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Conflict-Related Democracy Predictors in Ukraine: Tolerance and Participation Tendencies in Migration-Affected Communities

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In the paper, there have been presented the results of the comparative analysis, based on the empirical data provided in public opinion surveys and civic engagement polls of residents of Ukraine, 2017-2019. The investigation has been aimed at tracing the correlation, on the one hand, between the civic literacy level of population, and proneness of the latter to the impact of conflict-related biases, and populist political agendas, in particular, region- and language-related ones, concerning intergroup and intragroup relations between internally displaced persons and host communities. On the other hand, tolerance to otherness, and readiness of citizens to participate in peacebuilding initiatives, are reviewed through the perspectives and risks of further communicative and educational transformations of the conflict-restructured communities in Ukraine; and the conclusion on urgent need in diagnostic and prospective civic literacy and expectations mapping of the entire war-affected population, regardless of the region, outlines the challenge yet to be faced by Ukrainian researchers and policymakers.

Keywords: Ukraine, civic literacy, civic engagement, protracted internal displacement, IDP, tolerance, social cohesion

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Introduction

In the Freedom Score 2019 country report on Ukraine, political rights aspect in Ukraine scored 26/40, in particular, political pluralism and participation — 11/16; and the opportunity for the opposition to increase voters’ support and gain power through elections having been considered doubtful, according to point B2: “Newer grassroots parties have difficulty competing with more established parties that enjoy the support and financial backing of politically connected business magnates, known as oligarchs” (Aggregate Freedom Score, 2019). The abrupt change of political vector of Ukraine, after 2019 series of elections, has hinged on the background of the intermittent armed combat in eastern Ukraine resulting in over 3,000 civilians having been killed since 2014, and more than 1.4 million citizens having faced protracted internal displacement challenges during the 2014-2019 period. Thus, civic engagement situation in Ukraine, under the contradictory conditions, requires being paid special attention, in order to derive the patterns of citizens’ participation and interaction, as well as otherness, community restructuring, competence of civil servants, and impact of the level of the authorities being corrupted on future projecting, as the triggers affecting the long-term political decisions and durable solutions.

In January 2018, in the Public opinion survey to assess the changes in citizens’ awareness of civil society and their activities, corruption of the members of Verkhovna Rada (MPs) was considered the biggest obstacle to greater reform process in Ukraine by 46% of respondents, to compare with 40% having pointed out war, 37% — oligarchs, and 33% — corruption of civil servants, as the factors hindering development of Ukraine (Public opinion survey, 2018: 34); in Freedom Score 2019, corruption of officials was also considered “the main obstacle to effective governance in Ukraine” (Aggregate Freedom Score, 2019). Nevertheless, an “agree/disagree” question in 2019 Public opinion survey enabled to find out that, noncongruently, 55% of respondents agreed that “Bribery is an integral part of Ukrainian mentality” (Public opinion survey, 2019: 31); and 51% totally/rather agreed with the statement that “If you can resolve the issue with the public servants using some reward, most people in Ukraine try to take advantage of this” (Ibidem). At the same time, competence of the MPs passing laws, and that of civil servants implementing laws, was considered important in the reform context, in 2018, by 17% and 12% of respondents, respectively (Public opinion survey, 2018: 34). In 2019, before the parliamentary elections, the respondents pointed out that for the MPs to be seen in the next Verkhovna Rada, there was important honesty and openness about income, 89%; active support of anticorruption reforms, 89%; MPs being experts in public policy areas, 84% (Public opinion survey, 2019: 36). However, among the claims there were considered significant the features of the MPs-to-be such as “promising more jobs, better salaries and increased pensions”, “new faces who have never been in the parliament before”, and “those who are often on TV and are well-known to people”, by 81%, 67%, and 47%, correspondingly (Ibidem), thus making it possible to outline the deficiencies of civic literacy and populism counteraction, the latter to be addressed as the exigencies for the Ukrainian society nowadays.

Ukrainian politics tends to be regarded unpredictable, in 2019, both by 74% of citizens-respondents (Public opinion survey, 2019: 37), and in the international survey on freedom (Aggregate Freedom Score, 2019), with consideration of the clean sweep of a victory in elections having been achieved by the Servant of the People (Sluha Narodu) party. The party could not be even traced in the list of the parties getting 2% or more responses to the question on the parties the respondents would vote for, in January 2018 survey (Public opinion survey,
2018: 39), and then gained 34% of support in the survey as of July 2019 (Public opinion survey of residents, 2019: 27). And in the context, populism can be outlined, after Müller (2014), as realization of moralistic imagination in politics, that involves “just like us” identity of the leader, and appeal to the group of citizens situationally having been neglected in the country (Müller, 2014).

Therefore, in the article, there have been studied the dimensions of civic literacy in Ukraine as a complex problem, them involving tolerance and civic engagement aspects, with regard to the current hybrid war context related to the situation of protracted internal displacement, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) representation in the agendas and decision-making processes in Ukraine, as well as with consideration of the populism-driven political shift in Ukraine.

### Materials and Methods

The civic literacy problematics, with the background of war-related restructuring of the communities and, therefore, social cohesion priorities in Ukraine, requires the analysis to be based on the data as follows:

1. Theoretical findings on civic engagement, and the risks related to the society transformation as a result of conflict-imposed migrations and societal challenges.

2. Empirical data based on the public opinion surveys on civic activism (Public opinion survey, 2018; Public opinion survey, 2019; Public opinion survey of residents, 2019), civic engagement polls (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017; National Civic Engagement Poll, 2018) and analytics (Haran et al., 2019), National Monitoring System reports on the situation of internally displaced persons, 2017-2019 (National Monitoring, 2018; National Monitoring, 2019); as well as the aggregate data provided in the Freedom Score on Ukraine (Aggregate Freedom Score, 2019).

3. Ukrainian legislation on internal displacement, host communities and IDP-related policies, and durable solutions (On Approval, 2016; On Approval, 2017; Monitoring Report, 2018; 2017-2018, 2018; On Appointing, 2019).

The above-mentioned batches of data have been used to clarify the civic literacy level changes of Ukrainian population, 2017-2019, in particular, in the spheres of otherness evaluation and social cohesion challenges and restoring, under the conditions of the ongoing conflict. The comparative analysis of survey results on IDP-group assessment and self-assessment enables further investigation of the correlation between the issue of a vulnerable “politically neglected group”, and the rise of appeal to the populist peacebuilding and reintegration projects, as well as to trace the change of attitude towards the war-related political narratives.

### Theoretical background — Migration studies and displacement-driven democracy predictors for Ukraine

Evaluating the danger of democracy decline, Inglehart (2016) concluded based on the World Values Survey data that “tolerance of minorities is an even stronger predictor than overt support for democracy of how democratic a society actually is” (Inglehart, 2016: 19). An important aspect of civic literacy studies, as suggested by Westheimer and Kahne (2004), is educating ‘a good citizen’. For instance, the division of personally-responsible, participatory,
and justice-oriented patterns of civic education (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004: 243), can be applied to analysis of individualistic, leadership-related, and exploratory dimensions of civic engagement (Ibidem), as well as, beyond educational framework, in order to assess the intergroup/intragroup relations as just or unjust, and, furthermore, to achieve systemic changes and overcome hindering of social cohesion building process. The frame of assessment refers to the values that have priority in the society, such as tolerance, obedience, and self-expression, all of them included into the list of important values to be chosen in the World Values Survey (WVS). In 2011, pre-war, survey for Ukraine, obedience values prevailed over self-expression, 40-44% and 26-40% of choices, respectively, and tolerance was considered an important value by 51-64% of respondents, the range being age-related (World Values Survey, 2011: 9, 11, 20). In the context of protracted internal displacement and significant changes in the host communities due to IDPs mass influx in 2014-2016, Crimea having been annexed by the Russian Federation, and the ongoing armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, with open military combats with the Russia-backed forces, and the hybrid war technologies implemented, the right-oriented approach implies not only forming the rules and metarules to regulate the resources in host communities, but to reterritorialize the displaced through adaptation, rather than assimilation and dissolving.

Therefore, in the Ukrainian context, civic literacy study implies otherness distribution tracing, and, taking to account that there are 1,410,615 IDPs in Ukraine as of September 23, 2019 (IOM 2019: 1), approximately 4% of entire population have been affected by the conflict-related forced migration, and the issue of tolerance gets a new dimension of estimating the IDP-group not only through the simplified dichotomy of “burden vs. social capital” popular in official sources on the displacement (Thematic report, 2014: 5, 8; Ukraine.Recovery, 2015: 34, 40-44; Sustainable development goals, 2017: 114-115; Migration in Ukraine, 2016: 10; On Approval, 2016; On Approval, 2017), but rather through a multidimensional study of the wider otherness patterns (nationality/gender/employment) in displacement-restructured host communities, the former widely ranging from “minority majority” cases in the settlements of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, near the contact line, such as Severodonetsk, Izium, Novogrodovka, Vugledar, to the “negligible” percentage of IDPs, between 0.2% and 4.69%, in Chernivtsi, Zhytomyr, Vinnytsia, Volyn, Rivne, Zakarpattia oblasts, leading to lack of IDP-specific programmes on the local level, and eventually disappearing of displacement-driven issues from the local authorities agendas (Monitoring Report, 2018: 12, 39).

The theoretical grounds for evaluation of the vulnerable groups’ challenges has been suggested in migration studies. For instance, Sabates-Wheeler (2019) considers among displacement disadvantages, over-representation one, when forcibly displaced persons “constitute a disproportionate share of an excluded and marginalized group” (Sabates-Wheeler, 2019); the researcher also distinguishes between displacement-specific and displacement-intensified disadvantages of IDPs (Ibidem), them being of importance for Ukraine-related otherness study as well, with consideration of both common problems of IDPs and locals, and the special needs and vulnerabilities arising from forced resettling and ambiguity of outcomes, and being for the country a humanitarian challenge and a development one, at the same time (Kälin & Entwisle, 2017: 7). Other aspects of migration and adaptation relevant for the study, include mobility, anchoring and gradation of belonging studies (Bauman 2000; Urry 2007; Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2017; Rajput, 2019); integration rethinking, diversity/superdiversity studies — in the context of migration (Vertovec, 2007; Bradley, 2017; Schinkel, 2019; Favell, 2019; Klarenbeek, 2019; Meissner, 2019; Penninx, 2019); and
national integration idea transformation described by Anderson (2019), as “methodological de-nationalism” (Anderson, 2019).

