of Slovak right-wing extremists.

2 A BRIEF LOOK AT THE THEORY OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM

In view of the fact that our primary concern is to explore the lexis of right-wing extremism in relation to the category *nation*, we try to focus only on the main features of right-wing extremism. The term right-wing extremism is used as a collective term for expressions such as racism, fascism, neo-fascism, Nazism, neo-Nazism, nationalism, ultra-nationalism, right-wing populism, anti-Semitism, or hostility towards foreigners. This means that it is used as a common name for a number of anti-democratic political ideas, sets of ideas, or activities that, on the one hand, may show several common attributes, on the other hand, they may differ significantly from one another (Pfahl-Traughber 2001).

Backes and Jesse (1993) understand right-wing extremism as an anti-individualist movement that negates the basic principles of democracy and its major achievement - the constitutional state. Instead of a state that is based on the principle of equal political rights for every citizen, according to right-wing extremists there should be a political order that institutionalizes inequality based on origin, performance, national, ethnic and racial affiliation. In Western Europe, the right-wing extremists are characterized primarily by their sympathy for national socialism, or more precisely neo-Nazism. Despite their intrinsic heterogeneity, according to the German author Armin Pfahl-Traughber (2001, 14–16) they share the following features:

- Rejection of the principle of equality. The ideology of inequality is expressed in the social discrimination of certain people, or whole groups, and it is based on ethnic, physical or mental differences.
- Overestimating of one's own ethnicity. The highest criterion for identifying identity is categorisation of people according to ethnic, national or racial origin. Their own category is rated as the highest, which in turn creates inferior members of other races, ethnicities or nationalities.
- Anti-pluralism. Pluralism, arising from value, interest or opinion conflicts, is seen as a factor undermining the integrity of the community. For this reason, extremists strive for creating a closed society that is made up of one unit - racial, religious and national.
- Authoritarianism. The state is the dominant player in governing society. Every individual must submit to the authority of the state.

Since right-wing extremism is intrinsically differentiated, right-wing extremist parties differ from one another. Richard Stöss (2008) steadily differentiates among 1) moderate nationalists and foreigner-haters who act in a rather conformal manner towards the political system, 2) nationalists and neo-racists who are more critical of the existing system, 3) (neo) fascists and (neo) racists who are generally hostile to the existing system.

In a similar vein, Cas Mudde (2000b) distinguishes between consistently anti-democratic extreme right and nominally democratic, but populist radical right. This Dutch political scientist concludes that this is a group of parties sharing a common ideological or programmatic basis (Mudde 2000b). This is primarily based on nationalism, which includes, among other things, hostile attitudes towards immigrants.

The perception of nationalism by extremists, as we already mentioned, is based on hostility towards immigrants. We consider every behaviour with a negative impact on national identity that differs from the behaviour of an autochthonous

society as hostile (Mudde, 2000b). Extremists perceive nationalism in their aggressive form, i.e., the nation is understood as a social entity superior to other nations and nationalities. The interests of one's own nation stand on an absolute top and hold precedence over the interests of other nations or supra-nationals, or more precisely international organizations. Emphasis on national supremacy, national traditions, or superiority over other nations is just one branch of right-wing extremists. Another branch emphasizes the uniqueness of its own race over other races. In Central Europe, we encounter hostility especially to the Romani, in Western Europe it is hostility to certain groups of immigrants (especially black and possibly immigrants from Arab countries). Kailitz (2004) notes four signs of racism among right-wing extremists:

- the notion that humanity is composed of genetically distinct racial groups,
- genetic differences create differences between races in terms of behaviour, intelligence and morality,
- some races are superior to others,
- suppressing the rights of certain ethnic groups.

Thus, for Kailitz (2004), racism is an important feature of political extremists on the right side of the ideological axis. For this German author, extremists are groups or individuals who, for racial or nationalist reasons, do not recognize the rights of certain social groups, especially immigrants and asylum seekers. However, the question in this context is which political party will openly proclaim the biological superiority of one nation, or race over another, if for such attitudes the court may prohibit the activity of a political party. For this reason, it is necessary to look at racism from a different perspective than the traditional approach. According to Armin Pfahl-Traughber (2019), racism can be perceived from two perspectives. In the narrower sense, racism is based on the biological argumentative construction of race. In this type of racism, it is the derogatory attitudes of individuals towards different racial groups. In a broader sense, expressions that diminish the seriousness or insult certain groups of people on the basis of their cultural affiliation can also be considered racism. In this case, we are talking about the so-called cultural racism, culturalism or neo-racism (Pfahl-Traughber 2019). This type of racism is not based on the idea of the superiority of some groups or nations over others. It is based on the belief that different lifestyles and traditions are incompatible and that removing any borders is harmful (Balibar and Wallerstein 1992).

In the context of this thinking, it should be noted that Slovak extremists have also undergone development. In the early period of the existence of Slovak right-wing extremism, it was possible to identify several manifestations of open racism. Right-wing extremists used very negative language means to express their superiority over Jews, Roma, Muslims, migrants or homosexuals. Due to concerns about the dissolution of the party (similarly to the predecessor of ĽSNS *Slovenská pospolitost'* (Slovak Brotherhood), which was banned by the Supreme Court in 2006), or from criminal prosecution of individual party members, the communication of ĽSNS leaders is currently adapting to standard political communication. However, as we will see in the analysis of the language of Slovak right-wing extremists, they do not express open racism, but their communication strategies contain elements of cultural racism.

3 EXTREMISTS' COMPREHENSION OF THE CATEGORY NATION

The language of right-wing extremists, or extreme radical right-wing political parties, is specific, and some authors examine it as a special phenomenon (Schuppener 2013; Štefančík and Hvasta 2019). Right-wing extremists are creative in the creation of new language expressions, or in the rediscovery of historicisms, usually associated with negative historical periods. Jeremy A. Frimer et al (2019) argue, "the language of extremists on both the left and the right is more negative than the language of ideological moderates" (Frimer et al. 2019, 1217). According to Rainer Strobl (2001), three elements are evident in the political communication of right-wing extremists: the dehumanization of foreign groups, verbal aggression against minorities, and the nationalist idealization of one's own (national) group. We also find all these three elements in the political communication of Slovak extremists, whether it is emphasizing the important position of the Slovak nation or verbal aggression towards other, foreign, otherwise thinking groups.

The language of the Slovak right-wing extremism depends primarily on nationalism and several basic themes that are universal for extremist and radical parties across Central and Western Europe. Authors who compare the programmatic priorities of extremist parties in Europe state that today, it is above all a negative delimitation aimed at international migration, Islam, different cultures and ongoing European integration (Smolík 2013; Mareš 2014).

The universal feature of extremist anti-systemic parties is a program orientation towards the nation and an ordinary man (Spier 2006; Smolík 2018). Nation is a special category of extremist political communication. It is perceived as a homogeneous ethnic mass, not as an internally heterogeneous entity, despite the fact that the heterogeneity of nation states is typical of contemporary and modern Europe (Gbúrová 1996). The term nation is understood by extremists as domestic, ethnically homogeneous population based on "biological purity" (Schellenberg 2009), which is usually threatened not only from outside, but also from inside, even though there is, in fact, no homogeneous nation because it is internally differentiated ethnically, religiously, culturally or socially. According to Pfahl-Traughber (2019), extremists defy by this stand one of the fundamental principles of liberal democracy, namely pluralism.

Through the category nation, anti-systemic politicians integrate different socio-economically marginalized groups of inhabitants, or people who have not been able to adapt to the new conditions created after the economic and political transformation in the 1990s, or to the new challenges of the current globalized world, into one homogeneous community. Extremists provide a sense of importance (or pride), though often only seemingly, to these subjects.

Although LSNS has changed several content priorities over the years, nationalism has remained its central ideological basis. According to Jansen and Borggräf (2007), the idea of a nation enables to define one part of society as "we" and the rest as "others", "those of others" or "foreigners". It is therefore a way to include people who are unable to orient themselves in contemporary modern world, helping them return their self-esteem, to free their frustration from their own failures, from the inability to respond to the challenges of the globalization process, and thus help them to gain a sense of importance. However, whether it is real or fictitious importance, it does not play an important role for the individual, because creating a sense of belonging to any community with important roles is important. Dichotomous categorization of individuals into two

groups "we" and "those others" is a simple construct, which is aimed at providing guidance for understanding the world for people without better education.

The ideas of nationalism allow everyone, even a socially unsuccessful individual, to become part of a larger group. This group is usually presented as a community that has been through various injustices (besides other things from others, usually neighbouring nations, or social groups), so it needs to free itself from enemies and build its own sovereignty independently of other nations, or from the will of international organizations. In this context, the idea of the need to protect the nation and defend it from the inner and outer enemies appears. In a nationalist language, the uncritical highlighting of some historical events or personalities associated with them is often present. And it does not matter whether it was a person with a positive tendency to the principles of liberal democracy, or vice versa, people with an anti-democratic approach.

Nationalism can be seen from two perspectives, especially when we distinguish between inclusive and exclusive nationalism (Riescher 2005). Inclusive nationalism, whose synonym is patriotism, has played a positive role in the historical process of the modern European nations. Indeed, this type of nationalism promotes the creation of collective identity, integrates the various parts of society into a common whole, regardless of political belief. Inclusive nationalism has created a value and thought system for individual nations, helping them to build constitutional patriotism. It raised national awareness by justifying the existence of a nation, highlighting its positive role in history, underlining some important historical milestones, a role in international politics, and creating a positive vision of the nation for the next period (Wehler 2001).

In addition to the positive effects on nation formation and national awareness, nationalism can also have the opposite effect, especially when it comes to exclusive nationalism. The synonym of this type of nationalism is chauvinism characterized by aggressive delimitation from other states, nations or ethnic groups, expressions of elevation over other nations, discrimination or, in extreme form, the destruction of other national or ethnic groups (Riescher 2005, 599). Expressions of exclusive nationalism can also be seen in the process of regime transformation and are the part of the political communication of the contemporary extremists. In the 1990s, "nationalism and national populism were the obstacles to the consolidation of the liberal democracy and the integration ambitions of Slovakia" (Mesežnikov and Gyárfašová 2016, 39). Even in the context of right-wing extremists, it is usually "intolerant antiliberal nationalism" (Bötticher and Mareš 2012, 315).

4 WE VS. THE OTHERS

In view of the fact that the central category of political communication of right-wing extremists is the nation, in the language of this ideological group there are regular expressions associated with the nation. The extremists use these terms in the form of a noun or adjective: *nation*, *Slovak nation*, *national* or the name of the country *Slovakia* (or as an adjective *Slovak*) as a synonym for a nation. In order to highlight the positive attitude towards the nation, the extremists use the national prefix *pro* with adjective (*pro-national*, *pro-Slavic*, *pro-Slovak*). This prefix is intended to emphasize a very positive attitude towards a nation or country. The main features of the communication of the Slovak right-wing extremists are illustrated in the following sentence:

- "*Unlike them, we will never betray a nation or God*" (ĽSNS 2016).

This sentence is stated in the party manifesto of ĽSNS 2016 and represents the way the Slovak right-wing extremists think. In this sentence, it is possible to identify several significant expressions of the political communication of the Kotlebovci – ĽSNS party. Extremists define themselves against the existing treacherous political elite (from them), which is in the language of the extremists the enemy of the people by using personal pronouns (we, us, them,..). The personal pronoun they (or in the form of them) not only embody the political elite, but practically everyone who is against the extremists.

In the given example the nation (whose fundamental part are extremists, i.e., us) is a central category whose interests extremists want to defend, protect, advocate, stand up for. In addition to personal pronouns, the language of right-wing extremists often includes possessive pronouns, e.g., *our* (*our nation, our Slovakia, our country, our homeland, our culture, our traditions, our leader, our president, even our women*). Since on the one hand there is always Slovak, even on the example of using adjectives it is possible to identify dichotomous viewing of the sense of friend vs. enemy. The role of these vehicles of expression is to create a contradiction between *our* (*Slovak, Slavic, white, decent, integrity, etc.*) and foreign, i.e., *other* (*black, colour, African, Muslim, non-adaptive, asocial, etc.*). To emphasize the difference between Slovak and foreign, we identify in the language of extremists the use of comparative and superlative adjectives, or hyperbolising nouns (*disaster, terror, explosion, destruction*) and adjectives (*huge, gigantic, record, brutal, awful, disastrous, shocking, dizzying, bloodthirsty*). The right-wing extremists use these language means to highlight a certain moment of criticism by influencing the emotional level of the recipient of the political message.

What specifically, the Slovak right-wing extremists understand under the term nation (or in the form of an adjective *national*), testify, for example, the status of sympathizer ĽSNS published on Facebook. In this case, the racist content of the statement is evident. Only a person with white skin is considered to be the part of the nation. The others should be a part of different communities. The adjective *white* is therefore as important in the language of extremists as the noun *nation*. Through the adjective *white*, they define themselves against members of other races or ethnic communities. The adjective *white* often occurs in collocations, e.g., *white Slovak, white women, white people, white children, white families, white decent, white workers*, and so on.

"*According to his experience, these patrols are useless because they have not prevented many conflicts between gypsies themselves and gypsies and whites*" (Milan Uhrík, Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic for the ĽSNS, since 2019 Member of the European Parliament ĽSNS 2017).

"*Instead of white children of indigenous inhabitants, the bands of young Arabs are wandering through ravaged cities, and instead of normal, hefty men, there are men dressed up as princesses in skirts on the streets*" (Andrej Medvecký, regional chairman of the ĽSNS in Žilina, the ĽSNS 2018).

If we compare the communication of extremists in the past and today, we find important differences. In view of the fact that the Slovak extremists faced up to an attempt to ban the party's activities by the General Prosecutor at the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic, they are currently wary of commenting on other races. Nowadays, the racist expressions are still typical for supporters and voters of the ĽSNS on the social networks (Kluknavská and Hruška 2019; Miškolci, Kováčová and Rigová 2020), but not for the language of official party

representatives. Although the terms like *gypsy*, *parasite*, and *asocial* are still present in their language, and they have also been dealt with by the Supreme Court in April 2019, when the General Prosecutor submitted the request for the dissolution of the party, the party's representatives consider their use more responsibly. Thus, in the case of the current leadership of the ĽSNS, there can be seen a tendency not to communicate in the narrower perspective of racism, i.e., not to proclaim openly the biological superiority of the white race over other races. However, if we look at racism in its broader perspective, from the point of view of other ethnic groups, cultures or religions, which are offended, then it is possible to characterize the ĽSNS by adjective racist.

5 NATION AND CHRISTIANITY

In view of the fact that the people, i.e., the nation is the central category for the ĽSNS, the names of outstanding personalities from the Slovak history often appear in the language of its representatives. Mostly, those who are connected with the process of creating a modern Slovak nation in the 19th century (Štúr, Hurban, Hodža), the politicians of Slovak nationality in the first Czechoslovak Republic (Hlinka, but also Štefánik), or representatives of the totalitarian regime of the Slovak Republic (1939–1945) during the Second World War (Tiso, Tuka).

"Šaňo Mach, our leader, protect us from the Jews" (Richard Boleček 2016, source Benčík 2017).

"The anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest sons of the Slovak nation who was also the president of the first Slovak Republic, Mr. Msgr. ThDr. Joseph Tiso, sympathizers and members of the People's Party Our Slovakia have not forgotten this year either" (ĽSNS 2018).

Christianity plays an extremely important role in the language of right-wing extremists. Emphasizing the importance of Christianity for the life of Slovaks forms an integral part of the political communication of the Slovak right-wing extremists. Right-wing extremists often use religious terms (Bible terms) that are more typical for the Catholic Church (such as the Ten Commandments, the culture of death, the Son of God, revelation):

"The party wants to thank God in the first place" (ĽSNS 2016).

"Slovakia will belong to us again, it will be Slovak and Christian" (Marian Kotleba, source Vražda 2017).

"Christmas is one of the most important holidays of the year. During these days we commemorate the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ - the Son of God" (ĽSNS 2018).

God and the Catholic Church are an important part of the extremists' political communication. An explanation for this communication strategy can be found not only in the religious character of a large part of the Slovak population, primarily in the countryside (Bunčák 2001, Csanyi 2020). Religion is important for extremists because through religion they try to find connections with the first Slovak Republic (1939 - 1945). The head of this undemocratic and anti-Semitic state was the Catholic priest Jozef Tiso as a successor of another Catholic priest, Andrej Hlinka. The Slovak extremists started their program with anti-Semitism, however with a lesser voter response (Kluknavská 2012; Kluknavská and Smolík 2016), besides denying the Holocaust by presenting a positive image of the fascist

state, known as the Slovak State, which existed during the Second World War and its leader Jozef Tiso (Just 2019). However, right-wing extremists were unable to mobilize voters with these issues and were therefore on the periphery of the party system (Kucharčík and Řádek 2012).

The connection between the present and the “war republic” is evident not only at a symbolic level, but we can also identify some contexts in the language area. The motto *For God and for the Nation* was the central motto of the Slovak form of fascism of the first Slovak Republic (Szabó 2017), and it is similar to the present official greeting of the right-wing extremists „*Na stráž!*“ (On Guard!) (Sokolovič 2009).

Among the historical personalities, whose merits for the development of the Slovak nation are most emphasized by the extremists, is the President of the first Slovak State in the foreground. Jozef Tiso was not only the head of the state, but he was awarded the title of a *vodca* (in German *Führer*) by the parliamentary resolution of 1942. The Slovak right-wing extremists celebrate this state formation as the top of the process of forming the Slovak nation. But the regime of this Slovak republic (1939–1945) was unequivocally totalitarian. All organizations that did not stand close to the ruling HSLŠ were dissolved at the end of the 1930s. The HSLŠ took its cue from the Nazi organizations of Hitler's Germany and established its own organizations with a totalitarian management system, including Hlinka's Guard and Hlinka's Youth (Sokolovič 2009). And besides we would like to mention that this state had sent thousands of innocent people, its own citizens, to death only because of their religion or ethnicity. The extremists plunge the negative aspects of the totalitarian regime of the first Slovak Republic into insignificance. As a rule, they highlight the economic and cultural achievements of this period's policy.

Extremists doubtfully see the role of the government of the first Slovak Republic in the liquidation of European Jews during World War II. During the existence of the *Slovenská pospolitost'* (Slovak Brotherhood) they took over in the modified form some symbols and uniforms of the clerical-fascist organizations of the war period. The symbols and uniforms were almost identical, but the extremists had to change them because wearing the symbols of the clerical-fascist regime was against the law. However, this form of politics did not provide a sufficient response for the right-wing extremists from the Slovak voters (Kluknavská 2012). They were on the edge of public interest because of the voter preferences, which were below half of one percent.

Undisguised positive relationship of the ĽSNS to the first Slovak Republic is one of the decisive reasons, why several authors characterize this party as extremist, fascist or neo-Nazi (Drábik 2019). The regime of the Slovak Republic between 1939 and 1945 discriminated against groups based on political, national, religious or sexual criteria. The regime was responsible for the physical liquidation of the part of its population (Kamenec 2020). Thousands of inhabitants of the Slovak Republic lived during this period not only in oppression, but they were directly discriminated by the state power and were worried about their lives. Defending this totalitarian regime means to call into question the principles that are fundamental for the current democratic system of liberal democracy and open society.

6 THE NATION AND ITS ENEMIES

Right-wing extremists determine nationality by blood, not by birthplace, residency or citizenship. Thus, in the perspective of right-wing extremism, the category of the nation does not include immigrants, members of other races and, in some cases, representatives of autochthonous minorities, because these "foreign" groups could disrupt the ethnic homogeneity of the majority community, disrupt "homogeneous demos" (Wodak 2016). Social groups, which stand outside a homogeneous nation, are usually attributed responsibility for various social problems by extremists. According to Uwe Backes (1989, 305), "extremist groups create an image of the enemy, into which they project all kinds of negative qualities." The image of the enemy should serve to strengthen the group of individuals and to emphasize their missionary role. The extremist parties use this strategy for developing elitist thinking among their followers. They portray themselves as people with a special mission (for example, to protect a nation, a national identity) who are surrounded by enemies against whom it is necessary to fight relentlessly.

The category of enemies, which in the mental world of extremists threaten a nation, is particularly wide. In this context, it is important whether they are persons, the groups of persons or organizations within the state, or persons or organizations based abroad. Alternatively, they are entire states. The list of enemies is virtually infinite, usually based on the current internal or foreign policy situation. By way of illustration, in the language of right-wing extremists, Romani people and migrants (i.e., immigrants, refugees, Muslims, Africans, which means the people of other skin colour or race) are currently considered to be the most important enemies, while the topic of international migration and the integration of immigrants the Slovak political parties, including nationalist, ignored for a long time. Many Slovak citizens did not have direct experience with migrants from culturally different countries (Letavajová, Chlebcová Hečková, Krno, Bošelová 2020). It is the immediate absence with immigrants that we can consider as the reason why political parties did not articulate this topic before 2015. In the past, far-right parties were building their policy primarily on anti-Hungarian propaganda, in which Hungarian was a threat to the identity of the Slovak nation.

Before the Slovak extremists discovered the topic of international migration, the members of the Romany minority were considered to be the biggest violator of the idea of a homogeneous nation, whose extremists address particularly by derogatory terms such as parasites, Gypsies, Gypsy terrorists, Gypsy extremists, asocial, Indians, black slams (settlements where socially excluded Romani people live). In this context, it should be added that the term parasite (pl. Parasites) was used by Adolf Hitler (2000) to mark Jews in his book *Mein Kampf* (see also Bein 1965). In Hitler's logic, the term parasites referred to the groups of people that, like its original biological significance, have a detrimental effect on the organism, in this case the German nation (Schmitz-Berning 1988). Ötsch and Horaczek (2017) allege that if a politician wants to show hatred to other people or groups, he usually uses an expression from the animal kingdom. In the sense, the others are not "the right" people (Ötsch and Horaczek 2017, 61).

"We will make an order with the thieves in ties, as well as with the parasites in the settlements" (LSNS 2016).

"We will remove the advantages of gypsy breadwinners over decent people. We give nothing free of charge to the parasites who refuse to work - no houses, benefits, or allowances" (LSNS 2016).

The Slovak extremists see Romani people as an important enemy. At this point, we can emphasize that thanks to the shift of content priorities from the glorification of the undemocratic first Slovak Republic and its political representatives to the criticism of the Romany minority their electorate has been extended in parliamentary elections (Kluknavská and Smolík 2016) and they overcome the quorum needed to join the National Council. In addition to migrants, the international organizations, primarily the European Union and NATO, are considered important external enemies. International organizations are represented as entities that not only threaten the sovereignty of the Slovak nation, but even bring it to bankruptcy, i.e., to a definitive demise. The European Union is presented in the language of extremists as an institution through which Slovakia is losing its national nature, sovereignty, autonomy and the domestic politics is subordinated to the politics of the EU, from which come not only harsh and national sovereignty restricting regulations, but even migrants. The European Union is so presented in the logic friend vs. enemy, i.e., in the sense of we – good Slovakian, and the others, the European, who represent the threat of cultural identity, traditions, society, Christianity, and also security. Right-wing extremists often use the term "*Brussels dictate*" in the context of the European Union. The Slovak extremists regularly use the term *European Union* with various negative-sounding attributes, such as *rotten* or *perverse*.

*"The **dictates of Brussels** are liquidating Slovakia" (LSNS 2015).*

*"The EU is against God and the nation. The EU openly supports homosexuals and transgender people and shows them as role models for young people. He promotes mutual marriages of these **perverts**" (LSNS 2019).*

*"The EU is gradually pushing these **perversions** towards us in Slovakia" (LSNS 2019).*

*"We put Slovak interests above **the dictates of Brussels** and therefore reject restrictions on the sovereignty of the member states of the European Union" (LSNS 2020).*

In addition to the European Union, the criticism of other international organizations and institutions of West European or American origin appears in the language of extremists. This criticism is primarily directed against NATO. This defensive grouping of sovereign states is presented as an *aggressive, criminal organization* headed by the United States of America, and the member states are just "*personal servants in the hands of the Americans.*" The extremists attribute to the North Atlantic Alliance not only military interventions into the sovereignty of national state, but they also see behind its activities the reasons for the emergence of a migration crisis in 2015. They do not take into account a number of factors that would be more difficult to explain to the public, in this case extremists also use a simple template to justify global problems. They do not take into consideration a number of factors that would be more difficult to explain to the public, they only need black and white vision of the world and a certain factor to which they then attribute the existence of current domestic or worldwide crisis situations.

*"Slovakia has been a member of the NATO **criminal organization** for more than 11 years" (LSNS 2016).*

"NATO is a **criminal and terrorist organization** that serves primarily as an instrument of **American expansionism**. ... Being a member of NATO means being an ally of assassins!" (LSNS 2016).

7 CONCLUSION

By analysing the language of Slovak right-wing extremists, we found that in the political communication of the LSNS dominate two language figures: synecdoche and topos. The synecdoche (latin *totum pro parte* – the whole for a part), which is a word or phrase in which a part of something is used to represent a whole or conversely a whole is used to represent a part of something, appears in the case of right-wing extremism especially in using the word nation (Riesigl 2011). Of course, it is not related to all people belonging to a nation, i.e., to a community that is characterized by, among other things, a common language, a common usually bounded territory, or some common cultural specifics resulting from the local traditions. This special rhetorical figure, *totum for parte*, applies mostly to a particular socio-economic group, or more precisely electorate of a populist entity. Rarely are all the citizens of the Slovak Republic of Slovak nationality termed the nation. Extremists use this term to denote only the part of society that supports their program priorities, they consider the citizens on the other side as enemies. Extremist parties deliberately create an enemy image that reflects multiple negative features. Creating an enemy serves to strengthen cohesion within one's own group of voters or sympathizers. In view of the fact that extremists present simple proposals to defeat an enemy, such a communication strategy helps to strengthen the importance of their missionary role. Extremists thus help to build the notion that the nation is surrounded by enemies against whom it is necessary to stand out against and lead a relentless fight.

The second significant and much more significant, if not the most significant, rhetorical figure by which right-wing extremists justify their arguments or allegations, or they question the existing status quo, is the nation's topos and its version is in argumentation theory called as an *argumentum ad populum* (Riesigl 2011). This model expresses argumentation in the sense that if something is required by a nation, the majority of the nation, or at least by some socio-economic group, the extremists perceive them as the LSNS voters, and thus that wish should be transformed into reality. Or, on the contrary, if a nation does not like something, it cannot remain or become a reality.

In the language of the right-wing extremists, the dichotomous logic of a friend vs. an enemy comes to the fore. The spectrum of enemies of the nation is extremely wide in the case of Slovak extremists. This includes, in addition to refugees and economic migrants, Muslim migrants, regardless of the reason for leaving the country of origin, as well as members of the Romany minority and Jews, or more precisely organizations and businesses owned by Jews. However, we also find here other thinkers, supporters of the European Union and NATO, supporters of American foreign policy, as well as ruling elites of the democratic centre, Freemasons, banks and large companies with foreign (Western) capital, NGOs, as well as established media and sexual minorities. The enemies of other cultures are represented in the language of right-wing extremists in racist and xenophobic logic, and for this reason, they use a variety of negative substantives or adjectives, including vulgarisms, which are extremely numerous in the language of sympathizers of LSNS on the social networks.

The language of the Slovak right-wing extremists is characterized by its specific features in writing, and therefore it is important to examine it as part of the research of the political discourse (Dulebová 2013), but we also find certain specifics in the verbal level. Extremists express their views more strikingly, in a more approachable and simpler way. Their language often includes expressions taken from a military, militaristic vocabulary (Štefančík 2020). The extremist is not interested in explaining, he/she is interested in captivating, fascinating, communicating in a different way than most politicians do, laughing at their opponents, or offending them directly, for their ethnic, religious, social or racial affiliation. Extremists regularly work with the motives of threat and danger in order to cause fears among voters. Fear is considered an important trigger for political action, and it is important means of voter mobilization for extremists. As a rule, extremist formations legitimize their political goals by referring to security requirements (Wodak 2016). Every crisis creates a sense of threat and extremists can work with this sense of fear. However, behind this whole communication strategy there is no effort to help, because the nation – society is often threatened only fictitiously. The first and foremost aim of this communication tactic is to convince the voters about the threat. Regardless of whether or not the arguments they use have or do not have information value and they can be convincingly verified, irrespective of whether it is a real threat or a fictitious one.

By analysing the language of Slovak right-wing extremists, we also observed the developmental shift in the political communication of ĽSNS representatives. We wanted to compare how the communication of a non-parliamentary party differs from the communication strategies of a parliamentary party. Based on a diachronic comparison of individual statements of the representatives of this ideological spectrum, we can state that in a few years (from the election campaign in 2016 to the present) the official language of the representatives of the ĽSNS has changed significantly in terms of absolute extreme towards the acceptable middle. This phenomenon can be explained by the effort to open up to wider groups of the population. However, we cannot exclude the efforts of the party to avoid a ban on the party's activities after their experience of dissolving the party Slovak Brotherhood – the National Party. In this context, it should be noted that the Slovak courts have already condemned two party leaders for disseminating extremist content. While Milan Mazurek (the party's former vice-chairman) received only a financial fine and lost his mandate, Marian Kotleba, the party's leader, was sentenced to four years and four months of imprisonment for founding, supporting, and promoting a movement that suppressed human rights. If the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic confirms this judgment of the Slovak Specialized Court, Kotleba will not only be imprisoned for more than four years but he will also lose the mandate of a member of the Slovak Parliament. The accusation was based, besides other things, on the racist symbolism of the number 1488, which Marian Kotleba used at a party public event (Kysel' 2010). The diachronic comparison therefore shows that the representatives of the ĽSNS not only replaced uniforms with green T-shirts but also modified their communication strategies. However, the extremists still use many lexical units that incite ethnic, racial, or religious hatred. Besides, if there is an attempt by official party representatives to change the style of political communication, this is absent from sympathizers and ordinary members of the party. Therefore, it is still appropriate for us to continue to label this party formation as a right-wing extremist.

REFERENCES

- Backes, Uwe. 1989. *Politischer Extremismus in demokratischen Verfassungsstaaten*. Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Backes, Uwe and Jesse Eckhard. 1993. *Politischer Extremismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Berlin: Propyläen.
- Balibar, Etienne and Immanuel Wallerstein. 1992. *Rasse Klasse Nation. Ambivalente Identitäten*. Berlin: Argument Verlag.
- Bein, Alexander. 1965. "Der jüdische Parasit. Bemerkungen zur Semantik der Judenfrage." *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 18 (2): 121–149.
- Benčík, Ján. 2016–2020. *Blog Jána Benčíka*. Available at <https://dennikn.sk/blog/724871/kotleba-lsns-kazdy-prostriedok-dobry>.
- Bötticher, Astrid and Miroslav Mareš. 2012. *Extremismus: Theorien – Konzepte – Formen*. München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag.
- Bunčák, Ján. 2001. "Religiozita na Slovensku v európskom rámci." *Sociológia* 33 (1): 47–69.
- Burkhardt, Armin. 1996. Politolinguistik. Versuch einer Ortsbestimmung. In *Sprachstrategien und Dialogblockaden: Linguistische und politikwissenschaftliche Studien zur politischen Kommunikation*, eds. Klein, Josef and Hajo Diekmannshenke, 75–100. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter.
- Cingerová, Nina and Irina Dulebová. 2019. *Jazyk a konflikt. My a tí druhí v ruskom verejnom diskurze*. Bratislava: UK.
- Csanyi, Peter. 2019. Review of the 2019 European Parliament Election in Slovakia. In *Ekonomické, politické a právne otázky medzinárodných vzťahov 2019*, eds. Cibul'a, Adam et al., 69–77. Bratislava: EKONÓM.
- Csanyi, Peter. 2020. "Impact of Immigration on Europe and its Approach towards the Migration (European Union States vs. Visegrad Group Countries)." *Journal of Comparative Politics* 13 (2): 4–23.
- Drábik, Jakub. 2019. *Fašizmus*. Bratislava: Premedia.
- Dulebová, Irina. 2013. K otázke definície pojmu politický diskurz. In *Sociolinguistica Slovaca 7, Jazyk a diskurz v kultúrnom a politickom kontexte*, ed. Ondrejkovič, Slavomír, 45–51. Bratislava: VEDA.
- Frimer, A. Jeremy et al. 2019. "Extremists on the Left and Right Use Angry, Negative Language." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 45 (8): 1216–1231.
- Gbúrová, Marcela. 1996. *Medzi identitou a integritou*. Prešov: Slovacontact.
- Hitler, Adolf. 2000. *Mein Kampf*. Bratislava: ARA.
- Jansen, Christian and Henning Borggräfe. 2007. *Nation – Nationalität – Nationalismus*. Frankfurt am Main and New York: Campus Verlag.
- Jesse, Eckhard and Tom Thieme. 2011. Extremismus in den EU-Staaten. Theoretische und konzeptionelle Grundlagen. In *Extremismus in den EU-Staaten*, eds. Jesse, Eckhard and Tom Thieme, 11–32. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.
- Just, Petr. 2019. "Slovak Cabinet after 2016: From Single Party Majority to Motley Crew." *Journal of Comparative Politics* 12 (1): 71–85.
- Kailitz, Steffen. 2004. *Politischer Extremismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Eine Einführung*. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Kamenec, Ivan. 2020. "Changes in the Attitudes of the Slovak Population Regarding the So-Called Solution to the 'Jewish Question' (1938–1945)." *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* 40 (7): 44–52.
- Kluknavská, Alena. 2012. "Krajne pravicové strany v parlamentných voľbách 2012 na Slovensku." *Rexter – časopis pro výzkum radikalismu, extremismu a terorismu* 2012 (1): 1–35.
- Kluknavská, Alena and Matej Hruška. 2019. "We Talk about the "Others" and You Listen Closely the Extreme Right Communication on Social Media." *Problems of Post-Communism* 66 (1): 59–70.
- Kluknavská, Alena and Josef Smolík. 2016. "We hate them all? Issue adaptation of extreme right parties in Slovakia 1993–2016." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 49 (4): 335–344.
- Kotlebovci – ĽSNS. 2016–2020. *Webový portál ĽSNS*. Available at <http://www.naseslovensko.net>.