The Ukraine-specific challenges of civic engagement, in the current migration context, have been studied through a number of perspectives: conflict-related restructuring of society and vectors of influence (Malyarenko & Wolff, 2018; Bazaluk, 2017; Dodonov et al., 2017; D’Anieria & Kuzio, 2019), in particular, the public opinion data analysis on assessment of rule of law in the occupied Crimea (O’Loughlin & Toal, 2019); otherness-related attitudes to IDPs, for instance, criminalized accentuated image vs. imposed morality, and region-specific challenges of adaptation to host communities (Smal & Poznyak, 2016; Bulakh, 2017; Ivashchenko-Stadnik, 2017).

Thus, the paper is aimed at investigation of the following democracy predictors, with regard to the vulnerabilities of the conflict-affected society prone to populism-favourable expectations:

1. Civic literacy level, as a predictor of unbiased response to the situation, and realistic estimation of the authorities functions and limitations; the latter is significant for triggering participation and civic engagement of citizens, without them transferring decision-making and responsibility utterly onto those in power;
2. Tolerance to vulnerable groups, and impact of “Not in My Back Yard” (NIMBY) effect on migration-restructured communities, in particular, regarding attitudes to the “other” groups and readiness to support;
3. The gaps in situational self-assessment of vulnerable groups members (for instance, IDPs), and assessment of the actors by other citizens, as an indicator of both social cohesion, and ability to coordinated actions in implementing durable solutions.

Analysis — Civic literacy level of Ukrainian citizens: 2017-2019 surveys data

A Ukrainian citizen civic portrait: baseline (2017) and control (2019)

The civic literacy baseline, with regard to the Russian-instigated occupation and ongoing armed conflict, was investigated in 2017, within the framework of PACT and USAID-supported Civic Engagement Poll, a quantitative survey of Ukrainian population, with a sample size of 2134 residents of Ukraine, the sample design corresponding to the adult population of Ukraine as of 2016, excluding the data collection of Crimea and the non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine. The recent quantitative survey, Public opinion survey to assess the changes in the citizen’s awareness of civil society and corresponding activities, was conducted with participation of 2054 Ukrainian adult citizens in June-July 2019; and the data can serve the control for measuring the shifts having taken place in the sections of civic education, main goals of Ukraine apprehension and perception of the vulnerable groups as Other or Alien actors of practical discourses.

In both surveys, the level of civic literacy and civic education results were measured on the basis of 13 questions on the fundamental rights and freedoms of Ukrainian citizens, as well as on government and self-government, local and state levels of budget-forming, and the definition of “Ukrainian nation (2017) / Ukrainian people (2019)”. To be considered civically literate, the respondents of the surveys were expected to provide the correct answers to the minimum of 10 questions out of 13 (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017: 69; Public opinion survey, 2019: 49).
In 2017, there was marked absence of significant difference in civic literacy between gender and age categories, 8-10% of civically literate citizens among them (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017: 70). In 2019, there was fixed a relevant raise in the proportion, with the total level of civically literate citizens shifting from 8 to 13%, and the distribution in the gender categories splitting from merely equal 9% for male informants and 8% for the female ones, to 15% and 10% respectively; the age distribution changed dramatically as well, in general, from 8-10% to 14-15% for the range of groups including the 18-44 and 55-64-year-old respondents (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017: 71; Public opinion survey, 2019: 51).

The most evident changes in civic literacy level can be traced in the data distributed by regions: the most significant improvements, from 8 to 21%, and from 5 to 10%, have been registered in Kyiv city and the Northern oblasts of Ukraine, correspondingly; a definite raise from 16 to 20%, from 8 to 11%, and from 6 to 8%, occurred in the Southern, Central, and Western regions respectively (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017: 70; Public opinion survey, 2019: 50). The only civic literacy level decline situation was registered in the Eastern region of Ukraine, from 8 to 6% of civically literate citizens (Ibidem), although that can be influenced with the migration processes and instable communities structure in the government-controlled areas (the GCA) of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

The aggregate data show the positive dynamics of the civic education results in most aspects, though it is important to trace the tendencies in the respondents’ answers to the basic questions, as they enable to formulate both the educational needs and pitfalls, as well as can serve as a guide to the reintegration obstacles overcoming.

For instance, 49% of the respondents of 2019 poll (Public opinion survey, 2019, 54) were aware of the people of Ukraine being the bearer of the sovereignty in the country, and, though there is a positive gain from 44% in 2017 poll (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017: 74), the position of President and the Parliament as the next popular options in the poll results corresponds with the perception of the state as a rule-maker and the bearer of the responsibility for welfare and livelihood, in other sections of the surveys. About 8% of the respondents steadily consider the President and Verkhovna Rada being potent to appoint even local self-government, based on the data of both surveys (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017: 31; Public opinion survey, 2019: 20).

Therefore, the deviations in civic literacy can be addressed as societal “ozone holes”, through which manipulations and information distortions penetrate, in the form of decision-molding mythologemes, and political beliefs, without being critically reviewed by the information recipients; and perception of “we-other” structure in the local communities, as well as wider concepts of “nation” and “the people”, add to understanding of the civic engagement outline in Ukraine.

Tolerance and perception of the vulnerable groups in Ukraine: general review

One of the important questions shaping the attitude towards various groups in the Ukrainian society was formulated in the polls as follows: “Who does the Constitution of Ukraine define as the [Ukrainian nation (2017)] Ukrainian people (2019)?”, with the suggested responses including Ukrainians, citizens of Ukraine and foreigners, all people who reside in Ukraine legally, and citizens of Ukraine of all nationalities. In 2017, there prevailed the incorrect answer linking citizenship with nationality, the option “Ukrainians” was chosen by 30% of the respondents, and the correct answer “citizens of Ukraine of all nationalities” was preferred by 22%. One of the reasons for this could be the formulation of the question that seemed misleading to the respondents due to nation/nationality not being distinguished properly by
them. The notion “Ukrainian nation” was substituted with “Ukrainian people” in the same set of questions in the civic literacy survey of 2019, and the general distribution changed dramatically: the correct answer “citizens of Ukraine of all nationalities” gaining 32%, and national identification of the citizen being left behind with 22% of preferences (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017: 75; Public opinion survey, 2019: 55). Though this particular distribution could have been influenced with the notion change, in the USAID National Civic Engagement Polls as of 2017 and 2018, there was provided another attitude-monitoring question where the respondents were to agree or disagree with the statements, one of which being formulated as follows: “It is ok to think that your nation is better than the rest” (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017: 134; National Civic Engagement Poll, 2018: 44). The general tendency was pervasive in both surveys and permeated in 56-58% of the positive answers, with higher percentage in the Central and Northern regions of Ukraine, and lower threshold of the positive answers, 42-49%, observed in the Western, Eastern regions, and Kyiv city. The distribution is comparable to another item of this set of statements on agreement/disagreement expression, that is formulated as “It is hard to have a positive attitude towards some ethnicities and nations” (Ibidem). With the disturbing trend of positive answers prevailing, 52% in 2017 survey in general, the Southern region of Ukraine being the “leader” due to the highest level of hesitation towards the possibility of other ethnic groups’ positive perception (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017: 134). In the quantitative survey of 2018, with the sample size of 2073 adult citizens of Ukraine, there was fixed a slight improvement, as the percentage of the agreement expression to the statement lowered to 48% (National Civic Engagement Poll, 2018: 44). At the same time, the surveys 2017-2018 showed high level of positive attitude towards religious groups, as the statement “Any religious groups have the right to existence” got 66% of positive answers in 2017, in total, with the highest level of tolerance in the Eastern and Central regions of Ukraine, 70% and 73% correspondingly, though the general result dropped to 58% of agreement responses in 2018 (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017: 134; National Civic Engagement Poll, 2018: 44).

The comparison of the prejudices towards other religious and ethnic groups expression level can also be traced through the otherness perception monitorings included into the polls taken in 2017-2018. There was suggested a list of groups, and the task was to define those the respondent would not like to have as neighbours, and in both surveys, the ethnic group of Roma was the third popular answer, right after drug-addicts and persons who abuse alcohol, and chosen by 51% of the respondents in 2017 (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017: 132), with the results shifting to 46% in 2018 (National Civic Engagement Poll, 2018: 42). To compare, 7-8% of respondents did not tolerate people of other religions, on the community level (Ibidem), thus disclosing that the attitudes based on ethnicity of the communicative actors might be more influential than the officially proclaimed markers of political split, such as language or regionally varying identities. For instance, no more than 3% of the respondents of the surveys analyzed considered Russian-speaking people as an undesired group for neighbourhood, to compare with 2% of the respondents choosing this option in regard with Ukrainian-speaking people, the distribution being hardly significant, if compared to 40-47% of the respondents having negative attitude towards sexual minorities, and 35-45% of those not willing to share the community space with people with HIV/AIDS (Ibidem). As the latter issues of prejudices are difficult to be applied in the hybrid war manipulations, therefore the Russian propaganda widely exploits the counter-real mythologeme of Russian-speaking population being isolated and discriminated on the community level in Ukraine; especially the mythologeme is productive as Russia-supported impact means in the non-government controlled areas of Ukraine. It has
become the grounds for the attempts of the Russian World (Russki Mir) project realization and “Russian population defence” agenda of the Russian Federation as a justification of the military intervention and political pressure.

In 2019 survey, the community-related tolerance was measured by means of the question on distinguishing the groups that “most experience violations and limitations of rights and freedoms or a prejudiced attitude on the basis of their social features” (Public opinion survey, 2019, 46), with the possibility of up to 5 answers choice. The social features being quite a vague category in the context, the respondents still marked the heterogeneous groups of sexual minorities, 25% responses; IDPs, 19%; and national minorities, 17%, as the most vulnerable ones in the Ukrainian society. Moreover, 42% of the respondents found this question hard to answer or refused to respond altogether (Ibidem); and 86% of the sample group stated they do not belong to any discriminated group, to compare with 38% of the same sample having chosen “yes” in total, ranging from “definitely yes” to “rather yes”, to the question “Are you ready to support other groups of people from the list above (groups to which you do not belong) in defending their rights?”, while 23% of the respondents refused or found it hard to answer the question on whether they are ready to support the vulnerable groups in defending the rights (Public opinion survey, 2019: 47).

Thus, in the aspect of readiness to support the vulnerable groups, the issue can be further focused at the particular correlation of otherness between IDPs and members of host communities, especially in view of the gradual drop of military actions support by the population of five oblasts adjacent to the non government-controlled areas (the NGCA), from 1.7 to 1.3 points, 2017-2018 (2017-2018 main changes, 2018), and increase in readiness of respondents from these oblasts to dialogue with the persons from the NGCA, from 5.8 to 6.4 points, 2017-2018 (Ibidem).

IDPs issues in the results of the surveys: assessment and self-assessment

Nationwide and IDP-related surveys data in Ukraine differ in evaluation of the level of IDP-group of citizens being discriminated. The group is seen as discriminated by one in five respondents of the surveys (Public opinion survey, 2019: 46), although the IDP-specific National Monitoring System Reports (NMS reports) on the situation of internally displaced persons, 2017-2019, show rather low level of discrimination, as self-assessed by IDPs in the context of interactions with the locals and authorities in host communities: approximately 6% of the key informants still claim discrimination, to compare with 18%, in 2017; and more than 90% of IDP-respondents face no discrimination, up to the recent data (National Monitoring, 2018: 45; National Monitoring, 2019: 48).

Comparing the civic engagement data since 2015, as provided in 2017 and 2018 surveys (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017: 18; National Civic Engagement Poll, 2018: 6), there can be traced the tendencies in the answers to the question “What are you personally willing to do to help settling the crisis in the East of Ukraine?” as follows: despite being stable during the period 2015-2017, the data on the respondents willing to support the Ukrainian army and Ukrainian volunteers battalions with funds, food, and equipment dropped significantly in 2018, from 25-23% to 21%, and from 23-21% to 17% respectively; and the willingness to serve personally in the Ukrainian army and the battalions was expressed by 2-4% of the respondents in 2015-2017, with the data on the willingness for active participation in the armed combats not included in 2018 survey. At the same time, the answers indicating willingness to contribute funds or volunteer for rebuilding the East after the conflict gained 3-5% of the
choices (Ibidem), the former option of support appearing in the polls for the first time in 2017, in the survey on civic engagement.

Although, returning to the discussion on the IDP-related civic engagement, there can be assumed a certain rise in the group of the respondents willing to contribute funds to assist IDPs, from 9 to 15% during 2015-2018 period; and helping IDPs with shelter, food and pro-bono services varies at about 16%, as of 2018 survey data (Civic Engagement Poll, 2017: 18; National Civic Engagement Poll, 2018: 6). Thus, in 2018, there was fixed stabilizing of support distribution between military and social support motivations of the Ukrainian citizens: 15-17% distribution both for supporting IDPs and volunteer battalions, for instance; to be compared with the support distribution of 9% for the former, and 23% for the latter, in 2015 (Ibidem).

The mentioned before lack of motivation for rebuilding the East (Donbas) after the conflict can be explained not only with the uncertainty and undefined risks of the ongoing hybrid war with the Russian Federation. In the context of the unpredictable political deviations in Ukraine, but also the priorities distribution demonstrated in the Ukrainian society. The quantitative surveys of the Ukrainian population civic engagement provide the ranking of the most important issues for 2017-2019 period. The respondents were to choose three most important current issues for Ukraine, and in both 2017 and 2018 surveys, economic situation, fighting corruption and the crisis in Donbas were chosen by 46-57% of the respondents, the economic issues toppling the armed conflict-related problems for more than a half of the respondents (Public opinion survey, 2018: 26).

In 2019 poll on civic engagement, there were suggested two parallel questions, enabling to compare three most important issues chosen by the respondents in relation to Ukraine in general, and for them personally and their family (Public opinion survey, 2019: 29). In comparison with 2017 and 2018 data, three choices of the most important data for Ukraine in 2019 included fighting corruption, crisis in Donbas and health care, 41-55%, while economic situation was omitting from the key choices (Public opinion survey, 2018: 26; Public opinion survey, 2019: 29). Although, among the issues important for the respondents personally and their families, the crisis in Donbas was chosen by 27% only, and, for instance, another war-driven problem, returning of Crimea, was regarded as important by 5% of the respondents, to compare with 10% of the same sample group considering it an important current issue for Ukraine in general (Ibidem).

Still, Haran et al. (2019), draw attention to the necessity of life normalization in the GCA of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine. For instance, in 2017, 23% of respondents supported the policy of isolation of the occupied territories, and 21.9% supported the policy of maintaining “the humanitarian ties with the territories to the best extent possible” (Haran et al., 2019: 699); and in 2018, the gap widened significantly, isolation support dropped to 16.8%, and 22.3% of respondents chose the option of the humanitarian ties development (Ibidem). Therefore, readiness to the dialogue, and vagueness of the compromises acceptable for the current authorities to end the war, as well as “population being tired of the war” factor resulting from the protracted character of the conflict-inflicted challenges, can lead to hasty and strategically insecure reintegration process (On Appointing, 2019), and concessions of Ukraine to other actors, if not guaranteed through a broad “peace deal” (Haran et al., 2019: 702), as well as civic engagement motivation of citizens, based on proper assessment of the conflict- and integration-related political decisions of the authorities.
Conclusions and recommendations

The societal-level democracy deviations resulting from the existential insecurity consequences of the armed conflict accompanied with informative manipulations, from the aggressor-state, and “populism-enchanted” population in Ukraine, can be regarded as a conflict-related humanitarian and development challenge. Civic literacy and civic engagement of Ukrainian population are of utter importance in the situation described, as the democracy predictors, such as tolerance, pluralism and participation, form the framework of interactions between Ukrainian citizens, under the conditions of military aggression counteraction, biases and populism insights, as well as reaching, by means of coordinated actions, social cohesion balance in conflict-restructured groups, without either assimilation, or isolation of IDPs in host communities.

Therefore, in terms of the outline for further investigations on the civic literacy and civic engagement challenges in Ukraine, the problematic areas can be referred to as follows:

1. The communicative dimension: the role of groups’ assessment and self-assessment overlapping, in estimation of the “other”/opponents’ readiness for peacebuilding and reintegration, with particular attention to the GCA / the NGCA residents, members of host communities / IDPs / returnees, and other conflict-driven migration actors in Ukraine;

2. The educational dimension: the empirical data provided in the analyzed public opinion surveys and monitoring reports, due to the objective reasons, lack the information on civic literacy level and civic engagement intentions of the population residing in the temporarily occupied regions; and without the reliable information of the kind, the one-way oriented durable solutions and peacebuilding efforts are still in need of the detailed mapping on the civic literacy deficiencies and expectations of the affected citizens; and thus, the authorities-implemented political navigation towards reintegration and sustainable goals, such as peacebuilding and social cohesion in Ukraine, is rather hopeful and intuitive than rationally backed.

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Shared Living in Israel — Higher Education as an Agent of Change in a Conflicted Society

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This paper focuses on academia as an agent of change in ongoing conflictual situations. In diverse and divided societies, the education system has a responsibility to promote multiculturalism in order to mitigate tension. Various theories deal with creating discourse spaces between groups in conflict: contact theory, the intergroup approach, and the narrative approach. This paper presents the role assumed by academia in Israel to bring Jews and Arabs closer together by means of two current examples — the ‘Israeli Hope in Academia’ project, which began two years ago under President of Israel Rivlin’s tutelage, and the subsequent establishment of Centers for Shared Living on campuses as an example of execution in practice. The paper ends with practicable recommendations how the policy implementation can be improved in these centers, and can inspire other countries that experience ongoing conflicts.

Keywords: multiculturalism, conflict resolution, higher education, change agent

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Introduction

Israeli society is characterized by polarization and divides, both within the Jewish population that is divided into various groups and between the Jewish population and the Palestinian-Arab citizens of Israel. The State of Israel is in an ongoing battle with the Palestinians, so that Jews and Arabs are citizens of the same country, but there is a conflict between the two nation groups. Other countries face a similar reality of dealing with the routine of an unsolved conflict; for instance, the Ukraine has been in a state of conflict for a number of years, both internally and versus external forces. In the Israeli reality, the various ethnic and religious groups almost do not meet in the education system, and when they do — it is often with suspicion and tension. Various international models address the encounters and discourse between groups in conflict. This paper wishes to shed light on the actions taken by academic institutions in Israel to create...
closeness between the groups, and to present it as a national strategy aimed at mitigating tensions.

The paper opens with a theoretical review that describes multicultural education and theoretical models that deal with tension between groups, followed by a short review of strategic, structural and psychological barriers in conflicts in general, and their reflection in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Next, the paper focuses on the higher education system as a change agent in a conflicted heterogenous society, detailing various strategies, including defining a national goal to bring groups closer together, proclaimed by President of Israel (Reuven Rivlin) in 2017 under the title ‘Israeli Hope in Academia’, and the subsequent establishment of Centers for Shared Living on campuses. Finally, conclusions are drawn from the Israeli case, through which it might be able to learn how to similar develop tools in other countries. The aim of this paper is to promote thinking towards a reality in which public systems are not ‘on hold’, waiting for the conflict to end, but rather actively fostering moderation and closeness through (in this case, academic) institutions. Higher education as a change agent is a platform that can create bridges and links between diverse groups in an ongoing conflict.

**Theoretical background — Multicultural education and shared living models**

Multicultural approaches have many aspects, but in general, they aim to promote an official line that acknowledges the existence of ethnic and cultural groups, and the collective rights derived from this acknowledgement (Kymlicka, 1998). Proponents of multiculturalism see cultural diversity as an element that must be included in modern liberalism. The state must create fair policy and a range of possibilities for these groups. Multicultural policy makes room for non-dominant groups and organizes their relationships with the state through new legislation and institutions (Kymlicka & Banting, 2006). Multicultural education includes actions that are performed in the system to respect the other, to create sensitivity to various ways of life and thought, and to move away from ethnic perceptions and stereotypes. The aim of an educational multicultural approach is to construct a varied learning environment, which provides each student from any group (whether ethnic, cultural, or social) with opportunities to sustain their diversity. The system fosters values of pluralism and encourages the individuality of the various groups, assuming that their integration enriches them, and builds up their self-confidence versus other groups. A student need not neutralize his or her unique characteristics in order to have relationships with others (Banks & Banks, 2010; Hsu & Chepyator-Thomson, 2010).

To deal with situations in which diverse groups meet, approaches were formulated to cope with ensuing tensions. In certain cases, these are even groups in conflict, especially in the present era, as immigration waves are expanding, and more and more immigrants move to western countries and create new communities with different characteristics. In the Israeli case, the conflict with Arab countries and the Palestinians has been going on for decades.

The main theoretical approaches aimed at promoting shared living in a conflictual space are:

1. **Contact theory**: A popular model is Allport’s (1954) contact hypothesis, which suggests that the best way to reduce hostility between majority and minority groups is contact between group members. Direct contact can reduce stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. In the nature of things, societies in conflict are rife with prejudice, and partial and erroneous knowledge about other groups. Providing
an opportunity to get to know one another personally and directly facilitates social and personal relations with people from other groups, and consequently reduces prejudice. Encounters of this kind must insist on equal status (of the situation and context of the meeting), institutional support (laws, norms, and social atmosphere), intimate, ongoing contact that enables the development of friendships, and mutual dependence through a shared cause that requires cooperation.