- Kucharčík, Rudolf and Miroslav Řádek. 2012. Politické strany a vývoj stranického systému na Slovensku od roku 1992. In *Vol'by 2012*, ed. Štrauss, Dušan, 228–247. Trenčín: Transparentnosť.
- Kvapil, Roman. 2017. Štýlová diferenciacia jazyka politiky. In *Jazyk v politických súvislostiach*, ed. Kvapil, Roman, 9–18. Bratislava: EUBA.
- Kysel', Tomáš. 2020. Rozsudok nad Kotlebom: 13 dôkazov, prečo podľa sudkyne propagoval neonacizmus úmyselne. *Aktuality.sk*, 17 December 2020. Available at <https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/848920/rozsudok-nad-kotlebom-13-dokazov-preco-podla-sudkyne-propagoval-neonacizmus-umyselne>.
- Letavajová, Silvia, Chlebcová Hečková, Andrea Krno Svetozár and Miriama Bošelová. 2020. *Novodobé migrácie vo verejnej, mediálnej a politickej diskusii*. Nitra: UKF.
- Mareš, Miroslav. 2014. "The extreme right's relationships with Islam and Islamism in east-central Europe: from allies to enemies." *East European Politics & Societies* 28 (1): 205–224.
- Mesežnikov, Grigorij and Oľga Gyárfašová. 2016. *Súčasný pravicový extrémizmus na Slovensku: Stav, trendy, podpora*. Bratislava: IVO, HSS.
- Miškolci, Jozef, Lucia Kováčová and Edita Rigová. 2020. "Countering Hate Speech on Facebook: The Case of the Roma Minority in Slovakia." *Social Science Computer Review* 38 (2): 128–146.
- Mudde, Cas. 2000a. *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*. Manchester: University Press.
- Mudde, Cas. 2000b. "Stranická rodina – rámcová analýza." *Politologická revue* 2000 (1): 78–93.
- Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist Radical Right in Europe*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Niehr, Thomas. 2014. *Einführung in die Politolinguistik. Gegenstände und Methoden*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Ötsch, Walter and Nina Horaczek. 2017. *Populismus für Anfänger. Anleitung zur Volksverführung*. Frankfurt am Main: Westend.
- Pfahl-Traughber, Armin. 2001. *Rechtsextremismus in der Bundesrepublik*. München: C.H.Beck.
- Pfahl-Traughber, Armin. 2019. *Die AFD und der Rechtsextremismus. Eine Analyse aus politikwissenschaftlicher Perspektive*. Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Riescher, Gisela. 2005. Nationalismus. In *Lexikon der Politikwissenschaft*, eds. Nohlen, Dieter and Rainer-Olaf Schultze, 599. München: C. H. Beck.
- Riesigl, Martin. 2011. Sprache als Strategie des Populismus und Nationalismus. Südtiroler Kulturinstitut. Available at http://www.kulturinstitut.org/fileadmin/user_upload/-SPRACHSTELLE/-Nachlese/Sprache_des_Populismus_und_Nationalismus.pdf.
- Salzborn, Samuel and Anton Maegerle. 2016. "Die dunkle Seite des WWW. Rechtsextremismus im Internet." *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 10 (2): 213–231.
- Seresová, Katarína. 2017. Jazyk politiky a jeho funkcie. In *Jazyk a politika. Na pomedzí lingvistiky a politológie II*, ed. Štefančík, Radoslav, 15–20. Bratislava: EKONÓM.
- Schellenberg, Britta. 2009. *Aktuelle Entwicklungen im europäischen Rechtsextremismus*. Bonn: BPB.
- Schmitz-Berning, Cornelia. 1988. *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Schuppener, Georg. 2013. Nationale Sozialisten gegen das System – Die Lexik rechtsextremer Internet-Seiten. In *Aussiger Beiträge. Germanistische Schriftenreihe aus Forschung und Lehre*, eds. Bergerová, Hana, Marek Schmidt and Georg Schuppener, 171–190. Ústí nad Labem: Univerzita J. E. Purkyně.
- Smolík, Josef. 2013. "Krajněpravicové politické strany v zemích V4: historie a současnost." *Sociológia* 45 (4): 385–410.
- Sokolovič, Peter. 2009. *Hlinkova garda 1938 – 1945*. Bratislava: UPN.
- Spier, Tim. 2006. Populismus und Modernisierung. In *Populismus: Gefahr für die Demokratie oder nützliches Korrektiv?*, ed. Decker, Frank, 33–58. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.
- Stöss, Richard. 2008. "Extremistische Parteien. Worin besteht der Erkenntnisgewinn?" *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 2008 (47): 3–7.
- Strážnická, Alexandra. 2017. "Extremism in Slovakia – Throughout Analysis." *European Journal of Transformation Studies* 5 (2): 60–68.
- Strobl, Rainer. 2001. *Wissenschaftliche Erklärungsmuster des Rechtsextremismus*. Available at https://www.proval-services.net/download/vortrag_strobl_re.pdf.

- Szabó, Miloslav. 2017. „Klérofašizmus“? Katolicizmus a radikálna pravica v stredoeurópskom kontexte (1918–1945).” *Historický časopis* 65 (4): 675–687.
- Štefančík, Radoslav and Miloslav Hvasta. 2019. *Jazyk pravicového extrémizmu*. Bratislava: EKONÓM.
- Štefančík, Radoslav. 2020. “Metafora vojny v jazyku politiky.” *Lingua et vita* 9 (1): 59–69.
- Vražda, Daniel. 2017. *Kotleba. Odkiaľ prišiel a ako je možné, že sedí v parlamente*. Bratislava: N. Press.
- Wehler, Hans Ulrich. 2001. *Nationalismus. Geschichte, Formen, Folgen*. München: C.H.Beck.
- Wodak, Ruth. 2016. *Politik mit der Angst. Zur Wirkung rechtspopulistischer Diskurse*. Wien and Hamburg: Edition Konturen.
- Zavrl, Irena. 2016. Sprache der Politik – nützliche Zweideutigkeit. In *Jazyk a politika. Na pomedzí lingvistiky a politológie*, ed. Štefančík, Radoslav, 20–27. Bratislava: EKONÓM.



KONCEPT NARODA V JEZIKU SLOVAŠKE SKRAJNE DESNICE

Cilj te študije je ugotoviti, kako slovaški desničarski skrajneži dojemajo izraz narod. Predvidevamo, da je narod ključna komunikacijska kategorija slovaških desničarskih skrajnežev. Pri raziskovanju jezika desničarskih skrajnežev izhajamo iz hipoteze, da ima tovrstni politični jezik posebne značilnosti, zlasti na leksikalni ravni. Ker politična komunikacija skrajnežev temelji na izzivanju strahu pred (pogosto izmišljenim) sovražnikom, predpostavljamo obstoj dihotomne definicije v smislu prijatelj proti sovražniku, natančneje mi proti njim ali mi proti drugi. To pomeni, da skrajneži narod dojemajo kot homogeno skupino ljudi, ki jim grozijo zunanji ali domači sovražniki. V tem kontekstu razpravljamo o tem, kdo je v perspektivi desnega ekstremizma, ki je označen kot sovražnik države, in kakšno komunikacijo označujejo te družbene skupine.

Ključne besede: narod; desni ekstremizem; Slovaška; politična komunikacija; sovražnik; LSNS.

IS CULTURE A SPECIAL 'HUB' POLICY AREA FOR CO-CREATION?

Sanja VRBEK and Irene PLUCHINOTTA¹

Co-creation is promoted as a solution to the 'wicked' problems of today. Despite its applicability across policy areas and its promising effects, culture is often referred to separately, as a special field of interest and favourable environment for co-creation. Although this tacitly implies that this policy area features rather different conditions for co-creation, there are no solid arguments to justify the fact that culture is treated differently than other policy areas. To address this dilemma, the paper aims to answer whether and to what extent co-creation drivers and barriers in the area of culture are 'policy specific'. This is achieved with the help of a systematic literature review and a case study of the 2020 Rijeka European Capital of Culture project. On this basis, the paper concludes that there are no 'culture specific' drivers and barriers to justify the 'special treatment' of culture as a substantially different co-creation arena.²

Key words: culture; co-creation drivers and barriers; Fuzzy Cognitive Map; European Capital of Culture project.

1 INTRODUCTION

Co-creation is advertised as a promising solution to the 'wicked' problems of today (e.g. Rittel and Webber 1973). It is recognised as a strategy capable to counteract and reshape the precarious political and economic conditions faced by the public sector since the 2008 economic crisis, which in the light of the

¹ Sanja VRBEK holds a doctorate in political science from the University of Ljubljana (Faculty of Social Sciences) and currently works as a postdoctoral researcher on the COGOV project (Horizon 2020 No. 770591) at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Public Administration. Her main research interest is collaborative innovation in the public sector, public policy in general and Europeanisation. Contact: sanja.vrbek@fu.uni-lj.si. Irene PLUCHINOTTA is a research fellow at the University College London, the Bartlett Faculty of The Built Environment (UK). She is currently working on the innovative design and co-design of public policies. She uses System Dynamics and Operational Research approaches to support decision-making for sustainability policies. Contact: i.pluchinotta@ucl.ac.uk.

² This research received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 770591.

present COVID-19 crisis bear a risk of being amplified. Thus, co-creation is seen as an answer to the politics of austerity and financial pressures on the public sector as it mobilises the resources, knowledge and skills of different actors with the aim to improve the effectiveness and quality of public services while lowering costs (Pestoff 2014). The main result of this process is (co-)creation of public value, which leads to higher satisfaction with a particular service, as well as to the general improvement of the wellbeing of citizens and fulfilment of their needs (Osborne, Radnor and Strokosch 2016). The attractiveness of this concept stems not only from economic grounds, but also from the 'promise' to address the main problem of modern democracies – the democratic deficit (Osborne, Radnor and Strokosch 2016). The active inclusion and contribution of citizens in policy making, presumed by this concept, is seen as a path towards stronger social cohesion and democratisation in general (Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers 2015).

In such a context, culture has been given significant attention as a particularly favourable environment for co-creation (Barile and Saviano 2014; Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans 2016; Concilio and Vitellio 2016; Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018; Wiid and Mora-Avila 2018; Alexiou 2019). This could imply that culture features different conditions for co-creation, which require special attention and consequently a different approach. However, there are no evidence-based arguments that could justify culture – as a separate co-creation arena – being treated substantially differently than other policy areas.

To solve the dilemma, the paper critically discusses the drivers and barriers of co-creation in the area of culture vis-à-vis 'general' co-creation drivers and barriers noted in other policy areas. On this basis, it attempts to answer the following research question: whether and to what extent co-creation drivers and barriers in the area of culture are 'policy specific'?

To achieve this, the paper is structured in six sections. In the next section two, we initially endeavour to identify the main changes/trends in the area of culture, as well as the general features of this policy area that make this context conducive to co-creation. In addition, in section three, we present the methodology of the research, which builds on two methods: content analysis of Web of Science (WoS) papers and a case study of the 2020 Rijeka European Capital of Culture project (ECoC). In section four, with the help of the first method (i.e. content analysis), we identify and discuss both 'general' and 'culture specific' co-creation drivers and barriers. These results are further, i.e. in section five, complemented with the findings of the Rijeka 2020 ECoC case study. Finally, in the conclusion, we answer the research question and draw conclusions as to whether the special treatment of culture as a 'hub' policy area for co-creation is justified or not.

2 CO-CREATION IN THE AREA OF CULTURE

There are three breaking points in the area of culture recognised as crucial for setting the stage for co-creation. The first is traced back to the 1960s, when a new 'consumerist' idea of culture emerged, placing the user at its centre (Barile and Saviano 2014). This is especially evident in the redefinition of the idea of cultural heritage featuring both tangible and intangible cultural goods – the former referring to material cultural sites, while the latter to symbols and values. Non-material aspects of cultural heritage have become subject to wider interpretations (and consequently value creation) by external actors as

recipients of culture. This new type of cultural value creation is seen to derive “from the interaction between an offering system, which has been organised to propose a value and a beneficiary/user who is capable of extracting that value through the interaction process” (Barile and Saviano 2014, 59).

The second breaking point is noted in the 1990s, with the technological progress and penetration of internet in every segment of life (Rutten 2018). This stirred the interest for greater participation and collaboration in culture and arts, while digital technologies also reshaped the management of culture as such – for instance, by making cultural heritage artefacts more visible and accessible to the public (Concilio and Vitellio 2016; Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018). Moreover, digitalisation contributed to the inclusion of different actors and their active contribution to the process of co-creation of cultural value (Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018). Technology actually transformed citizens (or at least the perception of them) from passive recipients of culture to active co-creators of cultural content, who have the opportunity to critically deliberate and challenge deeply entrenched representations by the dominant (mainstream) culture (Rutten 2018). Hence, digitalisation could be interpreted as the main ‘ally’ of the processes of democratisation and de-elitisation of culture – firstly, in terms of boosting connections/interactions among users and providers of cultural services and secondly, by challenging traditional processes of cultural value creation (Lang, Shang and Vragov 2009; Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018).

Last but not least, the third event boosting the attractiveness of co-creation in the area of culture (but also in other policy areas) is the 2008 economic crisis. In the aftermath of the crisis, co-creation was recognised as an alternative to the downfall of the welfare state and the lack of public financing for non-profitable public services (Wiid and Mora-Avila 2018), with culture as their very epitome. Thus, faced with scarce resources on the one hand and increased competition coupled with cultural commodification and more demanding consumer base on the other, cultural organisations found themselves under strong pressure to redefine their role (Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018). This was the trigger that made them pursue a more entrepreneurial approach, often embedding a co-creation orientation and more consumer centric culture (Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans 2016). This also contributed to the redefinition of their attitude towards users, i.e. consumers of cultural services – accepting them as active partners in the process of creation of cultural experience and value (Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans 2016).

Hence, aesthetic enjoyment of cultural products or services is no longer seen as the key aspect that shapes cultural value; instead, it is the multiple meanings that emerge among ‘users’ when enjoying, i.e. consuming culture (Barile and Saviano 2014). Such an understanding of cultural value implies strong dynamism and sensitivity to the context where interaction takes place and multiple meanings regarding the cultural product/service are exchanged (Barile and Saviano 2014). This is especially evident in the case of intangible cultural representations (e.g. intangible cultural heritage, festivals etc.), as they set the stage for people to meet and jointly co-create memorable experiences (Alexiou 2019).

On this basis, it can be concluded that cultural goods/services as such do not have an intrinsic value, as their value is constantly re(co-)created within the physical communities where interaction and sharing of experiences takes place (Concilio and Vitellio 2016; Alexiou 2019). Trying to acknowledge the importance of the social context, Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato (2018, 167) refer to this situation as

“value in use”. This means that both the context where interaction takes place and the actors’ disposition in sharing and integrating their resources shape cultural value (Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018, 162). Other authors (e.g. Rutten 2018) even go a step further, claiming that the very events that provoke social interaction, participation and cultural encounters represent a form of art. This understanding of cultural value as a product of co-creation through “experience-for-experience exchanges” (Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018, 167) departs from the traditional understanding of culture as hedonic, elitist and static phenomenon. Accordingly, cultural value is no longer fixed and predefined, but emerges in a dynamic process of co-creation with users (Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018). As such, this new idea of culture comes close to the wider understanding of co-creation as collaborative innovation, which does not allow any reference to predetermined results (Sørensen and Torfing 2018, 391).

However, culture is not a ‘monolithic’ policy area (as it features substantially different cultural goods and services), which means that co-creation in this context could manifest itself in many different ways. For instance, in the area of cultural heritage, Concilio and Vitellio (2016) recognise two dimensions of co-creation – generative and preservative. The former implies co-creation of new forms of (intangible) cultural heritage, while the latter refers to reproduction (and thus generational transfer) of existent cultural value (Concilio and Vitellio 2016). Other authors (e.g. Hudson, Sandberg and Schmauch 2017) approach culture in a more general manner and discuss co-creation either as joint creation of culture *per se*, or as a specific act of collaboration/interaction between audience and artists at a concrete event.

Despite these differences regarding the manifestation of co-creation (stemming from the cultural context where it takes place), the arguments in favour of the introduction of this approach are more or less unified and to a great extent overlapping with the general debate about the benefits of co-creation. Thus, in the cultural sphere, as in other policy areas, co-creation is expected to contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of public services, improve democratic practice and deliver greater public value (Kershaw, Bridson and Parris 2017); contribute to wiser policies and more democracy (Edelenbos, van Meerkerk and Schenk 2018); and empower citizens (Griffiths 2013). There are, however, benefits of co-creation that are context bound, such as greater creativity as a result of opening of cultural content and increased product selection (Lang, Shang and Vragov 2009), as well as co-creation of alternative (i.e. more inclusive) cultural narratives that break deeply entrenched stereotypes (Concilio and Vitellio 2016).

Yet, although culture is recognised as a fruitful soil for co-creation, there are certain issues that challenge this process. For instance, Lang, Shang and Vragov (2009) refer to copyrights and intellectual property as specific barriers to co-creation in culture. In addition, Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans (2016, 749) recognise as problematic the tension between “a curatorial orientation and one that focuses on the consumer experience”. The latter implies that cultural organisations are often torn between their goals of education, preservation and presentation of cultural value, on the one hand and customer satisfaction, consumer experience and coproduction within the organisation’s mission, on the other hand (Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans 2016, 751). This could be interpreted by some as a trend of commercialisation and devaluation of culture leading to resistance and negative connotation ascribed to co-creation.

Nevertheless, apart from this, the issue of co-creation drivers and barriers in the cultural sphere has not gained appropriate research interest. Among the rare endeavours for a more systematic analysis of drivers and barriers in this area, we note the research by Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans (2016) arguing that many co-creation drivers and barriers are not culture specific but are relevant also in other policy areas. However, in the absence of a more systematic research effort for a comparative analysis of the drivers and barriers in culture vis-à-vis other sectors, this is only an assumption, which we will try to revisit in the conclusion of paper.

3 METHODOLOGY

To answer the research question, the paper relies on two methods: a content analysis of WoS papers and a case study of the 2020 Rijeka ECoC project. The content analysis is used with the purpose of identifying 'general' and 'culture specific' co-creation drivers and barriers. The findings of the content analysis are complemented with an in-depth analysis of the drivers and barriers identified in the case of the 2020 Rijeka ECoC project. For this purpose, the case study relies on a Fuzzy Cognitive Map (FCM) on co-creation barriers and drivers. Case study is used as the most appropriate method for investigation of a contemporary phenomenon (i.e. co-creation) within its real-life context, where the research goal is to answer 'how' and 'why' some events occur (Yin 2003). Thus, it is intended to help us better understand the process of co-creation in the field of culture: firstly, by identifying 'cultural' co-creation drivers and barriers and, secondly, by showing exactly 'how' and 'why' they enable, or prevent, co-creation.

3.1 Content analysis of Web of Science papers

The papers analysed with this method were selected based on the following criteria:

- time-span of the papers: 10 years, between 2009 and 2018;
- key words: co-creation or co-production;
- WoS category: Public Administration; and
- written in English language.

On this basis, we initially identified one hundred fifty-five papers. However, after the cleaning process, sixteen papers were excluded as they did not refer to co-creation and/or co-production in the context of the public sector and public services. At the end, the total number of papers that were systematically analysed by means of the content analysis was one hundred thirty-nine.

The idea behind this approach was to provide a list of both 'general' co-creation drivers and barriers present across different policy sectors and 'specific' drivers and barriers in the area of culture. However, due to the small number of papers (only four) referring to culture as a policy area where co-creation had been applied, we decided to fill this gap with the analysis of drivers and barriers identified in a real case of successful co-creation – the 2020 Rijeka ECoC project.

3.2 Case study of the 2020 Rijeka European Capital of Culture project

The case study of the 2020 ECoC project builds on the information obtained from 10 semi-structured interviews carried out in the context of the COGOV project between April and May 2019 (Cvelić et al. 2020). The interviews were conducted

with persons on key managerial positions within RIJEKA 2020 LLC (Limited Liability Company), the City of Rijeka and other related organisations responsible for the project implementation. Hence, the paper uses the data gathered in the interviews – precisely, by eliciting the information about co-creation drivers and barriers for the purpose of their further analysis by means of FCM methodology.

FCMs have become a suitable and proven knowledge-based methodology for systems modelling (Kosko 1986). This technique is especially attractive when modelling systems are characterised by ambiguity, uncertainty and/or non-trivial causalities among their variables (Nápoles et al. 2018). The vast literature related to FCMs reports very clearly about many successful studies that used FCMs.

A cognitive map, together with the related FCM, is the representation of thinking about a problem (e.g. Ozesmi and Maurer 2004). FCMs are intended to represent the subjective world of the interviewees (Eden 2004). They are considered a suitable method to categorise manageably complex knowledge forms (e.g. Eden 1988; Pluchinotta, Esposito and Camarda 2019).

The maps are directed graphs, a network of nodes and links where the direction of the arrow implies believed causality (Ackermann et al. 2014). FCMs represent the integration of the cognitive mapping approach with the fuzzy logic theory (Kosko 1986). For each variable a Centrality Index (CI) was computed leading to the identification of the most important nodes within a map, accounting for the complexity of its network of links (Ozesmi and Maurer 2004). The CI of a FCM is defined as the summation of its in-arrows and out-arrows (Eden 1992).

Within this paper, the case study represents a context-based ex-post analysis of the drivers/barriers of the ECoC project. The empirical data from the case study allowed to identify specific variables enabling or preventing co-creation, in order to answer the research question. Furthermore, the analysis of the CI determined which drivers and barriers were more relevant according to the interviewees.

4 CO-CREATION DRIVERS AND BARRIERS IDENTIFIED IN THE LITERATURE

4.1 General drivers and barriers of co-creation

Based on the content analysis, we identified one hundred nine (78 %) papers that refer to co-creation drivers and/or barriers in different policy areas (e.g. health, environment, public safety, social policy, education and ‘others’). However, the majority of the papers discuss drivers and barriers indirectly – as issues relevant for the process of co-creation, without explicitly designating them as such. This is due to the fact that co-creation drivers and barriers are rarely in the prime research focus of the relevant literature. Moreover, the lack of a systematic approach to this problem manifested itself in our research as an enormously long list of substantially different drivers and barriers that lack clear categorisation. Hence, to present our results in a more comprehensive and clearer manner, we categorised the ‘general’ drivers and barriers according to the subject, i.e. aspect of the co-creation process they affect. On this basis, we recognised five categories of drivers and barriers: 1. structural/organisational drivers and barriers; 2. drivers and barriers related to the quality of the relationship between co-creators; 3. drivers and barriers related to internal (public organisation) co-

creators; 4. drivers and barriers related to external co-creators; and 5. contextual drivers and barriers.

4.1.1 Structural/organisational drivers and barriers

Structural/organisational drivers and barriers refer to the organisational properties and capacity of the public institutions to co-create. As the main driver of co-creation, here, we recognise less-centralised and highly connected structures with multiple stakeholders and decentralised and polycentric governance (e.g. networks) (Cepiku and Giordano 2014; Durose and Richardson 2016b). However, an appropriate (i.e. multi-actor and less centralised) organisational structure is not sufficient for successful co-creation, unless certain barriers are addressed, namely: unclear accountability, not clearly defined roles, lack of institutional instruments for motivation of co-creators and non-involvement of key (both internal and external) actors at the highest (management) level of organisation (Levasseur 2018; Nesti 2018; Touati and Maillet 2018). Moreover, an organisational structure favourable to co-creation presumes the existence of a continuous two-way channel of communication providing regular and direct interaction with external stakeholders (Barbera, Sicilia and Steccolini 2016; Tu 2016). Such communication should be complemented by institutional strategies securing the representation and engagement of different actors, *inter alia* 'hard-to-reach' and 'voiceless' groups (Pill and Bailey 2012; Bovaird et al. 2016). This means that an institutional setup that privileges certain (usually more resourceful) actors at the expense of more disadvantaged groups represents a barrier that undermines the impact of co-creation (Pestoff 2014; Burall and Hughes 2016; Farr 2016). In addition, public organisations which are more flexible in their approach – relying on incomplete, i.e. underspecified policy design (open to being directly affected by participation) – have a better chance to be successful in co-creation than organisations that apply a 'one-size-fits-all' approach insensitive to the context (Durose and Richardson 2016a and 2016c; Torvinen and Haukipuro 2018). To be able to co-create, public organisations not only need to have appropriate financial and human resources, but also need to be willing to invest in capacity building and training (Dunston et al. 2009; Pill and Bailey 2012; Sicilia et al. 2016; Surva, Tönurist and Lember 2016). Eventually, resources misalignment, lack of experience in managing co-creation and lack of evidence within the organisation about the positive effects of co-creation are also issues that hinder the process (Loeffler and Bovaird 2016; Vennik et al. 2016; Wiewiora, Keast and Brown 2016; Nesti 2018).

4.1.2 Drivers and barriers related to the quality of the relationship between (internal and external) co-creators

These drivers and barriers include the features and quality of the relationship between co-creators that affect the process of co-creation. For the establishment of this relationship, in the first place, there needs to be a sense of interdependency among participants (public institution and citizens) (Alford 2016). This means that the efforts and resources of all participants are recognised as necessary, complementary and interdependent for the achievement of the goal set (Chaebo and Medeiros 2017). Moreover, the relationship between co-creators should build on willingness, trust and equality among participants, clear commitment, shared responsibility and ownership (Pestoff 2014; Burall and Hughes 2016; Durose and Richardson 2016a; Loeffler and Bovaird 2016). It is also important that all parties share a common understanding of the basic principles of the process and are prepared for constructive interaction (Surva, Tönurist and Lember 2016). Precisely, this

means that they have a clear idea about the expected outcomes and each other's goals, respect each other and are open-minded to change their positions in the light of stronger arguments (Kemp and Rotmans 2009; Fledderus, Brandsen and Honingh 2014; Durose and Richardson 2016a and 2016c). In addition to the need for establishing this relationship from an early stage of the policy process (McCabe 2016), another relevant driver is the feeling among the participants that they have sufficient time for deliberation and performance of the tasks required (vs. limited time for debate and participants' inability to actively follow the process) (Isett and Miranda 2015; Burall and Hughes 2016). In contrast, 'relationship related' barriers that hinder co-creation comprise a prevailing feeling among co-creators that they are not understood and the asymmetry in knowledge, skills, power, expertise, information and power (Pestoff 2014; Hardyman, Daunt and Kitchener 2015; Burall and Hughes 2016; Wiewiora, Keast and Brown 2016; Williams et al. 2016; van Eijk, Steen and Verschuere 2017). Their relationship can also be strained by misuse of resources during the interaction and immense politicisation of the process (Bartenberger and Sześciło 2016; Williams, Kang and Johnson 2016).

4.1.3 Drivers and barriers related to internal (public organisation) co-creators

Drivers and barriers related to internal (public organisation) co-creators refer to the capacity and attitudes of the staff of the public organisation (public managers, middle-rank and frontline public servants) regarding co-creation. The key issue, here, is that internal co-creators understand co-creation (beyond mere consultation and formal participation), believe in its benefits and have the capacity/skills to participate in such process – e.g. 'soft skills', skills to experiment and to be open to surprises (Dunston et al. 2009; Duijn, Rijnveld and van Hulst 2010; Durose and Richardson 2016c; Strokosch and Osborne 2016). Consequently, a closed mind-set of the public servants to innovation, their inclination to a traditional 'way of doing things', the lack of appropriate skills (above mentioned) and the inability/reluctance to break away from a 'path dependent' logic are recognised as barriers to co-creation (Baker and Irving 2016; Nesti 2018). However, even in the absence of these barriers and in case of a genuine desire for co-creation, this process can be undermined by the staff's lack of time to co-create (e.g. due to market pressures for increased productivity) (Vennik et al. 2016) or fear that co-creation would increase their workload (Nesti 2018). Moreover, beside sufficient resources, public servants need to enjoy a certain level of flexibility and autonomy, i.e. leeway to take independent decisions during the 'unpredictable' process of co-creation (Lindsay et al. 2018). This implies that instead of selfishly protecting their 'privileged' position (in policy making), they are ready to give some discretion – in terms of responsibility and ownership – to external co-creators (Howlett, Kekez and Poocharoen 2017). This to be achieved often requires a 'role model' among high profile public servants, who not only practice collaborative leadership, but take the role of advocates of co-creation (Griffiths 2013; Strokosch and Osborne 2016). Finally, an important driver in this context is a strong sense and desire among internal co-creators to enhance the public image of the organisation (Vennik et al. 2016). This requires that public servants do not fear the innovation for revealing systemic and organisational flaws (Meričkova, Nemeč and Svidronova 2015), nor see it as a 'Potemkin' strategy for justifying existing (flawed) goals and policies (Lövbrand 2011).

4.1.4 Drivers and barriers related to external co-creators

Drivers and barriers related to external co-creators refer to the traits (i.e. features, attitudes and capacity) of the citizens as co-creators. In order to be

willing to co-create, citizens first need to recognise the ‘salience of a problem’ (Chaebo and Medeiros 2017). This implies that voluntary – in contrast to pressured – participation positively affects the process of co-creation (Osborne, Radnor and Strokosch 2016; Surva, Tönurist and Lember 2016; Chaebo and Medeiros 2017; Torvinen and Haukipuro 2018). Another significant driver of citizen participation is ‘political efficacy’ – a prevailing perception that government authorities are responsive to their demands and value their contribution (Fledderus, Brandsen and Honingh 2014; Van Eijk and Steen 2016). In addition, citizens should feel confident (‘sense of self-efficacy’) that they are capable to contribute in the process (Fledderus, Brandsen and Honingh 2015; Bovaird et al. 2016; Van Eijk and Steen 2016; Chaebo and Medeiros 2017). This confidence builds on both, objective/material and intangible assets such as (leisure) time, money, social capital and civic skills (Thijssen and Van Dooren 2016). The absence of these conditions represents a barrier to co-creation, especially in terms of inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups. Additional barriers related to external co-creators include doubt that other participants will be actively co-creating; taking higher share of risk and responsibility within the process; too professionally oriented and abstract tasks; and costs outweighing the benefits of participation (Fledderus, Brandsen and Honingh 2015; Tuurnas 2016; Williams, Kang and Johnson 2016; Levasseur 2018).

4.1.5 Context related drivers and barriers

Context related drivers and barriers refer to conditions concerning the wider political and socio-economic context in which co-creation takes place. Thus, policy areas that are less defined and feature ‘loose’ normative and regulatory frameworks seem to be more open to the prospect of co-creation, a concept that does not follow strictly defined rules and requires significant leeway for creativity and experimentation (Burall and Hughes 2016; Voorberg et al. 2017). Also, strong political support for co-creation among elected politicians, beyond ideological and party lines (Griffiths 2013; Cepiku and Giordano 2014; McCabe 2016; Strokosch and Osborne 2016) and a prevailing discourse supportive of citizen collaboration – presuming collaboration as the standard ‘way of doing things’ (Doheny and Milbourne 2013; Bianchi, Bovaird and Loeffler 2017) – indicate a favourable context. On the other hand, contextual barriers seem to include state regulations and policies which, even though not directly related to co-creation, may have a significant impact on the process: e.g. fiscal climate, budgetary restrictions and austerity measures (Lum, Evans and Shields 2016; Martin 2018; Pearson, Watson and Manji 2018).

4.2 Culture specific drivers and barriers of co-creation

In the content analysis, we identified four papers that discuss co-creation in culture, precisely in the context of: conservation of historical buildings (Edelenbos, van Meerkerk and Schenk 2018); establishment of a digital cultural sphere (Griffiths 2013); role of museums (Kershaw, Bridson and Parris 2017); and arts in general (Wiid and Mora-Avila 2018). We systematised the ‘cultural’ drivers and barriers identified in these papers following the categorisation from section 4.1.

The key structural/organisational barriers that hinder co-creation in culture are ‘inertia’ (resistance) to new ways of operating and lack of suitable institutional infrastructure supporting co-creation (Kershaw, Bridson and Parris 2017). The latter refers to the lack of a clearly structured/institutionalised process of co-

creation, building on consultation with external stakeholders, consolidation of their ideas and development of solutions that reflect different contributions in the process (Griffiths 2013; Edelenbos, van Meerkerk and Schenk 2018). A specific driver emerging in the first phase (i.e. consultation) is the application of familiar (to external co-creators) consultation techniques, such as the use of social media (Griffiths 2013; Wiid and Mora-Avila 2018). Another driver is the sensitivity of the (cultural) organisation in terms of understanding the psychosocial characteristics of external co-creators (Wiid and Mora-Avila 2018). Moreover, transparency, accuracy and accessibility of information should be included in the process to have the effects of drivers of co-creation. This often implies systematic endeavours by the organisation to clarify complex issues (with the help of diagrams, visualisation and links to external sites) and existence of a centralised information base providing the relevant materials to citizens (Griffiths 2013; Kershaw, Bridson and Parris 2017).

In addition, a high level of trust and open, honest and constructive communication between co-creators are recognised as crucial drivers related to the relationship among (internal and external) co-creators (Edelenbos, van Meerkerk and Schenk 2018; Wiid and Mora-Avila 2018). Also, consensus and common vision shared by co-creators are drivers that further enhance this process. However, for ensuring legitimacy of the co-creation process (and thus wider acceptance of its results), the relationship among internal and external co-creators needs to be representative (Griffiths 2013).

Moreover, among the key drivers related to internal co-creators we note the prevailing perception of citizens as active agents (rather than passive recipients) of change and positive attitudes towards citizen initiatives (Griffiths 2013; Edelenbos, van Meerkerk and Schenk 2018). In contrast, the main barriers here are lack of skills for co-creation, reluctance to share control (i.e. responsibility) with external co-creators and fear that co-creation could undermine the reputation of the (cultural) institution (Kershaw, Bridson and Parris 2017).

The key driver related to external co-creators that triggers their mobilisation is discontent with governmental planning and decision making (Edelenbos, van Meerkerk and Schenk 2018). Later in the process, digital skills and use of technology, informed participation and the perception that their contribution is valued emerge as important drivers (Griffiths 2013).

Eventually, general political support for experimentation and inclusion of citizens are considered context related drivers and barriers (ibid.). A favourable context is further created by the general regulative framework encouraging or mandating collaboration (Kershaw, Bridson and Parris 2017). Surprisingly, even the general lack of funding in the cultural sphere (ibid.) is recognised as a driver that forces cultural organisations to look for alternative ways to secure their sustainability, e.g. to turn to co-creation.

This discussion to a great extent matches the 'cultural' co-creation drivers and barriers identified by Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans (2016). However, their research complements our analysis with additional drivers, such as more demanding consumers and competitive pressures for change (as context related drivers) and upper management commitment to co-creation (as a driver related to internal co-creators). Moreover, tensions between curatorial and commercial imperatives within cultural organisations, hierarchical organisational structure featuring 'silo' mentality and lack of funding (ibid.) emerge as additional

structural/organisational barriers to those identified in the content analysis. Here, however, the lack of funding is reported as an impediment to the process – in contrast to the discussion above, where ‘lack of funding’ is seen as a ‘context related driver’. This could be explained by the fact that co-creation, although implying mobilisation and use of resources of different actors (leading to lower costs of services provision), is not a ‘cheap’ process *per se*. On the contrary, it requires cultural organisations to have sufficient funding to properly conduct co-creation activities.

5 CO-CREATION DRIVERS AND BARRIERS IN THE CASE STUDY OF THE 2020 RIJEKA EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROJECT

The main idea of the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) project is to bring cities at the heart of cultural life across Europe, improving the quality of life in these cities and strengthening their sense of community. The candidature of Rijeka (Croatia) for the ECoC 2020 project was guided and financed by the City of Rijeka from 2014 till March 2016, when RIJEKA 2020 LLC (Limited Liability Company) was jointly founded by the City of Rijeka and the Primorje-Gorski Kotar (PGK) County for the implementation of the project. Through the ECoC project, the City of Rijeka and the PGK County aimed to improve the scope and variety of the city’s and region’s cultural offer, expand accessibility and participation in culture, build capacities in the cultural sector and its ties to other sectors and increase international visibility as well as the city’s and region’s profile.

Since the preparation phase, cultural organisations, NGOs, citizens and other stakeholders have been included in the ECoC project. Specifically, the Rijeka 2020 Participatory Programme is considered as one of the most innovative areas of co-creation thanks to the comprehensive citizen participation. The core idea is to actively involve citizens in creating cultural, social and environmental programmes and to improve the production and organisational capacities of informal civilian groups. The Participatory Programme intends to raise the degree of citizen participation in social and cultural activities and the awareness about the environment. The Programme consists of two micro-funding programmes (Civil Initiatives and Green Wave), a capacity building programme (Learning to Build Communities), a participatory decision-making body (Council of Citizens) and RiHub as a physical place for education, meetings, exchange and joint action.

Currently, the Rijeka 2020 ECoC project and its Participatory Programme are in the implementation phase ending in 2021. In the first call for project proposals of the Participatory Programme for 2019, 80 projects were submitted (59 under Civil Initiatives and 21 under the Green Wave programme) and 22 were selected (plus 8 backup projects). The call for members of the Council of Citizens received 94 applications and 30 Council members were randomly selected.