2. **Intergroup theory** criticizes contact theory, claiming that the relationships between the groups cannot be ignored. In the Israeli case, Jewish members belong to the majority group and Israeli-Palestinians belong to the minority group, and there are gaps in the equality between the two groups (Friedberg, 2007). Minority groups typically have less access to national resources and loci of power. These elements shape the encounters and must be present in them. The encounter also serves as a basis for the reinforcement of each identity, because encounters between groups empower the investigation of each group’s identity and self-definition (Maoz, 2001). Each participant represents his or her group, so that interpersonal meetings have less importance. In this context, it is the moderator’s responsibility to form practices that bring the groups closer. This process often includes one-national meetings that provide a protected space that can later improve the intercultural encounter (Amir & Ben-Ari, 1987).

3. The **narrative approach** is based on shared learning through the participants’ narratives of their personal experiences. Telling the personal story, listening and processing it together enable discourse and joint coping with the complex political issues. The discourse does not focus on the political aspect but on the personal aspect, the participants’ emotions and experiences. This approach also incorporates contact theory, because interpersonal closeness between the members is created through the narratives. The aim is also to connect each participant to his or her story as well as to expose them to the other’s story (Amir & Ben-Ari, 1987).

**Test case — the Israeli case — Strategic, structural, and psychological barriers in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an ongoing conflict characterized by complex barriers that prevent its resolution. The basis of the conflict is opposing interests regarding the basic issues such as territory and borders. However, beyond these, there are barriers rooted in differences and contradictions between identities, values, beliefs, historical narratives, collective memory, religion, myths, and ethos. The barriers that the populations must cope with, as in many other ongoing conflicts, are strategic, structural, and psychological:

1. **Strategic** barriers relate to the security risks of making peace, especially when either side is required to concede to territorial concessions, for example, and fear of the other side’s conduct following these concessions.

2. **Structural** barriers are based on internal political structures that create institutional and bureaucratic constraints that make legitimization of a peace process difficult to accept. Various stakeholders such as political elites, political parties and interest groups on both sides may oppose peace processes for political, ideological and security reasons.

3. **Psychological** barriers include cognitive, emotional and motivational aspects,
national narratives, and collective memories, which make it difficult to change beliefs and attitudes towards the other and the conflict. They affect the perceptions and interpretations of both sides. These barriers prevent willingness to make concessions and compromises, to take risks, or to set new priorities. Psychological barriers block fair assessment of the other, and create biases as to the other’s goals and strategies as well as lack of appreciation of the other side’s willingness to resolve the conflict (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2010).

Analysis — Higher education as a change agent in a conflict-ridden heterogeneous society

*Israeli Hope in Academia*

Demographic and cultural processes have been reshaping Israeli society in recent decades: from a society composed of a clear majority and minority to a society composed of four main sectors or ‘tribes’ close to each other in size: secular Jews, national-religious Jews, orthodox Jews, and Arabs. This situation is reflected in the numbers of first-graders in the Jewish-orthodox and Arab education systems — almost 50% of the total number of first-grade children. In this reality, there are no longer clear majority and minority answers to ideological questions, and this requires a shift from the accepted majority-minority perception to a new perception of partnership between the sectors that make up Israeli society. At the opening session of Israeli Hope in Academia, President of Israel, Reuven Rivlin, offered his vision: “Academia is the gateway to fulfilling the Israeli dream; it is the entry ticket for all of us to loci of influence. It is the first that creates a space that can serve to form a common language and goals, in which a sense of belonging and responsibility can be forged. Academia can and should be a lighthouse for the understanding that human variety and diversity are not a threat — but an advantage. The road to Israeli hope leads through the willingness and effort to integrate and diversify” (Hendin & Alon, 2017).

This project, initiated in 2017, includes about thirty academic institutions, and is intended to establish the partnership between the various parts of Israeli society in several arenas, primarily academia, employment, education, sport, and local government. All these arenas become change agents of shared and uniting ideas. In the context of this paper, Israeli Hope in Academia operates to promote a varied, culturally-fit environment, which prepares its graduates for shared living and commitment to integrate in the work market. Israeli Hope in employment fosters diversity, representation and cultural fitness, with emphasis on integrating Arabs and orthodox Jews in industry. Israeli Hope in education promotes education for partnership, given the four separate education systems. Israeli Hope in sport works to foster tolerance and coping with violence and racism. Academia is indeed one actor, but the others are linked to it and derived from it (for instance, employment integration and education). The activity in the various arenas is characterized by creating extensive cooperation with government offices, foundations and civil society organizations. The President’s residence serves as an organizing factor of these partnerships, and as an engine that can bring all the partners to the table to lead the desired change, in an attempt to form a new moral, value-oriented standard in light of the changes that Israeli society is experiencing.

*The academic context of shared living — in practice*

At the outset of a discussion about implementing ‘shared living in academia’, we should first define ‘shared living’. The concept consists of knowing the other, the different, through dialog
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and respect for cultural diversity and the other, and through recognition of the importance of shared civil commitment. This perception is congruent with the definition of partnership in the Israeli Hope project: “Equality between the partners, mutual respect and legitimization, recognition of each side’s national and cultural existence, positive and fair relationships through empathic and sensitive dialog, a sense of shared responsibility, and shared striving for peace” (Issawi Report, 2009).

Decision-makers in the higher education system realized academia’s significant role in bringing populations closer together before the President’s 2017 project. In the reality of life in Israel, academic institutions are often the first place that Jews and Arabs meet. The academic framework can be used not just to impart academic knowledge, but also to create discourse between the groups, to reduce prejudices, and to generate social and cultural closeness. Higher education institutions have operated for years to promote these causes. The more relevant institutions are teacher-training colleges, which train the educators of the future generation of Israeli citizens. The aspiration of teacher-training colleges is to mold the social change agents (teachers) through own values of equality and intercultural dialog can be fostered. The colleges view these values as their mission; encourage multicultural and multi-identity education, social solidarity, equality, and justice. There are 29 teacher-training colleges in Israel, including teacher-training programs in public universities. Although about half of these programs declare concrete tasks in the abovementioned areas, only few relate in practice to the concepts of multiculturalism, conflict resolution, or shared learning.

A document written by an Arab researcher and a Jewish researcher (Jayusi & Zalmanson-Levi, 2018) entitled ‘Multiculturalism and shared living between Jews and Arabs in academic teacher-training colleges’ presents information on encounters between Jews and Arabs in education departments and university-based teacher-training programs. According to the Council for Higher Education (2018), the rates of Arab students in humanities and education departments in 2018 were 20% in teacher-training colleges (and they are 24% of all college students), and 22% in universities; i.e., about one of every five students is an Arab. The report discusses the shared space between Jews and Arabs in teacher-training institutions, and describes the majority-minority relations in academia, the recent developments and actions taken, and what should be done in the future. In order to expand and improve the familiarity between the groups, various forums at academic institutions in collaboration with civil society organizations contribute in varied ways including focused workgroups of staff members, joint student activities, and attempts to form awareness of the issue in academic institutions (Lautman Forum for Educational Policy, 2017). The various institutions have different student bodies and varied policies, but the meetings between them create a shared language on the issue of ‘shared living’. At this author’s college, which is also a teacher-training college, the Center for Shared Living is headed by Dr.WurudJayusi. The center conducts various activities designed to bring Arabs and Jews closer together through learning languages, cultural events, joint conferences, etc. When Jews and Arabs are exposed to each other’s stories and get to know each other in person, mutual stereotypes fade away. The problems between the groups are also discussed at these meetings. The intention is not to ‘run away’ from problem topics or discussion of the conflict. There is joint activity, shared learning, and an understanding that there are uniting elements between the groups, and that they should be given space to be expressed and developed (author’s personal experience).
Conclusions and recommendations

The Israeli case, in which academia assumed the role of change agent and initiated activities to bring diverse groups closer, shows that closeness can be created, even in public institutions, and even when there is an ongoing conflict. In citizens’ everyday life, encounters transpire in various arenas — academia, employment, society and culture. If mutual familiarity and closeness occur, the conflict that is constantly in the background can be felt less in everyday life. Academia is in fact a meeting place in which majority-minority power relations exist, but academia (by definition) also facilitates discourse, pluralism, and opportunities for encounters and reciprocity between diverse groups. The research report written in Israel (Jayusi & Zalmanson-Levi, 2018) proposed operative recommendations to improve the goals of shared living in academia. These recommendations can be relevant to other countries (such as the Ukraine) where there is an ongoing conflict. The recommendations were grouped into three areas:

**Pedagogy**— It was suggested to conduct courses that deal with the conflict and its various aspects, and that these courses teach Jewish and Arab students together. It can be seen that the contact theory, the intergroup theory and the narrative approach are reflected in this recommendation. Students study together, and hear each other’s historic narrative. Also, these courses should have more or less even numbers of Jewish and Arab students.

**Language and culture**— The Arabic language is not spoken by most Jews. The report proposed to expose groups of Jewish students to the Arabic language and culture. Some colleges conduct Arabic courses for Jewish students and other events for both populations in the context of language and culture.

**Institutional**— The willingness of the academic establishment to promote the topic of ‘shared living’ is necessary. A review of academic institutions revealed that 16 of them operate centers for shared living (at the author’s college, the center is headed by one of the authors of the report, Dr.WurudJayusi). It is recommended that the center is led by two managers — Jewish and Arab. The centers operate the activities on campus, raise the students’ and staff’s awareness of the possible experiences, and deal with fundraising and pooling of resources.

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Pension Legislation of Ukraine: Current State and Development Prospects

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Introduction

Nowadays the pension legislation is being discussed actively. The main goal of the pension reform is restoring fairness of assignment of the pension payments. Based on the example of Head Department of Pension Fund of Ukraine in Kyiv Region, author discusses in the article the present situation and how it can further evolve in the pension sphere. The analyzed issues include implementation of the European standards of operation of the bodies of Pension Fund of Ukraine, peculiarities of securing pensions for citizens that live in rural areas, solidary pension system model, financial discipline of employers etc.

Keywords: pension legislation of Ukraine, pensioners, pension payments, Pension Fund of Ukraine, Kyiv region, “E-pension”, solidary pension system model, financial discipline

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f) financial discipline of Kyiv region employers;
g) state regulation of employment.