In this section, the results of the FCM analysis of the Rijeka 2020 ECoC project are presented and discussed. The FCM is built on the drivers and barriers identified during the stakeholders’ interviews in the context of the case study, conducted in the framework of the COGOV project (Cvelić et al. 2020). Below, drivers and barriers and the related CI are reported (Table 1) together with a graphical representation of their relationships (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: THE FCM OF THE DRIVERS AND BARRIERS OF THE 2020 RIJEKA ECOC PROJECT

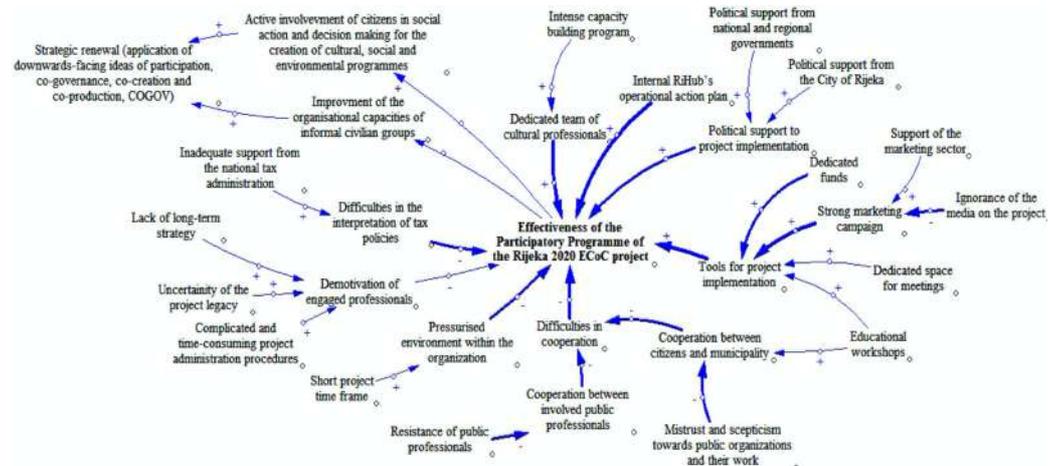


TABLE 1: LIST OF DRIVERS AND BARRIERS OF THE 2020 RIJEKA ECOC PROJECT ELICITED FROM THE INTERVIEWS AND THE RELATED CI

ID	VARIABLE	CLUSTER	CENTRALITY INDEX
A1	Effectiveness of the Participatory Programme of the Rijeka 2020 ECOC project	Main Objective	4.90
A16	Tools for project implementation	Driver	2.50
A10	Difficulties in cooperation	Barrier	1.70
A18	Strong marketing campaign	Driver	1.50
A13	Cooperation between citizens and municipality	Driver	1.30
A4	Demotivation of engaged professionals	Barrier	1.20
A22	Political support to project implementation	Driver	1.10
A11	Cooperation between involved public professionals	Driver	1.00
A26	Dedicated team of cultural professionals	Driver	1.00
A8	Pressurised environment within the organisation	Barrier	0.80
A25	Internal RiHub's operational action plan	Driver	0.70
A15	Educational workshops	Driver	0.60
A2	Difficulties in the interpretation of tax policies	Barrier	0.50
A12	Resistance of public professionals	Barrier	0.50
A14	Mistrust and scepticism towards public organisations and their work	Barrier	0.50
A19	Dedicated funds	Driver	0.50
A20	Ignorance of the media on the project	Barrier	0.50
A3	Inadequate support from the national tax administration	Barrier	0.30
A5	Lack of long-term strategy	Barrier	0.30
A6	Uncertainty of the project legacy	Barrier	0.30
A7	Complicated and time-consuming project administration procedures	Barrier	0.30
A9	Short project time frame	Barrier	0.30
A17	Dedicated space for meetings	Driver	0.30
A21	Support of the marketing sector	Driver	0.30
A23	Political support from the City of Rijeka	Driver	0.30
A24	Political support from national and regional governments	Driver	0.30
A27	Intense capacity building programme	Driver	0.30

The 'Tools for project implementation' (A16) was recognised as the key driver in the process of implementation of the Participatory Programme of the Rijeka

2020 ECoC project. Specifically, the Programme relies on a 'Strong marketing campaign' (A18, CI=1.5) which was considered essential together with 'Dedicated funds' (A19) and 'Dedicated space for meetings' (A17). Furthermore, a set of 'Educational workshops' (A15) was organised in RiHub with the purpose of breaking barriers in future communication and cooperation between citizens and public servants.

The presence of a 'Dedicated team of cultural professionals' (A26) was also recognised as an important driver (CI=1). Specifically, the team was trained and empowered through an intense 'Capacity building programme'.

The 'Political support to project implementation' (A22, CI=1.10) from the City of Rijeka as well as from national and regional governments and the presence of the 'Internal RiHub's operational action plan till 2021' (A25) were considered beneficial.

While 'Cooperation between citizens and municipality' (A13, CI=1.13) and 'Cooperation between involved public professionals' (A11) were mentioned as influential, the main barriers in the implementation of the Rijeka 2020 ECoC project were generally related to any kind of 'Difficulties in cooperation' (A10, CI=1.70), such as the one 'Between citizens and a municipality' (A13) caused by 'Mistrust and scepticism towards public organisations and their work' (A14) and the one 'Between involved public professionals' (A11) triggered by the 'Resistance of public professionals' (A12).

The barrier 'Demotivation of engaged professionals' (A4, CI=1.20) was also considered a key element influencing the effectiveness of the Programme, generated by 'Lack of long-term strategy', 'Uncertainty of the project legacy' and 'Complicated and time-consuming project administration procedures'. Lastly, one of the barriers mentioned due to the negative impact on the marketing campaign was the 'Ignorance of the media on the project' (A20).

6 CONCLUSION

The analysis of the 'general' and 'culture specific' drivers and barriers identified in the relevant literature does not indicate a substantial difference between culture and other policy areas. Actually, the analysis shows a significant overlap of the co-creation drivers and barriers irrespective of the policy area in which the process takes place. The only 'specific' difference ascribed to culture emerges as a rather epistemological challenge, deriving from the underlying antagonism of different understanding(s) of culture – often manifested in the tension between curatorial and commercial imperatives arising within cultural organisations (Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans 2016). However, it is questionable to what extent this is a unique feature of culture, since under neoliberal pressure all policy areas face similar challenges in terms of the need for reinterpretation of their 'traditional' understanding and role towards greater commercialisation and commodification.

Moreover, also the findings of the Rijeka 2020 ECoC case study bring no surprise in this regard; they actually confirm the conclusion that there is no substantial difference between culture and other policy areas in terms of co-creation drivers and barriers. Seen through the prism of the categorisation presented in section 4, the drivers and barriers identified in the Croatian case study can be easily

grouped according to: structural/organisational features, features of internal co-creators, quality of the relationship between internal and external co-creators; and wider contextual features.

In line with the findings of the literature review, the case study emphasises the importance of structural/organisational features by pointing out the communication infrastructure and actions undertaken by the organisation towards securing better access of external stakeholders (covered by the drivers 'Tools for project implementation', 'Strong marketing campaign' and 'Dedicated space for meetings'). Furthermore, the case study stresses the importance of financial and human resources as the key organisational attributes enabling effective implementation of co-creation. The impact of the organisational setup is noted also in terms of organisational barriers to co-creation, such as 'Lack of long-term strategy', 'Uncertainty of the project legacy' and 'Complicated and time-consuming project administration procedures'. In particular, the barrier 'Short time-frame of the project' indicates the need for sustainable organisational structure and reveals a causal connection with the problem of 'Pressurised environment within the organisation' as an additional barrier.

As barriers related to internal co-creators, the Rijeka 2020 case study recognises 'Resistance of public professionals' and 'Demotivation of engaged professionals', in contrast to the drivers 'Dedicated team of cultural professionals' and 'Cooperation between involved public professionals'. Thus, similar to the findings of the literature review, the emphasis here is placed on the skills and capacity of internal co-creators enhanced by 'Capacity building programme'.

A similar driver – 'Educational workshops' – is identified in the context of the next category referring to the relationship between internal and external co-creators. This driver is seen crucial for improving the 'Communication and cooperation between citizens and public servants' and thus addressing barriers that undermine their relationship, such as 'Mistrust and scepticism towards public organisations and their work'.

Eventually, an overlap between the case study and the literature review is noted regarding context related drivers and barriers. Namely, the key contextual driver noted in the Rijeka 2020 case study – political support at different levels (local, regional and national) – corresponds to the findings of the literature review about the prominence of the general political support to co-creation. Moreover, the interconnected contextual factors from the case study – 'Inadequate support from the national tax administration' leading to 'Difficulties in the interpretation of tax policies' – can be interpreted as a concrete example of the 'general' barrier from the literature i.e. 'state regulations and policies, which even though not directly related to co-creation have significant impact on the process' (see subsection 4.1.5). Although 'Ignorance of the media' emerges as a specific contextual barrier in the case study, it can be perceived as complementary to the general factor referring to a prevailing discourse favourable to citizen collaboration.

On this basis, we conclude that there are no 'culture specific' drivers and barriers of co-creation that make this policy area more (or less) conducive to co-creation in comparison to other policy areas. Thus, the special treatment of culture as a separate co-creation arena that differs substantially from other policy areas is not justified. This, however, does not mean that culture is not worthy of special research focus; on the contrary, it implies a need for better interaction of the research on co-creation across different policy areas. As the

analysis shows, there are many parallels that can be drawn from the research in other policy areas to inform and enrich the literature on co-creation in the field of culture.

At the same time, however, it should be born in mind that culture is not a 'monolithic' policy area, meaning that the drivers and barriers discussed here do not have universal and equal significance irrespective of the specific, i.e. individual cultural context in which co-creation takes place. Although the significance of a specific individual context was not the focus of this research, it can be assumed that it bears greater importance for the co-creation process than the policy area as such. Nevertheless, for drawing more solid conclusions about the significance of the individual context vis-à-vis type of policy area additional research efforts are required.

REFERENCES

- Ackermann, Fran, Susan Howick, John Quigley, Lesley Walls and Tom Houghton. 2014. "Systemic risk elicitation: Using causal maps to engage stakeholders and build a comprehensive view of risks." *European Journal of Operational Research* 238 (1): 290–299.
- Alexiou, Melissa-Vasiliki. 2019. "Experience economy and co-creation in a cultural heritage festival: consumers' views." *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 15 (2): 200–216.
- Alford, John. 2014. "The Multiple Facets of Co-Production: Building on the Work of Elinor Ostrom." *Public Management Review* 16 (3): 299–316.
- Barbera, Carmela, Mariafrancesca Sicilia and Ileana Steccolini. 2016. "What Mr. Rossi Wants in Participatory Budgeting: Two R's (Responsiveness and Representation) and Two I's (Inclusiveness and Interaction)." *International Journal of Public Administration* 39 (13): 1088–1100.
- Barile, Sergio and Marialuisa Saviano. 2014. "Resource Integration and Value Co-Creation in Cultural Heritage Management." In *Management of Cultural Products: E-Relationship Marketing and Accessibility Perspectives*, ed. Aiello, Lucia, 58–82. IGI Global.
- Bartenberger, Martin and Dawid Sześciło. 2016. "The Benefits and Risks of Experimental Co-production: The Case of Urban Redesign in Vienna." *Public Administration* 94 (2): 509–525.
- Baker, Keith and Adele Irving. 2016. "Co-producing Approaches to the Management of Dementia through Social Prescribing." *Social Policy & Administration* 50 (3): 379–397.
- Bianchi, Carmine, Tony Bovaird and Elke Loeffler. 2017. "Applying a Dynamic Performance Management Framework to Wicked Issues: How Coproduction Helps to Transform Young People's Services in Surrey County Council, UK." *Journal International Journal of Public Administration* 40 (10): 833–846.
- Bovaird, Tony, Gerry Stoker, Tricia Jones, Elke Loeffler and Monica Pinilla Roncancio. 2016. "Activating collective co-production of public services: influencing citizens to participate in complex governance mechanisms in the UK." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 82 (1): 47–68.
- Burall, Simon and Tim Hughes. 2016. "The hidden politics of policy design." In *Designing Public Policy for Co-production: Theory, Practice and Change*, eds. Durose, Catherine and Liz Richardson, 71–80. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Cepiku, Denita and Filippo Giordano. 2014. "Co-Production in Developing Countries: Insights from the community health workers experience." *Public Management Review* 16 (3): 317–340.
- Chaebo, Gemael and Janann Joslin Medeiros. 2017. "Conditions for policy implementation via co-production: the control of dengue fever in Brazil." *Public Management Review* 19 (10): 1381–1398.
- Ciasullo, Vincenza Maria, Orlando Troisi and Silvia Cosimato. 2018. "How Digital Platforms Can Trigger Cultural Value Co-Creation?—A Proposed Model." *Journal of Service Science and Management* 11 (2): 161–181.

- Concilio, Grazia and Ilaria Vitellio. 2016. "Co-creating intangible cultural heritage by crowdmapping: the case of mappi[na]." 2nd International Forum on Research and Technologies for Society and Industry Leveraging a better tomorrow (RTSI), in Bologna, Italy, September 7–9.
- Cvelić, Josipa, Tatjana Perše, Sanja Vrbeč and Irene Pluchinotta. 2020. "RIJEKA 2020: Participatory Programme: Deliverable 2.3", prepared for the EU Horizon 2020 funded COGOV project (grant agreement No 770591). Available at <http://cogov.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/D2-3.pdf>
- Doheny, Shane and Paul Milbourne. 2013. "Modernization and devolution: delivering services for older people in rural areas of England and Wales." *Social Policy and Administration* 47 (5): 501–519.
- Duijn, Michael, Marc Rijnveld and Merlijn van Hulst. 2010. "Meeting in the middle: Joining reflection and action in complex public sector projects." *Public Money and Management* 30 (4): 227–233.
- Dunston, Roger, Alison Lee, David Boud, Pat Brodie and Mary Chiarella. 2009. "Co-Production and Health System Reform – From Re-Imagining To Re-Making." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 68 (1): 39–52.
- Durose, Catherine and Liz Richardson. 2016a. "Co-productive policy design." In *Designing Public Policy for Co-production: Theory, Practice and Change*, eds. Durose, Catherine and Liz Richardson, 30–50. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Durose, Catherine and Liz Richardson. 2016b. "Debating co-productive policy design." In *Designing Public Policy for Co-production: Theory, Practice and Change*, eds. Durose, Catherine and Liz Richardson, 181–202. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Durose, Catherine and Liz Richardson. 2016c. "Governance for co-productive policy designs." In *Designing Public Policy for Co-production: Theory, Practice and Change*, eds. Durose, Catherine and Liz Richardson, 203–206. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Edelenbos, Jurian, Ingmar van Meerkerk and Todd Schenk. 2018. "The Evolution of Community Self-Organization in Interaction with Government Institutions: Cross-Case Insights From Three Countries." *The American Review of Public Administration* 48 (1): 52–66.
- Eden, Colin. 1988. "Cognitive mapping." *European Journal of Operational Research* 36 (1): 1–13.
- Eden, Colin. 1992. "On the nature of cognitive maps." *Journal of Management Studies* 29: 261–265.
- Eden, Colin. 2004. "Analyzing cognitive maps to help structure issues or problems." *European Journal of Operational Research* 159: 673–686.
- Farr, Michelle. 2016. "Co-Production and Value Co-Creation in Outcome-Based Contracting in Public Services." *Public Management Review* 18(5): 654–672.
- Fledderus, Joost, Taco Brandsen and Marlies Honingh. 2014. "Restoring Trust Through the Co-Production of Public Services: A theoretical elaboration." *Public Management Review* 16 (3): 424–443.
- Fledderus, Joost, Taco Brandsen and Marlies Honingh. 2015. "User co-production of public service delivery: An uncertainty approach." *Public Policy and Administration* 30 (2): 145–164.
- Griffiths, Mary. 2013. "Empowering Citizens: A Constructivist Assessment of the Impact of Contextual and Design Factors on Shared Governance." *Public Affairs and Administration* 443–461.
- Hardyman, Wendy, Kate L. Daunt and Martin Kitchener. 2015. "Value Co-Creation through Patient Engagement in Health Care: A micro-level approach and research agenda." *Public Management Review* 17 (1): 90–107.
- Howlett, Michael, Anka Kekez and Ora-orn Poocharoen. 2017. "Understanding Co-Production as a Policy Tool: Integrating New Public Governance and Comparative Policy Theory." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 19 (5): 487–501.
- Hudson, Christine, Linda Sandberg and Ulrika Schmauch. 2017. "The co-creation (of) culture? The case of Umeå, European Capital of Culture 2014." *Journal European Planning Studies* 25 (9): 1538–1555.
- Isett, Kimberley R. and Jeanne Miranda. 2015. "Watching Sausage Being Made: Lessons learned from the co-production of governance in a behavioural health system." *Public Management Review* 17 (1): 35–56.

- Kemp, René and Jan Rotmans. 2009. "Transitioning policy: co-production of a new strategic framework for energy innovation policy in the Netherlands." *Policy Sciences* 42 (4): 303–322.
- Kershaw, Anne, Kerrie Bridson and Melissa A. Parris. 2017. "Encouraging Writing on the White Walls: Co-production in Museums and the Influence of Professional Bodies." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 77 (1): 19–34.
- Kosko, Bart. 1986. "Fuzzy knowledge combination." *International Journal of Intelligent Systems* 1(4): 293–320.
- Lang, Karl R., Richard D. Shang and Roumen Vragov. 2009. "Designing Markets for Co-Production of Digital Culture Goods." *Decision Support Systems* 48 (1): 33–45.
- Levasseur, Karine. 2018. "Co-producing accountability? Drawing conclusions from non-profit child care services in Manitoba." *Canadian Public Administration* 61 (1): 26–44.
- Lindsay, Colin, Sarah Pearson, Elaine Batty, Anne Marie Cullen and Will Eadso. 2018. "Co-production as a route to employability: Lessons from services with lone parents." *Public Administration* 96 (2): 318–332.
- Loeffler, Elke and Tony Bovaird. 2016. "User and Community Co-Production of Public Services: What Does the Evidence Tell Us?" *International Journal of Public Administration* 39 (3): 1006–1019.
- Lövbrand, Eva. 2011. "Co-producing European climate science and policy: a cautionary note on the making of useful knowledge." *Science and Public Policy* 38 (3): 225–236.
- Lum, Janet M., Bryan Evans and John Shields. 2016. "Co-Constructing Performance Indicators in Home and Community Care: Assessing the Role of Nongovernmental Organizations in Three Canadian Provinces." *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research* 7 (1): 46–67.
- Martin, Douglas. 2018. "Lean in a cold fiscal climate: the public sector in an age of reduced resources." *Public Money and Management* 38 (1): 29–36.
- McCabe, Paul. 2016. "Challenges in policy redesign." In *Designing Public Policy for Co-production: Theory, Practice and Change*, eds. Durose, Catherine and Liz Richardson, 63–70. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Meričkova, Beata Mikusova, Juraj Nemeč and Maria Svidronova. 2015. "Co-creation in local public services delivery innovation: Slovak experience." *Lex Localis* 13 (3): 521–535.
- Minkiewicz, Joanna, Kerrie Bridson and Jody Evans. 2016. "Co-production of service experiences: insights from the cultural sector." *Journal of services marketing* 30 (7): 749–761.
- Nápoles, Gonzalo, Maikel Leon Espinosa, Isel Grau and Koen Vanhoof. 2018. "FCM Expert: Software Tool for Scenario Analysis and Pattern Classification Based on Fuzzy Cognitive Maps." *International Journal on Artificial Intelligence Tools* 27 (7).
- Nesti, Giorgia. 2018. "Co-production for innovation: the urban living lab experience." *Policy and Society* 37 (3): 310–325.
- Osborne, Stephen P., Zoe Radnor and Kirsty Strokosch. 2016. "Co-Production and the Co-Creation of Value in Public Services: A Suitable Case for Treatment?" *Public Management Review* 18 (5): 639–653.
- Ozesmi, Uygur and Stacy L. Maurer. 2004. "Ecological models based on people's knowledge: A multi-step fuzzy cognitive mapping approach." *Ecological Modelling* 176 (1–2): 43–64.
- Pearson, Charlotte, Nicholas Watson and Kainde Manji. 2018. "Changing the culture of social care in Scotland: Has a shift to personalization brought about transformative change?" *Social Policy & Administration* 52 (3): 662–676.
- Pestoff, Victor. 2014. "Collective Action and the Sustainability of Co-Production." *Public Management Review* 16 (3): 383–401.
- Pill, Madeleine and Nick Bailey. 2012. "Community Empowerment or a Strategy of Containment? Evaluating Neighbourhood Governance in the City of Westminster." *Local Government Studies* 38 (6): 731–751.
- Pluchinotta, Irene, Dario Esposito and Domenico Camarda. 2019. "Fuzzy cognitive mapping to support multi-agent decisions in development of urban policymaking." *Sustainable Cities and Society* 46.
- Rittel, Horst W. J. and Melvin M. Webber. 1973. "Dilemmas in a general theory of planning." *Policy Sciences* 4 (2): 155–169.
- Rutten, Kris. 2018. "Participation, Art and Digital Culture." *Critical Arts* 32 (3): 1–8.

- Sicilia, Mariafrancesca, Enrico Guarini, Alessandro Sancino, Martino Andreani and Renato Ruffini. 2016. "Public services management and co-production in multi-level governance settings." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 82 (1): 8–27.
- Sørensen, Eva and Jacob Torfing. 2018. "Co-initiation of Collaborative Innovation in Urban Spaces." *Urban Affairs Review* 54 (2): 388–418.
- Strokosch, Kirsty and Stephen Osborne. 2016. "Asylum Seekers and the Co-production of Public Services: Understanding the Implications for Social Inclusion and Citizenship." *Journal of Social Policy* 45 (4): 673–690.
- Surva, Laidi, Piret Tõnurist and Veiko Lember. 2016. "Co-Production in a Network Setting: Providing an Alternative to the National Probation Service." *International Journal of Public Administration* 39 (13): 1031–1043.
- Thijssen, Peter and Wouter Van Dooren. 2016. "Who You Are/Where You Live: Do Neighbourhood Characteristics Explain Co-Production?" *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 82 (1): 88–109.
- Torvinen, Hannu and Lotta Haukipuro. 2018. "New roles for end-users in innovative public procurement: case study on user engaging property procurement." *Public Management Review* 20 (10): 1444–1464.
- Touati, Nassera and Lara Maillat. 2018. "Co-creation within Hybrid Networks: What Can be Learnt from the Difficulties Encountered? The Example of the Fight against Blood- and Sexually-Transmitted Infections." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 84 (3): 469–485.
- Tu, Xuan. 2016. "Conditions for the Co-Production of New Immigrant Services in Hong Kong." *International Journal of Public Administration* 39 (13): 1067–1076.
- Tuurnas, Sanna. 2016. "Looking beyond the Simplistic Ideals of Participatory Projects: Fostering Effective Co-production?" *International Journal of Public Administration* 39 (13): 1077–1087.
- Van Eijk, Carola and Trui Steen. 2016. "Why engage in co-production of public services? Mixing theory and empirical evidence." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 82 (1): 28–46.
- Van Eijk, Carola, Trui Steen and Bram Verschuere. 2017. "Co-producing safety in the local community: A Q-methodology study on the incentives of Belgian and Dutch members of neighbourhood watch schemes." *Local Government Studies* 43 (3): 323–343.
- Vennik, Femke D., Hester M. van de Bovenkamp, Kim Putters and Kor J. Grit. 2016. "Co-production in Healthcare: Rhetoric and Practice." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 82 (1): 150–168.
- Voorberg, William, Victor Bekkers and Lars Tummars. 2015. "A Systematic Review of Co-Creation and Co-Production: Embarking on the social innovation journey." *Public Management Review* 17 (9): 1333–1357.
- Voorberg, William, Victor Bekkers, Krista Timeus, Piret Tonurist and Lars Tummars. 2017. "Changing public service delivery: learning in co-creation." *Policy and Society* 36 (2): 178–194.
- Wiewiora, Anna, Robyn Keast and Kerry Brown. 2016. "Opportunities and Challenges in Engaging Citizens in the Co-Production of Infrastructure-Based Public Services in Australia." *Public Management Review* 18 (4): 483–507.
- Wiid, Ria and Paulo Mora-Avila. 2018. "Arts marketing framework: The arts organisation as a hub for participation." *Journal of Public Affairs* 18 (2): 1–8.
- Williams, Brian N., Seong-Cheol Kang and Japer Johnson. 2016. "(Co)-Contamination as the Dark Side of Co-Production: Public value failures in co-production processes." *Public Management Review* 18 (5): 692–717.
- Williams, Brian N., Megan LePere-Schloop, Daniel P. Silk and Alexandra Hebdon. 2016. "The co-production of campus safety and security: a case study at the University of Georgia." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 82 (1): 110–130.
- Yin, Robert K. 2003. *Case Study Research and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.



JE KULTURA KOT PODROČJE JAVNIH POLITIK VOZLIŠČE SOUSTVARJANJA?

Soustvarjanje se promovira kot rešitev današnjih izzivov. Kljub uporabnosti na različnih področjih javne politike in obetavnih učinkih, se področje kulture pogosto izpostavlja kot posebej zanimivo in ugodno okolje za soustvarjanje. Tako se intuitivno uveljavlja kot področje, ki ponuja precej različne pogoje za soustvarjanje – kljub pomanjkanju trdnih argumentov, ki lahko upravičujejo drugačno obravnavo kulture od ostalih področij javnih politik. Da bi rešili to dilemo, je namen članka odgovoriti na vprašanje, ali in v kolikšni meri so spodbudni dejavniki in ovire soustvarjanja na področju kulture specifični. Odgovor iščemo s pomočjo sistematičnega pregleda literature in študije primera projekta »Evropska prestolnica kulture 2020 Reka«. Članek na podlagi tega ugotavlja, da ni specifičnih spodbudnih dejavnikov in ovir, ki bi opravičevali posebno obravnavo kulture kot bistveno drugačnega področja soustvarjanja.

Ključne besede: kultura; spodbudni dejavniki in ovire soustvarjanja; mehki kognitivni zemljevid; projekt »Evropska prestolnica kulture«.

POLITICAL MAP OF ARGENTINA AFTER 2019 ELECTIONS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Katarína BROCKOVÁ, Rudolf KUCHARČÍK and Tetyana ZUBRO¹

Argentina is one of the most influential players in Latin America with the aspiration of being a regional leader. However, history of the country has been affected by serious economic and political instability. Political scientists agree that the country has the potential to be a real economic and political power. This paper analyses the main events creating and influencing the current political map of Argentina and explains the reasons of electoral behaviour with special emphasis on the elections of 2019.

Key words: Argentina; political map; Peronism; elections; Kirchnerism.

1 INTRODUCTION: TOWARDS UNCERTAINTY OF THE 21st CENTURY

At the beginning of the 20th century, Argentina was the richest country in Latin America and one of the richest countries in the world. The living standard of the country was comparable to those of the U.S. and Western European countries. It was even higher than in France, Italy or Germany at that time and Argentina was a hemispheric rival of the U.S. (Clavijo 2020).

The remarkable economic growth of Argentina started in the second half of the 19th century and continued with the dynamic demographic change of the country. In 1869, Argentina's national population was about 1.7 million; in 1914, it was almost 8 million (Smith and Green 2019, 246). The country became the destination for migrants from Europe in the second half of 19th century and Western and Eastern Europeans moved to three American destinations – Canada, U.S., and Argentina. This process made Argentina (together with Uruguay) unique in Latin America. About 97% of Argentinians have European origin – comparing to 14% of Bolivians, 25% of Chileans, 50% of Brazilians or 20% of Colombians (Kent 2016, 184). During that period gross domestic product grew continuously – estimated average rate was at least 5% from 1860s to 1914 (Smith and Green 2019, 246).

¹ Katarína BROCKOVÁ and Rudolf KUCHARČÍK are associate professors at the University of Economics, Faculty of International Relations, Slovakia. Tetyana ZUBRO is assistant professor at the University of Economics, Faculty of International Relations, Slovakia. Contacts: katarina.brockova@euba.sk, rudolf.kucharcik@euba.sk, tetyana.zubro@euba.sk.

Argentina's economic success was based on agriculture – especially on export of agricultural products – beef meat and grain (ibid., 245). However, one-way and export-oriented economy was dependent on world prices of export commodities. Very soon, the economic policy of the country proved to be problematic as the value of the export goods was unpredictable. This kind of economic policy of Argentinian governments resulted in the country being affected by protectionism during the Great Depression in late 1920s and early 1930s. The political turbulences that followed led to the first of the six military coups in the country in 1930.² Broader consequences of that situation are detectable in Argentinian politics and society until present times. No Argentinian government has been able to solve a major social problem – deepening inequities in Argentina as one of the sources of political turbulences in the country in the following hundred years. Social unrests of 1930s and 1940s helped to establish really strong and influential trade unions as one of the decisive players of Argentinian politics. Later they became a very close and traditional partner of different Peronist parties and movements. Due to the Peronist ideology of corporatism, workers and the working class were brought into politics. On the other hand – as trade unions were influential and became a real part of the Peronist movements, it was difficult and even impossible to adopt actions necessary for the revitalization of the economy³ – including social restrictions. Populism,⁴ typical for the governments of Juan Domingo Perón (1946–1955), (1973–1974), remained an integral part of Argentinian politics.

After the Dirty war period (1976–1983) Argentina became one of the examples of the countries of Huntington's third way of democratization.⁵ The military junta was definitively discredited in 1983 as a result of a series of military government actions - defeat in the war on Falklands, crimes of the government and military representatives and unwillingness to discuss social problems as military junta banned unions and controlled social institutions in the country (Hellinger 2011, 244). The upcoming tasks for the new civic government were clear – national reconciliation, punishment of crimes of representatives of the military junta government (1976–1983) and revitalization of economy.⁶ The newly elected president Raúl Alfonsín⁷ (1983–1989) was partially successful in the first two areas of action, but he was unable to solve the economic crisis⁸ in Argentina. His economic policy even involved the introduction of a new currency – the *austral*. However, the currency was devaluated so many times that it became worthless (Buckmann 2012, 43). Social riots caused by economic problems forced Raúl Alfonsín to leave the office pre-term in July 1989 (transfer of power to the new president was originally scheduled for December 1989).

The successor of Raúl Alfonsín in the office of the President of Argentina was the

² The other coups were in 1943, 1955, 1962, 1966 and 1976.

³ Compare Čech (2011).

⁴ Theoretical approach to populism compare Cremonesi and Salvati (2019).

⁵ Some authors argue that the process of transition started much earlier in April 1977 – one year after military coup when group of mothers of disappeared Argentinians went to Plaza de Mayo in front of the presidential palace to protest silently. They immediately became international symbol of resistance of repression – Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo (Hellinger 2011, 245), inevitable part of symbolism in modern politics of Argentina.

⁶ The inflation reached 335% in 1975, 200% in 1982 and about 400% in 1983 (Hellinger 2011, 246).

⁷ Raúl Alfonsín from left-centrist Radical Civic Union was surprisingly winner of the election of 1983 as the favorite of the election was Peronist from Justicialist Party Ítalo Argentino Lúder. Raúl Alfonsín finally obtained 52% of votes and Lúder 40% (Schumacher 1983).

⁸ Inflation in Argentina was about 600% in 1986, 380% in 1988 and 3000% in 1989 (World Bank Open Data 2021).

Peronist Carlos Saúl Menem (1989–1999). Carlos Saúl Menem and his political approach support the fact that it is not easy at all to categorise Peronism and the ideology of Peronism.⁹ Carlos Saúl Menem was by no means leftist nor was he linked with trade unions as traditional Peronists. Menem's economic approach was rightist and neoliberal and included privatisation of key sectors of economy – airlines, energy supplies, railways. In opposition to other prominent Peronists was his foreign policy close to the U.S.¹⁰ As his neoliberal approach seemed to be successful in the beginning of 1990s,¹¹ he brought Peronists new type of voters – middle class voters. However, as in previous decades, the economic prosperity of Argentina did not last longer period. The hope for economic stability ended during 1998¹² and at the beginning of the 21st century, the economy of Argentina fell into its deepest decline since the Great Depression (Smith and Green 2019, 272). Finally, in 2001 Argentina defaulted – the first of the three times in the following twenty years of the 21st century.

2 FROM 2001 DEFAULT TOWARDS THE 2019 ELECTIONS

Argentina's economic problems on the brink of the new millennium had serious political consequences. President Fernando de la Rúa¹³ (1999–2001) was forced to resign on December 21, 2001. His resignation was the response to the riots across the country and the lack of political support within his own coalition as some deputies refused his free market style. After his resignation, Argentina witnessed 4 different presidents in the course of two following weeks. Firstly, Fernando de la Rúa was replaced by Peronist Adolfo Rodríguez Saá. He resigned on December 30, 2001 – as in the case of Fernando de la Rúa, Adolfo Rodríguez Saá also lacked the support within his own party - this time the Peronist Justicialist Party. Later Ramón Puerta (President of the Senate) and Eduardo Camaño (President of the Chamber of Deputies) served as presidents – both only for 48 hours. Finally, on January 2, 2002, Peronist Eduardo Duhalde was elected President to complete the original term of Fernando de la Rúa (O'Toole 2011). The society was hit significantly by the consequences of the recession and default. The unemployment rate rose to about 25%, 55% of the society found themselves below the poverty line. About 27% of the society lived in extreme poverty (Clavijo 2020).

The Presidential election of 2003 was held in a situation of political and economic tensions. The list of candidates proved the fragmentation of Argentinian politics, even within traditional political parties (Justicialist Party and Radical Civic Union). Three of nine candidates in the election of 2003 were Peronists – Carlos Saúl Menem, Néstor Kirchner and Adolfo Rodríguez Saá. They were supported by different factions of Justicialist Party and each of them obtained more than 14%

⁹ Carlos Saúl Menem managed to govern Argentina through decretes of Urgency and Necessity (Decretos de Urgencia y Necesidad) as the results of disputes in Peronist camp. The number of the decretes he issued between his first term (1989-1994) was unprecedented – 336 (Smith 2012, 162).

¹⁰ Argentinian approach towards U.S. is traditionally inconsistent. Leftists Peronists leans to cooperation with leftist governments in the regions (the case of Nestor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández Kirchner). Liberals and centrists tends to cooperation with the U.S. (the case of government of Mauricio Macri).

¹¹ Inflation was about 1% in 1996 and 1997 (Smith and Green 2019, 270).

¹² Country was hit by Asian financial crisis in 1997 and Russian financial crisis in 1998. Argentina was in severe recession from 1998 (Clavijo 2020).

¹³ President Fernando de la Rúa was leader of Radical Civil Union and in 1999 presidential election defeated Peronist Eduardo Duhalde.

of votes. Two other candidates had their roots in the Radical Civic Union – Elisa María Avelina Carrió and Ricardo López Murphy. However, the official candidate of Radicals was Leopoldo Moreau with a marginal result of about 2% (Election Guide 2020).

TABLE 1: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2003

First round/April 27 th , 2003; Turnout 77.53%				
Carlos Saúl Menem <i>Front for Loyalty/ Frente por la Lealtad</i>	Nestor Kirchner <i>Front for Victory/ Frente para la Victoria</i>	Ricardo López Murphy <i>Federal Movement to Recreate Growth/ Recrear para el Crecimiento</i>	Elisa María Avelina Carrió <i>Argentines for a Republic of Equals/ Argentinos por una República de Iguales</i>	Adolfo José Rodríguez Saá <i>National and Popular Movement/ Frente Movimiento Popular</i>
24.34%	21.99%	16.35%	14.15%	14.12%

Source: Election Guide (2020).