Key idea of the pension reform in Ukraine

Key idea of the pension reform is simple: if a person worked honestly all his or her life, then he/she should be guaranteed a decent pension.

During 2019, the undertaken revisions targeted certain social groups and primarily those pensioners that made pension contributions over a lengthy insurance period: 30 years for women and 35 years for men. For such individuals the following minimum pension payments were established:

1. Starting from January 2019 — in amount of 40% of the minimum wage set by the Law of Ukraine on State Budget for the respective year. Since the minimum wage makes UAH 4 173, the minimum pension payment stands at UAH 1 669.20. Such revisions were granted only to those individuals who reached the age of 65 years (relevant provision is contained in article 28 of Law of Ukraine “On compulsory state pension insurance”). In Kyiv region such revision was performed for 85 000 of individuals, average amount of the increase made UAH 172.20.

2. Starting from July 2019 — in the amount of UAH 2 000. Such revision was performed for 111 000 of individuals, average amount of the increase made UAH 280.

The largest-scale revision was the one performed starting from March 1, 2019. Scale of the revision was characterized not only by the number of individuals affected, but also by the amount of the increase itself. Besides that, during the revision certain individuals (those who were making pension contributions over a lengthy insurance period and the pension amount of whom did not exceed UAH 1 669.20), in addition to their pensions, were granted a one-off extra payment. The total number of individuals that received pension increase over the period makes 430 000 people (in Kyiv region there are 527 000 of registered civil pensioners) while almost 90 000 individuals received a one-off extra payment. Average amount of the increase made UAH 558.

As a result of adoption by Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of a decree No. 543, dated 26 June 2019 pension payments significantly increased for such a special social group as individuals with disabilities acquired due to war.

Starting from July 1 2019 depending on the degree of disability, the mentioned individuals were assigned the following minimum pension payments:

1. Individuals with war-cause disabilities of degree I — 650% of subsistence level for disabled persons (UAH 10 166).
2. Individuals with war-cause disabilities of degree II — 525% of subsistence level for disabled persons (UAH 8 211).
3. Individuals with war-cause disabilities of degree III — 360% of subsistence level for disabled persons (UAH 5 630.40).

The mentioned persons (and there is almost 8 000) received the revised pensions already in July 2019.

Military servicemen were not left without attention as well — particularly the individuals subject to military service that were called for the military camps, that participate in liquidation
of the consequences of the Chornobyl disaster, other nuclear incidents and tests, military exercises with the use of nuclear weapons during military service (military camps) and that as a result became individuals with disabilities. For such individuals starting from July 2019 the disability-related pensions started being accrued in amount of five minimum wages set by the law as of January 1 of respective year. Previously the right for such accrual was available only to the military servants that participated in liquidation of the consequences of the Chornobyl disaster, other nuclear incidents and tests, military exercises with the use of nuclear weapons during active (i.e. non-camp call-ups) military service and that as a result became individuals with disabilities. Therefore, the number of article 59 of the Law of Ukraine “On status and social security of the citizens that suffered from the Chornobyl disaster” started covering a broader number of individuals.

Finally, it should be added that Law of Ukraine “On state budget for 2019” from 1 July 2019 raises the subsistence level for disabled individuals from UAH 1,497 to UAH 1,564 that gave ground for following revisions:

a) minimum and maximum amounts of pension payments;

b) additional payments for exceeding the normal insurance period, foreseen by article 28 of the Law of Ukraine “On compulsory state pension insurance” (except for pensioners that continue working);

c) add-on payments and increases provided for by the Laws of Ukraine “On the status of war veterans, guarantees of their social security” and “On victims of Nazi prosecutions”;

d) monthly state targeted aid to the individuals that became disabled as a result of war and participants of the war fighting, and state social aid for caring after individuals that became disabled as a result of war;

e) minimum pension payments to the disabled individuals regarding which there is an established cause and effect relation with the Chornobyl disaster and to the individuals that participated in liquidation of consequences of the Chornobyl disaster.

The next revision related to the increase of the subsistence level for disabled individuals is expected to take start from December 1, 2019.

The Government cares about improving the pension system. In addition, implementation of the capital-accumulation pension system and development of the voluntary system of public (non-state) pension insurance — will be the next step towards improvement of well-being of the future pensioners.

Peculiarities of the Pension Fund of Ukraine’s organization
(based on the example of its Head Department in Kyiv Region)

Peculiarities of the Pension Fund of Ukraine’s organization are studied based on the example of its Head Department in Kyiv Region.

To be eligible to work at Head Department in Kyiv Region of the Pension Fund of Ukraine a person needs to have Ukrainian citizenship and to hold a highest education degree in Economics, Law, Technology or Humanitarian Studies.

What makes working for Pension of Ukraine special is communicating with a special group of people — pensioners, and being responsible for timely financing and paying out the pensions to them.
Obviously, there is certain staff turnover and currently it exceeds 15%. At the same, it is worth noting that the turnover is due to moving of Kyiv region-based personnel of the Pension Fund of Ukraine to the other state agencies, to higher-ranking and management positions.

Over January-November 2019 115 employees have been appointed to positions at Pension Fund of Ukraine’s Head Department in Kyiv Region. Kyiv region district employment centers are the main suppliers of candidates for positions at Head Department.

Positions at the Pension Fund of Ukraine’s Head Department in Kyiv Region are predominately occupied by employees with education in Economics (over 65%) and Law (over 15%).

Mentors play a special role in the work of young employees for whom Pension Fund of Ukraine is the first job. Mentor is an experienced employee that is attached to a young employee and during certain period provides assistance in establishing him/her in the new position. Mentor empowers and creates the conditions for the young employee so that he/she can comfortably work in the collective.

**Implementation of the European standards of operation of the bodies of Pension Fund of Ukraine**

An integral part of the pension reform is implementation of European standards of functioning of the bodies of Pension Fund of Ukraine. Use of modern information and management technologies, unified client servicing quality standards should make servicing efficient and comfortable for Ukrainian citizens. Peculiarities of implementation of the mentioned standards at the Head Department in Kyiv Region of the Pension Fund of Ukraine are considered further.

In order to put into practice the innovative ideas, and using the opportunities provided by the latest technologies, Kyiv region bodies of the Pension Fund strive to change the technological, infrastructure and personnel-related approaches to servicing citizens. A new step into this direction is providing remote services in electronic form.

It should be emphasized that as of today there is a fully functioning web-portal of electronic services of the Pension Fund of Ukraine that provides a number of services for pensioners, insured individuals and insurers. Particularly, they are:

a) setting of free SMS notification — informing regarding assignment/revision of pension; conducting of insurance payments by employer and individual’s de facto insurance contribution period;

b) receiving references validity of which is confirmed by QR-code — regarding the amount of paid contributions (the OK-5 form), extract from the register of insured individuals, reference regarding pension amount;

c) obtaining by insured individuals through personal account of information regarding the insurance contributions period and monthly payments of the single social contribution by employer;

d) insurer’s account through which it is possible to get information regarding payment of the single social contribution, including regarding the enterprise’s overdue payment of this contribution, as well as the electronic “References on the work and insurance period” of employees for the purpose of calculation of amounts to be paid for the time of temporary disability.
The number of users of the Fund’s online service in Kyiv region is constantly growing and already makes over 384,000. Quite unexpected, but one can find among the users not only young persons, but also citizens that are well beyond 60 years of age. Since we are obviously living at the times of rapid progress, most of the users already possess rather advanced connection devices. Even if not exactly the case, there are knowledgeable children and grandchildren. Therefore, the service is accessible to representatives of various age groups.

In 2019, Pension Fund launched in Kyiv region a new automated system for “single-click” assignment of pensions (“E-pension”). Previously, in order that the pension is assigned the person had to make several visits to the Pension Fund. The “single-click” service implies only one visit to the institution, for the purpose of submitting the originals of documents and obtaining the pension ID card. Introduction of such system ensures the most comfortable conditions for being serviced without leaving home. In order to use the service one needs to meet just three preconditions:

a) an adequate communication device (e.g. laptop) with access to Internet;

b) authorization with the personal account at the Pension Fund of Ukraine’s web-portal via electronic digital signature;

c) availability of the necessary scanned documents.

To use the “E-pension” service one should firstly authorize with personal account at the web-portal of the Pension Fund of Ukraine via the electronic digital signature; then in the personal account’s section “Request for assignment of pension” to upload the whole package of scanned documents required for assignment of pension; then to sign the application with the electronic digital signature and send it to the “Request” sub-system. So, in order to register application for pension online, it’s necessary to have an electronic digital signature — since it is essential for confirming identity of the person submitting an online application.

The request should be considered within 10 days. During this period, the portal user can check at which stage his/her request is currently processed. In case that the person does not have either the possibility or the willingness to use the new resource, he/she may, as earlier, apply to the pension institution.

During the period 25 July–05 November 2019 the “single-click” request for assignment of pension was submitted by 26 individuals from Kyiv region. There is a visible trend for increase in such submissions.

**Peculiarities of securing pensions for citizens that live in rural areas**

Further are analyzed the peculiarities of securing pensions for citizens that live in rural areas. In most cases, citizens of this category not only lack access to the Internet, but also suffer certain difficulties visiting the pension institution offices.

Pension Fund cases of all social groups. Therefore, in Kyiv region, in addition to the 34 reception centers (that receive visitors every day) there are also 63 client reception outlets that receive visitors in accordance with approved schedules. Location of the outlets is as close as possible to the places of residence of clients. And as early as 2017 the visitors were contacted at reception centers only. There were long queues; it was uncomfortable for both the visitors and the employees of the Pension Fund of Ukraine to work.
At the reception outlets (remote workstations), including Chornobyl, it is rendered the full range of services approved by the Management Board of the Pension Fund of Ukraine’s decree No. 13-1, dated 30 July 2015, particularly:

a) consulting regarding application of legislation on compulsory state pensions insurance, pension security, accounting of individuals that are subject to compulsory state social insurance;

b) accepting applications for issuing of notes, references, certificates, other documents regarding pension security, conducting of mandatory payments that are administered by the bodies of the Pension Fund, accounting of individuals that are subject to compulsory state social insurance, as well as issuing of respective certificates;

c) providing assistance on filling out and receiving of the application documents for issuing of the pension ID card, as well as their issuing;

d) accepting documents for preliminary analysis with the purpose of establishing the individual’s eligibility for assignment or revision of pension;

e) accepting request for providing of documents necessary for confirmation of the insurance contributions period, salary for assignment/revision of pension;

f) ensuring access to the Pension Fund’s electronic services, providing assistance in using them.

Besides that, introduction of mobile check-points (working with secure eToken keys) allows from the remote workstations to receive documents for assignment and revision of pensions.

Analysis of the number of individuals that applied to the reception outlets, particularly the 4,391 persons in the III quarter of 2019, allows making a conclusion that the Pension Fund in Kiev region has chosen the right path. The Fund plans to continue expanding its network of outlets in the localities where the people are awaiting.

One indication that the right path was chosen is the numerous positive written feedbacks of citizens.

**Solidary pension system model**

Further is analyzed the functioning of the solidary pension system, particularly the mechanism that maintains this system in Ukraine.

On 8 July 2010 was adopted and on 1 January 2011 came into force the Law of Ukraine “On collecting and accounting the compulsory state social insurance single contribution”. The law’s aim was to reform the system of administrating system of compulsory state social insurance through creating a single system for collecting and accounting the insurance contributions, introduction of the single contribution for compulsory state social insurance and avoiding duplicating of the social insurance funds’ functions related to accumulation of insurance payments. At the same time the lion’s share of total proceeds, particularly 86.43%, is used for financing budget of the Pension Fund of Ukraine. The remainder is distributed among the social insurance funds.

Nowadays the employer is obliged to pay for the employee 22% of accrued salary (for employees with disabilities — 8.41%). In accordance with Law of Ukraine “On changes to the Tax Code of Ukraine and certain legislative acts of Ukraine regarding ensuring balance of budget proceeds in 2016” this percentage is the same for all employers. Provision of the
mentioned law cancelled payment of the single contribution depending on the enterprises’ risk class. Purpose of the amendment was reducing the pressure on the salaries budget of employers and increasing of proceeds as a result of taking enterprises’ activities out of the shadow. Worth noting though that the almost 50% reduction of the tax burden of the salary budget in the part of single contribution in 2016 did not result into significant changes, i.e. the expected increase in salaries level did not happen. This had a negative impact on the amount of proceeds of the Pension fund. Having analyzed the single contribution proceeds on the example of Kyiv region it is possible to conclude that the only driver of increase in proceeds is raising the minimum salary.

So, implementation of the reduced rate of the single contribution without implementation of the control measures hasn’t produced expected result, namely legalizing of the salaries.

By the way, in most of the countries with developed economies the low-income citizens are exempt from payment of income tax. So, the main burden of filling the budget is incurred by the rich population.

In Australia the employment/corporate (compulsory) pension in effect since 1992 forms the basis of Australian pension system. Its core is making obligatory contributions by employer to the employee’s pension fund (private pension plan). The mandatory rate of contribution was:

a) 9% of employee’s average income during period 1July 2002–30 June 2013;
b) 9.25% starting from 1 July 2013;
c) 9.5% during 1 July 2014–30 June 2021;
d) 12% starting from July 2025
In October 2012, Government of the United Kingdom launched the labor (workplace) scheme of pension security. Starting from February 2018 all employers are obliged to register all qualified employees (aged 22 years to the age of eligibility for state pension and that received above GBP 10 000 in 2014-2015). Minimum contribution — 8%.

**Status of financial discipline of Kyiv region employers**

Further is analyzed to which extent employers adhere to financial discipline and how timely they make payments of the single social contribution.

Irrespective of reduction of the rate of the single social contribution, every month it is observed mounting of the overdues. Employers that violate legislation on single social contribution are charged with financial sanctions. Fines in amount of 20% of the untimely paid amounts and penalties. However, this does not stop certain employers of Kyiv region.

**Structure of overdues of legal entities and individuals-entrepreneurs of Kyiv region in respect of payment of single social contribution for compulsory state social insurance (Diagram 2)**

In certain ways, employers create for employees the problem of accruing a pension — the qualifying contributions period of an insured individual is calculated based on the insured individuals’ personified accounting data from the State register of compulsory state social insurance. The periods that are included in the register as those for which contributions have not been paid for will not be taken into account when estimating that contributions period when calculating a pension.

Shadow economy makes a negative impact over the pension system of Ukraine.

The term “shadow economy” derives from the English expressions “black economy”, “ghost economy” and “shadow economy”. In the literature, there is no precise definition of what the shadow economy is. Lawyers consider shadow economy as economic activity forbidden by
Ukrainian legislation. In addition, the shadow economy is interpreted as all economic activity that for certain reasons is not included in official statistics and respectively in the gross domestic product (GDP). In 2018, shadow economy stood at the level of 32%. It primarily causes reduction of tax proceeds from income affecting in such a way the state’s financial capacity. Due to that, state spends less on infrastructure and social services to its citizens.

One of elements of “shadow economy” is paying salaries in “envelopes”.

Based on analysis, out of 422,000 of insured individuals in Kyiv region as of 01.01.2019 79,000 individuals received salary in amount equal or below the level pf minimum salary. As a result of measures focused on promotion of legal employment among the population of the Kyiv region the mentioned measure improved by 20,000 individuals as of 1 September 2019. At the same time during 2019 6,307 individuals were legalized that ensured additional inflows to the budget in amount of UAH 6 million.

State regulation of employment

Finally, it is analyzed how population’s employment is regulated by state.

On 5 July 2012 was adopted and on 1 January 2013 came into force the new Law of Ukraine “On employment of population” that foresees compensation to employers of the single social contribution for compulsory state social insurance. In accordance with law, the employer that during 12 calendar months ensured creation of new workplaces, employed employees and during that period paid them a monthly salary in amount of not less than three minimum salaries per capita, during the next 12 calendar months, in case of maintaining the salary level, is eligible to compensation of 50% of actual amount of expenses on single social contribution accrued for each person. In case of decreasing the number of employees or the salaries budget employer loses the right to receive such compensation.

Besides that, currently there is a draft law registered at Verkhovna Rada that proposes exempting the employer from payment of the single social contribution in respect of employees that have not reached the age of 27 years. In 2019, such innovation was introduced in Poland. At the same time, while considering the document it should be taken into account the issue of accounting the contribution period for those years. Thus in respect of those insured persons in the future there may be raised an issue regarding the insurance period until reaching the age of 27 years. Resolving of such issues as collecting of single social contribution, legalizing salaries, liquidating mechanisms of avoidance of paying the single social contribution are relevant contemporary problems since pensions and other social benefits are paid out of those proceeds.

Conclusions

Summarizing the abovementioned, it is possible to conclude that personnel of the Pension Fund at Kyiv region continuously perform activities regarding improvement of the quality of servicing clients via implementation of new technologies, moving rendering of services as close as possible to the recipients as well as the timely assignment, revision and payment of pensions.

At the same time, the issue of increasing the amount of pension payments to the contemporary sufficient level remains relevant.

Unfortunately, it is only possible in case of acceleration of the economy’s growth rate and respectively the growth of salaries, official employment as well as avoiding payment of salaries in “envelopes”.
The demographic perspectives and the volatile economic environment give ground to the conclusion that the pension reform is a continuous process that never loses relevance rather than a one-off measure.
The paper analyses the information and digital toolset in a fight against liberal democracy and values of open society. The overall trend of the present world development is such that transition to the post-industrial society, with its inherent variety of interests and values of different social groups and organizations, impetuous development of information technologies, etc. leads to transformation of political institutes of democracy. In connection to this, modern democracy faces serious challenges. Demands to its efficiency and associated expectations have grown, while the ability of democratic states to solve development problems has not changed much.

Inversion of democracy is also related with globalization and striving for comprehensive security. The decline of people’s trust in the institutes of modern democracy; permanent growth of expectations from the regulatory capabilities of politics against the background of minimization of the idea of responsibility; the growing role of mass media and new uncontrolled decision-making centers that enter a competition with democratically legitimized institutes lead to atomization of society, its transformation into a set of autonomous information communities, giving rise to the “democracy of minorities”, on the one hand, and to a democratic global government, on the other. To survive, democracy needs continuous flexible adaptation to external and internal challenges, as a long-term project. Its future lies in change, rather than in the desire to preserve stability.

Keywords: digital threats, information challenges, democracy, conflict discourse, political cynicism, post-truth

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Introduction

New studies in the field of the theory of complex number systems question the idea that the democratic form of rule belongs to the most stable ones. An international group of scholars led by Karoline Wiesner, comprised of mathematicians, psychologists, political scientists and philosophers, paid attention to two functions of complex social systems — feedback loops and stability — that can pour light on the decline of the democratic form of rule (Oberhaus, 2018). The researchers note that citizens of democracies become ever less confident in their institutes of governance. They get increasingly inclined to reject institutes and norms, central for democracy. They are increasingly attracted by alternative, even autocratic forms of rule. This point may be proven with the democracy index calculated by the non-governmental organization Freedom House on the basis of such parameters as freedom of election, speech and civil rights, and witnessing a significant backslide of democracy all over the world in the recent years. Such process take place in two-times more countries than those that saw an increase in democratic principles.

The above-mentioned study shows how closely feedback loops are related with the state of democratic institutes. For instance, there is a direct dependency between economic inequality and a viable democracy. Where inequality between the rich and the poor grows, as it happened in the result of the crisis of 2008, democracy suffers, too. The reason is that democracy presumes basic equality of influence, scholars believe, but when economic inequality grows, some institutes begin to overweight others. Those who have more money can influence society stronger than others. This may result in repudiation of the democratic form of rule.

The erosion of democracy is influenced not only by economic factors. Scholars have found out that if the population has extremely polar opinions, it also destabilizes a viable democracy. Due to irreconcilable positions, autocratic leaders try to impose their point of view by all means, and tend to break the principles of democracy rather than let the opponent win.

The third reason for the backsliding of democracy noted by scholars is the dilution of social norms, currently taking place mainly under the influence of social media. Scholars elaborate that extreme views move into the mainstream when they are legitimized by actual or presumed majority endorsement. If an opinion, no matter how absurd it may be, is shared by at least a portion of billions of Facebook users, this creates an opportunity for the emergence of a false consensus effect around any fringe opinion, because the social signal is distorted by global interconnectivity.

Hence, digital threats to democracy are more than real, especially in the era of substantial growth of influence of social networks and media on society. In order to realize the scope and power of influence of information and digital technologies, one should first analyze the level of digitalization of the present-day world.