Nestor Kirchner, one of Peronists' candidates became President as a relatively unknown politician after the election of 2003. Nestor Kirchner was a leftist Peronist and a rival of Carlos Menem within the Peronist movement. He was the governor of the province Santa Cruz and until 2003 he did not perform significantly in the national policy. In 2003 election president in office Eduard Duhalde supported him. His main rival – also Peronist Carlos Saúl Menem stepped down after the first round¹⁴ of the presidential election – disappointed by his poor result (although he was the winner of the first round – Table 1). Menem's decision not to compete had considerable effect on the future of the politics in Argentina. Nestor Kirchner and his wife Cristina Fernandez Kirchner became the most influential players in the politics of the country. Kirchnerism developed to one of the decisive and essential political movements in Argentina of the 21st century.

Nestor Kirchner did not introduce a radically new program as Carlos Menem did before (Plachý 2012, 263). His rhetoric was leftist and anti-liberal. However, in practical politics he was moderate and centrist. As president he tried to by-pass legislature and to govern through decrees. Nestor Kirchner issued 232 of them – the amount comparable to Menem's 336 during his first term. For his opponents, that style of governance was an evidence of corruption and clientelism (ibid.). On the other hand, we have to underline that economic situation during his presidential term was stable – *i.e.* economic growth in 2006 was 9.2% (Buckmann 2012, 50). Because of social programs, declining the poverty and stable economy Nestor Kirchner was relatively popular during his whole term in office. His decision not to run for office in the 2007 presidential election was a surprise. However, it came not as a surprise that he decided to support his wife Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in the presidential contest of 2007. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner won the 2007 election smoothly. Her main rival Elisa María Avelina Carrió gained about 20% of votes less than Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (Table 2).

¹⁴ According to Argentine constitution to avoid runoff in presidential election, it is necessary to gain 45% of votes or 40% of votes with at least 10% over the runner-up. According to the Argentine constitution candidates are to obliged to have two debates during the campaign. If there is a second turn they have to take part in the third one. The Chamber of Deputies consists of 257 seats, Every two years is re-elected part of the chamber (130 or 127 deputies). They are elected by proportional system. Argentinian Senate consists of 72 senators – every two years is elected one third of them. Eeligible to vote is every 16 years old native Argentinian or 18 years old naturalized citizen (Constitución de la Nación Argentina 2021). Argentina is also a country with obligatory quotas for women (the first party list quota decision in the world) – from 1990 every party list must contain at least 30% of women candidates. The election are obligatory in Argentina for all the citizenese with possible sanctions for those who do not take part (fincial penalties, depriving the possibility to work as a state employee etc.).

TABLE 2: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2007

First round/October 28 th , 2007; Turnout 71.8%				
Cristina Fernández de Kirchner <i>Front for Victory / Frente para la Victoria</i>	Elisa María Avelina Carrió <i>Civic Coalition/ Coalición Cívica</i>	Roberto Lavagna <i>Alianza Concertación para Una Nación Avanzada/ Consensus for an Advanced Nation</i>	Alberto Rodríguez Saá <i>Union and Liberty Party / Alianza Frente Justicia Union y Libertad</i>	Nestor Pitrola <i>Worker's Party / Partido Obrero</i>
44.92%	22.95%	16.88%	7.71%	6.19%

Source: Election Guide (2020).

Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner confirmed her position as head of the state in presidential election of 2011 gaining almost 54% of votes (Table 3). It is questionable if the election process in 2011 was competitive as the election was affected by the death of still popular Nestor Kirchner and consequent sympathy for Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. The first mandate of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner¹⁵ was influenced by continuously favourable economic situation (GDP growth in 2010 was about 10% - Table 7). The situation changed at the beginning of the second decade of 21st century during her second term. The government of Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner was not willing to make a deal with creditors and Argentina was forced to leave international capital markets. The economic policy of the second government of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner resulted in a new default in 2014.

TABLE 3: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2011

First round/October 23 rd , 2011; Turnout 74.42%			
Cristina Fernández de Kirchner <i>Front for Victory / Frente para la Victoria</i>	Hermes Juan Binner <i>Broad Progressive Front Alliance / Alianza Frente Amplio Progresista</i>	Raúl Alfonsín <i>Radical Civic Union / Unión Cívica Radical</i>	Eduardo Alberto Duhalde <i>Justicialist Party / Partido Justicialista</i>
53.96%	16.87%	11.15%	5.89%

Source: Election Guide (2020).

Cristina Fernández de Kirchner could not compete in the 2015 presidential election and Peronist movement had to nominate a new candidate. The official candidate of the Peronists became the former vice-president in Nestor Kirchner administration and governor of Buenos Aires Daniel Scioli. His main rival was Mauricio Macri from the opposition (included i.e. Radical Civic Union) bloc Let's Change. The situation was different to contests in 2007 and 2011. As there was no winner after the first round of the election (Table 4), the second round was necessary. Mauricio Macri won narrowly (Table 4) with about 51% of votes.

TABLE 4: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2015

First round/October 25 th , 2015; Turnout 78.66%		
Daniel Scioli <i>Front for Victory / Frente para la Victoria</i>	Mauricio Macri <i>Let's Change / Cambiemos</i>	Sergio Massa <i>United for a New Alternative / Unidos por una Nueva Alternativa</i>
36.90%	34.30%	21.30%
Second round/November 22 nd , 2015; Turnout 80.85%		
Daniel Scioli <i>Front for Victory / Frente para la Victoria</i>	Mauricio Macri <i>Let's Change / Cambiemos</i>	
48.66%	51.34%	

Source: Election Guide (2020).

¹⁵ Cristina Fernández de Kirchner was in a dispute with prominent Peronist colleagues – in 2008 left her chief of her office Alberto Fernández (current president). In the same year vicepresident Julio César Cleto Cobos decided not to support her decision to increase tax on export on agriculture products. As his vote was in the Senate decisive the governmental proposal was rejected (Argentine Senate rejects farm tax 2008).

The political division of the society was confirmed in the legislative election held at the same time. Although Mauricio Macri won presidential election, his coalition lost in the elections to both chambers of the Parliament. Peronist coalition Front for Victory won both (Table 5, 6).

TABLE 5: CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES 2015 ELECTION

October 25 th , 2015; Turnout 74.17%			
<i>Front for Victory/ Frente para la Victoria</i>	<i>Let's Change Alliance/ Cambiemos</i>	<i>United for a New Alternative/ Unidos por una Nueva Alternativa</i>	<i>Others</i>
60 seats	40 seats	14 seats	16 seats

Source: Election Guide (2020).

TABLE 6: SENATE ELECTION 2015

October 25 th , 2015; Turnout 79.83%			
<i>Front for Victory/ Frente para la Victoria</i>	<i>"Let's Change" Alliance/ Cambiemos</i>	<i>United for a New Alternative/ Unidos por una Nueva Alternativa</i>	<i>Others</i>
13 seats	6 seats	1 seat	4 seats

Source: Election Guide (2020).

3 ELECTIONS 2019

3.1 Pessimism before elections in 2019

Immediately after he was inaugurated Mauricio Macri took steps for the liberalization of the Argentinian economy. He cut export taxes, lifted currency controls and negotiated conditions allowing Argentina to return to international capital markets (Nelson 2020). However, his support declined once he had to deal with broader economic reforms and expenditure cuts. Mauricio Macri was finally forced to turn to IMF to ask for assistance to solve the economic crisis in the country. The debt from IMF rose to 56 billion USD – the largest one in IMF history (Fróes). Despite this decision, economic conditions failed to improve (Nelson 2020) and Mauricio Macri was not able to fulfil one of the key promises of his campaign – zero poverty. Of course, his supporters suggested that the economy was in a really bad condition in 2015 so he needed more time to achieve his economic goals. However, one can ask if promises of that kind (zero poverty) are not to be perceived only as a sort of populism usually linked with Peronism and Kirchnerism but not with a moderate candidate unable to compete without articulating unrealistic promises to society that is not prepared for necessary but painful restrictions. The economy was once again the main topic of the political campaign and the atmosphere in the country was pessimistic.

In 2018 62% of Argentinians identified the situation in the country as very bad or bad. In Latin America only Venezuelans identified the situation as worse (83%). The average of Latin America was 42% with the most satisfied residents of Chile and Bolivia where the situation was identified as bad or very bad by 16% and 18% of population respectively (Latinobarómetro 2018, 8). In the same poll only 8% of Argentinians were satisfied with the economic situation in their country. The average of Latin America was 12%. The most satisfied were the citizens in Chile (26%), Uruguay (21%) and Bolivia (18%) (ibid.). At the same time, Argentinians were the most pessimistic in perception of their future. Only one third of them thought that the situation would be better in 2019 – in the year of the election. The average for Latin America was 45%. The most optimistic appeared to be Brazilians and the citizens of the Dominican Republic with 58% (ibid., 12).

Despite those results, Argentina traditionally belongs to Latin American countries with higher support for democracy. In 1996 about 76% of Argentinians were in favour of democracy. A better result was only recorded for Uruguay (80%). In 2018 it was 58% of support in Argentina. Despite this result, Argentina is still among the countries with the highest support for democracy – only Venezuela (75%), Costa Rica (63%) and Uruguay (61%) recorded a higher level of support (ibid., 16).

Pessimism was confirmed also by the polls held in the year of elections. The nation did not expect better living standard regardless of the candidate who would have won the election. According to Argentinians, the most severe problems facing country in 2019 were inflation (40.7% of poll responders), unemployment (22.2% of poll responders) and corruption (15.9 % of poll responders) (The presidential election in Argentina 2019). Only 29.2% believed that the economy would perform better if Mauricio Macri won election in 2019. 50.7% of poll responders thought it would perform worse (ibid.). The poll took place in May 2019 so it was not clear yet if Cristina Fernández would run for office or not. If she were a candidate 38.5% of responders said that the economy would perform better if she won and 44.7% said it would perform worse (ibid.).

Those opinions were approved in the poll held on September 2–3, 2019. According to the results, 63.3% of Argentinians were not satisfied with the way Mauricio Macri governed the country. Only 32.9% of responders were satisfied. About 57% of responders said that his government was bad or very bad. Only 26% of them agreed that his government was good or very good. The same poll confirmed that the most distinctive persons in politics of the country are Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Mauricio Macri. More than 48% of responders said that they would never vote for Mauricio Macri and 39.1% of them pointed out that they would never vote for Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. About 35.5% of responders would never support Alberto Fernández and 10% would never vote for Roberto Lavagna. The principal problems for the country were inflation (37.8%), corruption (21.1%), inefficient state (16%) and unemployment (14.8%) (Encuesta electoral: Elecciones Presidenciales de Argentina 2019).

Macroeconomic data (Tables 7–11) also confirm bad condition of Argentinian economy in the second decade of the 21st century and could also explain the position of Argentinian society in terms of economy and economic expectations. Looking at GDP growth, Argentina did very well in 2010 but the economy of the country was still in recession in the election year. Comparing the four other countries only Colombia's growth exceeded 3%. One of the most important problems for the whole region is social inequality¹⁶ (Table 9). It is visible that this issue poses a challenge not only for Argentina. However, as underlined in this paper – the main problem for the country was inflation regardless of the year – the results for Argentina were critical during all the time and no other country we chose faced such a critical situation (Table 10).

¹⁶ Compare i.e. Mahler et al (2015).

TABLE 7: GDP (ANNUAL %)

	2010	2015	2018	2019
Argentina	10.1	2.7	-2.6	-2.1
Brazil	7.5	-3.5	1.3	1.1
Chile	5.8	2.3	3.9	1.1
Colombia	4.5	3.0	2.5	3.3
Uruguay	7.8	0.4	1.6	0.2

Source: World Bank Open Data (2021).

TABLE 8: GDP PER CAPITA USD

	2010	2015	2018	2019
Argentina	10 386	13 789	11 633,5	9 912,30
Brazil	11 286,2	8814	9001,2	8 717,2
Chile	12 808	13 574,2	15 924,8	14 896,5
Colombia	6336,7	6175,9	6716,9	6428,7
Uruguay	11 992	15 613,8	17 278	16 191

Source: World Bank Open Data (2021).

TABLE 9: INCOME SHARE HELD BY LOWEST 20%

	2010	2015	2018	2019
Argentina	4,6	X	5,0	4,7
Brazil	X	3,6	3,1	3,1
Colombia	3,3	3,8	4,0	3,7
Uruguay	5,0	5,6	5,9	5,8

Source: World Bank Open Data (2021).

TABLE 10: INFLATION (%)

	2010	2015	2018	2019
Argentina	20,9	26,6	40	50,6
Brazil	8,4	7,6	3,3	4,2
Chile	9,0	5,0	2,4	2,7
Colombia	3,8	2,4	4,5	4,3
Uruguay	4,9	9,0	5,6	7,7

Source: World Bank Open Data (2021).

TABLE 11: UNEMPLOYMENT - TOTAL LABOUR FORCE (%)

	2010	2015	2018	2019
Argentina	7,71	7,61	9,22	9,84
Brazil	7,73	8,43	12,33	11,93
Chile	8,42	6,51	7,23	7,29
Colombia	10,98	8,3	9,11	9,96
Uruguay	7,16	7,49	8,34	9,35

Source: World Bank Open Data (2021).

3.2 Results of the 2019 elections

Presidential and legislative elections were held on October 27, 2019. They were preceded by obligatory primaries called Simultaneous and Compulsory Open Primaries (PASO)¹⁷ on August 11, 2019. They are perceived as primaries as they are the first phase of the election. Every party can perform its program and present different opinions. The citizens also decide which candidates will take part in national election. They are open as every Argentine citizen can take part in this process. They are simultaneous as they are realizing the same day for every political party in Argentina. And they are obligatory as every political party and candidate has to go through the process of primaries and also every citizen should take part in the election process of primaries to choose the candidate (Miranda 2019, 58–59). Candidates with less than 1.5% of votes in primaries cannot take part in the national election.

Mauricio Macri was not a favourite in the primaries. He tried to increase his popularity by choosing his vice-presidential candidate from the Peronist camp.

¹⁷ PASO is part of election process in Argentina from 2011.

He chose senator from the province Río Negro Miguel Ángel Pichetto. This strategy was understandable but did not prove helpful. The tandem Alberto Fernández and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner won the primaries with 47.7% of votes, Mauricio Macri and Miguel Ángel Pichetto gained 32.1% of votes and Roberto Lavagna with Juan Manuel Urtubay 8.2% (Horowitz 2019).

Although Mauricio Macri tried to reverse the results, the trend was clear and on October 27, 2019, he lost the election (Table 12). However, analysing the results of the 2019 elections more precisely it becomes evident that the society is divided strictly into two strong camps. Macri won only in six of total twenty-four provinces. His loss can be interpreted as a rejection of his neoliberal approach and austerity policy that even worsened after the economic crisis in 2018.¹⁸ On the other hand, although Mauricio Macri lost the presidential election, Alberto Fernández and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner did not obtain clear majority in the legislative part of election (Tables 13, 14). Taking into account the results of midterm election from 2017 (Tables 15, 16) it was evident that Alberto Fernández would face strong opposition and that he would need to try to find compromise and partners from all political camps if he wanted to solve crucial problems of the country.

TABLE 12: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2019

First round/October 27 th , 2019; Turnout 80.86%		
Alberto Fernández <i>Everyone's Front/Frente de Todos</i>	Mauricio Macri <i>Together for Change/Juntos por el Cambio</i>	Roberto Lavagna <i>Federal Consensus/Consenso Federal</i>
48.10%	40.37%	6.16%

Source: Election Guide (2020).

TABLE 13: CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES 2019 ELECTION

October 27 th , 2019; Turnout 80.86%		
<i>Everyone's front/Frente de Todos</i>	<i>Together for change/Juntos por el Cambio</i>	<i>Others</i>
64 seats	56 seats	10 seats

Source: Election Guide (2020).

TABLE 14: SENATE ELECTION 2019

October 27 th , 2019; Turnout 80.86%		
<i>Everyone's front/Frente de Todos</i>	<i>Together for change/Juntos por el Cambio</i>	<i>Others</i>
12 seats	8 seats	4 seats

Source: Election Guide (2020).

TABLE 15: CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES 2017 ELECTION

October 29 th , 2017; Turnout 76.82%			
<i>Let's Change/Cambiamos</i>	<i>Citizen's Unity/Unidad Ciudadana</i>	<i>Justicialist Party/Partido Justicialista</i>	<i>Others</i>
61 seats	28 seats	18 seats	20 seats

Source: Election Guide (2020).

TABLE 16: SENATE ELECTION 2017

October 29 th , 2017; Turnout 78.72%			
<i>Let's Change/Cambiamos</i>	<i>Citizen's Unity/Unidad Ciudadana</i>	<i>Justicialist Party/Partido Justicialista</i>	<i>Others</i>
12 seats	6 seats	4 seats	2 seats

Source: Election Guide (2020).

¹⁸ The crisis was worsen by external factors – slow economic growth in Brazil, the trade war between the United States and China affecting e.g. export of Argentinian goods, low global commodity prices and serious draught (the worst in 50 years) in Argentina (Gedan 2019; Baculáková 2018). The U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) also raised interest rates – the consequence was reduction investor interest in Argentine bonds (Nelson 2020).

One of the strongest groups of supporters of the Fernández-Fernández tandem were young Argentinians. Leftist ideas were really popular among young Argentinians in 2019. In addition, it was “cool” to be anti-Macri. Young Argentinians were attracted to the ideas of Peronism. The Fernández-Fernández tandem was able to address the so-called generation Z (Special Analysis: Argentina Election 2019).

Alberto Fernandez¹⁹ (former critic of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner) was a more moderate candidate than Cristina Fernández de Kirchner would ever be. He was incorporated in the structure of the Justicialist Party and was able to attract Peronists who could not accept Kirchnerism. Alberto Fernández sees himself as a Peronist, left liberal and a progressive liberal (Schuster 2019). He is not a supporter of neoliberal programs as according to him the role of the state is to balance what the market unbalances (*ibid.*). Mauricio Macri joined only two leaders in Latin America who were not re-elected since 1990.

Those two were Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua in 1990 and Hipólito Mejía in the Dominican Republic in 2004. On the other hand, he is only the third non-Peronist candidate who was able to complete his term since 1912 (Nielsen 2019).

4 CONCLUSION

After being elected, Alberto Fernández once again faced a severe economic crisis. His predecessor Mauricio Macri failed mainly because the investments he promised in his election campaign of 2015 did not arrive (Schuster 2019). Moreover, in 2019 Argentina did worse in major economic indicators as it did in 2015. The estimated GDP decline in 2020 was about 11.8%. Expected growth for 2020 was - 11% and the prediction for 2021 is +3.0%. Expected inflation for 2020 was 45.4% with not better figures in 2021 - 42.4%. Public debt was 89.8% in 2018, 93.8% in 2019, 117.3% in 2020 and forecast for 2021 is 118.3% of GDP (Argentina: Economic and political outline 2021).

However, the history of Argentinian economic problems and consequently the history of the country's political turmoil is rich. Argentina has defaulted nine times in total (last time in May 2020) and since 1950, it spent one third of the time in economic recession. Only the Democratic Republic of Congo has worse results in this indicator (*ibid.*). During that period Argentina also logged 14 recessions (Gedan 2019). Since 1956 Argentina also joined 21 IMF programs

¹⁹ Alberto Fernández was not the only opposition candidate in Latin America who won the election at the end of the second decade of 21st century. Opposition candidates won also in Chile (Sebastian Pinera in 2017), Colombia (Iván Duque in 2018), Mexico (A. M. López Obrador in 2018), Brazil (Jair Bolsonaro in 2018), El Salvador (Nayib Bukele in 2019), Panama (Laurentino Cortizo in 2019) and Guatemala (Alejandro Giammattei in 2019). The result of those elections confirm these about heterogeneity rather than homogeneity (leftists governments in the first decade of 21st century) in the region (Malamud and Núñez 2019). Elections in the regions won candidates from different parts of political spectres - extreme right (Jair Bolsonaro), conservative right (Iván Duque, Mario Abdó Benítez, Juan Orlando Hernandez), center-right (Sebastian Piñera, Alejandro Giammattei), center left (Carlos Alvarado, Laurentino Cortizo), left (Manuel López Obrador) (Malamud and Núñez 2019). Alberto Fernández becomes to center-left but tandem Fernández-Fernández moves him closer to positions that are more leftist. He governs in the region that is different to the era of Nestor Kirchner and Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner governments. There are no more friendly governments as in the past (Brazil by Lula and Dilma, relatively prosperous Venezuela governed by Hugo Chávez). From the list above it is visible that region is a mosaic of dissimilar projects (Schuster 2019).

(International Monetary Fund 2020). Despite these figures, Argentina is without any doubt a regional power with great economic potential and sufficient influence to defend its national interests and, hypothetically, has favourable conditions for its development: adequate number of population and the space for its increasing, productive agriculture and skilful labour force (Friedman 2011, 234). Argentina faces mainly political challenges – politicians have to stop increasing their popularity with money they do not have (ibid.). Marshall (2017, 220) in that context points out that Argentina has a real chance to be the First world country. The pre-condition for this is a responsible economic policy as the steep status fall of the country during the last century was caused by the lack of diversification,²⁰ stratification, injustice in social structure, inadequate educational system, military coups and economic policy of the government period after the Dirty war. Also, Clavijo (2020) points out that although the international environment plays a role in the country's current conditions, there are two more important factors that obstruct the resolution of the main problems. Firstly, the Argentinian governments were not willing to modernize and diversify the economy of the country. Secondly, the population tends to vote for populist politicians. Midterm elections will be held in Argentina in 2021. The role of Alberto Fernández is to keep his coalition intact and to deal with the post COVID-19 atmosphere in the country. According to María Esperanza Casullo, political scientist at the National University of Rio Negro, Alberto Fernández can succeed. She points out that if the Argentinian economy rebounds and if a COVID-19 vaccine appears, Alberto Fernández government should do well in 2021. However, she emphasizes that those two 'ifs' are significant (Mander 2020).

REFERENCES

- Argentina: Economic and political outline. 2021. *Santander Trade Portal*. Available at <https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/argentina/economic-political-outline>.
- Argentine Senate rejects farm tax. 2008. *BBC*. Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/7511111.stm>.
- Baculáková, Kristína. 2018. Argentina – súčasná ekonomická situácia a faktory krízy. *International Relations 2018. Current issues of world economy and politics*. Available at https://fmv.euba.sk/www_write/files/veda-vyskum/konferencia-smolenice/2018/Smolenice_2018.pdf.
- Buckman, T. Robert. 2012. *The World Today Series 2012. Latin America*. Lanham: Stryker-Post Publications.
- Clavijo, José. 2020. Once the Country of the Future, Can Argentine Free Itself from its Past? *World Politics Review*, 30 June 2020. Available at <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/28879/in-the-wake-of-default-argentina-struggles-to-break-from-its-past>.
- Constitución de la Nación Argentina. 2021. Available at <https://www.congreso.gob.ar/constitucionNacional.php>.
- Cremonesi, Cristina and Eugenio Salvati. 2019. "Populism and 2014 European elections: a comparative study of party speeches by the leaders of Movimiento Cinco Stelle and United Kingdom Independent Party." *Journal of Comparative Politics* 12 (2): 18–37.
- Čech, Lubomír. 2011. *Globalization and its influence on international political relations basic features of international political relations in the environment of a postmodern society of the globalizing world. Globalisation dimensions & impacts: global studies series*. London: IJOPEC publication.

²⁰ The economy is still very depended on agricultural sector. Argentina is the world's largest exporter of soy and soy derived products. Except for soy, it is necessary to mention wheat, corn, beef or wine as key export articles.

- Election Guide. 2020. Argentine Republic. Available at <https://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/11/>.
- Encuesta Electoral: Elecciones Presidenciales de Argentina. 2019. *Atlas*. Available at <https://static.poder360.com.br/2019/09/Pesquisa-Atlas-Argentina.pdf>.
- Friedman, George. 2011. *Nasledujúce desaťročie. Kde sme... a kam sa uberáme*. Ikar: Bratislava.
- Fróes, Frederico. 2019. Argentina's election: The international implications of Fernández government. *Atlantic Council*. Available at <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/>.
- Gedan, N. Benjamin. 2019. Mauricio Macri was bound for disaster. *Foreign Policy*. 24 October 2019. Available at <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/10/24/macri-fernandez-kirchner-argentina-president-elections-economy-imf-debt>.
- Horowitz, Luisa. 2019. PASO Results: Who Will Compete for Argentina's Presidency? Available at <https://www.as-coa.org/articles/paso-results-who-will-compete-argentinas-presidency>.
- Hellinger, C. Daniel. 2011. *Comparative Politics of Latin America. Democracy at Last*. New York: Routledge.
- International Monetary Fund. 2020. Argentina. Available at <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/ARG>.
- Kent, B. Robert. 2016. *Latin America. Regions and People*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Latinobarómetro. 2018. Informe 2018. Available at <https://www.latinobarometro.org/lat.jsp>.
- Malamud, Carlos and Rogelio Núñez. *Elecciones en Bolivia, Argentina y Uruguay: un balance preliminar ante el fin del trienio electoral latinoamericano (2017-2019)*. Available at http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_es/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/zonas_es/america+latina/ari94-2019-elecciones-en-bolivia-argentina-uruguay-balance-preliminar-ante-trienio-electoral-latinoamericano.
- Mahler, A. Vinect, Kimberly Loontjer and Sara Parang. 2015. "Income inequality and government redistribution: a cross-national study." *Journal of Comparative Politics* 8 (1): 75–94.
- Mander, Benedict. 2020. Back to Argentina's treacherous politics for Alberto Fernández. *Financial Times*, 9 September 2020. Available at <https://www.ft.com/content/0dc1a3df-a3cd-4021-8833-87d70be135b1>.
- Marshall, Tim. 2017. *V zajatí geografie. Desať máp, ktoré vám vedia povedať všetko, čo chcete vedieť o globálnej politke*. Premedia: Bratislava.
- Nielsen, Sarah. 2019. *Argentina's Presidential Election Results Are In: Now What?* Available at <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/argentinas-presidential-election-results-are-now-what>.
- Nelson, M. Rebecca. 2020. Argentina's Economic Crisis and Default. Available at <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/IF10991.pdf>.
- O'Toole, Gavin. 2011. *Politics Latin America*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Plachý, Ondřej. 2012. Transformace labor-based stran v Argentíně. In *Politické strany Afriky, Asie a Latinské Ameriky: Rysy politického straníctví*, ed. Fiala, Vlastimil. Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultúry.
- Schumacher, Edward. 1983. The Argentine Result: A vote for democracy. *New York Times*, 2 November 1983. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/11/02/world/the-argentine-result-a-vote-for-democracy.html>.
- Schuster, Mariano. 2019. Bye Bye Macri: el 'kirchnerismo' regresa a Argentina con la victoria de Fernández. *El Confidencial*, 28 October 2019. Available at https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/2019-10-28/kirchnerista-alberto-fernandez-gana-elecciones-argentina_2302335.
- Smith, H. Peter. 2012. *Democracy in Latin America*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, P. Peter and James N. Green. 2019. *Modern Latin America*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Special Analysis: Argentina Election. 2019. Available at <https://www.latinamerica2b.com/research-insights/geopolitics/southern-cone/argentina/analyses-forecasts/special-analysis-27-october-2019-argentina-elections>.

The presidential election in Argentina. Nationwide Poll. *Synopsis consultores*, 7 May 2019. Available at <https://static.poder360.com.br/2019/05/THE-PRESIDENTIAL-ELECTION-IN-ARGENTINA-SYNOPSIS-MAY-2019.pdf>.

World Bank Open Data. 2021. Latin America & Caribbean. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/region/latin-america-and-caribbean>.



POLITIČNI ZEMLJEVID ARGENTINE PO VOLITVAH 2019 V PRIMERJALNI PERSPEKTIVI

Argentina je eden najvplivnejših igralcev Latinske Amerike, ki si prizadeva postati regionalni vodja. Na zgodovino države je vplivala resna gospodarska in politična nestabilnost. Politologi se strinjajo, da ima država potencial resnične gospodarske in politične moči. Prispevek analizira glavne dogodke, ki ustvarjajo in vplivajo na trenutni politični zemljevid Argentine, ter pojasnjuje razloge volilnega vedenja s posebnim poudarkom na volitvah leta 2019.

Ključne besede: Argentina; politični zemljevid; peronizem; volitve; kirchenizem.

GLOBAL AND NATIONAL PARADOXES IN RESPONSES TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Marjan MALEŠIČ¹

The crisis brought by COVID-19 and the response to it have led to plenty of paradoxes and associated behaviour. Relying on paradox theory, the author overviews paradoxes detected on the global level before focusing on Slovenia: one of the most effective countries in fighting the COVID-19 virus during the first wave of epidemic but one of the least successful during the second one. The government has ignored the management structure already in place and designed to respond to a complex crisis, and instead decided to improvise. Despite the harsh anti-COVID-19 measures imposed during the second wave, no positive results have been visible for months. While the authorities have expected citizens to abide by the measures, certain representatives of the authorities have sometimes ignored them. Rather than dealing strictly with issues to do with the virus, the government has raised particular sensitive ideological issues and created conflict, losing precious time and energy. Despite the existence of crisis communication plans, several principles for addressing the public were missing. Civil society's protests against the measures hold the potential to attract even harsher ones. The fight against the virus has absorbed tremendous medical capacities, thereby neglecting other diseases that may be expected, on top of the COVID-19 problems, to have a long-term negative impact on public health.

Key words: COVID-19; crisis; crisis response; paradox; Slovenia.

¹ Marjan MALEŠIČ, Professor and the Head of the Defence Research Centre at the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS), University of Ljubljana. His recent teaching and research fields include crisis (disaster) management, environmental security, the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, and non-military aspects of security. Malešič served as the vice-dean responsible for research at FSS (2007–2011) and as a member of the EU COST Domain Committee Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health (2010–2014). He is currently Chairman of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Social Sciences. Contact: marjan.malesic@fdv.uni-lj.si.

1 INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most striking paradox of the COVID-19 pandemic is that some important politicians, high-level state officials and even medical experts have asked publicly: Who could have known the COVID-19 crisis could spread so hugely and have such devastating global consequences? However, with his thesis on the “world risk society”, Beck (1992, 2008) has for decades directed attention to the integration and interdependence of the modern world, and how it is vulnerable to environmental, nuclear, economic/financial, genetic and terrorist threats. He has warned about the consequences of a complex crisis which spreads in an uncontrolled manner in space, time and society, that makes it difficult to calculate levels of fatalities, other victims and damage, thereby limiting the options for damage control and compensation. On the brink of the new millennium, Rosenthal et al. (2001) discussed future crises, their endemic nature, heterogeneity, complexity, self-perpetuation, trans-nationalisation, mediatation and politicisation. They also warned about the vicious circle of crises. In 2008, an economic, financial and social crisis hit the world, producing multi-faceted effects. Europe and certain other parts of the world saw a migration crisis of enormous proportions and profound implications between 2015 and 2016.² Today, COVID-19 confronts us with a crisis that is taking lives and jeopardising public health in the long run. It also is generating negative political and economic effects, influencing the psychological condition of individuals, groups and society while also changing the social discourse, limiting human rights, impacting our art, culture, education and sport, and having a great bearing on human relationships.

The mentioned threats are therefore universal, cutting across physical, time and social boundaries and requiring a common response from countries, international organisations and institutions, and non-governmental organisations. Yet, some years before the COVID-19 crisis we could witness the re-nationalisation of various policies globally and regionally, causing the erosion of the global and regional instruments for responding to crises. The World Health Organisation would no doubt say it has been under considerable political pressure during the crisis.

The article addresses these and other paradoxes of the COVID-19 crisis and the responses to it. The analysis of literature aimed to help consider the role of paradox in organisational theory, and to provide a basis for understanding COVID-19-related paradoxes as revealed by recent research around the world. A scoping study of the thus far limited sources was undertaken to achieve this. The observation method was used to explore instances of paradox as seen in Slovenia during the response to COVID-19: Best (1st wave) vs. worst (2nd wave) practices, measures vs. success, formal vs. improvised crisis management structure, complex crisis vs. state of epidemic, declared vs. actual behaviour, positive measures vs. side effects, trust vs. distrust, social and political culture vs. communication style, good intentions vs. bad outcomes, and focus on COVID-19 vs. neglect of other public health issues. In the conclusion, the comparative method is used to juxtapose global and national experiences as concerns the presence of paradox in the crisis response. The time period of the analysis is the beginning of March 2020 to the beginning of February 2021.

² For more, see Malešič (2017).

2 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Paradox may be briefly defined as a situation that is difficult or impossible to understand because it contains two contradictory facts or characteristics. Or, according to Lewis (2000, 760), “the notion of paradox can be defined as contradictory yet interrelated elements – elements that seem logical in isolation but absurd and irrational when appearing simultaneously”. The concept of paradox is associated with terms like contradiction, irony, inconsistency and oxymoron.

Smith et al. (2017) traced the appearance of paradoxical thinking in organisational theory back to the start of the 1980s. Initial studies revealed the notion of organisational effectiveness was inherently paradoxical. Since then, other issues have been explored: how to master the paradoxes and competing demands of organisations, the role of organisational paradox in theory and practice, the paradox of change, attraction and co-evolution, the transformation of paradoxes, paradoxical interventions in social work etc. Recently, several organisational phenomena related to paradox have been explored: the tensions of exploration and exploitation, competing identities and hybrid organisations, along with the dichotomies of stability and change, and control and collaboration.³

Guilmot and Ehnert (2017, 1–3) also conducted a scoping study of literature on paradox and phenomena linked to contradictory tensions. Paradox is relevant for managers seeking to solve tensions in organisations with a view to reconciling two or more contradictory, interrelated and co-existing oppositions. Guilmot and Ehnert (2017, 21) believe paradox is an increasingly prevalent phenomenon in organisations. Paradox as a lens has been used in research into various organisational phenomena like identity, innovation, change process, governance and leadership. Organisational paradoxes have been classified as learning (stability vs. change), organising (collaboration vs. control), performing (financial vs. social goals) and belonging tensions (individual vs. collective), and been explored on the levels of the individual, dyad, group, project and organisation.

Lewis and Smith (2014, 1) note “organisations are rife with tensions, ranging from flexibility vs. control, through exploration vs. exploitation, autocracy vs. democracy, social vs. financial to global vs. local”. The research of paradox makes ever more sense due to the complexity, change and ambiguity found in management processes. That is, a paradox perspective imposes profound changes in organisational theory’s main assumptions (ibid., 23): Traditional theory relies on rational, logical and linear approaches, whereas a paradox perspective emerges from surprising, counterintuitive and tense ones; traditional theory tries to uncover truth, the paradox perspective assumes that understandings emerge over time, “created from the juxtaposition of opposing forces and focused via actors’ cognitions and social constructions” (ibid.).

Smith and Tracy (2016, 1) believe that “organizational success increasingly depends on leaders’ ability to address competing demands simultaneously”. Competing demands are related to tensions between profit and purpose, today and tomorrow, short and long term, and global and local. Theoreticians have

³ Smith and Lewis (2011, 382) analysed 12 management journals for the period 1989–2008 and found 360 articles focused on the organisational paradox.

studied this issue from institutional theory and paradox theory angles. The former stress the contradictory and oppositional nature of competing demands, whereas the latter sees them as inherent to organisational systems. Paradoxes are contradictory, interrelated and persistent, “demanding strategies for engaging and accommodating tensions but not resolving them”.