Conflict discourse and political cynicism as tools to fight against democracy and open society values

Political pluralism is a vital feature of liberal democracy. It is associated with the freedom of mass media, as well as the freedom to form and express an opinion. To form one’s opinion, alternative sources of information are needed. Ideally, implementation of those principles of democracy enables citizens to influence the political agenda. Said principles were implemented in the conditions of “pre-Internet”, “pre-network” political communication. Political
communication in the Internet differs by the subjects, style of presentation (usually, informal and impulsive), and the range of participants (ranging from politicians and experts to rank-and-file citizens). The traditional roles of a communicator (sender of information) and an addressee (recipient of information) are diluted. Under the influence of Internet forums and blogs, political communication is being personalized. However, this does not expand the freedom of opinions. First of all, Internet forums and blogs present kind of an “echo” to information delivered in the traditional media and by official communication channels (Wallsten, 2005). Second, using the terms of “generators of senses” and “consumers of senses”, one can reveal “two layers” of political communication. “Generators of senses”, engaged in social project planning, set a certain intellectual and emotional “interval”, “corridor” for perception of information, ideas of its veracity or erroneousness, influence on the emotional perception of events. To create such “corridors”, technologies of conflict discourse are used, since they make it possible to maintain political pluralism (true or imaginary).

The conflict discourse is ambivalent: 1) it is aimed at controversial interpretation of information; 2) it is manifested in the speaker’s negative assessment of the addressee or the situation that arose in the result of his actions, with an intolerant, negativist, often — aggressive style of communication. In the former case, the conflict discourse is associated with competitive assertion of claims to significance of presentation of information, being a sign of pluralism. The latter case goes with verbal aggression, insolence as a style of political behavior and its verbal justification.

The conflict discourse aimed at defamation of the opponent is based on unmasking, insults, verbal hits, derogatory term. The defamatory form of the conflict discourse associated with moral nihilism, breach of norms of communication and behavior, is manifested in political cynicism. Cynicism prompted by political mistakes, on the one hand, is manifested in large-scale disappointment with the usefulness of the practices of governance, and on the other hand, in generators of senses’ adherence to demagogic stock phrases, such as “national interests”, “patriotism”, “historic roots”, simultaneously labelling objectors with negative stereotypes — “fifth column”, “traitors”, etc.

Political cynicism of the elites is manifested in disdain to panhuman values, apology of the exceptionality of managerial functions and the need of separation of the ruling circles from the masses, self-confidence and refusal to accept criticism of the decisions taken. Manifestations of political cynicism include recruitment of administrative personnel on grounds of loyalty and personal devotion, resulting in opportunism and attempts to escape responsibility of executives at different levels. Political cynicism of the elites as abuse of power causes transformation of vertical pressure of the government on the population into different forms of horizontal pressure, intolerance and aggression, social apathy and atomization.

Political cynicism as an essential feature going with inefficient and disastrous political decisions and actions is manifested in the populist discourse and used to fight values of liberal democracy and open society. Antiliberal populists resort to technologies of praise of the addressee, the logic of similarity / community of positions and interests, intentional reductionism, simplification of problems while keeping silent about the real ways of their solution, the rhetoric of a unique road in spite of unfriendly partners / rivals. The logic of similarity disregards social differentiation, the need of a target policy while meeting public demands. By contrast to such a populist approach, the liberal pluralist discourse rests on the well-reasoned logic of differences and instrumental solutions to the problems.
Therefore, the critical discourse, manifested in political cynicism, is widely used as an information and digital tool aimed at defamation of the opponent. This creates imaginary pluralism where logical arguments and rational practices of solution of social problems have no place, which bears a serious threat to modern democracy in the era of skyrocketing digitalization.

**Politcization of the Internet as a precondition to rule out “monopoly of power”**

The World Web and social networks are becoming an integral part of human life. As we mentioned, the Internet has provided a new platform for social relations, simplifying the process of communication among the people.

Many transitional political regimes try to strengthen control of the new media. The problem is that such systems require institutes not to promote democracy or social efficiency; their main task is to serve the interests of the rule-makers. In modern “educated” autocracies, mass media play the role of a certain “media army”, providing information support for the political regime. Needless to say that such a mechanism works with utmost success, if the political agenda is controlled by the state.

There are several models of mass media impact on the audience: 1) transactional; 2) expectancy-value; 3) uses and dependency (Bryant & Thompson, 2002: 149). The model of uses and dependence currently prevails in the majority of autocracies or electoral democracies. Such a mechanism is quite good for the government to use in so-called information cascades, where a piece of news is taken up and retransmitted by next to all mass media, producing an effect of greater reliability and better perception by the public. That is why the majority of the population in those countries are consumers of information, or what is called the truth by the official authorities.

Up to a point, the Internet and mass media played on different platforms. Politics was left to mass media, while the Internet more focused on entertainment and leisure. Understandably, politics was present there in the form of blogs, but they remained almost unnoticed in the general information discourse. The situation remained calm until large-scale politicization of the YouTube in 2011-2012. That platform harbored many channels that began to criticize the authorities; the “truth” of those channels rather strongly differed from that of the state, youths became politicized. This situation led to numerous youth protests against the governments (in Turkey, Iran, the Middle East, Latin America, South-East Asia, and Russia). Those events concurred with the development of portable electronic devices and high-speed mobile networks — 3G (followed by LTE), in closed-off countries (China, Iran, Tunisia, Syria) — with mass adoption of VPN technologies. It is match harder to restrict undesired information in the web than in the traditional media.

The Internet turns into a new platform for the political life of the state. It provides the basis for political socialization, policy discussion, setting the agenda; it bears a huge potential for political mobilization of citizens. The Internet, by contrast to the traditional mass media, simplifies creation of new information channels, facilitates users’ pooling on the basis of their political preferences, leading to emergence of great many independent news resources. Such resources include news web sites, blogs, groups in social networks, channels in messengers and personal pages of politicians in social networks. As a rule, each of those information platforms addresses its own, specific audience sharing the authors’ opinion about social and
political events, but this does not rule out the possibility of overlapping audiences of different new channels with a similar stand in the assessment of social problems.

In the conditions of presence of a large number of news resources, different ideological trends are fragmented. Adherents of different political views disagreeing with the existing political alliances may set up their own community and draw people with similar political views. However, such alliances do not retire into their shell and maintain communication with other communities — they share links to other groups, comment on posts, which leads to formation of a communication network of users, resting on horizontal ties. The situation as it has developed has a positive effect on the freedom of speech and pluralism of opinion, but at the same time, it bears negative effects, too.

Complication of the structure of modern society entails accumulation of social problems. Problems that are on the agenda of society are inevitably reflected in election programs and statements of political leaders, since the latter are expected to solve such problems. Supposedly, the political scene should see struggle of arguments about the future of the state, the ways of solution of problems faced by society. However, in a fragmented ideological environment, with great many independent news channels of information, the ideas of the ways of problem solution also multiply. Every information channel may act as an independent elucidator of events in the country, with its own idea of its future. Political leaders must give society a solution to every important problem, while the number of interpretations of those problems rises sharply. In this context, one may rightfully doubt if society can be consolidated by rational argumentation alone.

In this context, a social problem arises as a circumstance or situation labelled as a problem by actors on public discourse platforms. That said, the importance of a problem is determined not by its impartial assessment but by its collective perception. Every public stage has its “throughput capacity”; out of the huge “population” of potential problems, only a small portion receives coverage. As a result, social problems permanently compete to appear on the agenda and to stay there as long as possible. However, different formulations of the same problem also compete. The attention of consumers of information is also limited. Representatives of different social groups, as a rule, recognize a specific range of social problems and demonstrate a specific level of “personal compassion”.

Social problems presented more dramatically are more likely to appear on the agenda. Problems associated with “deep mythological subjects or widespread cultural accents” also have a competitive advantage. Due to the limited “throughput capacity” of public platforms and individual attention, actors try to make reports concise. To attract attention, a report should also be striking.

In the conditions of network organization of information resources, the possibility of consolidation of the public on the basis of rational arguments is limited. To win elections, politicians have to resort to recognizable symbols, widespread myths and human emotions, which leads to formation of a political culture of “post-truth”.

To be sure, the Internet and information technologies strengthen personal freedom of citizens and, as a result, limit powers of the state. Uncontrolled spread of information in social networks, messengers and YouTube poses a direct threat to the state media’s monopoly of truth and stability of the political regime. Many undemocratic regimes try to use the Internet to disseminate unliberal culture and associated values in order to diffuse the effects of politicization of the web.
**Post-truth as a way of manipulation of public consciousness in the modern world**

In modern society, the notion of “post-truth” gets increasingly widespread. Post-truth as a way of emotional influence on the audience is ever more frequently used in mass media and in social networks. The Oxford Dictionary gives the following definition of post-truth: “Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief” (Oxford Dictionary, 2019). Post-truth is a tool for manipulation of public opinion and consciousness. The current “era of post-truth” should be viewed exactly through manipulation. Our consciousness is subjected to continuous manipulation by a great number of tools, such as mass media, Internet, cinema, music, culture. Introducing certain trends into the cultural core, one can reformat the consciousness and fates of whole states and nations.

The mechanism of operation of post-truth is similar to the mechanisms of propaganda and manipulation. The main features of post-truth include:

1. Appeal to emotions and personal convictions of the audience (post-truth means news taking place in the viewer’s perception of the world).
2. Intentional understatement of actual facts, or facts inconsistent with the predetermined concept, with a focus only on the relevant portion of information, while the rest is just concealed.
3. Information overload, transmission of an endless stream of stories mainly consisting of abstract reflections.
4. Combinations of truth and lies.
5. Appearance of information at the “right” time, i.e., when most needed.
6. Provocation of a stormy reaction of the audience by imparting a “sensational” semantic charge to post-truth.

In the conditions of information society development, the role of mass media grows, as they give access to varied information for the wide public. At that, generators of information reports, using different media technologies, can influence the perception of one or another political event. The traditional tools of mass media influence on the audience, including construction of post-truth, are deemed to include media agenda setting, priming, and framing. Let us consider them in more detail.

The theory of media agenda setting proceeds from the idea of existence of a strong correlation between the emphasis made by mass media on a specific event and the significance attached to that event by the audience. Public awareness of different issues influences problem definition and rating. Mass media immediately influence public awareness (McCombs & Shaw, 1972: 179). The perception of the importance of a specific subject for the public comes to the audience from mass media, in particular, dependent on the amount of data on the subject delivered to the public by the media (Kiousis & McCombs, 2003: 146).

Priming is another technology of influence on mass consciousness. The basis of the huge potential influence of priming rests on the prime as an object, an encounter with which changes the ability of a person to deal with an identical or similar object. In substance, priming is a device contributing to prompt solution of any task and formation of an opinion on any problem thanks to similar questions or actions that took place in the past.
Yet another tool of mass media influence on the audience is presented by framing. The theory of framing rests on the assumption that the audience will see the problem differently, dependent on how it is covered or interpreted in mass media. For instance, the same event may be presented as an act of violence or a tragic accident.