Waldman et al. (2019, 1) established that “most of the theorising and research on paradoxes had occurred on the organisational level”, yet they also propose to take account of the individual and team levels of analysis. Therefore, they emphasise “multiple levels of analysis” (ibid.) and the application of various methods, including surveys, experiments and qualitative discourse methods.

Pina e Cunha and Putnam (2019) introduced the phenomenon known as “the paradox of success”, also called “the Icarus paradox” or “the paradox of performance”. Success contributes to persistence in use of the same strategies, overlooking other options. Success leads to convergence, which lowers awareness of the important power held by divergence. In other words, a strong performance promotes a defensive mind-set that may produce dysfunctional outcomes. “Thus, the same practices that lead organizations to becoming successful often simultaneously push them to downfall” (Elsass 1993; quoted by Pina e Cunha and Putnam 2019, 96). This phenomenon might lead organisations towards narrowness and self-complacency.

Pina e Cunha and Putnam (2019, 102–103) think that research on paradox has developed into “an exciting, vigorous, and vibrant area in strategic management and organization theory”. Paradox theory suggests that defensiveness and inertia can arise from the ways actors in organisations manage various paradoxical tensions. The latter “provoke questions and confusion, encouraging both scholars and practitioners to pause and reflect” (Andriopoulos 2014; quoted by Pina e Cunha and Putnam 2019, 103). Paradox theory is a crossroads at which the institutionalising of existing knowledge and exploring of new terrains meet. Theoreticians should not strictly follow one approach or another, but benefit from both, searching for synergy between the known and unknown.

Smith and Lewis (2011, 381 and 398) noted that organisational environments are becoming more global, dynamic, innovative and hyper-competitive, bringing with them contradictory and intensified demands that organisations must also resolve. Paradox is becoming a critical theoretical lens for understanding and to lead contemporary organisations. Similarly, Smith et al. (2017) believe the recent emphasis on paradoxical thinking in understanding organisational phenomena is due to two trends: 1) the increasingly complex world we live in characterised by uncertainty, change and ambiguity; and 2) the existing frameworks of theoretical thinking have reached their limits. Also important is that we are ever more confronted with questions of extremes (can too much of a good thing be bad?) and boundary conditions (when does which is true become false?).

The COVID-19 virus and subsequent crisis are definitely significantly exacerbating such trends and require that paradoxes at a global and national levels be revealed as part of the response to it.

3 A REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON PARADOX RELATED TO COVID-19 ON THE GLOBAL LEVEL

Although the COVID-19 crisis is still underway and seems that it will have lasting consequences for human life over the decade to come, some researchers have already started exploring several paradoxes that have accompanied this period in time.

Messinger and Crandall (2020, 679) saw a paradox in respecting the precautions early on in the crisis: If social distancing was working, the spread of virus had slowed and hospital capacities had not been exceeded, some people began to claim the measures were unnecessary and demanded a return to normalcy. As we can see at the beginning of 2021, the 'flattening of the curve' of the disease during summer 2020 should not mean doing away with the protective measures. However, the authorities in many countries relaxed them, with the outcome being a serious second wave of the virus' spread that is even more intensive and devastating than the first, at least in most countries.

Banerjee (2020, 1) brought a paradox of control into the discussion. China's initial steps to curb the virus by imposing a lockdown were seen in the West as harsh, extreme and severe, but also controversial, unconstitutional in a democracy, and authoritarian. Yet, several months later, the majority of Western countries were acting similarly.⁴ In some countries, lockdown is merely an illusion of control emanating from the intolerance of uncertainty or alternative views (ibid., 2). Measures based on computer simulations or models have led to a lot of collateral damage. Millions of people have lost their livelihoods and those with other diseases have not received treatment at the right time due to the dominant focus on COVID-19.

Official messages should calm people, yet the inconsistent communication of the role of social distancing, the effectiveness of masks, reliability of testing, tracing and isolation etc., have often stirred panic or at least confusion, also undermining public trust (Banerjee 2020, 1). Another paradox is that individuals using social media, without holding any medical training, knowledge and experience, have had a considerable influence on people's behaviour, often successfully countering the statements given by professionals based on science and data (Messinger and Crandall 2020, 679).

Danchin et al. (2020) considered the paradox of the pandemic in international law. The pandemic paradox lies in the fact that COVID-19 "has exposed the inherent logic and necessity of an effective international legal order at a moment when ideas of supranational organization and post-national sovereignty are increasingly resisted" (ibid., 3). Reasons for this are complex, but include the populist movements of various kinds we have recently observed in some countries (e.g. the USA, Brazil, Philippines, Hungary, Poland...).

The pandemic has created three key paradoxes relevant to the international legal order (ibid., 4-5). The patriotism paradox: in the name of people, populist governments wish to strengthen their national sovereignty by disengaging from international organisations, treaties and regimes. In times of COVID-19, the withdrawal of states from regimes of sovereign cooperation (e.g. the United Nations Security Council, World Health Organisation, European Union) even

⁴ E.g. Italy was the first Western country to introduce a country-wide lockdown.

more diminishes their sovereign capacity and interests. The border paradox: the suspension or limitation of international travel and trade by states (e.g. the USA) has accentuated rather than stemmed the virus' global spread. Such an approach cannot be effective without ensuring the simultaneous implementation on a global scale of protocols related to testing, contact tracing and quarantining, as recommended by the WHO. The equality paradox: COVID-19 poses an equally lethal threat to all people and societies, yet its impact is felt unevenly since the capacities to control/limit the virus vary from one state to another. We are again witness to discrimination and injustice and therefore the international protection of human rights is needed.

Krastev (2020) identified several paradoxes associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. He states COVID-19 exposes the dark side of globalisation yet also acts as an agent of globalisation. The next paradox is that the virus is accelerating de-globalisation but also exposing the limits of renationalisation. The virus is global and reveals our interdependence, meaning international cooperation is key to resolving virus-related problems. Another paradox reflects the fact that in the early stages the virus inspired national unity, but as it has gone on it has deepened the existing social and political divides. One more paradox is that the virus has put democracy on hold in many countries, but people are less willing to accept authoritarian regimes. As far as the EU is concerned, at the start of the crisis citizens' enthusiasm for the EU dropped, yet the virus is forcing governments to realise their dependence on common action within the EU. The closure of EU member states' borders has made us more European and even more cosmopolitan than ever: We are living in the same world with the same fears, concerns and discourses.

Fischetti (2020) detected several paradoxes in areas like economic inequality, impact on women, schooling from home, health and well-being, and social change: some people are earning more than ever before, others are on the brink; women are affected because they represent the backbone of the emergency response system, they are also burdened by responsibilities at home and sometimes subjected to domestic violence; family time that schooling from home provided was not always used to benefit the entire family; alcohol consumption has increased, while mental health challenges are now bigger than ever in some societies.

Bradbury-Jones and Isham (2020) warned about the paradox the pandemic is bringing into our homes. Home should be a safe place; however people's lives have been drastically altered, in turn leading to multiple new stresses, including physical and psychological health risks, isolation and loneliness, the closure of schools and businesses, economic vulnerability and the loss of jobs. The risk of domestic violence has increased along with that and its "rates are rising, and they are rising fast".

Boudry (2020) discussed one strange paradox in the pandemic: the better we manage to contain the crisis, the less we will learn from it. He criticises the 'experts' who did not accept the protective measures and asserted that panic is more dangerous than the virus itself. Although our current invisible enemy has several dangerous features: high transmissibility, long incubation time, asymptomatic spread, and relatively high mortality rates, to mention a few. It is clear that without the measures the numbers of dead would be even more catastrophic as would be the collateral damage of the virus. Another paradox is that those who underestimated the virus and criticised the measures, later on

concluded that the predictions of the majority of scientists were wrong, while overlooking that those very measures did help reduce the figures for infected, hospitalised and dead people.

4 PARADOXES OF THE CRISIS (RESPONSE) IN SLOVENIA

The first case of COVID-19 virus infection in Slovenia was detected on 3 March 2020 and confirmed the next day. Nine days later, an epidemic was declared by the government. Interestingly, on the very same day there was a change of government: the centre-left coalition government was replaced by a centre-right one. The end of the first wave of the epidemic and the end of the state of epidemic was officially declared on 31 May 2020. Still, during summer and early autumn the virus-related health situation in the country deteriorated dramatically, forcing the government to again declare a state of epidemic on 19 October 2020. This second wave of the epidemic is still underway at the beginning of February 2021. On 13 March 2020, Slovenia registered 52 new cases of virus infection, whereas on 31 May there were no new cases. The highest daily number of cases in that time period was 70. On 19 October, there were 537 new cases, while on 31 January 2021 the number was very similar (596 cases). However, the highest number of daily infected people during this period was 3,354. The total number of newly infected people in the last week of January (25 to 31) was 8,643, meaning a daily average in that week of 1,235⁵ (the author's calculations based on Johns Hopkins University statistics).

The first death due to the virus was registered on 14 March 2020. In the first wave of epidemic, there were a little over 100 deaths in total, whereas in the second wave (until 31 January 2021) of the epidemic more than 3,400 deaths were recorded. The peak of the first wave was 6 deaths on 5 April 2020, with the peak of the second wave of 66 deaths coming on 8 December 2020. The total official number of all infected on 6 February 2021 was around 168,000, whereas more than 3,500 people had died (the author's calculations based on Johns Hopkins University statistics). Unofficial estimates made by epidemiological experts suggest around 600,000 people have been infected in Slovenia, or almost 30 per cent of the population.

A huge paradox is revealed by the above figures. Namely, in the epidemic's first wave Slovenia was one of the most effective countries in the world in fighting the virus, but data for the second wave show Slovenia was one of the least successful countries, especially in the number of deaths per million inhabitants.⁶ Such negative trends in development of disease and its consequences occurred due to the government's significant relaxation of the measures and the relaxed behaviour of the population. Many people spent their summer holidays in a foreign country, especially in Croatia where the epidemiological situation was then worse than in Slovenia and the adopted measures were not as tight or strict. The importing of the virus from Croatia and certain other countries was confirmed, with the government eventually deciding to close the border with Croatia as late as 20 August 2020. When people came back to work and children

⁵ Slovenia had a population of 2,111,461 on 1 October 2020 (Statistical Office of Slovenia 2020).

⁶ According to Worldometer Statistics, only Belgium and San Marino have had a worse record than Slovenia. The explanation given by a top Slovenian epidemiologist was that the health authorities strictly followed the WHO's guidelines that required states to register all patients who had died with the COVID-19 virus, regardless other potential causes of death, including those who had the virus and died up to one month after they had fully recovered from it (Logar 2020).

returned to kindergartens, primary schools and high schools, the virus once again started to spread intensively.

After a few weeks, kindergartens (with some exceptions), schools and universities were closed, and education shifted over to various online options. Several other harsh measures were adopted in October 2020 – wearing masks outside, time limitations on restaurants and bars, the gathering of groups of people was limited, public services were restricted etc. – but the figures were still rising. That was followed by the suspension of public transport, gatherings of people outside, retail shops which were not essential were closed, travelling from one municipality to another was forbidden (with some exceptions), and for the first time since WW II a curfew was imposed on the citizens (Cerar 2020). Again, there were no positive results and in early February 2021 the situation remained very similar.

Let us check in detail the Slovenian authorities' crisis response to the above situation. As a consequence of the vast efforts of social scientists, state officials and certain politicians, Slovenia has managed to develop quite a decent (certainly not perfect) crisis management model that defines the roles of individual actors, making them more resilient and enabling them to coordinate their activities. We now consider the legal aspects of these efforts.

Article 20 of the Government Act of the Republic of Slovenia stipulates that government has its own National Security Council (NSC). It serves as a consultative and coordinating body in the fields of defence, security system, disaster protection and relief system, and for other national security issues. The NSC is supported by a Secretariat responsible for the operational coordination of the implementation of the NSC's standpoints. In a complex crisis,⁷ the government might make a decision by which the NSC Secretariat takes over the task of coordinating the response to it, as provided by the ministries, government services and national security subsystems. The Secretariat might also propose measures in reaction to a complex crisis. An Operational Group works within the Secretariat that is responsible for ensuring analytical and professional (expertise) support to the Secretariat, and preparing situation analyses in various fields of national security.

A National Crisis Management Centre (NCMC) is also established at the Ministry of Defence to provide the spatial, technical, informational and tele-communicational conditions for the government to function in a complex crisis and in the event of other threats to national security. The NCMC prepares regular reports on the national security situation for the NSC Secretariat and its Operational Group. Part of the NCMC is the Inter-Ministerial Analytical Group responsible for providing analytical and professional (expertise) support – it monitors and assesses the security situation and the course of events.

The Decree on the National Security Council and the Ordinance on Crisis Management and the National Crisis Management Centre elaborate the structure, tasks, leadership and functioning of the above-mentioned bodies. The decision to

⁷ "Complex crisis is a phenomenon, event or situation of a severe threat to basic social values..., and the related uncertainty and limited response time that exceeds the response capacities of individual ministries, governmental services and national security sub-systems" (Government Act of RS 2017).

declare a complex crisis and perform crisis management⁸ is made by the government upon the proposal of the minister in charge of the specific crisis.

A huge paradox is that the government – despite the Ministry of Health being overwhelmed by the virus – did not declare a “complex crisis” that would have triggered a more comprehensive approach to the crisis response, while also ignoring the previously mentioned crisis management structure.⁹ Instead, the government declared “a state of epidemic” and formed its own “Crisis Staff”, a body that operated for less than a fortnight before being dismantled due to its questionable legal basis and functional value. No doubt, the government should have followed the official crisis management procedure and structure that would have allowed for the creation of a functional module, adequately and optimally adapted to the nature, scope and intensity of the COVID-19 crisis. It is difficult to estimate the probability that some of the mistakes observed in the government’s response to the crisis emanated from this initial failure.

As mentioned, a new government came into power on the very first day of the epidemic being declared. This change triggered a significant ideological and political shift in Slovenian politics. The new government of course made many personnel changes in the ministries, but many changes were also made in the institutions that should be professional and never political (police, National Investigation Bureau, National Institute of Public Health, Statistical Office etc.).¹⁰ The government also intervened in the judicial system, understood as an attack on the independence of the judicial branch of power. Attempts to influence public radio and television, the Slovenian Press Agency and certain other media outlets, and to pressure individual editors and journalists were seen as well.¹¹ Conflicts between the government and parts of civil society, including art groups and individuals as well as public universities were quite frequent. In the realm of international relations, the new government expressed some sympathy for the authoritarian politics in Hungary and Poland and their protagonists, and for the policy of former American President Donald Trump, even when the whole democratic world had recognised that Joseph Biden had won the elections.¹² These authoritarian inclinations were noticed in international media and politics.¹³

⁸ Crisis management is defined as “organisation and measures to provide an effective complex crisis response” (ibid.).

⁹ It is also true that previous government did not upgrade that structure with adequate crisis management plans.

¹⁰ As a matter of fact, this was a pattern used to a certain degree by previous governments, as well.

¹¹ Vice-president of the European Commission Vera Jourova suggested to the Slovenian government on 23 July 2020 that it re-think its amendments to the Media Act and to cease the attacks on some journalists (STA 2020a). On 16 October 2020, the European Federation of Journalists reacted to tweets by Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša about the media by issuing a warning: This demonisation of public media and journalism must stop (STA 2020b).

¹² Janša wrote a tweet in support of Trump immediately after the US presidential election, claiming Trump had won and, according to Janša, the mainstream media had been trying to deny this. In contrast, Janša waited to congratulate Biden until he was sworn in as the new president.

¹³ For instance, The New York Times (2021) called Janša a “right-wing populist” who had quickly endorsed Trump’s lie about his election victory. Le Monde (2021) reported that Janša had congratulated Trump for his victory and broken the principle of European unity. The newspaper asked whether one can ignore deviations from democracy in some EU countries? Politico.eu (2021) also described Janša as a “right-wing populist” and a close ally of Viktor Orban, while reporting that some EU officials had expressed concern about the direction of Slovenian politics given that Slovenia is to assume the Presidency of the Council of the EU on 1 July 2021. According to Politico.eu, Foreign Minister Anže Logar reassured them that Slovenia would be neutral in the EU–Hungary dispute and seek political continuity within the presidency trio (Germany, Portugal and Slovenia).

We see a paradox in the fact the government should be investing all of its energy and time to overcome the negative COVID-19 related trends instead of using the tough epidemiological situation to address issues not directly related to it. Too much political and media energy has been devoted to the mentioned topics. In these circumstances, it has been very difficult to nurture trust and to form the broad coalition needed to fight the virus and its consequences. It is reasonable to ask to what extent the digression from the core tasks led to the failure in the fight against virus described above. The fact is that government was unprepared for wave 2 of the epidemic, did not adequately analyse where and why the virus' spread was greatest, while the measures it adopted were often confused, even controversial.

We identify another paradox in the government knowing about the longitudinal public opinion trends as revealed in surveys as well as the public's everyday behaviour and reactions to the different political and social phenomena, while its communication strategy has not been adapted to these trends, or social and political culture in general. The broad public and especially specific social groups have deserved more empathic communication. The public's rejection of the authoritarian, paternalistic communication based on orders and lacking in thorough explanations has been evident. Mixed with increasing restrictions placed on personal freedom this communication style has in some cases seen the public feeling humiliation, helplessness and a lack of control over their own lives (Ferlin, Malešič and Vuga 2021). The rules of crisis communication such as openness, objectivity, credibility, timeliness, proactivity, accuracy, empathy, consistency etc. have been neglected in several cases of government representatives addressing the public.

The start of February 2021 saw a unique paradoxical decision made by the Government Communication Office. In an evening television broadcast, the head of the Office decided to forbid certain ministers, other governmental employees and National Institute of Health experts from explaining details of the government policy on the fight against the virus. The press conferences held every morning at 11.00 were said to be sufficient. Still, the government adopts measures or relaxes them in the afternoon/evening as well, meaning it makes sense to explain the measures to the public throughout the day.¹⁴ The motto of crisis communication 'tell it all and tell it quickly' was thereby completely ignored by the government and the Government Communication Office.

The public's diminishing trust in government has likely contributed to the failure to manage the crisis. This concerns the "risk perception paradox" (Wachinger et al. 2013) that claims a perception of high risk should lead to better personal preparedness and hence to behaviour that seeks to reduce that risk. However, this does not always occur in practice with even the opposite sometimes happening. The Slovenian case is a good example of this paradox: Despite extremely high figures for daily virus infections, hospitalised patients and deaths since October 2020, people have not respected all of the measures adopted fully and consistently.

Let us consider a few other paradoxes in the crisis response. The authorities expect the citizens to engage in protective behaviour like wearing masks while on the other hand some representatives of the authorities have ignored this

¹⁴ The International Press Institute (2021) suggested that the Government Communication Office immediately reconsider its policy and allow government representatives to once again appear in the media.

measure: the President, the Minister of the Interior and their teams visited the region close to the Croatian border and as a rule did not wear masks; some ministers were mask-less while speaking in Parliament; and the director of the National Institute of Health did not use a mask while paying for petrol at a service station. Breaches of the “stay within your own municipality” rule have also been identified. The paradox here: do what I say, not what I do.

It is also a paradox that the government closed the kindergartens, schools and other educational institutions before it closed the hotels. It was very annoying and frustrating for children/young people and their parents to find educational institutions closed from November 2020 until the end of January 2021 when the government very selectively and only gradually started to reopen the kindergartens and primary schools. With certain safety measures in place, only kindergarten children and pupils in grades 1–3 were allowed to return, and only in regions with an acceptable level of virus infection. This caused great dissatisfaction among children and their parents in certain regions, with public protests starting in several Slovenian cities. This brings us to another paradox: children, who in normal circumstances tend not to like to go to school, protesting to ensure they learn better (online schooling was seen as not the same) and can socialise with their schoolmates. In addition, some children started to ‘hate’ the computer, a tool previously fetishized considerably by them before the crisis – another paradox.

In late spring 2020, the government decided to distribute vouchers (EUR 200 for adults and EUR 50 for children) among the Slovenian population to stimulate the tourist industry. The result was mass gatherings of people in the tourist regions of Slovenia, especially on the coast, by lakes, rivers and in spa centres, adding to the risk of the virus’ spread. The paradox here: the good economic intentions of the government to support tourism and citizens helped exacerbate the COVID-19 situation in the autumn months.

Particular civil society groups organised demonstrations in the capital city Ljubljana and in other cities across the country to protest against the government measures and to fight for human freedoms and rights. Ljubljana was witness to cyclist-protesters, mass gatherings to launch art installations, parents and children protested against the lockdown of schools etc., and believing the said measures were too harsh. The paradox is that mass gatherings, especially when protective measures were not fully respected, potentially exposed people to virus infection, in turn possibly requiring new (even harsher) measures or the prolongation of the existing ones.

One tremendous paradox seems to be that the fight against the COVID-19 virus (whether successful or not) has absorbed vast medical capacities by way of hospitals, medical equipment and personnel. The data suggest the country’s medical capacities have been critically stretched for several months in a row. On the other hand, there has been a lack of medical capacities to deal with other diseases. Huge swathes of medical and dental services have been cancelled, with only a few (such as oncology and paediatrics) still functioning. The overall impact of all this will cause medical problems among the population for years to come, especially the totally neglect of prevention activities. The figures showing newly diagnosed cancer diseases seem to be much lower than before the COVID-19 crisis, not due to less cancer but the drastically lower number of medical checks performed on the primary level.

5 CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 crisis has forced national and international actors to master the various paradoxes and competing demands that have surfaced, while also meeting the need to reconcile many contradictory, interrelated and co-existing oppositions at once. For instance, it has not been easy to reconcile public health needs associated with COVID-19 by providing economic, financial, welfare goods and services, schooling, transport, while also supporting the health needs of the population not related to COVID-19. The response of actors to the crisis is to try to find a balance between autocracy and democracy, coercion and willingness, control and flexibility. Many measures have been judged as autocratically and drastically intervening in human rights and freedoms, bypassing the traditional division of power, and ignoring formal crisis response procedures.

On the global level, the uncertainty, change and ambiguity have created several paradoxes: the virus can be successfully curbed with intensive international cooperation through global and regional institutions, but they were already weakened before the crisis and during it by the nationalistic and populist politics in some countries. Nevertheless, as the crisis developed, awareness of the pivotal role of international cooperation gained momentum. The virus seems to have cut across various global inequalities, yet its impact is felt unevenly as the capacities of countries to fight the virus vary. This is obvious in the areas of medical capacities, expertise and vaccine distribution, to mention only a few. The virus has also added to economic, gender and generation inequality. Last but not least, home, which should provide a safe haven, has become a place of domestic violence for (too) many people, including children.

A major paradox of the COVID-19 response in Slovenia is that the country was among the most effective to deal with virus in the first wave and one of the least successful countries in the second wave. The “paradox of success” and “risk perception paradox” were particularly on display. Further, the government already had in place a pre-prepared procedure and structure to respond to a complex crisis, but it chose to improvise, on a questionable legal basis. The government ought to deal primarily, if not exclusively, with virus and related problems, yet it found time and energy to deal with counterproductive ideological topics, personnel policy, apply pressure to the media and engage in conflicts with parts of civil society. Very harsh measures to curb the virus’ spread have been introduced, but their results are hard to see. Citizens have been expected to respect the measures while some representatives of the authorities which introduced these measures have ignored them. The content, timing and geography of introducing the measures has also created paradoxes. The inconsistent, sometimes confused and paternalistic communication with the public has been out of step with the prevailing political culture of the citizens and their needs in the crisis. Members of civil society have protested against the harsh measures, yet paradoxically their attendance at mass gatherings could worsen the situation and see the imposition of even harsher measures.

The analysis reveals several paradoxes in the COVID-19 response on the global and national levels, and hopefully we will be able to avoid another one in the future. Namely, the crisis offers many lessons and it would be another great paradox to not document, analyse and insert them in our future response to complex crises.

REFERENCES

- Banerjee, Amitav. 2020. "Pandemic, Panic, Policies, and the Paradox of Control." *Medical Journal of Dr D Y Patil Vidyapeeth* 20 (20): 1–3.
- Beck, Ulrich. 1992. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage Publications.
- Beck, Ulrich. 2008. "World at Risk: The New Task of Critical Theory." *Development and Society* 37 (1): 1–21.
- Boudry, Marten. 2020. "A strange paradox: the better we manage to contain the coronavirus pandemic, the less we will learn from it." *The Conversation*, 2 April 2020.
- Bradbury-Jones, Caroline and Louise Isham. 2020. "The pandemic paradox: The consequences of COVID-19 on domestic violence." *Journal of Clinical Nursery* 29 (13-14): 2047–2049.
- Cerar, Gregor. 2020. "Covid-19: po prvem valu epidemije med zmagovalci, v drugem na svetovnem dnu (COVID-19: After the first wave of epidemic among winners, in a second one at the global bottom)." *MMC RTV SLO*, 28 December 2020.
- Danchin, Peter D., Jeremy Farrall, Shruti Rana and Imogen Saunders. 2020. "The Pandemic Paradox in International Law." *ANU College of Law Research Paper* 20 (18): 1–11.
- Decree on National Security Council. 2020. *Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia*, no. 26/20. Available at <https://www.uradni-list.si/glasilo-uradni-list-rs/vsebina/2020-01-0576/odlok-o-svetu-za-nacionalno-varnost>.
- Ferlin, Anica, Marjan Malešič and Janja Vuga. 2021. "Preparedness vs. Improvisation: A Response to the COVID-19 Crisis in Slovenia." *Teorija in praksa* (to be published).
- Fischetti, John. 2020. "The end of beginning – paradox of a pandemic." *Whyalla News*, 20 August 2020.
- Government Act of the Republic of Slovenia. 2017. *Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia*, no. 24/05, 2017.
- Guilmont, Natalie and Ina Ehnert. 2017. "27 years of research on organizational paradox and coping strategies: A review." *XXIVe Conference Internationale de Management Strategique*, Lyon, 7–9 June 2017.
- International Press Institute. 2021. Slovenia: Government Communication Office must stop controlling COVID-19 news coverage. Available at <https://ipi.media/slovenia-government-communication-office-must-stop-controlling-covid-19-news-coverage>.
- Johns Hopkins University. 2021. COVID-19 dashboard. Available at <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>.
- Krastev, Ivan. 2020. "The Great Paradox of Covid-19." *Aspen Review*, issue 2. Available at <https://www.aspen.review/article/2020/great-paradox-covid-19/>.
- Lewis, Marianne W. and Wendy K. Smith. 2014. "Paradox as a Metatheoretical Perspective." *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Sciences* 50 (2): 127–149.
- Lewis, Marianne W. 2000. "Exploring Paradox: Toward a more comprehensive guide." *Academy of Management review* 25 (4): 760–776.
- Le Monde. 2021. La tentative d'insurrection dirigée depuis la Maison Blanche est une leçon pour toutes les démocraties. 8 January 2021. Available at https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2021/01/08/envahissement-du-capitole-une-lecon-pour-les-democraties_6065598_3232.html.
- Logar, Mateja. 2020. Government of Republic of Slovenia press conference, 7 December 2020.
- Malešič, Marjan. 2017. "The Securitisation of Migrations in Europe: The Case of Slovenia." *Teorija in praksa* 54 (6): 947–968.
- Messinger Cayetano, Shari and Lee Crandall. 2020. "Paradox of success and public perspective: COVID-19 and the perennial problem of prevention." *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 74: 679.
- Ordinance on crisis management and governance and on the National Crisis Management Centre. 2018. *Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia*, no. 28/18. Available at <https://www.uradni-list.si/glasilo-uradni-list-rs/vsebina/2018-01-1238?sop=2018-01-1238>.
- Pina e Cunha, Miguel and Linda L. Putnam. 2019. "Paradox theory and the paradox of success." *Strategic Organization* 17 (1): 95–106.

- Politico.eu. 2021. Slovenia seeks to calm nerves over EU presidency. 4 February 2021. Available at <https://www.politico.eu/article/slovenia-eu-presidency-council-calm-nerves-anze-logar/>.
- Rosenthal, Uriel, Arjen R. Boin and Louise K. Comfort. 2001. *Managing Crises. Threats, Dilemmas, Opportunities*. Springfield: Charles C Thomas.
- Smith, Wendy K. and Marianne W. Lewis. 2011. "Toward A Theory of paradox: A Dynamic Equilibrium Model of Organizing." *The Academy of Management Review* 36 (2): 381–403.
- Smith, Wendy K. and Paul Tracy. 2016. "Institutional Complexity and Paradox Theory Complementarities of Competing Demands." *Strategic Organisation* 14 (4).
- Smith, Wendy K., Marianne W. Lewis, Paula Jarzabkowski and Ann Langley. 2017. Foreword: Paradox in Organizational Theory. In *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Paradox*, eds. Smith, Wendy K., Marianne W. Lewis, Paula Jarzabkowski and Ann Langley. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- STA. 2020a. Weekly review of events involving Slovenia, 17-23 July 2020. Available at <https://english.sta.si/2789319/weekly-review-of-events-involving-slovenia-17-23-july>.
- STA. 2020b. Weekly review of events involving Slovenia, 11-17 October 2020. Available at <https://english.sta.si/2687021/weekly-review-of-events-involving-slovenia-11-17-october>.
- Statistical Office of Slovenia. 2020. Population of Slovenia. Available at <https://www.stat.si/statweb/en>.
- Worldometer. 2021. COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic. Available at <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus>.
- The New York Times. 2021. The Art of the Lie? The Bigger the Better, 10 January 2021. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/10/world/europe/trump-truth-lies-power.html?auth=link-dismiss-google1tap>.
- Wachinger, Gisela, Ortwin Renn, Chloe Begg and Christian Kuhlicke. 2013. "The Risk Perception Paradox-Implications for Governance and Communication of Natural Hazards." *Risk Analysis* 33 (6): 1049–1065.
- Waldman, David A., Linda L. Putnam, Ella Miron-Spektor and Donald Siegel. 2019. "The role of paradox theory in decision making and management research." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 155 (November 2019): 1–6.



GLOBALNI IN NACIONALNI PARADOKSI V ODZIVIH NA KRIZO COVID-19

Kriza, ki jo je povzročil virus COVID-19 in odziv nanjo sta pripeljala do številnih paradoksov in z njimi povezanega vedenja. Avtor ob opori na teorijo paradoksa najprej naniza nekaj primerov, ki so bili prepoznani na globalni ravni, v nadaljevanju pa se osredotoči na Slovenijo. Ta je bila ena najuspešnejših držav pri spoprijemanju z virusom COVID-19 v prvem valu epidemije in ena najmanj uspešnih v drugem valu. Vlada je ignorirala strukturo upravljanja, ki je bila nedavno vzpostavljena za odziv na kompleksne krize in je raje improvizirala. Kljub strogim protivirusnim ukrepom uvedenim v drugem valu, pozitivnih učinkov ni bilo še več mesecev po njihovi uvedbi. Medtem ko so oblasti od državljanek in državljanov pričakovale spoštovanje ukrepov, so jih določeni predstavniki oblasti občasno kršili. Namesto, da bi se vlada ukvarjala izključno z virusom, je odpirala nekatera občutljiva ideološka vprašanja in sprožala konflikte, pri čemer je izgubljala dragocen čas in energijo. Navkljub obstoju načrtov, smo v vladnem naslavljanju javnosti pogrešali upoštevanje temeljnih načel kriznega komuniciranja. Protesti civilne družbe proti strogim vladnim ukrepom so omogočali širitev okužbe in posledično uvajanje še strožjih ukrepov. Boj proti virusu je zahteval izjemne

zdravstvene zmogljivosti, kar je hkrati pomenilo zanemarjanje drugih bolezni, ki bodo imele dolgoročen negativen vpliv na javno zdravje.

Ključne besede: COVID-19; kriza; krizni odziv; paradoks; Slovenija.

COVID-19 AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (POLICIES): A YEAR OF PERILOUS AD-HOC SOLUTIONS¹

Milan BRGLEZ, Boštjan UDOVIČ and Amalija MAČEK²

The COVID-19 pandemic not only upturned people's way of life, but also exposed the lack of preparedness of states and supranational political institutions for such crises. The article assesses the policies of the European Parliament introduced over the last year to guarantee its functioning. What transpires is that, a year after the outbreak of COVID-19, EU institutions still act on an ad hoc basis, responding only to present challenges and not fostering resilience to unexpected crises in the long run.

Key words: COVID-19; European Union; European Parliament; governance.

1 INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The almost fairy-tale-like story of the European Union (EU) begins with the foundation of the Union as a community of countries wanting to prevent new wars and the possibility of warfare between different states on the European continent in general. Although initiatives for peaceful European unification, such as the Paneuropean Movement, can be found as early as the 1920s, far predating Winston Churchill's famous speech at the University of Zurich in 1946, in which he highlighted the pressing need for the creation of a united states of Europe, the formal basis for its foundation is commonly identified in the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952. Five years later, the six countries of this European organisation also founded the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) and the European Economic Community. From then on, the European integration process proceeded with varying degrees of success.

¹ The article does not reflect the positions of the European Parliament or any other association the authors are involved in. The article is part of the Research Programmes P5-0177 (*Slovenia and its actors in International Relations and European integrations*) and P6-0265 (*Intercultural Literary Studies*).

² Milan BRGLEZ, PhD, Centre of International Relations, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Member of European Parliament. Contact: milan@milanbrglez.si. Boštjan UDOVIČ, PhD, Centre of International Relations, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. Contact: bostjan.udovic@fdv.uni-lj.si. Amalija MAČEK, PhD, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Contact: amalija.macek@ff.uni-lj.si.

After the initial integration euphoria of the 1960s, enthusiasm somewhat cooled down in the 1970s. New impetus for the integration process came with the enlargement of 1981/1985 and the disintegration of the bipolar world system. Suddenly, several 'new' countries were vying for membership in the European Community. The core of the 'old' European Economic Community regarded them mainly through the lens of the Washington Consensus, which promoted free movement of capital. But because integration in Europe was also political, free movement of people was added to the free movement of capital. However, after the end of the Cold War, the newly emerging Europe did not experience any substantial change. With the exception of the common market, European integration—if it really may be called integration—was largely still intergovernmental, which was evident in the extremely complex procedures, as well as in the interdependence of the EU bodies, among which the Council had the strongest decision-making power, as it still does today. An additional attempt towards greater integration on the political level among the countries was the *Convention on the Future of the European Union*, sometimes also called the *European Convention*.³ The document was supposed to answer the fundamental question on how EU member states, united in a common market, could also unite on a political level. The results of the Convention were recorded in a document known as the *Constitution for Europe*, which was never adopted since it was turned down in referenda in some of the member states. Soon after the great enlargement of 2004, the EU faced the first challenge of how to deepen the integration. Instead of the *Constitution for Europe*, which would have required serious changes to the structure of the EU, the member states decided to introduce only some amendments to the existing regulations, creating the Treaty of Lisbon.

This first political turmoil soon turned in empirical ones. First, a grave economic crisis hit the EU in 2008. EU institutions seemed to be incapacitated to act efficiently on the economic problems of EU member states. It took more than three years for the EU to agree on a single answer to possible future economic crises. While EU member states were trying to recover from the economic devastation on their own, the EU was hit by a second challenge—the migration crisis. This crisis revealed that the EU lacked the right instruments to deal with a large-scale influx of people escaping from wars and seeking asylum in Europe. Different approaches employed by EU institutions did not grant a stable and functioning solution, so again states were mostly on their own in finding a sustainable solution. During the migration crisis, the EU was subject to yet another shock, this time Brexit. Years ago, it seemed that the EU would only grow in size; Brexit on the other hand showed that member states can also decide to withdraw from the Union. This unprecedented occurrence not only shook the EU logic, but put on the table the main question that had remained unaddressed: How should the EU develop in the future?

COVID-19 was the third crisis facing the EU in the last decade. After its incapacity to solve the two previous crises was evident, it was expected that the EU would deliver better in the "healthcare crisis". But the expectations were not fulfilled. Now, a year into the pandemic, we are still stuck in the middle of this crisis. The

³ *The Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe* was based on the premise that the EU would become more integrated. Ironically, we should not forget that at the time the European Commission was represented in the Convention's Praesidium by Michel Barnier, the man who was appointed by the European Commission as chief negotiator for Brexit a few years ago and left this post in early March 2021. It should also be noted that another member of this Praesidium was Alojz Peterle, who later became a long-standing Member of the European Parliament.

different reactions from EU institutions and EU member states lead us to believe the EU does not address the COVID-19 crisis strategically but is rather more focused on day-to-day activities to mitigate the consequences.

The aim of this article is to evaluate the responses of EU institutions to the COVID-19 crisis, in our case the European Parliament. Why did we choose to analyse the European Parliament? Firstly, because it is the only EU body that is elected in direct elections in all 27 member states. This does not only make it the most democratic EU institution, but also gives it the highest responsibility to converge the differences within the EU into a single framework. And secondly, the European Parliament is the body that adopts EU legislation (together with the Council). As such, it should be the first in line to develop resilience to external shocks that could harm the legislative process.

In this article, we would like to answer the following two research questions:
R1: What were the characteristics of the response of the European Parliament to COVID-19 in the first wave (spring 2020)? Here we would like to analyse which measures were adopted, how these measures functioned, what problems arose from the introduction of ad hoc measures, etc. The idea of this analysis is to describe the context and activities taken by the European Parliament when confronted with COVID-19 issues. However, after the spring wave of COVID-19, the measures were relaxed by the summer of 2020. Since the European Parliament already had some experience with COVID-19 measures, etc., it would be logical that it would be prepared for the second wave of the pandemic (autumn/winter 2020/21).

This brings us to R2, where we will investigate whether the response of the European Parliament in the autumn/winter of 2020/21 shifted from ad hoc to strategic measures, and whether they had an internal and external logic.

The answers to the research questions will be sought using a set of different methods. The methods of critical analysis and synthesis of primary and secondary sources will set the framework for the research, while the empirical analysis of a case study of the European Parliament's response to COVID-19 will primarily be based on two methods: in-depth unstructured interviews with certain stakeholders involved in the processes within the European Parliament, and the participant observation method, which will provide us with some data and reactions to COVID-19 not available to the general public. Both methods will be combined to find answers to the research questions presented above.

The article is structured as follows: The introduction with a description of the research problem is followed by the theoretical part of the article, in which the basics of the EU's health policy are presented. This framework will then serve as a platform for the discussion on the measures adopted by the European Parliament on COVID-19. After the empirical analysis, the article wraps up with a discussion and conclusion, in which we provide answers to the research questions and outline possible areas for future investigation.

2 THE EUROPEAN UNION'S (A)SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO HEALTHCARE ISSUES

Taking into consideration the diversity of the European Union, especially its expansion and membership structure, it is clear that social and healthcare policy⁴ could not become a Union policy. Firstly because of the historical legacy of each state in the area of social and healthcare protection and the development of different models, secondly because of ideological constraints—some countries are more protective in social and healthcare affairs, while others take a more liberal approach in these areas—and thirdly because social and healthcare affairs are an important part of the statecraft toolbox of each political elite. That is why it is also important that states retain as much power as possible in these areas. These three reasons explain the attitude of states and the EU towards social and healthcare policy. We could say that the situation today is a result of the needs and not the desires of states, since in the long history of European integration member states have realised that in the field of social and healthcare affairs at least some activities should be coordinated. In the gradual development of EU law, the coordination of activities between the EU and member states was euphemised as shared competences, a concept that is nowadays becoming more and more important (and in light of recent events—such as access to vaccines, etc.—also disputed; cf. Deutsch and Martuscelli 2020). In the area of healthcare, the EU and member states have shared competences (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union 2007/2009, Article 4(k), Article 6(a)), which in fact means that the EU is a sort of platform, serving to coordinate policies if member states wish to do so.⁵

The problem of the formulation, development, perception and also application of healthcare policy in the EU was discussed by different researchers. Gerlinger and Urban (2007, 133ff) state that while officially healthcare policy is treated primarily as a national affair, it has been going through a dynamic process of Europeanisation, made possible especially by the open method of coordination (ibid., 140; Ruijter 2019). Greer (2009, 18–33) presents two frameworks for policy-making in the area of healthcare: one are the treaties (of the EU) and the other are the institutions. With respect to the treaties, Greer (ibid., 19) emphasises that the EU has weak competences in the field of healthcare, defined only in Article 168 of the TFEU (ex--Article 152 of the TEU).⁶ According to his investigation, “the words ‘complement’ [paragraph 1] and ‘encourage co-operation’ [paragraph 2] are designed to emphasize that the EU may only supplement the work of member states, which are the main actors in health policy”. Such criticism about the marginalisation of health policy at the EU level (ibid., 22) is repeated when presenting the main institutions related to healthcare, describing them as “complicated”, and “able to create major problems for individual groups and member states if they have not influenced their policies” (ibid., 33). If this analysis is quite provoking, illustrating the complexity and inefficiency of the coordination between the EU and member states in the area of

⁴ A symbolical reflection of the interconnectedness of health and social policy is also the EPSCO Council configuration (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs).

⁵ The main problem in the time of COVID-19 is that it is still impossible to evaluate whether the Union has gained more power in the system of shared competences, or it simply used the power it already had. Since the understanding of shared competences is blurred, both interpretations are possible. For the perception of the level of integration and competences of the Union vs member states, cf. Lovec (2020, 1096–1099).

⁶ Apart from Article 168, the EU's competences in the area of public health are also defined in Article 191 of the TFEU (ex-Article 174), where “protecting human health” is second on the list of objectives to which “the Union policy on the environment shall contribute”.

healthcare, a later investigation by Greer et al. (2014) presents the evolution of healthcare coordination at the EU level in a more positive light. As exposed in the conclusion of their discussion (ibid., 129), they note that the “EU has a surprisingly large impact on health, most of which comes from areas beyond the formal health article [Article 168, ex-Article 152]”, but at the same time they point out that the EU health policy has two deficiencies: its fragmentation and its marginalisation. The healthcare policy of the EU is not central, but rather seems like a result of other policies (social policy, common market policy, etc.). If we disregard the treaties, which only deal with the health policies of the Union in two articles (Article 168 and Article 174), one cannot disagree with this comment. The observation of Greer et al. (2014) is implicitly confirmed also by the analysis of Gooijer (2007, xviii), who states that “the subsidiarity principle with regard to health care is slowly being eroded”, but this cannot be understood as a unification, but more as a (coordinated) convergence at the level of quality and financial aspects.

This shows that the healthcare policy at the level of the EU can be perceived as both a blessing and a curse. A blessing in the sense of a common denominator (needs) reflected in shared competences, while the curse stems from the same framework—the coordination role—which limits the efficiency and effectiveness of the decision-making and delivery and can also lead to *beggar-thy-neighbour* policies, where individual member states’ interests can prevail over communitarian ones (cf. Guy and Sauter 2016, 15).

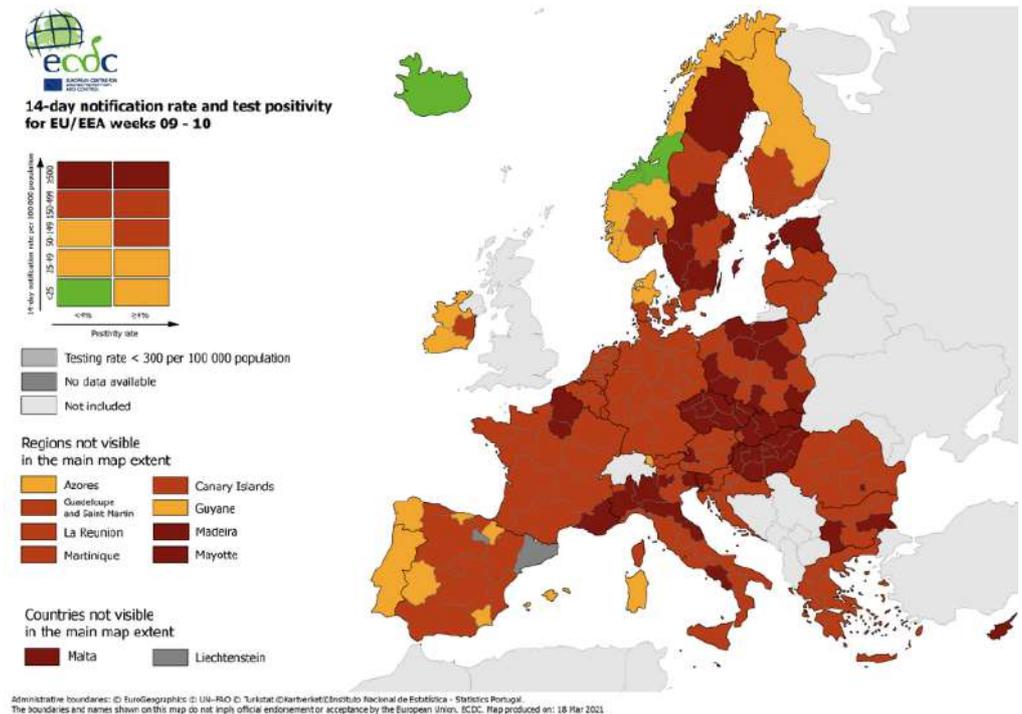
However, shared competences and long legislation procedures are not the only problem of healthcare policy at the Union level. As presented by Horgan and Kent (2017, 193), another problem is also the dispersion of healthcare authorities among the Council, the European Commission (there are different departments covering some areas of healthcare) and the European Parliament. They agree that such systemic failure (the absence of a clear chain of command) also hinders the efficiency of Union activities in the area of healthcare.

These embedded errors of the EU’s decision-making system in healthcare were also visible particularly in the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, when all EU institutions acted with low level of coordination and no strategic approach on how to deal with the pandemic. Most of the activities of EU institutions were recommendations to member states on how to behave to avoid the spreading of COVID-19. And since recommendations are no more than that, member states were mostly left on their own. Consequently, they decided on the perilous issues as driven by their internal politics—some introduced harsher measures, while others went for softer approaches than recommended by EU institutions (Renda and Castro 2020).⁷ The absence of a unified approach to dealing with COVID-related issues was visible in obtaining of data on those infected, deceased, etc. Renda and Castro (ibid., chapter IV) emphasise that the *European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control* (ECDC) has “competences to collect and share data” (on the infected, deceased, transmitted COVID-19 cases, etc.), but lacks the consistency and quality of data, since “not all countries are sharing data on the number of cases by age and sex”, and key information such as test criteria, “which have a direct effect on the number of confirmed cases and deaths reported, was not fully shared”. The problem of reporting came to the fore when the methodology for counting COVID-19 deaths became an issue since different countries across the EU adopted different methodologies for defining the statistic

⁷ Slovenia’s and Austria’s closure of borders with Italy in March 2020 to stop the spread of COVID-19 was criticised by French President Emmanuel Macron (News18 2020).

(see The Conversation 2020). Another problem, exposed in the autumn and winter of 2020/21, was the illustration of the spread of the virus in different countries. The EU adopted a colour map of infection rates in a country, but since the colour code criteria were developed in relatively good times (spring 2020), at a certain point all EU member states were categorised as red or most problematic. That is why the EU added to a “dark red” category to the table, to be used for the most problematic areas. But as it seems from Figure 1,⁸ this methodology has not helped develop a uniform answer to COVID-19 threats.

FIGURE 1: 14-DAY TEST POSITIVITY FOR THE EU/EEA IN WEEKS 9–10 OF 2021



Source: ECDC (2021b).

The theoretical framework presented three problematic points of healthcare policy in the EU. Firstly, although healthcare policy is still part of shared competences, it is becoming more and more intensively coordinated. This was in one part incentivised by the decisions of the European Court of Justice,⁹ while on the other hand also by the needs of member states, which are giving the EU a larger proportion of decision-making on health—mostly indirectly (under Regulations 883/04 and 987/09 and Directive 2011/24). Secondly, healthcare policies at the level of the EU are still perceived as an additional activity, not a central one. This is reflected also symbolically, since dealing with health issues at the EU level is not centralised or unified but dispersed among different dossiers and different bodies have the authority to decide on health affairs (e.g., the Council, the European Parliament). Thirdly, COVID-19 revealed that the complexity of healthcare issues requires intensified action of the EU in the field of healthcare. This can be achieved directly, by changing the basic treaties, or indirectly through practice (see also van Schaik and van de Pas 2020). The process of implicitness and indirectness has proved in the past to be more fruitful than direct, top-down decisions. Deeper integration in healthcare affairs is on the

⁸ For the definition of other zones, see ECDC (2021b).

⁹ On the role of case law, see Bessa Vilela and Brezovnik (2018).

table, since states need it. The main task for the EU is to deliver quick decisions. Here the main obstacle is the structure of the decision-making process.

3 COVID-19 AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

3.1 Introduction

At the dawn of 2020 it did not seem that COVID-19 could pose a serious threat to developed countries. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 occurred in China, it was expected that it would harm especially Eastern Asia and African countries (Raga and te Velde 2020, 8), while Western (developed) countries were perceived to be less under threat. It is clear from this presumption that analysts based their predictions on lessons learnt from the cases of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, 2003) and Avian influenza (1997 in Thailand, 2013 in China). But the COVID-19 situation was different. Firstly, because COVID-19 has turned out to be much more contagious; secondly, the world is more globalised comparing to the early 2000s and even to 2013, meaning that the virus can spread faster. Contrary to the expectations, the EU had its first COVID-19 patients by mid-January 2020. At that point the debate started that some pre-emptive action should be taken to limit the spread of the virus in the EU. There were different views on what to do—limiting air traffic between the EU and Wuhan or China in general, introducing quarantine for people arriving from China (regardless of citizenship, etc.). A lack of a unified or even coordinated approach in the EU (member states were introducing measures on different levels) convinced Slovenian Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Milan Brglez to address a written question to the Council (23 January 2020),¹⁰ asking about possible EU action to prevent the spread of the virus:

An increase in the number of deaths (17) resulting from the recent outbreak of the new coronavirus in Wuhan, China has been recently reported. The Platform for European Preparedness Against (Re-)emerging Epidemics (PREPARE) has voiced concerns about the credible threat of a pandemic in Europe. The UK, France and Italy have direct flight connections to the region of Wuhan, where the virus originated, and Austria has direct flight connections to other Chinese regions. Some airports have already adopted measures to stop the virus being spread by passengers arriving from China. However, there are suspicions that the passenger screening process might not be fully effective. The fact that large numbers of people are currently in transit for the Chinese New Year period is a cause for concern.

With a view to fulfilling the provisions laid down in key legally binding documents and protecting the lives of EU citizens by guaranteeing healthy environmental conditions, does the Council expect that it will be necessary to coordinate adequate preventive measures among the most at-risk airports in the Member States in order to stop the virus spreading in the EU?

Although it would be expected that the Council would respond to this issue as soon as possible, it took almost three months to answer. On 16 April 2020, Brglez received a reply that was bureaucratically dry and opened with this passage:

¹⁰ There were some remarks that Brglez addressed the question to the wrong EU institution, and that the question should be raised with the European Commission.

It should be noted that competence to take preventive health measures on serious cross-border threats lies with the Member States (Council Reply P-000510/2020) [...]

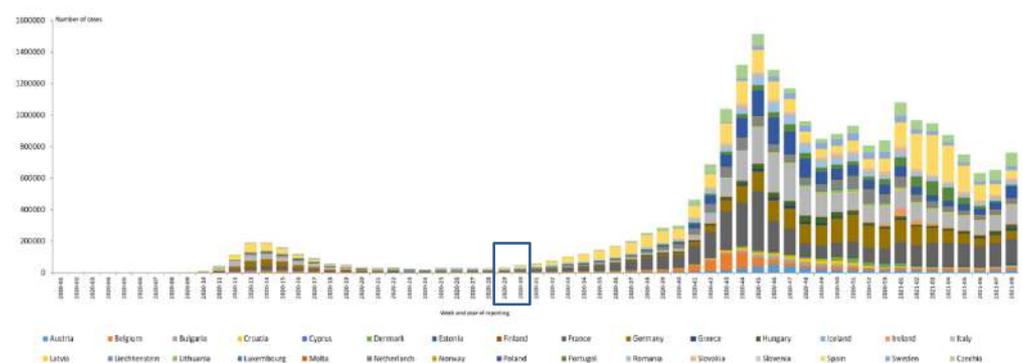
It continued in the same manner:

Member States, in accordance with Article 11 of Decision No 1082/2013/EU, are consulting each other within the Health Security Committee (HSC) and liaising with the Commission with a view to coordinating their national measures.

Then the text listed all the activities that the Council undertook to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis (meetings of the Council, meetings of the Council and the European Council, etc.). Apart from the administrative dryness, the answer also shows that the EU sticks to its coordination role. When COVID-19 was spreading among member states, the EU tried to find a joint solution “by coordinating”. This is confirmed also if we analyse the webpage of EPSCO (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council), which shows many meetings of health ministers,¹¹ but with little impact. What also transpires when analysing the official statements of the Council is that the EU realised that it underestimated the problem of COVID-19. Although Croatian Health Minister Vili Beroš claimed on 13 February 2020 that the response of the EU was “prompt and effective”, he revised his stance somewhat after the 6 March 2020 EPSCO meeting, saying that “[p]rotecting public health is *our top priority*”, and that “[t]he EU’s response to the outbreak [...] *has been very good, but the situation has changed*” (emphasis added) (Beroš 2020).

In April 2020, slowly, the crisis began to subside somewhat, and by-mid May 2020 it was clear that the situation in the EU was improving, but COVID-19 would remain a serious threat throughout the year. A short relief followed in the summer, but already in August 2020 some signs of a possible second (and harsher) wave of COVID-19 were already visible (see Figure 2 from week 29 on).

FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF COVID-19 CASES (1 JANUARY 2020 – 1 MARCH 2021); BY WEEK



Source: ECDC (2021a).

The first wave demonstrated two things for which the EU (and its institutions) should be prepared in the second wave. Firstly, coordination of approaches is not enough. What should be done is that the European Commission should shift from a coordinating role to a leading role. Here member states would have embraced

¹¹ EPSCO held meetings on COVID-19 on 13 February and 6 March 2020, after which the health ministers held videoconferences on 15 April, 5 May, 12 May, 9 June and 12 June 2020 (Council 2020).

the possibility of a joint approach, granting higher stability and predictability. The European Commission did this with vaccines, but we should take into consideration that there it had more room for manoeuvre there. It is true that the European Commission coordinated or led the public procurement for vaccines, but on the other hand it also allowed member states to decide which and how many vaccines they would order. However, if the European Commission acted more proactively and (maybe) beyond its authority, the vaccination policy and related issues would be better coordinated and there would be less possibility for solo actions, as we are now seeing from different member states. Secondly, EU institutions should prepare a backup plan for such situations to enhance resilience, not only via member states, but also in terms of their internal tasks. If the first wave of COVID-19 hit the EU unprepared and the decisions about the working processes were developed ad hoc, the internal structure could/should be more solid when the second wave came, worker protection should be at a higher-level, while at the same time the new normal should not harm the procedures within EU institutions.

3.2 The European Parliament's response to COVID-19: three case studies

The European Parliament (EP) responded to the looming threat of COVID-19 relatively late. MEPs received the first notification of EP authorities on COVID-19 on 26 February 2020 (Quaestor Notice 09/2020).¹² The notification listed all the areas where COVID-19 had already widely spread (China, Singapore, South Korea, Iran, northern Italy). The MEPs were given two recommendations in the event they had been in any of the abovementioned areas prior to that date:¹³

A. If you are well and you had no (suspected) contact with a person infected with the novel Corona virus, COVID-19:

- *stay home in self-isolation and do not come to the EP (also not to the Medical Service); you can use the IT tools provided by the European Parliament to be in contact with your office;*
- *monitor your health/take your temperature twice daily for 14 days; if you develop any symptoms, please refer to section B below;*
- *if after 14 days of your return, you have no symptoms, you are advised to visit your General Practitioner to receive a full clearance.*

B. In case you had any known or suspected contact with a person infected with the novel Corona virus COVID-19, or if you develop any symptoms: [...]

- *Please contact your General Practitioner for urgent advice and care. If you are in Brussels and you do not have a GP here, you can find one by calling 02/212 22 22. Doctors on call: <http://www.gbbw.be/index.php/en/>*
- *In case of medical emergency, call 112.*
- *Always inform the caregiver about your recent travel history and do not go to the clinic without prior telephone contact. (When in a clinic, ask to wait in a separate room; do not stay in a waiting room with other people.)*
- *Do not come to the office until you have received a green light from a General Practitioner.*

These instructions were ("strongly") recommended to MEPs, however problems arose because a number of MEPs arrived from Italy or flew through northern

¹² The *Quaestors* are a group of MEPs elected for supervising administrative and financial matters related to the work of MEPs, or to supervise other activities as decided by the *Bureau of the European Parliament*.

¹³ Emphasis by the European Parliament.

Italy. Some of them insisted they were healthy, so they could not be ordered to remain in quarantine at home.¹⁴ On 2 March 2020, the President of the EP adopted the decision of cancelling all missions and delegations of MEPs, as well as all ancillary events at the EP and all external visitors of EP meetings (e.g., the interested public). “Unless otherwise specified [...] the governing bodies of Parliament, plenary, ordinary and extraordinary committee meetings, and the political groups *shall not be restricted in their ability to function normally [...]*. Media representatives *shall not be excluded from accessing Parliament’s premises unless so required by Article 2*” (CP D(2020)9024).¹⁵

On 5 March 2020 (Quaestor Notice 12/2020), the European Parliament closed sport facilities used by its staff;¹⁶ a day later, on 6 March, all visits to the European Parliament were cancelled until 23 March 2020 (Quaestor Notice 13/2020).¹⁷ On 9 March the President of the EP ordered social distancing among members, instructing that “(a) *the attendees do not approach each other closer than 1 meter when seated*, (b) attendees shall *avoid direct physical contact* such as handshakes, (c) persons showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as sneezing, running nose or cough shall not attend the meeting” (emphasis added), and telework, i.e. remote collaboration between MEPs (CP D(2020)9886). On 11 March 2020, the Secretary-General of the EP adopted a protocol for the event of an infection of a MEP or staff member (Quaestor Notice 18/2020) and ordered the approval of 100% telework on request¹⁸ and 70% telework “*for all staff whose physical presence in Parliament is not absolutely indispensable*”.¹⁹ The Quaestors also *recommended* (emphasis added) the same for accredited parliamentary assistants (APA) and trainees working at MEPs’ offices (Quaestor Notice 20/2020).²⁰

Case study 1: The position of APAs, local assistants and trainees

By the end of March 2020, all missions of APAs and trainees planned for 2020 were cancelled. Furthermore, the EP temporarily suspended the recruitment of APAs, local assistants and trainees (Quaestor Notice 23/2020). Consequently, several individuals were left without a contract, and a number of trainees whose contracts expired at the end of March or in April were also left in the air. The right to employ APAs and trainees was re-established only one month later (Quaestor Notice 25/2020), but this was already too late for all those who had booked transportation or cancelled accommodation. But this was only the beginning of confusion. The main problem with the adoption of measures was their lack of predictability. This became an issue in the case of APAs, who had mixed instructions, depending on their MEP. Quaestor Notice 20/2020 advised MEPs to treat APAs in the same way they treat other EP staff, meaning that they should enhance the teleworking of their APAs. Some MEPs decided that because of the problematic situation in Brussels they would allow their APAs to go to their countries of origin and continue to work (remotely) from there, while other MEPs argued that teleworking meant teleworking from Brussels. Due to lack of clear

¹⁴ Data acquired through the authors’ observation and conversations with the MEPs.

¹⁵ Emphasis by the EP.

¹⁶ Belgium closed sport facilities at midnight on 14 March.

¹⁷ The prediction that the European Parliament would only remain closed to visitors for three weeks proved unrealistic.

¹⁸ Employees eligible for the approval of telework were pregnant women, people over the age of 60 and people with chronic illnesses.

¹⁹ The measure entered into force on 16 March 2020.

²⁰ Here we need to draw attention to the following passage, the wording of which caused a number of problems: “Members are recommended to apply the same measures mentioned above with regard to their Accredited Parliamentary Assistants (APAs) and other staff, including trainees.”

instructions, some APAs left Belgium, which soon became a problem. This is seen from the Communication of Directorate General for Personnel (DG PERS) issued on 3 April 2020, saying:

According to the Staff Regulations and the Implementing Measures for the Assistants' statute, the possible places of work are limited to Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg [...]. [T]elework must be performed from the address that the Member of staff has communicated to the administration of the Parliament pursuant to Article 20 of the Staff Regulations, i.e. their address in their place of employment.

This DG PERS communication caused a serious problem, since some people had already left Belgium and faced the threat of losing their contract or part of their salary. After this communication of DG PERS was issued, part of the MEPs strongly opposed such interpretation of the rules set in the *Staff Regulations*, claiming that telework could be done wherever and that such interpretation was just an administrative burden. Not only emails were circulating daily, some APAs and trainees—even though it was almost impossible to travel—used different means of transportation (exposing themselves to grave health risks) to come back to Brussels. A group of representatives of APAs held a meeting on 7 April 2020 with the Director-General of DG PERS (APA Committee 2020) in order to solve the misunderstanding, but were unsuccessful, since DG PERS insisted that according to existing rules APAs could only telework from their places of employment, while other possibilities were in hands of the Bureau of the European Parliament. The Bureau met on 17 April 2020. Instead of adopting a single solution, it decided that the “justification” of absence would be judged on a case-to-case basis (Pereira Silva 2020).

The calming of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic put on the table the issue of the European Parliament resuming normal work. APAs were able to work from the office by June 2020 and throughout the summer of 2020. Since the European Parliament had already faced issues during the spring 2020 lockdown, one would expect it to be better prepared for the autumn/winter of 2020/21. While the measures adopted may have been somewhat more structured compared to the spring of 2020, they were still incoherent. One such measure, based on the criteria of leverage, was presented in Quaestor Notice 55/2020 (4 October 2020). After a long introduction analysing which measures introduced by the European Parliament were not respected, a new measure of “one person per room” was introduced. Two weeks later, on 20 October 2020, the number of people able to work in the premises of the European Parliament decreased from 1 per room to 1 per MEP (Quaestor Notice 59/2020). The European Parliament also emphasised that “[r]andom checks will be performed by Parliament responsible services to ensure compliance with the provisions set in the President’s decision”. This measure is still in force today, six months after its introduction.²¹

Case study 2: Interpreters and interpreting in the European Parliament

The European Union has the largest interpreting service in the world. At the beginning, 4 languages of the founding states (French, German, Italian and Dutch) were used, among which 12 language combinations were possible. Today, there are 552 combinations. EU institutions have their own internal interpreting

²¹ The check at the entrance to the European Parliament does not allow more than one person per MEP to be in the European Parliament at the same time. This causes serious problems during plenaries when staff need to switch (one has to leave the building before the other can enter), while the process of traineeship is also becoming near impossible.

services, in which a relatively small number of interpreters for each language are employed. There are around 800 full-time interpreters for all languages (employment requirements are extremely strict) and around 3,000 contract interpreters working for the institutions. COVID-19 mainly affected freelance interpreters (ACI) who remained without work and without an income overnight. To be precise, contract sums were paid until the end of May 2020 (regardless of whether interpreters actually worked on the day planned a year before), but from June on their situation became even more difficult, as for the first time in history the European Parliament and Commission cancelled interpreting contracts until the end of 2020. In the first stage, when the European Parliament sessions were still held remotely, some meetings were not interpreted in all languages, and MEPs were forced to use the “big 6”. In the autumn/winter of 2020 the situation improved a bit and MEPs officially regained the possibility to deliver their contributions in their own language, but in practice this was still a problem, since interpretation was not always granted for smaller nations/languages. That is why the 8 Slovenian MEPs wrote a letter to EP President David M. Sassoli on 15 September 2020 stressing that the European Parliament was obligated to ensure that MEPs can deliver speeches in their own language, not only because this is set down in the *Rules of Procedure*, but also because neglecting some languages can create a perception of inequality among member states.

On the private market, the use of remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI) through interpreting platforms became a new reality. EU institutions hesitated, especially because of working conditions and data security. The ad hoc character and the challenges related to the interpretation issues ended in April 2021 when the global association of interpreters (AIIC) and the EP reached an agreement on interpreting via e-platforms, which is going to be established in due time.

Case study 3: A break away from the Conclusions of the Edinburgh European Council

We have already shown that COVID-19 had a severe impact on the procedures of the European Parliament, but what has remained in the background is that COVID-19 also led to the abolition of certain untouchable practices. One such practice was the European Parliament plenary sessions held in Strasbourg 12 times a year. This is not just a practice but is part of the Conclusions of the Edinburgh European Council and was respected until March 2020.

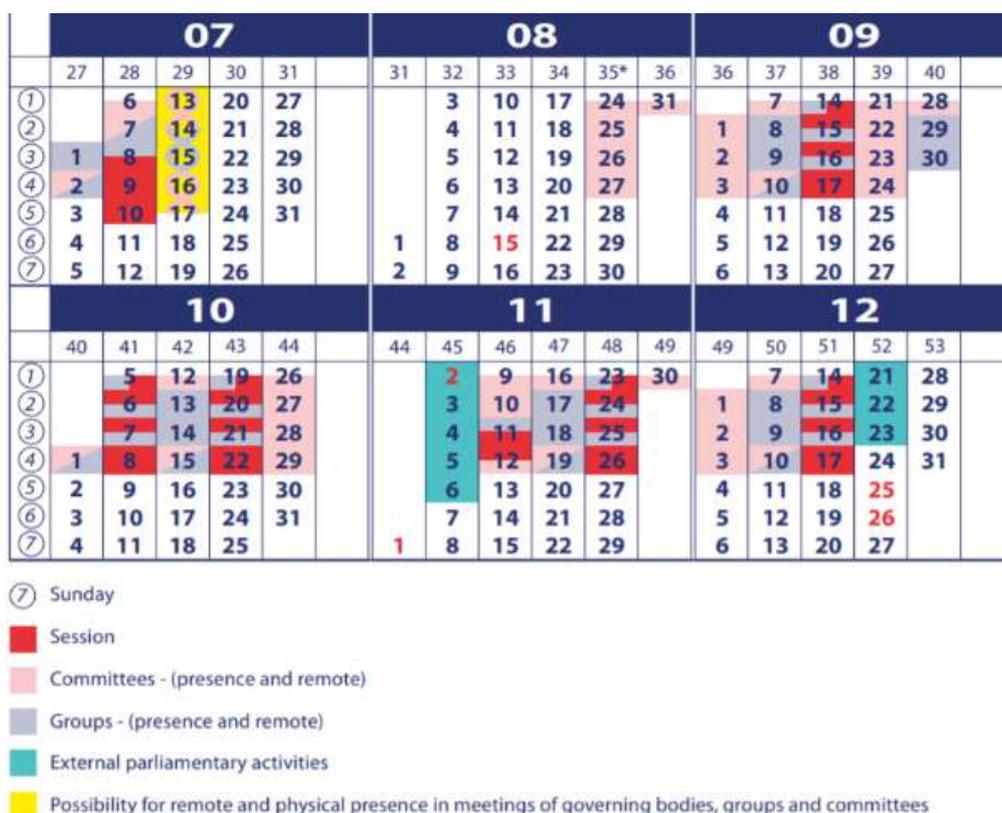
With respect to the European Parliament, the Edinburgh European Council Conclusions of the Presidency from 11 and 12 December 1992 (SN/456/1/92) were important for two reasons. The first was a change in the number of seats in the EP (because of the unification of Germany in 1989), and the second was a clear definition of the (main) seats of EU institutions. Article 1 of Annex 6 thus says:

The European Parliament shall have its seat in Strasbourg where the twelve periods of monthly plenary sessions, including the budget session, shall be held. The periods of additional plenary sessions shall be held in Brussels. The Committees of the European Parliament shall meet in Brussels. The General Secretariat of the European Parliament and its departments shall remain in Luxembourg.

The excerpt above clearly states that the plenary sessions (12 a year) need to be held in Strasbourg (called the “big plenaries” because they last four days), while additional plenary sessions (known as “small plenaries” because they only last

one day) take place in Brussels. However, after the outbreak of COVID-19, the European Parliament had to decide what to do. A decision on the plenary session in Strasbourg planned for March 2020 was first postponed until it became clear that it would be impossible to hold there as normally. First, only the March 2020 session was moved to Brussels, which was presented as a provisional measure, while Quaestor Notice 21/2020 (dated 11 March 2020) set a precedent for the functioning of the European Parliament: plenary meetings in Strasbourg scheduled to take place monthly until September 2020 were cancelled. Instead of Strasbourg, the meetings were moved to Brussels and shortened. The situation was repeated in the autumn/winter of 2020 and continues in the spring of 2021.

FIGURE 3: NEW PLENARIES FOR 2020



Source: European Parliament (2021).

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The article addressed the issue of the impact of COVID-19 on the functioning of EU institutions, in particular the European Parliament. Since COVID-19 is a healthcare issue, we also tried to develop a theoretical framework for a discussion on how shared competences can hinder the ability to cope with challenges, since both parties can play a two-level game when unwilling/unable to take responsibility in a crisis. From our analysis, we can draw the following three issues that should be studied in further detail.

Firstly, shared competences can prove to be inefficient in a time of crisis. In normal routine conditions, shared competences can work and may even provide better results than a top-down approach. But in a time of crisis, time and efficiency are of utmost importance—delivering the best solutions as soon as

possible. In such context, shared competences can become not only an obstacle, but can seriously harm the activities and the decision-making process(es). In the case of COVID-19, the EU lost its opportunity to develop itself as a relevant actor in healthcare issues. There were some attempts, but what it lacked (and this is also confirmed by some top EU decision-makers; see Herszenhorn and Deutsch 2021) was an estimation of challenges and opportunities of how the EU could be an important player also in areas of shared competences.

Secondly, the COVID-19 pandemic confirmed that the shared competences in the field of healthcare need rethinking. This is especially visible in the procurement of vaccines, where the EU as an actor can achieve more compared to each individual state. But at the same time, the story with the vaccines has also made it clear that EU institutions (such as the European Medicines Agency—EMA) can decelerate the efficiency of vaccine delivery. The EU can therefore be both an accelerator and decelerator of efficiency and appropriate response. This means that EU institutions should invest more in diminishing the barriers while enhancing the advantages. The COVID-19 pandemic is a healthcare crisis that caught the EU unprepared, but it is probably not the last one. The EU should rethink already today its positions and procedures in order to develop more resilience and a more effective approach in reacting to threats coming from its surroundings.

Thirdly, the three case studies from the European Parliament show that the EU should invest more in its internal resilience to unexpected events. What the three case studies make clear is that the European Parliament was completely unprepared for such a crisis in the first wave, but it could also have reacted better or with more structured measures in the second. It is true that the situation is getting better every week, but on the other hand such important and large institutions should have contingency plans for reacting to possible threats and at the same time preserving their modes of operation (not breaching the practices and EU law—e.g. the Edinburgh European Council Conclusions), avoiding misinterpretations (as in the case of the APAs) and finally, developing plans to decrease the possibility of diminishing rights of each employee or MEPs and also their states of origin.

Answering the research questions, we can say that the response of the European Parliament to challenges in the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic was based on ad hoc solutions, sometimes the messages/actions were confusing, causing serious personal problems for EP staff. Since they were unprepared, the reactions were sometimes also abrupt, although logical. However, the experiences from the first wave meant that during the second wave some activities were performed in a more structured way, the measures adopted had an inherent internal logic, but there is still room for improvement. A year after COVID-19 hit Europe, MEPs still vote according to the classical system of printing the ballot, marking their vote, and then scanning and sending it to Brussels by email. Here, a step forward is needed.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic is quite a hard lesson for the functioning of the European Union. All the sceptics that had been presenting the EU as outdated understood that the vitality of an international institution is most relevant in a time of crisis. We agree that the EU has its own problems, but the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the EU is not just an integration for good times—it is even more relevant in bad times. With all of its problems, it provided a platform for the development of COVID-19 vaccines in less than a year, it organised the

procurement of necessary equipment, it adopted a large recovery package, etc. All these activities, most of which are based on a win-win approach, would vanish if we opted to return to individual states. Because instead of cooperation the policy of beggar thy neighbour would prevail. We know as much from many historical examples.

REFERENCES

- APA Committee. 2020. *Communication to APA*. Personal information, email correspondence.
- Beroš, Vili. 2020. "EU will ensure a coordinated response to the COVID-19." *EU2020HR*, 1 March 2021. Available at <https://eu2020.hr/Home/OneNews?id=201>.
- Bessa Vilela, Noemia and Boštjan Brezovnik. 2018. Europe: Hell or Paradise? An Overview on the European Law and Case Law. *Journal of Comparative Politics* 11 (2): 65–83.
- Brglez, Milan. 2020. "Priority question for written answer P-000510/2020: Possible pandemic threat of coronavirus in the EU." *European Parliament*, 1 March 2021. Available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-9-2020-000510_EN.html.
- Council of the EU. 2020. "Meeting calendar." *European Council*, 1 March 2021. Available at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/calendar/?Category=meeting&Page=1&dateFrom=2020%2F01%2F01&dateTo=2021%2F06%2F26&filters=2026>.
- Council. 2020. "Reply P-000510/2020." Personal information, MEP archive.
- CP D(2020)9024. 2020. *The Decision of the President of the European Parliament of 2 March 2020*. Brussels: European Parliament.
- CP D(2020)9886. 2020. *The Decision of the President of the European Parliament of 9 March 2020*. Brussels: European Parliament.
- Deutsch, Jillian and Carlo Martuscelli. 2020. "EU: A united coronavirus vaccination plan is worth a little wait." *Politico.eu*, 2 December 2020. Available at <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-a-united-coronavirus-vaccination-plan-is-worth-a-little-wait>.
- Directive 2011/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2011 on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare. OJ L 88, 4/4/2011: 45–65. Available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/24/oj>.
- ECDC. 2021a. "COVID-19 situation update for the EU/EEA." *European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control*. Available at <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/cases-2019-ncov-eueea>.
- ECDC. 2021b. "Maps in support of the Council Recommendation on a coordinated approach to travel measures in the EU." *European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control*. Available at <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19/situation-updates/weekly-maps-coordinated-restriction-free-movement>.
- Edinburgh European Council Conclusions. 1992. *European Council in Edinburgh, 11–12 December 1992. Conclusions of the Presidency*. Available at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20492/1992_december_-_edinburgh_eng.pdf.
- European Parliament. 2021. *Calendar 2020*. Available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/doc/news/lookingaheadagenda/22261/cal2020_july_en.pdf.
- Gerlinger, Thomas and Hans-Jürgen Urban. 2007. "From heterogeneity to harmonization? Recent trends in European health policy." *Cad. Saúde Pública* 23 (2): S133–S142.
- Gooijer, Win de. 2007. *Trends in EU Health Care Systems*. New York: Springer.
- Greer, Scott L. 2009. *The Politics of European Union Health Policies*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill, Open University Press.
- Greer, Scott L., Nick Fahy, Heather A. Elliott, Matthias Wismar, Holly Jarman and Willy Palm. 2014. *Everything you always wanted to know about European Union health policies but were afraid to ask*. Copenhagen: World Health Organisation.

- Guy, Mary and Wolf Sauter. 2016. *The History and Scope of EU Health Law and Policy*. TILEC Discussion Paper 2016-002.
- Herszenhorn, David and Jillian Deutsch. 2021. "Von der Leyen: EU 'underestimated' challenges in mass vaccine production." *Politico.eu*, 5 February 2021. Available at <https://www.politico.eu/article/von-der-leyen-says-eu-misjudged-complexity-of-manufacturing-coronavirus-vaccines-on-large-scale>.
- Horgan, Denis and Alastair Kent. 2017. "EU Health Policy, Coherence, Stakeholder Diversity and Their Impact on the EMA." *Biomed Hub* 2017 (2).
- Letter of eight Slovenian MEPs to President Sassoli. 2020. Personal correspondence of MEPs, 15 September 2020. Brussels: European Parliament.
- News18. 2020. "'A Bad Decision': Macron Calls Out Slovenia, Austria for Closing Borders with Italy Amid Virus Outbreak." 11 March 2020. Available at <https://www.news18.com/news/world/a-bad-decision-macron-calls-out-slovenia-austria-for-closing-borders-with-italy-amid-soaring-cases-of-coronavirus-2532543.html>.
- Pereira Silva, Pedro. 2020. *Information concerning telework for APA—EP Bureau Decision*. Personal information, MEP archive.
- (DG) PersCommunication. 2020. *Email correspondence from DG PERS*. Personal information, MEP archive.
- Quaestor Notice. 09/2020. *Quaestor Notice of 26 February 2020*. Brussels: European Parliament.
- Quaestor Notice. 12/2020. *Quaestor Notice of 5 March 2020*. Brussels: European Parliament.
- Quaestor Notice. 13/2020. *Quaestor Notice of 6 March 2020*. Brussels: European Parliament.
- Quaestor Notice. 21/2020. *Quaestor Notice of 11 March 2020*. Brussels: European Parliament.
- Quaestor Notice. 23/2020. *Quaestor Notice of 25 March 2020*. Brussels: European Parliament.
- Quaestor Notice. 24/2020. *Quaestor Notice of 25 March 2020*. Brussels: European Parliament.
- Quaestor Notice. 25/2020. *Quaestor Notice of 23 April 2020*. Brussels: European Parliament.
- Quaestor Notice. 59/2020. *Quaestor Notice of 20 October 2020*. Brussels: European Parliament.
- Raga, Sherillyn and Direk Willem te Velde. 2020. *Economic vulnerabilities to health pandemics: which countries are most vulnerable to the impact of coronavirus*. Supporting Economic Transformation, 4 February 2020. Available at <https://set.odi.org/economic-vulnerabilities-to-health-pandemics-impact-of-coronavirus>.
- Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems. OJ L 166, 30/4/2004, pp. 1–123. Available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32004R0883>.
- Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems. OJ L 284, 30/10/2009, pp. 1–42. Available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32009R0987>.
- Renda, Andrea and Rosa Castro. 2020. "Towards Stronger EU Governance of Health Threats after the COVID-19 Pandemic." *European Journal of Risk Regulation* 11 (2): 273–282.
- Ruijter, de Anniek. 2019. *EU Health Law & Policy: The Expansion of EU Power in Public Health and Health Care*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- TFEU—Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. OJ C 326, 26/10/2012: 47–390. Available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>.
- The Conversation. 2020. "'Died from' or 'died with' COVID-19? We need a transparent approach to counting coronavirus deaths." 9 September 2020. Available at

<https://theconversation.com/died-from-or-died-with-covid-19-we-need-a-transparent-approach-to-counting-coronavirus-deaths-145438>.

van Schaik, Louis van and Remco van de Pas. 2020. *Europeanising health policy in times of coronationalism. Policy Brief*. Den Haag: Clingendael.



DELOVANJE EVROPSKEGA PARLAMENTA V PRVEM IN DRUGEM VALU COVID-19: POMLAD – ZIMA 2020

Covid-19 ni samo spremenil življenja ljudi, ampak je razgalil tudi (ne)pripravljenost držav in mednarodnih organizacij ter institucij na nenadne (zdravstvene) krize. Članek se osredotoča na dileme/probleme, s katerimi se je moral spopasti Evropski parlament v prvem in drugem valu covid-19, spomladi in jeseni 2020. Analiza pokaže, da kot druge institucije tudi Evropski parlament ni bil pripravljen na krizo takih razsežnosti, zato so bili v prvem, delno tudi v drugem valu covid-19 njegovi ukrepi namenjeni predvsem reševanju aktualnega stanja, niso pa bili zastavljeni dolgoročno.

Ključne besede: covid-19; Evropska unija; Evropski parlament; vladanje; upravljanje.

THE RUSSO-CHINESE AND CENTRAL ASIAN FOSSIL FUELS TRADE: DIVERSIFICATION AND THE GEO-ECONOMIC BALANCE OF POWER

Davor BOBAN and Valentino PETROVIĆ¹

The article is about the role of fossil fuels in Russian foreign policy and about the geo-economic strategies which the Kremlin applies toward China and Central Asia. We argue that Russia uses a geo-economic realist approach and a neo-mercantilist strategy toward China. Our second argument is that the desire for diversification and direct trade brings them closer to each other, but conflicting interests in Central Asia also divide them. The combination of these centrifugal and centripetal forces results in a balance in Russo-Chinese relations and characterises their new partnership. Finally, Central Asian fossil fuel exporting countries are also interested in trade diversification to remain independent from Moscow and Beijing. We argue that the Kremlin can use some aspects of a neo-imperialist strategy toward Central Asia, but new pipelines toward China decrease the overpowering Russian influence in the region. Research covers the 2000–2020 period and statistical data references acquired from primary sources are used for the research.

Key words: Russia; China; Central Asia; fossil fuels; geo-economic realism.

1 INTRODUCTION

The trade in fossil fuels between Russia and the EU states is burdened with political conflicts and disagreements. The Ukraine gas crises of 2006 and 2009, the Russian leverage in gas trade over the Baltic and East Central European countries, and Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 prompted reactions from Brussels. The EU's Third Energy Package of 2009 and 2014 sanctions against Russia resulted in strained relations and affected their gas trade. A danger of international isolation faced the Kremlin and it turned its attention more to Asia, particularly China. The common denominators of this co-operation are the desire

¹ **Davor BOBAN** is an associate professor at the Faculty of Political Science of University of Zagreb. **Valentino PETROVIĆ** is an associate writer for Institute for Development and International Relations on a project currently implemented with China-Central Eastern Europe Institute. Contact: davor.boban@fpzg.hr.

of both countries to achieve economic benefits, to diversify their energy trade, and to strengthen their positions in the international community. For these reasons, neighbouring countries and regions, primarily Central Asia, are also target of their interests.

Our research focus is primarily on the role of the fossil fuels trade in Russian foreign policy and the geo-economic strategies which the Kremlin could apply toward China and Central Asia. The research covers the 2000–2020 period when direct fossil fuels trade was established between Russia and China and when they established new relationships or changed their existing ones with Central Asian countries. We argue that with a direct trade with China, Russia is using a geo-economic realist approach and a neo-mercantilist strategy and combines it with no other strategy discussed by Wigell (2016) and some other authors: neo-imperialist, hegemony, or liberal institutionalism. The reason for not applying the first two is a lack of possibility for Russia to use hard power and to apply a classical realist approach over such powerful state. The reason for not applying liberal institutionalism is strong government control of the national energy sector in Russia in which there is no place for energy trade with China without the Kremlin's control. Our second argument is that conflicting interests between Russia and China over the fossil fuels trade with Central Asia limit the positive impacts of their new partnership. Direct trade brings two countries closer to each other, but their conflicting interests in the neighbouring region also divide them. The combination of these centrifugal and centripetal forces creates a balance in their mutual relations and characterises their partnership. And our last argument is that Central Asian fossil fuels exporting countries are interested in diversification of trade and political relations in order to remain independent from Moscow and Beijing. In addition to a neo-mercantilist approach, we argue that the Kremlin uses some aspects of neo-imperialist strategy toward Central Asia, but new pipelines from this region to China decrease Russian influence over them.

This article has seven sections. After the Introduction, we shall present our methodological framework, a literature review about selected theories related to the strategies in international fossil fuels trade and analyse the role of fossil fuels in Putin's Russia's foreign policy. In the following two sections, we analyse data about direct gas and oil trade between the two countries and their involvement in the energy trade and production in Central Asia. Finally, we shall present our conclusions about Russian foreign policy toward China and Central Asia in the last section.

2 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This research relates to the areas of foreign policy and international relations. For an explanation of our theses, we will use theoretical ideas about geo-economics, and the ideal-typical strategies of geo-economic use of power proposed by Wigell (2016). They will be tested using a qualitative text analysis approach and supported by statistical data references acquired from primary sources (Vromen 2018, 249–250). By applying such a methodological framework, we shall attempt to demonstrate the political and economic circumstances that led Russia to adapt its foreign policy strategy towards China and Central Asian countries which cannot be perceived solely through the lens of geopolitics and classical realist theory. This will enable us to understand the position of Russia in energy relations with China and will serve as a bedrock for our subsequent

analysis, where we shall present official figures on the fossil fuels trade. Our first step will be to examine the literature on these approaches and to contextualise them within Russian foreign policy and its strategy of utilising fossil fuels as a means of achieving political and economic goals.

The statistical data in this paper are taken mostly from primary sources. We try to present the figures on the structure of the oil and gas sector in Russia and China as well as their fossil fuels trade in the most reliable and credible way, rather than showcasing the figures previously analysed or commented on by other authors. Therefore, our analysis contains original sources such as *Gazprom in Figures 2015-2019 Factbook* and *Gazprom Annual Report* from 2015 to 2019. These documents supply the data on Gazprom's business, including those on natural gas sales volumes to European countries and China, and purchases of natural gas from the Central Asia region, respectively. Our additional Russian source was *Lukoil Annual Report 2019*. Furthermore, we used CNPC official sources to shed light on Chinese co-operation and joint projects with Central Asia countries.

To avoid being dependent only on data provided by Gazprom and the CNPC, we use several other primary sources to gain insight into other aspects of Russian and Chinese energy portfolios. Thus, with figures from *British Petroleum Statistical Review of World Energy*, we compare the structural specificities of the Russian and Chinese oil and gas sectors (production-consumption, import-export, pipelines-LNG). Finally, we use the data from the *Trend Economy Open Data Portal* to identify the value of Chinese crude oil imports from Russia and the data from the *Observatory of Economic Complexity* for additional information on Russian crude oil exports to European countries and China. The figures from secondary sources are presented only when referring to Pirani's paper (2019) issued by The Oxford Institute for Energy Studies. Our focus is primarily on the 2010s when the energy trade between Russia and China was intensified, although we also analyse the development of relations in the previous period. Our analysis contains the fresh figures reaching as far as to 2019, since the data about 2020 are still neither available to us nor complete.

3 NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ECONOMY IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

Many authors have described international relations in the Cold War using realist approaches which emphasise power and rivalry. In the post-Cold War era, old rival states started to use economic power for their foreign policy aims (Scholvin and Wigell 2018, 10) and some authors claim that "post-Cold War era is characterised not so much by political or ideological rivalry but by economic competition" (Wigell 2016, 136). With terms like geo-economics and geo-economic realism, they try to describe a new role of economy and natural resources in relations among states. Scholvin and Wigell, for instance, claim that "[G]eo-economics resonates with IR Realism by emphasising rivalry amongst states" (Scholvin and Wigell 2018, 5) and it "proceeds from the assumption that power and security are not simply coupled to the physical control of territory, as in classical geopolitical analysis, but also to commanding and manipulating the economic ties that bind states together" (ibid., 4). Wigell and Vihma (2016, 2) argue that main differences between geo-politics and geo-economics are how covert they are and what are their operational logic. First one is overt and confrontational, and the second is covert and selectively accommodational.

Wigell (2016, 137) claims that geo-economics is “*the geostrategic use of economic power*”, while Thorun (2009, 28) underlines that geo-economic realism is “mode of foreign policy thinking [which] shared with the previous period the assumption that international relations were characterised by competition”.

Despite the shift in international relations from an arms race to the use of economic resources, it is questionable whether it is possible for one government to rely exclusively on economic power or whether it is necessary to sometimes use hard power. In most cases, for virtually all states except the USA, it is too expensive to use the latter. War disrupts relations between states, causes tensions in international relations, and its outcome is questionable. It is more beneficial for governments to use national economic resources as a foreign policy tool. International trade enables them to achieve more of their political aims in domestic and foreign affairs than war and military conflicts do, and trade can contribute to the rise of their soft power. Problems arise when one government assumes that trade with other countries is not enough to stop threats to its country’s national security. It can attempt to interfere in the domestic affairs and foreign policy of other countries to achieve its own economic and security goals. In this regard, Deyermond (2016, 958–959) distinguishes between the Kremlin’s two approaches to sovereignty. One is post-Soviet and is intended for the “Near Abroad”, which means post-Soviet states. It limits their sovereignty because the Kremlin takes a stance that Russia has special interests there. The other approach is Westphalian and is intended for the rest of the world.

Economic resources could be used for different domestic and foreign policy reasons and each government is supposed to make a choice about this. Wigell (2016, 141–142, 146) sets out four possible ideal-typical strategies that governments can have for the use of economic resources in international relations: neo-imperialism, neo-mercantilism, hegemony, and liberal institutionalism. Neo-imperialism is used by government to establish “informal” empire by economic means (ibid., 142, quotation marks in the original text). “[I]t is not so much concerned with enlarging its territorial control, as with pursuing various forms of economic control, shaping the regional economic structure in such a way that makes weaker states dependent on the regional power” (ibid., 142). In contrast, neo-mercantilism is more about giving primacy to economic rather than geopolitical goals (ibid., 143). Ziegler and Menon (2014, 19) define neo-mercantilism as “a form of economic nationalism” and argue that “neo-mercantilist states seek to control the ‘commanding heights’ of the economy, the largest and most strategic sectors, through wholly state-owned firms or ones that in effect act as agents of the state and are supported by it in various ways.”

Hegemony emphasises regional leadership of one state for which its government uses economic power (Wigell 2016, 144). Esakova (2012, 68) argues “that for a country to be regarded as a hegemony within energy issue area, the following basic prerequisites should be in place: (i) access to crucial energy resources, (ii) availability of sufficient financial resources and (iii) technological know-how in order to be able to develop the energy resources, as well as (iv) large and diversified export markets for energy exports. Of course, the pure availability of these factors does not imply that a country automatically assumes a hegemonic position in energy area. However, unless these incremental preconditions are fulfilled, no energy hegemony is imaginable”. Finally, liberal institutionalism is only about economic objectives (2016, 145). We can argue whether some of the first three strategies are used by the Kremlin, but it is obvious that the Kremlin does not use liberal institutionalism in relations with its most important trade

partners. Pure economic goals are not something that could relate to Vladimir Putin's foreign policy.

Four ideal-typical strategies are useful for analyses of the Russian fossil fuels trade with China and Central Asia, but relations among them are not black and white. Ziegler and Menon (2014, 17) claim that the USA, Russia and China have interests in Central Asia and that the latter two "are driven in roughly equal measure by political and economic considerations. They have adopted neo-mercantilist policies (i.e., state-directed efforts aimed at making asymmetric economic gains at the expense of competitors, a concept we discuss at length below) to realise their goals in the region. The neo-mercantilist energy policies of China and Russia contribute to what is largely a competitive relationship among all three great powers in Central Asia". We agree that Russia has a neo-mercantilist strategy in Central Asia, but its relations with the region's states cannot be seen separately from Russian national security concerns and its post-Soviet sovereignty approach. Some regional organisations led by Russia are economic, but one is military. The important fact is that not all the region's countries are willing to accept participation in these organisations, which complicates the situation for the Kremlin's foreign policy makers. A neo-mercantilist strategy cannot satisfy all the Kremlin's goals, so it has to combine it with at least one more strategy.

4 THE ROLE OF FOSSIL FUELS IN PUTIN'S FOREIGN POLICY

President Putin from the very beginning of his Presidency wanted to revive Russia's power. He deployed two major means for this: the protection of national security and the development of economy. The former was primarily marked by the Kremlin's attempts to secure the country from external threats. It wanted to establish control over the "Near Abroad", even if it meant using hard power, like in Georgia and Ukraine, and to stop the eastward expansion of NATO. The latter was marked with regime's need to secure domestic legitimacy and financial resources to strengthen the state. Instead of an integration into Western political and military organisations, Putin's aim was to integrate Russia into the world economy without Western interference. This has not been an easy task because Russian economy could offer limited range of industrial commodities. However, the country has a plenty of natural resources highly demanded on world markets, particularly fossil fuels, and they became the Kremlin's "central security and foreign policy asset and instrument" (Petro 2011, 17).

The use of fossil fuels for economic ends and foreign policy goals is not new in Russia. In the 1960s, the Soviet Union built gas fields and pipelines for gas exports to Eastern and Western Europe. The gas trade continued after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but in Putin's Russia, the Kremlin's goal became higher - to make Russia the world's energy power. We can find evidence of this policy in Putin's academic paper from 1999, *Mineral Natural Resources in the Strategy for the Development of the Russian Economy*,² in which, as Balzer (2005, 214) claims, Putin presented idea of the necessity for the establishment of government control over the national energy sector: "rather than 'short term', Mr. Putin sees natural resources dominating Russia's economy for at least the next 50 years; he

² Balzer analyses the following article: Putin, V. V., "Mineral'no-syr'evyye resursy v strategii razvitiya Rossiyskoy ekonomiki," *Zapiski Gornogo Instituta*, 144, 3-9, 1999. As far as authors of this paper know, it is not available open access.

advocates creating vertically integrated financial-industrial groups to compete with Western multinationals; he considers both the state's role and the nature of property rights in the resource sector to be open to multiple institutional options that might coexist in time". After Putin became president, the Kremlin put oligarchs under its control, diminished the role of foreign companies in the domestic energy industry, and won control in major Russian oil and gas companies (Light 2009, 92, 94). Western companies continued to have stakes in the energy sector, but their ownership was limited.

It was a neo-mercantilist strategy combined with neo-imperialist and hegemonic strategies in foreign policy, depending on which countries it was applied to. The most lucrative markets for oil and natural gas were in the EU, but neo-imperialist strategy toward its member-states was not possible. There was no country ready to accept Russian dominance in this matter and the Kremlin was able only to try to establish its hegemony. Eventually, Russian attempts to act bilaterally in energy matters with European countries (Dimitrova 2010, 2), its aggressive behaviour in the Near Abroad, especially the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and its attempt to use natural gas as a leverage in its relations with small countries in Europe resulted with the stronger Brussels regulation over natural gas trade, particularly with the Third Energy Package of 2009. Russia's bilateral trade with small countries in the Baltic and East-Central Europe (ECE) weakened and the West imposed sanctions against Russia after the beginning of the war in Ukraine. The Kremlin tried to counter this with further diversification of foreign fuels export. It made new gas contracts and was building new pipelines toward Europe, like TurkStream and Nord Stream 2, but at the same it searched for new strategic partners in the world, particularly in Asia and its biggest market, China.

5 THE RUSSO-CHINESE FOSSIL FUELS TRADE

The turn towards China was not a radical, sharp re-orientation of Russian foreign policy. It was more an attempt to diversify foreign partners and an addendum to the existing orientation toward the antagonistic West, not its complete abandonment.³ Newfound interest in China was also compatible with Russian Eurasianist understandings of the country's role on two continents, which connects two worlds and civilisations (Donaldson and Nadkarni 2019, 15).

Relations between the USSR and Communist China were strained most of the time. Despite some warming in the 1980s, only the collapse of the USSR made possible the end of tensions and establishment of new relations between Russia and China. At that time, it was not clear what kind of relations would emerge. President Yeltsin and President Jiang proclaimed a constructive partnership between two countries in 1994 (Kaczmarek 2015, 8) and Russian foreign minister Yevgeni Primakov (1996–1998) suggested that China and India should become Russia's new strategic partners (Tsygankov 2016, 19). These proclamations coincided with the multi-vector foreign policy which started in Russia around this time due to its disappointment with the West (Kaczmarek 2015, 11). In 1996, two countries, plus Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, signed agreements on the settlement of border disputes. Five years later, Russia

³ Curanović (2012, 225) points out that each time in history Russia has turned to Asia, it has been a reaction to Russia's disappointment with the West.

and China signed Treaty of Good Neighbourliness and Friendly Co-operation which became basis for their future political and economic co-operation.⁴

Russia and China have similar and complementary interests in trade. The latter has strongly built up its economy since Deng Xiaoping turned economic policy toward more pragmatic approach in the 1970s and became able to offer an array of cheap commodities to world markets. Strong industrial development demanded more energy than China could produce and it became net importer of oil in the 1990s, and of gas and coal in the 2000s (Wensley et al. 2013, 311). Moreover, its shift from coal to gas in recent years (Nezhnikova et al. 2018, 209) and rising urban population (Perkins 2013, 26) means its thirst for natural gas and oil is on the rise. If we compare data for only last few years we can see how sharp it is: China consumed 10,668 barrels of oil per day in 2013 and 14,056 barrels in 2019 (Table 1) and imported 6978 barrels of oil per day in 2013 and 11,825 barrels in 2019 (Table 1); it consumed 171.9 bcm in 2013 and 307.3 bcm in 2019 (Table 4) and imported 51.5 bcm of gas in 2013 and 132.5 bcm in 2019 (Table 5).

TABLE 1: THE STRUCTURE OF RUSSIAN AND CHINESE OIL SECTOR, IN THOUSANDS OF BARRELS PER DAY

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Russia							
Production	10807	10860	11007	11269	11255	11438	11540
Consumption	3134	3298	3134	3219	3195	3282	3317
Export	7948	7792	8313	8814	8992	9080	9186
China							
Production	4216	4346	4309	3999	3846	3798	3836
Consumption	10668	11134	11911	12248	12842	13375	14056
Import	6978	7398	8333	9214	10241	11024	11825

Source: Data acquired from BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020 (2020, 16, 21, 30).

On the other side of the border, Russia's economy was not able to offer to the world market what China could. The basis of their trade became commodities that each side needed from the other: China had a vast array of industrial products and Russia had modern arms and fossil fuels (Carlson 2018, 32). The arms trade was the most important dimension of their economic co-operation in the 1990s (Kaczmarek 2015, 11) and the energy trade came later, during Putin's presidency. The latter trade between the two is important in terms of diversification, which "is a key to energy security" (Esakova 2012, 59): for Russia, it means securing different markets for its energy (ibid., 39) and for China securing multiple stable energy suppliers. Chang (2014, 1-2) claims that problem with getting loans from the West and the financial pressure coming from decreases in oil production also motivated Russian side to turn to China. Finally, the energy trade with China was a way for Russia to develop its regions in the Far East, which face emigration, the "threat" of Chinese immigration, and prospect of economic colonisation from China.

⁴ At that time, the EU started to create policies of new relations with China for economic reasons (Gonçalves 2012, 66).

The possibilities for the fossil fuels trade were limited in the beginning. First, an increase of the oil and gas export demands appropriate production and transport capacities. Gas transport is still predominantly done by pipelines and Russia still does not have well-developed LNG infrastructure despite some efforts in recent years in the Baltic, Arctic, and Pacific regions. Second, pipelines require politically stable states through which they could be laid. The most secure way to build them is between neighbouring countries, which enables direct trade without danger of the third-party interruptions. China also tries to be less dependent on oil coming by shipping from the Middle East, an important source of its oil import (Yilmaz and Daksueva 2017, 8), because the US Navy could threaten shipping routes (Blank 2006, 56; Carlson 2018: 35). Blank (2006, 56) argues that “[t]his explains why China is building pipelines from Kazakhstan to Shanghai”.

The expansion of the oil trade was a slow process, and, in the beginning, oil was exported to China by rail. The Yukos company of the oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky attempted to start this export by a pipeline in early 2000s (Lo 2008, 143). After the Kremlin consolidated its control over the national gas and oil sector and Yukos went to bankruptcy, the project was abandoned (Ziegler and Menon 2014, 33). This led China to focus itself more on Central Asian energy markets (ibid., 33). However, too much was at stake to miss opportunities and benefits from the mutual energy trade. The first big deal was completed in 2009 between the Russian state-controlled companies Transneft and Rosneft as well as China National Petrol Corporation (CNPC) about the completion of the oil pipeline between the two countries (Holtzinger 2010, 72). It was opened in 2010 with a capacity of up to 30 million tons per year (Hsu and Soong 2014, 76). In addition, the China Development Bank in 2009 gave loans to Gazprom and Rosneft in exchange for 15 million metric tons of oil per year (Chang 2014, 1–2). Unlike Yukos’s aborted attempts, these government-backed agreements were successful and Chinese import value of crude oil from Russia has since 2010 seen an annual rise (Table 2). In 2010, it was smaller than exports to the Netherlands, Germany, and Poland, comprising only 5.33% of total Russian export, but in 2018 China imported 26.2% of total Russian exported oil, becoming its number one destination (Table 3).

TABLE 2: CHINA’S IMPORT VALUE OF PETROLEUM OIL (CRUDE) FROM RUSSIA AND KAZAKHSTAN, IN BILLION USD

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Russia	8.882	16.322	20.485	19.742	24.950	17.242	16.889	23.994	37.889	26.492
Kazakhstan	5.552	8.858	8.719	9.375	4.222	1.887	0.832	0.888	1.148	1.327

Source: Data acquired from UN Comtrade, Annual International Trade Statistics by Country (2020).

TABLE 3: RUSSIA'S PETROLEUM OIL (CRUDE) TOP EXPORT DESTINATIONS, 2010–2018, IN %

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
China	5.33	9.17	10.1	10.4	14.1	16.8	19.7	21.4	26.2
Netherlands	17	13.5	16.5	14.6	15	14.2	15.5	14.7	15.2
Germany	10.1	11.2	11.2	10.2	9.49	9.75	10.3	10.4	8.73
Poland	8.33	9.15	9.08	8.99	8.76	8.1	7.08	6.6	6.49
South Korea	3.55	3.17	3.13	3.41	4.13	4.88	3.9	4.04	6.04
Belarus	3.74	3.67	4.51	4.46	4.96	6.21	5.27	5.48	5.06
Italy	4.49	4.01	3.97	4.62	4.34	3.69	2.88	3.2	4.31

Note: Countries taken into consideration are the top export destinations in 2018. Data acquired from Crude Petroleum in Russia (2020).

The development of the gas trade between the two countries was slower than the oil trade. For years, Russia wanted to establish direct gas trade with China, but at least two geographical factors affect Russian attempts at gas export diversification. First, main Russian gas fields are in northwestern Siberia. Their exploitation started in Soviet times and were later expanded. There were two options to start gas exports to China: to build pipelines from these fields to China or to open new fields with new pipeline somewhere closer to that country. These options relate to the second factor: Russia and China have borders on two geographically divided sections. The western is around 100 km long and is located between Mongolia and Kazakhstan. The eastern is between eastern Siberia and Manchuria and is around 4000 km long. Such division made possible two entry points and two different strategies of exploitation. If the western sector had been chosen, it would have been possible for Russia to use western Siberian gas fields for exports to China and thus would have an impact on both Russian gas exports to Europe and its foreign policy. If the eastern sector had been chosen, it would have required development of completely new gas fields in eastern Siberia and new pipeline from there to China. In both cases, unlike gas exports to Europe, which has been done with infrastructure built mainly in the Soviet times, completely new infrastructure would have had to be built in Siberia for export to China. This endeavour supposed major involvement of the state, not only companies, and negotiations between Moscow and Beijing. China encountered similar problems. As most other maritime countries, it had two options: to do this by pipelines or by LNG shipping. China has used both, but pipelines are more suitable for stable supply and Beijing thus had an interest in starting gas trade with neighbouring countries.

TABLE 4: THE STRUCTURE OF THE RUSSIAN AND CHINESE GAS SECTORS, IN BCM

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Russia							
Production	614.5	591.2	584.4	589.3	635.6	669.1	679.0
Consumption	424.9	422.2	408.7	420.6	431.1	454.5	444.3
China							
Production	121.8	131.2	135.7	137.9	149.2	161.5	177.6
Consumption	171.9	188.4	194.7	209.4	240.4	283.0	307.3

Source: Data acquired from BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020 (2020, 34, 36).

TABLE 5: COMPARISON OF RUSSIAN NATURAL GAS EXPORTS AND CHINESE NATURAL GAS IMPORTS, IN BCM

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Russian export							
By pipelines	210.7	189.6	194.2	202.0	219.7	221.3	217.2
By LNG	14.5	13.6	14.6	14.6	15.4	24.9	39.4
Overall	225.2	203.2	208.8	216.7	235.2	246.2	256.6
Chinese import							
By pipelines	26.4	30.3	32.4	36.8	39.9	47.9	47.7
By LNG	25.1	27.3	27.0	36.8	52.9	73.5	84.8
Overall	51.5	57.5	59.4	73.5	92.8	121.3	132.5

Source: Data acquired from BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020 (2020, 40).

The turning point in the Russo-Chinese gas trade came after the escalation of the Crimea crisis in 2014 when Russia softened its stance toward China to recover its shaken international position (Gabuev 2016, 68–69). Yilmaz and Daksueva (2017, 18) point out that the start of greater co-operation was also a kind of Chinese help to Russia to overcome consequences of Western sanctions.⁵ In May 2014, Gazprom and CNPC signed a 30-year contract which would bring to China 38 bcm of gas per year (Weitz 2014, 80). As was the case with some European countries, signing the deal with China was not an easy task for the Russian side. Negotiations lasted ten years (Nezhnikova et al. 2018, 207) and in terms of price, it was a race to the top for Russians and race to the bottom for Chinese. Both sides wanted to achieve the best for itself, with the Russians wanting “the same price” they had for European markets (Weitz 2014, 82). Eventually, they agreed for a price of about 350 USD per thousand cubic meters (ibid., 82). The Chinese side wanted a pipeline entry into east China (Yilmaz and Daksueva 2017, 11) and the May 2014 contract includes the construction of a completely new pipeline called Power of Siberia in eastern Siberia from two new gas fields north of Baikal. It came into operation in December 2019. Russia wanted to build gas pipeline Power of Siberia 2 in the western section of their borders to diversify its exports from western Siberia fields (ibid.), but Chinese approval came only after Power of Siberia gas route was confirmed in the May 2014 agreement (Sharples 2016, 899, 901).

During the Eastern Economic Summit in 2018 in Vladivostok, the Chinese authorities expressed interest in new gas pipelines from Russia: the already agreed Power of Siberia 2, with a capacity of 30 bcm/year, and the Far East pipeline, with a projected capacity of 5–10 bcm/year (Henderson 2018, 9). The Power of Siberia 2 was supposed to deliver Russian gas to western China via the Altai route through the Ukok Plateau. However, in early 2020, the pipeline was faced with opposition from Altai people who claimed that the Ukok Plateau is culturally and environmentally significant due to its lakes, rivers, and biodiversity (Altai People Against the ‘Power of Siberia 2’ gas pipeline to China, Russia 2020). The plans for the construction were eventually changed and instead of going across the Altai route to western China, the pipeline will run

⁵ An important precondition for Russo-Chinese co-operation was the disappearance of ideological differences, too. Wishnick (2016, 4) points out that their contemporary relations stem from now having more similar values and interest, like non-interference in domestic affairs and views on Western actions in some part of the world.

through Mongolia, to the high-consuming region in eastern China, only 560 km away from Beijing, with a capacity of 50 bcm/year, as was reported by Gazprom CEO, Alexei Miller (Pallardy 2020). The preliminary agreement between Gazprom and CNPC stood at 30 bcm/year and while Russia wants to increase the overall export via Power of Siberia 2, Beijing remains sceptical and would prefer to discuss the terms as initially agreed (ibid.).

Russia's turn to China did not end with pipelines. It also opened the Russian energy sector to Chinese investors (Carlson 2018, 34), particularly in LNG production. The CNPC has 20% and Silk Road Fund 9.9% of the shares in the Yamal LNG project (About the Project 2020). This gas facility is important for both sides in terms of diversification, but primarily for Russia. It exploits gas resources in the Yamal region in north-western Siberia where gas was previously produced and transported from via pipelines only to European and Russian markets. This gas is now available via LNG to be shipped to world markets and there has been a strong rise in sales of this gas to China since 2017 (Table 6).

TABLE 6: GAZPROM'S NATURAL GAS SALES VOLUMES, IN BCM

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Top European destinations					
France	10.5	12.5	13.3	13.3	13.0
Turkey	27.0	24.6	29.0	24.0	15.4
Italy	24.4	24.7	23.7	22.6	22.0
Germany	47.4	57.9	67.1	65.7	44.9
United Kingdom	22.5	25.7	29.1	34.2	59.0
China	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.8	1.5
Power of Siberia	-	-	-	-	0.3
LNG*	6.6	3.4	29.4	29.2	41.4

*in trillion BTU (British thermal units).

Source: Data acquired from Gazprom in Figures 2015-2019 Factbook (2020, 82-83).

Despite these investments and the rise in exports, the main Russian problem is that its attempt to become much less dependent on European markets is still not achieved (Table 6). The volume of natural gas exports to China by pipelines and LNG in 2019 was still smaller than exports to some European countries and only oil had achieved large volumes of export by that time (Table 3). The Kremlin's consolidation of control over the national energy sector, the underdeveloped pipeline infrastructure, and Chinese policies to diversify its energy import became the bedrock for Beijing's turn to Central Asian fossil fuels. Putin's neo-mercantilist strategy thus in its early years had some negative consequences for trade with China because the Kremlin was not able or ready to conclude trade agreements as fast as it was done by Yukos under Khodorkovsky.

6 RUSSIAN AND CHINESE INTERESTS IN CENTRAL ASIA: THE THREE-SIDED DIVERSIFICATION

The strategic location and abundance of fossil fuels in Central Asia make it the setting of the so-called New Great Game (Kleveman 2003; Kim and Indeo 2013). Its resources are attractive for net importers, like China and the EU, but also to

Russia, USA and even Iran. The Kremlin has pursued a neo-imperialist strategy in the region, seeing it as a part of the Near Abroad to which other powers should not have access. Russia leads regional organisations in the Near Abroad, which includes some Central Asian states but not China, like the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organisations (CSTO), and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Turkmenistan declared its neutrality in the 1990s and is not member of any of these organisations, Uzbekistan is a member of the CIS, Tajikistan is a member of the CIS and the CSTO, and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are members of all three organisations. This indicates that only one energy rich country in the region is a member of all organisations, one is a member of only one organisation, and one is a member of no organisations at all. There is only one important organisation which includes China. It is Shanghai Co-operation Organisation which was established in 2001 and it includes Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and all the Central Asian states except Turkmenistan.

China has interests in the region similar to Russia's. One is a security, which is related to the pre-dominantly Muslim westernmost Chinese region of Xinjiang. Beijing's fear of "the three evils" - terrorism, extremism and separatism" (Herd 2014, 186) and Soviet interference in this part of China in the past made Chinese government cautious in its approach to this territory. Secondly, Chinese interests primarily relate to Central Asian fossil fuels and markets for Chinese products. Andrews-Speed and Vinogradov (2000, 393) argue that reasons related to energy policy and foreign policy made China interested in the oil exploitation of the region already in the 1990s and Kazakhstan became the first Central Asian country from which China imported oil (*ibid.*, 390). The region's importance for China also stems from the problems in a direct energy trade between Russia and China in 2000s (Hsu and Soong 2014, 84) and from the unsuccessful realisation of Chinese plans for gas and oil trade with Iran (Pikayev 2009, 80). Because of this, "Central Asian relations are a natural extension of China's policy of developing more amicable relations in the international system, otherwise known as 'peripheral' (*zhoubian*) diplomacy" (Lanteigne 2010, 173).

TABLE 7: GAZPROM'S PURCHASES OF NATURAL GAS IN CENTRAL ASIA FOR SUPPLIES TO FAR ABROAD COUNTRIES, BCM

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Turkmenistan	10.9	11.0	3.1	-	-	-	4.0
Uzbekistan	5.7	3.6	3.5	4.3	5.5	3.8	4.9
Kazakhstan	11.9	10.9	12.6	12.7	13.8	12.3	11.3

Source: Data acquired from *PJSC Gazprom Annual Report* from the years 2015 (104), 2016 (82), 2017 (139), 2018 (122), 2019 (117), respectively.

Central Asian countries also have interest in trade diversification and China's entry into this region could be beneficial for them. The country perhaps most interested in this is the region's chief gas producer, Turkmenistan. Natural gas has been its most important economic resource and important for the economic development and for the survival of Niyazov (Kunysz 2012, 1-2) and later Berdimukhamedow regimes. Its major problem is how to sell potentially vast production, due to its unfavourable geographical position and, in the recent past, the lack of pipelines which would connect Turkmenistan with world markets. For almost two decades after the dissolution of the USSR, the transport of Turkmen gas depended on Russia which had pipeline connections with Turkmenistan built

in Soviet times.⁶ Russia's position of a sole transport provider caused occasional disagreements between two countries. It enabled Russia to extract profit as much as possible by selling Turkmen gas on world markets for much higher prices than the ones it paid for it to Turkmenistan and to use this position as a leverage against Turkmenistan (Hancock 2006, 71). Turkmenistan also refused to enter the Russia-led regional organisations and legally obliged its citizens to have only one citizenship, which resulted with immigration of ethnic Russians from Turkmenistan.

The energy relations between the two countries deteriorated when the Kremlin started to show muscles of its neo-imperialist strategy. After the explosion of Central Asia-Centre gas pipeline's fourth line in 2009, accusations were made blaming Moscow (Kuchins et al. 2015, 15). In the same year, Gazprom requested "a revision of the oil-linked price formula agreed with Turkmenegaz in 2008" (Pirani 2019, 12). Following the failure of negotiations, Russia had decided to minimise the purchase of Turkmen gas for the next couple of years, with a complete stop between 2016 and 2018, focusing more on annual, rather than long-term contracts (Kuchins et al. 2015, 16). To resolve the problem of being dependent on Russia, Turkmenistan needed new pipelines which would not go over Russian territory. There were a few possibilities. First, and from this point of view bizarre one, was to build gas pipeline over Taliban-controlled Afghanistan in the late 1990s to reach Pakistan and India (Rashid 2010, 173). Others were more realistic, but they also depended on good relations with neighbours. The second was under the Caspian Sea and toward Azerbaijan, but Russia complained about the ecological risks (Moscow stands against unilateral actions for Trans-Caspian gas pipe construction 2015). The third was toward Iran. Despite having one of the biggest world gas reserves, Iran has imported Turkmen gas since the completion of gas pipeline between the two countries in 1997 to satisfy its needs (Giuli 2008, 126; Hancock 2006, 74), but the quantities were small. The fourth solution was toward China.

Disagreements between Moscow and Ashgabat resulted in the decline of Russian influence in Turkmenistan, but also in the rise of the Chinese factor. A lack of infrastructure was an obstacle for the trade, so Beijing had to invest both in new pipelines as well as in new production fields. Unlike Russia, China possesses money for investments and it rapidly built its gas network in 2000s. In 2003, it had 21 thousand km (Hancock 2006, 78–79) and in 2019 the CNPC owned 55,810 km (Natural Gas & Pipelines 2021). It finished a 4000 km-long West-East gas pipeline intended for the gas import from Central Asia to its east coast (Chang 2014, 5) and in 2009 connected it with the pipeline network in Central Asia. The Central Asia-China gas pipeline consists of three parallel lines (A, B, C) and currently has an overall capacity of 55 bcm/year. With the addition of already planned line D, the overall influx from Central Asia to China could hypothetically reach 85 bcm/year.

In 2007, the CNPC signed a production share agreement with Turkmen State Agency for Management and Use of Hydrocarbon Resources that encompassed joint development and the exploration of gas fields on the right bank of Amu Darya River and then a natural gas and oil purchase agreement with Turkmengaz (CNPC Worldwide: CNPC in Turkmenistan 2020). The deal was to export 30 bcm of Turkmen gas to China per year in the following three decades (CNPC Worldwide: CNPC in Turkmenistan 2020). In 2013, the CNPC and Turkmengaz

⁶ Gleason claims that the potential of the gas revenue was such that Turkmenistan's officials were surprised by it after Turkmenistan became independent in 1991 (Gleason 2010, 79).

signed an additional gas sales and purchase agreement for 25 bcm of annual delivery that would eventually bring overall Turkmen gas exports to China at 65 bcm a year by 2020. The deal also included an engineering, procurement, and construction agreement on the Galkynysh gas field for 30 bcm/a production capacity building (CNPC and Turkmengaz Ink an Agreement on Boosting Natural Gas Shipments to China and a Gas Field EPC Contract 2013). The China Development Bank is financing the field with approximately \$8 billion in loans (Kuchins et al. 2015, 13).

The realisation of these agreements came as a blow for Russian profits coming from the transport of Turkmen gas (Ziegler and Menon 2014, 23–24). In 2010, Turkmenistan exported 21.2 bcm of gas, with 10.7 bcm going to Russia or through the Russian network and only 3.5 bcm was exported to China (Pirani 2019, 2). In 2018, the situation was completely different. That year, Turkmenistan exported 37 bcm of gas and almost all went to China, 34.5 bcm (Pirani 2019, 2). That is almost the same amount of gas which is planned to come from Russia to China via Power of Siberia. This turned Turkmenistan from a country exploited by Russia to an independent gas producer and its main competitor in gas trade with China thanks to trade agreements with this country. Turkmen gas is also a trump card in Chinese hands for the gas trade with Russia (Holtzinger 2010, 78). Xu and Reisinger indicate that geographical proximity between Central Asia countries and China is a factor that was often neglected by Russia when attempting to use the higher gas prices and delay pipeline construction as leverage against China. Now, with agreements signed between the CNPC and Turkmengaz, and plans for development line D of Central Asia-China gas pipeline on table, Beijing has decreased the demand for Russian gas and successfully shifted the balance of power in the region to its advantage (Xu and Reisinger 2018, 10).

China has wider economic interests in the region beside fossil fuels. The Silk Road Economic Belt initiative intended for Central Asia was announced in 2013 (Samokhvalov 2018, 40) and it prompted Russian fears about losing influence and economic interests in the region (Gabuev 2016, 65–66). Russia tried to revive its power by different means, and at least two related to the fossil fuels trade. First was the prevention of Chinese influence in the region by establishing bigger energy trade between two countries, as Yilmaz and Daksueva argue (2017, 13). If Russia wants to limit the consequences of the Chinese shift to Central Asian energy markets, then it must make additional effort to bind China to itself. First came the expansion in the oil trade and Russia eventually became a major exporter of this commodity to China. In 2010, China imported oil from Russia for 8.882 billion USD and from Kazakhstan for 5.552 billion USD (Table 2). Nine years later, import from Kazakhstan was worth only 1.327 billion USD and from Russia 26.492 billion USD (Table 2). The expansion in gas trade has been slow, but eventually Russia benefited from the disruption of gas exports from Central Asia. An example of this is 2017–18 winter crisis, when Turkmenistan exported smaller amount of gas to China than had been agreed, an event that sounded the alarm for Beijing as imports from Central Asian ally were not as secure as had been hoped (Henderson 2018, 15). Henderson argues that because of this crisis, a decision of the Chinese authorities to establish even closer energy ties with Russia, expressed at the aforementioned Eastern Economic Summit in 2018, seemed to be a rational choice, given the Russian need for money influx, reliability of their supply, Chinese growing demand, and the already agreed Power of Siberia project (ibid., 18).

The second way was a start of new co-operation with regional countries by concluding contracts with their governments on the fossil fuels trade. Following a three-year halt in energy trade between Russia and Turkmenistan, and arbitration process in Stockholm in which Gazprom sued Turkmenengaz for gas overpayment during the 2010–2015 period and demanded financial compensation, Gazprom resumed imports via Central Asia-Centre gas pipeline on 15 April 2019 (Socor 2019). Socor (*ibid.*) argues that the new arrangement is *de iure* based on the 2003 inter-governmental agreement which mandated an annual delivery of 40 bcm for a 25-year period from 2003 to 2028, but, as Pirani claims (2019, 12), the actual conditions are set to 5.5 bcm of gas delivery under a five-year contract, from 2019 to 2024. Russian co-operation with Kyrgyzstan started in 2003 with a gas agreement between Gazprom and Kyrgyz government (Foreign projects: Kyrgyzstan 2020), and Gazprom has owned Kyrgyzstan's gas network since 2013 (Freeman 2017, 13). However, Kyrgyzstan is not a gas exporter and does not play any significant energy role in Central Asia.

Uzbekistan's co-operation with China dates back to 2007 when Uzbekneftegaz and CNPC "signed a cooperation agreement on exploration and development" of the Mingbulak Oilfield (CNPC Worldwide: CNPC in Uzbekistan 2021) and was further intensified in 2013 when the two companies began their joint venture on three other gas fields (CNPC Worldwide: CNPC in Uzbekistan 2021). Gazprom is currently involved in the development of gas reserves at the Shakhpakhty field, a project that began in 2004, but the results are still unknown; and the 2018 hydrocarbon production project at the Djel field (Gazprom in Figures 2015-2019 Factbook 2020, 46). Lukoil, however, appears to be a front-runner in the gas production business lately. "In 2019, Uzbekistan accounted for 40.3% of the gas produced by Lukoil Group and 81.9% of the Group's overall gas production outside Russia" (Lukoil Annual Report 2019 2021, 57). Uzbekistan uses far more gas for domestic consumption than Turkmenistan, around 43–46 bcm/year, probably due to its larger population, while it exports smaller volumes to China and Russia, with exports to China being on the rise (Pirani 2019, 14, 21, 22). The situation is similar with the export and transport of Kazakh natural gas. Its total export was 12.7 bcm in 2010, and 12.4 bcm went to Russia or through Russian network and nothing to China (*ibid.*, 23). In 2018, Kazakhstan exported 18.4 bcm of gas, with 12.3 bcm going to Russia or through Russian network and 5.8 bcm to China (*ibid.*, 23). In all three cases, Russian imports and transport of natural gas from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in the period 2010–2018 was steady or decreased and that of the Chinese increased.

Russian attempts to revive its presence in the region by concluding new contracts with regional governments have had smaller effects than tying China to itself by concluding Russo-Chinese contracts. Both countries are competitors, but interests for co-operation force them to accommodate each other's interests in the region to avoid conflict: The Kremlin had to accept Chinese presence in Central Asia and Chinese foreign policy became careful towards Russian interest there (Gabuev 2016, 62). It is not possible for Russia to pursue a hegemonic strategy in the fossil fuels sector anywhere in the region, but it can try to pursue a neo-imperialist strategy by a combination of energy trade with regional military and economic organisations which it leads. Nevertheless, even this strategy faces a rise of Beijing's influence and its attempt to include Central Asia into its future economic empire. The Russian attempt to preserve its influence in the region is showing its shortcomings. Russia does not possess the financial capacities to build gas fields and transport infrastructure in the region like China does. Beijing is ready to finance projects intended for gas imports from Russia

and Central Asia and without this, they would not be able to fulfil their contract obligations toward China. This fact is important in determining Russian energy power since a lack of “availability of sufficient financial resources” degrades its status as a “*hegemony within energy issue area*” (Esakova 2012, 68). Having a problem with financing its own energy projects, Russia is even more dependent on finding new markets for its gas and oil or to widen its co-operation with existing ones. Since Europe is reluctant to do that, China and oversea markets are the only possible targets for achieving this aim, but without showing any neo-imperialist or hegemony aspirations toward them.

7 CONCLUSION

Diversification is one of the *spiritus movens* of Putin’s foreign policy. Basic Russian strategy in international fossil fuels trade since 2000 is neo-mercantilist, as some authors have already argued. This strategy is not satisfactory for the rise of Russian power and influence in the Russian neighbourhood and the Kremlin has to combine it with other strategies to achieve its goals. In some cases, such a combination is not possible, but in others their selection varies depending on which country they apply to. The Kremlin uses only a neo-mercantilist strategy for relations and trade with China. China’s economic strength, its status of a regional power, and the fact that Beijing needs Russian fuels, but it is not dependent on them make an establishment of “*hegemony within energy issue area*” difficult for the Kremlin. Consequently, Russia has to balance its approach to China. It is mostly visible in the May 2014 agreement when Moscow gave some concessions to Beijing to make possible an agreement on the gas trade after a decade of negotiations. Russia so far achieved benefits from this by getting a new big trade partner, new loans and investments, and China had to accept that Russia has its own *legitimate* interests in Central Asia.

Russia must accept the fact that China is interested in Central Asia as well and that the region’s countries have an interest in co-operating with it. This Sino-Central Asian co-operation resulted in the reduction of Russian influence in the region and the Kremlin thus cannot combine the neo-mercantilist strategy with the hegemony strategy there, but still has an opportunity to use some other strategies beside basic neo-mercantilism. Probably the most viable is the neo-imperialist strategy due to the existence of regional economic, military, and political organisations led by Moscow. The problem for the Kremlin is that these organisations are not integrated like their Western counterparts due to the smaller economic power of Russia and the lack of interest of Central Asian member-states in belonging to highly integrated organisations in which one powerful state would be a hegemon. For energy producing countries in the region, it is more lucrative to diversify co-operation with the both sides (Russia and China) and to secure other partners in the world than to take one-side approach. Diversification, thus, becomes one of the major forces that influence their foreign policies.

This all results in multilateral interdependency in the triangle Russia-Central Asia-China and a balance of power in terms of the mutual fossil fuels trade. It has decreased Russian influence in the region, but it did not diminish it. Nevertheless, it is questionable how long the Kremlin will survive there because of the widening gap between the Chinese and Russian national economies and narrowing gap between their militaries. The Kremlin’s retreat from the West and its lack of a real strategic and close partnership with China could thus further

diminish Russia's role and power in international relations in the foreseeable future.

REFERENCES

- About the Project. 2020. Available at <http://yamallng.ru/en/project/about>.
- Altai People Against the 'Power of Siberia 2' gas pipeline to China, Russia. 2020. Available at <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/altai-people-against-the-power-of-siberia-2-gas-pipeline-to-china-russia#>.
- Andrews-Speed, Philip and Sergei Vinogradov. 2000. "China's Involvement in Central Asian Petroleum: Convergent or Divergent Interests?." *Asian Survey* 40 (2): 377–397.
- Balzer, Harley. 2005. "The Putin Thesis and Russian Energy Policy." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 21 (3): 210–225.
- Blank, Stephen. J. 2006. "The Eurasian Energy Triangle: China, Russia, and the Central Asian States." *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 12 (2): 53–67.
- BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020. 2020. Available at <https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy/downloads.html>.
- Carlson, Brian G. 2018. "Room for Maneuver: China and Russia Strengthen Their Relations." In *Strategic Trends 2018: Key Developments in Global Affairs*, eds. Thränert, Oliver and Martin Zapfe, 29–45. Center for Security Studies [online]. Available at <https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/bitstream/handle/20.500.11850/317729/ST2018-04-BC.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
- Chang, Felix K. 2014. Friends in Need: Geopolitics of China-Russia Energy Relations. *E-Notes*, May 2014. Foreign Policy Research Institute.
- CNPC and Turkmengaz Ink an Agreement on Boosting Natural Gas Shipments to China and a Gas Field EPC Contract. 2013. Available at <https://www.cnpc.com.cn/en/nr2013/201309/1b81b6a8106947d4a1c55b6699a9d03d.shtml>.
- CNPC Worldwide: CNPC in Turkmenistan. 2020. Available at https://www.cnpc.com.cn/en/Turkmenistan/country_index.shtml.
- CNPC Worldwide: CNPC in Uzbekistan. 2021. Available at <http://www.cnpc.com.cn/en/2020Uzbekistan/2020Uzbekistan.shtml>.
- Crude Petroleum in Russia. 2020. Available at <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-product/52709/reporter/rus>.
- Curanović, Alicja. 2012. "Why don't Russians fear the Chinese? The Chinese factor in the self-identification process of Russia." *Nationalities Papers* 40 (2): 221–239.
- Deyermond, Ruth. 2016. "The Uses of Sovereignty in Twenty-first Century Russian Foreign Policy." *Europe-Asia Studies* 68 (6): 957–984.
- Dimitrova, Irena. 2010. "EU-Russia Energy Diplomacy: 2010 and Beyond?" *Connections* 9 (4): 1–16.
- Donaldson, Robert H. and Vidya Nadkarni. 2019. *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Esakova, Nataliya. 2012. *European Energy Security: Analysing the EU-Russia Energy Security Regime in Terms of Interdependence Theory*. Berlin: Springer VS.
- Foreign projects: Kyrgyzstan. 2020. Available at <https://www.gazprom.com/projects/kyrgyzstan>.
- Freeman, Carla P. 2017. "New strategies for an old rivalry? China-Russia relations in Central Asia after the energy boom." *The Pacific Review* 31 (5): 635–654.
- Gabuev, Alexander. 2016. "Crouching Bear, Hidden Dragon: "One Belt One Road" and Chinese-Russian Jostling for Power in Central Asia." *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies* 5 (2): 61–78.
- Gazprom in Figures 2015-2019 Factbook. 2020. Available at <https://www.gazprom.com/f/posts/72/802627/gazprom-in-figures-2015-2019-en.pdf>.
- Giuli, Marco. 2008. "Nabucco Pipeline and the Turkmenistan Conundrum." *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 2 (3): 124–132.

- Gleason, Gregory. 2010. "Natural gas and authoritarianism in Turkmenistan." In *Caspian Energy Politics: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan*, eds. Overland, Indra, Heidi Kjaernet and Andrea Kendall-Taylor, 78–90. London and New York: Routledge.
- Gonçalves, Arnaldo M.A. 2012. "The EU and China Bilateral Relationship: Looking for a Fresh Restart." *Journal of Comparative Politics* 5 (2): 61–81.
- Hancock, Kathleen J. 2006. "Escaping Russia, Looking to China: Turkmenistan Pins Hopes on China's Thirst for Natural Gas." *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 4 (3): 67–87.
- Henderson, James. 2018. "Russia's Gas Pivot to Asia: Another False Dawn or Ready for Lift Off?." The Oxford Institute for Energy Studies. Oxford Energy Insight: 40. Available at <https://www.oxfordenergy.org/publications/russias-gas-pivot-asia>.
- Herd, Graeme P. 2014. "The 'Battle of Ideas, Concepts, and Geopolitical Projects' in Central Asia: Implications for Russo-Chinese Relations?." In *Shifting Priorities in Russia's Foreign and Security Policy*, eds. Kanet, Roger E. and Remi Piet, 183–203. Burlington: Ashgate.
- Holtzinger, Jean-Marie. 2010. "The Russo-Chinese Strategic Partnership: Oil and Gas Dimensions." *Connections* 9 (4): 69–82.
- Hsu, Jing-Yun and Jenn-Jaw Soong. 2014. "Development of China-Russia Relations (1949–2011)." *The Chinese Economy* 47 (3): 70–87.
- Kaczmarek, Marcin. 2015. *Russia-China Relations in the Post-Crisis International Order*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kim, Younkyoo and Fabio Indeo. 2013. "The new great game in Central Asia post 2014: The US "New Silk Road" strategy and Sino-Russian rivalry." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 46 (2): 275–286.
- Kleveman, Lutz. 2003. *The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia*. New York: Grove Press.
- Kuchins, Andrew C., Jeffrey Mankoff and Oliver Backes. 2015. *Central Asia in Reconnecting Eurasia: Turkmenistan's Evolving Foreign Economic and Security Interests*. Lanham, Boulder, New York and London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Kunysz, Nicholas. 2012. "From sultanism to neopatrimonialism? Regionalism within Turkmenistan." *Central Asian Survey* 31 (1): 1–16.
- Lanteigne, Marc. 2010. "Security, strategy and the former USSR: China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation." In *Handbook of China's International Relations*, ed. Breslin, Shaun, 166–176. London and New York: Routledge.
- Light, Margot. 2009. "Russia and Europe and the process of EU enlargement." In *The Multilateral Dimension in Russian Foreign Policy*, eds. Wilson Rowe, Elana and Stina Torjesen, 83–96. London and New York: Routledge.
- Lo, Bobo. 2008. *Axis of Convenience: Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics*. London: Chatham House, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Lukoil Annual Report 2019. 2021. Available at <https://www.lukoil.com/InvestorAndShareholderCenter/ReportsAndPresentations/AnnualReports>.
- Moscow stands against unilateral actions for Trans-Caspian gas pipe construction. 2015. Available at <http://tass.ru/en/economy/799657>.
- Natural Gas & Pipelines. 2021. Available at https://www.cnpc.com.cn/en/naturalgaspipelines/naturalgas_index.shtml.
- Nezhnikova, Ekaterina, Oksana Papelniuk and Anna Evgenievna Gorokhova. 2018. "China Energy Dialogue: Research of the Most Promising Energy Areas for Interrelation." *International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy* 8 (1): 203–211.
- Pallardy, Diane. 2020. "Power of Siberia 2's New Route Makes Russian Gas Supplies to China More Feasible." Independent Commodity Intelligence Services. Available at <https://www.icis.com/explore/resources/news/2020/04/30/10503185/gif-inside-story-power-of-siberia-2-s-new-route-makes-russian-gas-supplies-to-china-more-feasible>.
- Perkins, Dwight H. 2013. "New Institutions for a New Development Model." In *China: A New Model for Growth and Development*, eds. Garnaut, Ross, Cai Fang and Ligang Song, 17–33. Canberra: ANU Press.
- Petro, Nicolai N. 2011. Russian Foreign Policy, 2000-2011: From Nation-State to Global Risk Sharing, PECOB's Papers Series, June 2011, #12. Available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1954189.

- Pikayev, Alexander. 2009. "Russia's attitude towards nuclear non-proliferation regimes and institutions: An example of multilateralism?." In *The Multilateral Dimension in Russian Foreign Policy*, eds. Wilson Rowe, Elana and Stina Torjesen, 69–82. London and New York: Routledge.
- Pirani, Simon. 2019. "Central Asian Gas: Prospects for the 2020s." The Oxford Institute for Energy Studies. OIES Paper, NG 155. Available at <https://www.oxfordenergy.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Central-Asian-Gas-NG-155.pdf>.
- PJCS Gazprom Annual Report 2017: 25 Years in Business. 2021. Available at <https://www.gazprom.com/f/posts/60/709300/gazprom-annual-report-2017-eng.pdf>.
- PJSC Gazprom Annual Report 2015: Multipolar Energy. 2021. Available at Available at <https://www.gazprom.com/f/posts/21/014436/gazprom-annual-report-2015-en.pdf>.
- PJSC Gazprom Annual Report 2016: The Power Within. 2021. Available at <https://www.gazprom.com/f/posts/11/885774/gazprom-annual-report-2016-en.pdf>.
- PJSC Gazprom Annual Report 2018: A Strategic Resource. 2021. Available at <https://www.gazprom.com/f/posts/67/776998/gazprom-annual-report-2018-en.pdf>.
- PJSC Gazprom Annual Report 2019: Efficient Growth. 2020. Available at <https://www.gazprom.com/f/posts/72/802627/gazprom-annual-report-2019-en.pdf>.
- Rashid, Ahmad. 2010. *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Samokhvalov, Vsevolod. 2018. "Russia and its shared neighbourhoods: a comparative analysis of Russia-EU and Russia-China relations in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood and Central Asia." *Contemporary Politics* 24 (1): 30–45.
- Scholvin, Sören and Mikael Wigell. 2018. Geo-economics as Concept and Practice in International relations: Surveying the State of the Art. *Finnish Institute of International Affairs*, Working Paper 102. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324602603_Geo-economics_as_a_concept_and_practice_in_international_relations_surveying_the_state_of_the_art.
- Sharples, Jack D. 2016. "The Shifting Geopolitics of Russia's Natural Gas Exports and Their Impact on EU-Russia Gas Relations." *Geopolitics* 21 (4): 880–912.
- Socor, Vladimir. 2019. "Gazprom Restarts Imports from Turkmenistan after a Long Halt (Part One)." *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Volume 16 (56). Available at <https://jamestown.org/program/gazprom-resumes-imports-from-turkmenistan-after-a-long-halt-part-one>.
- Thorun, Christian. 2009. *Explaining Change in Russian Foreign Policy: The Role of Ideas in Post-Soviet Russia's Conduct towards the West*. Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tsygankov, Andrei P. 2016. *Russia's Foreign Policy Change and Continuity in National Identity*. Lanham, Boulder, New York and London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- UN Comtrade, Annual International Trade Statistics by Country. 2020. Available at https://trendeconomy.com/data/h2?commodity=2709&reporter=China&trade_flow=Import&partner=World,Kazakhstan,Russia,Turkmenistan,Uzbekistan&indicator=TV&time_period=2010,2011,2012,2013,2014,2015,2016,2017,2018,2019.
- Vromen, Ariadne. 2018. "Qualitative Methods." In *Theory and Methods in Political Science 4th Edition*, eds. Lowndes, Vivien, David Marsh and Gerry Stoker, 237–254. London: Palgrave.
- Weitz, Richard. 2014. "The Russia-China Gas Deal: Implications and Ramifications." *World Affairs* 177 (3): 80–86.
- Wensley, Simon, Stephen Wilson and Jane Kuang. 2013. "China's Energy Demand Growth and the Energy Policy Trilemma." In *China: A New Model for Growth and Development*, eds. Garnaut, Ross, Cai Fang and Ligang Song, 301–319. Canberra: ANU Press.
- Wigell, Mikael and Antto Vihma. 2016. "Geopolitics Versus Geo-economics: The Case of Russia's Geostrategy and its Effects on the EU." *International Affairs* 92 (3): 605–627.

- Wigell, Mikael. 2016. "Conceptualizing regional powers' geoeconomic strategies: neo-imperialism, neo-mercantilism, hegemony, and liberal institutionalism." *Asia-Europe Journal* 14: 135–151.
- Wishnick, Elizabeth. 2016. "In search of the 'Other' in Asia: Russia-China relations revisited." *The Pacific Review* 30 (1): 1–19.
- Xu, Bo and William M. Reisinger. 2018. "Russia's Energy Diplomacy with China: Personalism and Institutionalism in its Policy-making Process." *The Pacific Review* 32 (1): 1–19.
- Yilmaz, Serafettin and Olga Daksueva. 2017. "The energy nexus in China-Russia strategic partnership." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 19 (1): 1–26.
- Ziegler, Charles E. and Rajan Menon. 2014. "Neomercantilism and Great-Power Energy Competition in Central Asia and the Caspian." *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 8 (2): 17–41.



RUSKO-KITAJSKO IN SREDNJEAZIJSKO TRGOVANJE S FOSILNIMI GORIVI: DIVERZIFIKACIJA IN GEO-EKONOMSKO RAZMERJE MOČI

Članek govori o vlogi fosilnih goriv v ruski zunanji politiki in o geoekonomskih strategijah, ki jih Kremelj uporablja za Kitajsko in Srednjo Azijo. Trdimo, da Rusija uporablja geoekonomski realistični pristop in neomerkantilistično strategijo do Kitajske. Naš drugi argument je, da jih želja po diverzifikaciji in neposredni trgovini zbližuje, toda hkrati jih razdvajajo nasprotujoči si interesi v Srednji Aziji. Kombinacija teh centrifugalnih in centripetalnih sil povzroči ravnovesje v rusko-kitajskih odnosih in je značilno za njuno novo partnerstvo. Nazadnje se tudi srednjeazijske države, izvoznice fosilnih goriv, zanimajo za diverzifikacijo trgovine, da ostanejo neodvisne od Moskve in Pekinga. Trdimo, da lahko Kremelj uporabi nekatere vidike neoimperialistične strategije do Srednje Azije, vendar novi cevovodi proti Kitajski zmanjšujejo prevladujoč ruski vpliv v regiji. Raziskave zajemajo obdobje 2000–2020, za raziskavo pa se uporabljajo referenčni statistični podatki, pridobljeni iz primarnih virov.

Ključne besede: Rusija; Kitajska; srednja Azija; fosilna goriva; geo-ekonomski realizem.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Journal of Comparative Politics invites all scholars and researchers of the Central and Eastern European area and beyond to submit papers for consideration. All topics of comparative social and political import within the spectrum of the social sciences and humanities, interdisciplinary or not, are welcome.

Please send your submissions in WORD format (.doc or .docx) to editor-in-chief miro.hacek@fdv.uni-lj.si with the words "JCP Article Submission" in the subject line.

- Maximum word length: 8000 words though exceptional papers which go beyond this limit might also be considered.
- All manuscripts must be accompanied by an abstract of up to 150 words stating precisely the analytical problem under consideration, the method of argument addressed to the problem and the conclusions reached by the author(s). Also add three to five key-words.
- Since manuscripts are sent out anonymously for evaluation, the author's name and affiliation should appear only on a separate covering page.
- To be eligible for the review process, manuscripts must be written according to the submission guidelines. All manuscripts that are not written and edited according to the submission guidelines will be rejected.
- Up to 100 words of biographical paragraph describing each author's current affiliation, research interests, and recent publications related to his or her article, and address should accompany the manuscript.
- Formatting standard used: Chicago Manual of Style 16th edition, Author-Date system for Social Sciences, UK English. All details are available here <http://library.williams.edu/citing/styles/chicago2.php>
- Please ensure that every reference cited in the text is also present in the reference list (and vice versa). All citations in the text must list exact page citations, if possible. Unpublished results and personal communication are not recommended in the reference list, but may be mentioned in the text.
- All submission copies should contain current author/s contact information.
- Once selected, the author/s will be contacted by a member of the editorial team.
- Journal of Comparative Politics uses double-blind review process, which means that both the reviewer and author identities are concealed from the reviewers, and vice versa, throughout the review process. To facilitate

this, authors need to ensure that their manuscripts are prepared in a way that does not give away their identity. Review process usually takes between 6-8 weeks.

Note on Editorial Policy

The Journal of Comparative Politics staff reserves the right to edit any and all submissions as necessary for publication. Authors will retain full future copyright over their submissions. Previously unpublished works are welcome for submission. All submissions must follow the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition, Author-Date system for Social Sciences, UK English, concerning punctuation, citation and bibliography format, etc. While the staff will cooperate with authors in reviewing edits prior to publication, Journal of Comparative Politics will determine all final editing decisions.

For further information about submissions, please consult <http://www.jofcp.org>.

Note on Ethical and Malpractice Policy

Journal of Comparative Politics (JCP) is committed to meeting high standards of ethical behaviour at all stages of the publication process. In our ethical standards we set out general expectations for authors, editors, publisher and reviewers. Authors submitting to JCP are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest are those that could be considered or viewed as exerting an undue influence on the presentation, review and publication of their work. These may be financial, non-financial, professional or personal in nature.



University
of Ljubljana Faculty
of Social Sciences