Therefore, a report transmitted in mass media strongly influences the public opinion. One cannot entirely change the opinion of a person using transmitted reports alone but can shape the recipient’s opinion through selection of information and the method of its presentation.

In addition to the traditional tools of mass media influence on the audience, one should consider new media technologies of construction and dissemination of post-truth:

1. Personification of politics (the person of a political leader becomes more important than his ideas).
2. Emotionalization of politics (impetuous development of the Internet contributes to the shift of the audience’s focus to emotions and feelings).
3. Entertaining politics (simplification and idealization of complex subjects along with funny presentation of information lead to the emotional perception of politics in general).

Mass media often resort to subjective coverage of events, being not only the original source but also the only channel of political information for the audience. For instance, viral media content in social networks, such as Facebook or Twitter, is the main source of political information for many citizens. Due to blanket distribution of information, it is deemed to be true, and the confidence in the content increases, disregarding however the likeliness of generation and circulation of disinformation (so-called “fake news”).

In the “era of post-truth”, it is similarly important to create new heroes or to glorify forgotten ones in the cinema or literature, no matter how real they are; those heroes can even be imaginary. The distinction between reality and fiction in post-truth becomes increasingly diluted. Modern society sees competition of discourses, and people’s identity depends on discursive processes. It is the government that generates the people’s identity and perception of one another, i.e., a person becomes a part of the discourse. Meanwhile, social groups with a non-dominant identity become “alien”, which gives rise to social antagonisms.

Social antagonisms are widely covered in media reports using propaganda methods. One of the most common devices at coverage of military conflicts or protest campaigns is presented by the method of “creation of a threat image” (Pocheptsov, 2002: 170). This method is used mainly to strengthen and support the existing political regime and to demonize political opponents and the opposition, presenting them as criminal elements, provocateurs, killers. As a rule, such stories rest on the emotional component, where the target audience, viewers are so indignant with the creepy stories that they do not want any meaty evidence. It does not matter how veracious a story is, if it reflects the world perception of the target audience. Emotional manipulation is the main element of the “era of post-truth.”

Post-truth originated from so-called information warfare and manipulation of consciousness. Methods of generation and dissemination of “fake news”, employment of so-called “trolls” and “bots” engaged to disseminate specific information do influence the audience. In modern societies, post-truth as a tool of influence on the mass audience gains ground due to the growing popularity of social networks and the Internet. The Internet lets every user be a journalist, but lacks the “responsible editor”. Exactly this gives rise to the large quantities of untrue information.
The “society of post-truth” sprang up because, first of all, liberal democracy has entered the phase where “red lines” became widened and diluted; second, information technologies and social networks have reached such a level that individuals and small groups can exert political influence through them; third, a hedonistic mass information society has been formed, enchanted with populism, savoring sensations and preferring peace of mind and simple solutions. As a result, mechanisms of information networking began to set the paradigm of manipulation of mass consciousness in general, with the freedom of choice and self-actualization locked in a narrow corridor of distorted political reality, uneasy to go beyond.

Conclusions

Modern democracy and values of open society suffer ever heavier blows in many countries. Developed democracies are no exception. A tide of antidemocratic movements is on the rise in the USA, Germany, France, Italy, etc. Those movements acquire especially threatening features in East European countries — Hungary, Poland, Ukraine. In those countries, populists appealing to the theory of conspiracy try to put all the blame on liberal democrats, allegedly sucking rank-and-file citizens dry and enforcing tough reforms that do not give people a normal life and social peace in the end result. At the same time, the character of citizens’ relations with traditional press undergoes qualitative changes: traditional mass media increasingly cede ground to social media providing a nutritional medium for the phenomenon of “post-truth” that, along with the conflict discourse, political cynicism, fakes and soft propaganda, turns into an information weapon against democracy and open society values.

Representatives of any part of the political spectrum now use digital technologies to spread disinformation and step up polarization. Although fake news and hate speech are not new, the present digital era — even if not intentionally — has created a favorable environment for them. The potential of the new technologies for improvement of the human life is beyond doubt, but the risks they pose for democracy are becoming increasingly evident.

In this connection, four challenges may be singled out, now high on the agenda of defense of modern democracy and values of open society.

The first challenge is presented by the growing industry of interference in the election process. While some people study presidential elections in the USA in 2016 in order to learn to escape such interference, others analyze that election campaign to improve election manipulation skills. Commercial consulting teams now tempt potential clients with ideas, how to efficiently influence elections using social networks, fake news and micro targeting. Can one overestimate the current threat to the global democracy, if election results can be influenced even in a mighty and technologically advanced country such as the USA?

The second challenge that gains strength is presented by the growing popularity of “home aids”. Internet information monopolists already can determine, what the majority of the population of any country watches and what it believes in. As soon as such home aids as Google Home, Alexa and Siri become common, users will soon get not a range of option but one and only answer to their inquiries. Such hyper care will inevitably reduce our search activity, research potential and level of discussion, giving a few companies and algorithms even more powers to polish our knowledge and convictions.

The third threat lies in the emergence of fake video materials — so-called deep fakes. This method, employing artificial intelligence and synthesis of images, makes it possible to create a video that cannot be distinguished from an original footage. Imagine, for instance, the speed of
spread of a fake video recording of the Iranian president ordering his generals to prepare for an armed invasion in Israel in the Internet. Growing popularity of deep fakes will inevitably lead to the decrease of the general confidence in the video content. As soon as the real and virtual worlds continue to merge together, we can lose the ability to distinguish, what is real in the democratic policy, and what is not.

The last but not least is the challenge of the P2P platform with an encryption mode. WhatsApp application, monthly used by over 1.5 billion active users in 180 countries, was employed to spread rumors and instigate violence in Brazil, Mexico and India — just as Facebook was used to foster violence between different communities in Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Indeed, anonymity and encryption provided by WhatsApp are strong tools of defense of citizens fighting for their democratic rights under violent authoritarian regimes, but the same features complicate identification of real sources of rumors, hatred and instigation of violence, which, in turn, complicates investigation of WhatsApp use for manipulation of election results.

While we tend to see digital technologies as threats for the existing political systems, other people see in them new opportunities to influence the election results. Coping with and containment of those threats is to become a top priority for democracies in any place on earth.

To defend the values of open society and efficiently counter present day information and political challenges, it is necessary:

First of all, to use clear and correct notions, in particular, to distinguish a referendum from a plebiscite that has nothing in common with democratic voting or direct democracy. Democratically elected governments should maintain real and serious dialogue with citizens in-between elections, otherwise the rift between the people and its representatives will widen exponentially, which will be used by all kinds of populists to the full extent. This rift may be narrowed by direct democracy, especially the tool of the popular legislative initiative.

Second, direct democracy should in the first place rely on digital technologies, including for organization of mass political events and new capabilities of political project funding, for instance, by means of crowd-funding. Democratic governments should contact their citizens and ask them about their needs.

Third, creation of online platforms, on the one hand, providing educational space for adoption of political democracy and demonstrating the best practices of democratic governance, on the other — providing a platform for unification of liberal democrats, promotion of values of open society and joining efforts against populists. More room for discussion should be provided — so-called Massive Online Deliberation Platforms, enabling people to communicate in a different key than it happens in social networks now. This additional room should be subject to pre-moderation with strict rules, and more sophisticated systems relying on artificial intelligence technologies should be able to identify and cut off so-called “trolls”, paid distributors of disinformation, seeking to turn any civilized discussion into a mess. Such “platforms for discussion”, by the way, open for high-quality mass media, should also operate on the basis of special algorithms, but they will not contribute to heightening of emotions and retransmission of hatred but support reasonable arguments.

Fourth, to restore confidence in the electoral democracy through perfection of the election legislation in terms of the election system and raising responsibility for buying votes.

Fifth, to bring up the current youth, in order to instill values of open society, encourage critical thinking and give rise to a demand for ideological parties with institutional safeguards, keeping their representatives within the value-based frameworks of their ideological trend.
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A ‘Triangular’ Relationship with the Great Powers: The Case of the post-Cold War Vietnam Balancing versus China and the USA

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The present article attempts to analyze the case of Vietnam as a middle power caught in-between two potentially inimical greater states, viz. the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China, in the aftermath of the Cold War, with a view to exploring the degree to which the former would have managed to maintain its relative independence in respect of each of the contending powers while drawing benefits from the relations with either of them. Making use of the multiple sources covering the present-day relations of Vietnam with both China and the U.S., the author argues that even though Vietnam had been confronted with several critical junctures wherein it may be motivated to fully align with either of the two powers, the country’s leadership would maintain a relatively neutral position while participating in the structures of interdependence and integration involving both great powers under consideration. Several implications for Ukraine’s international political strategy are thus foreshadowed in that respect.

Keywords: Vietnam, China, the United States of America, balancing, complex inter-dependence

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Introduction

The end of the global confrontation known as the Cold War (1948-1989) had become a watershed moment for erstwhile allies of the Soviet Union, which would henceforth have to try to carve out a new place for themselves in a rapidly changing world of international politics. Having emerged victorious from the Second Indochina War in 1975, the Socialist Republic in Vietnam appeared to be particularly threatened by the new international arrangements given that its previously generous financial and military-technological support from the USSR was...
cut off, while both the U.S. and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) would have hardly been amicably disposed toward their recent enemy in Hanoi (cf. Wong, 2002; Nguyen, 2016). Consequently, the survival and relative strength of the contemporary Vietnam, as well as its ability to strike seemingly beneficial deals with both Washington and Beijing, may be seen as a rather counter-intuitive outcome of the post-Cold War dynamic of international relations in Indochina. Simultaneously, the case of Vietnam could be viewed in a comparative light as far as a relatively dissimilar situation of Ukraine is concerned: whereas the Vietnamese state had so far managed to align its ‘multi-vectoral’ foreign policy course with the tasks of state survival and development, the Ukrainian one would have become entangled in mutually contradictory political arrangements arising out of its multi-vectoral commitments of the 2000s and the 2010s, only to find itself facing the Russian Federation in 2014 without any direct assistance on the part of its ‘strategic partners’ in the West (Mearsheimer, 2014; Battle, 2015). Therefore, exploring the experience of Vietnam, for all the obvious differences in terms of political regime and social structure, could potentially enable one to elucidate the causes of Vietnam’s relative success, and Ukraine’s evident failure, as far as balancing two major powers’ influence on one’s own state while avoiding any direct bandwagoning to either of them may be involved.

With this in mind, the present article provides a comprehensive analysis of Vietnam’s foreign policy strategy aimed to develop and implement a middle-of-the-road policy with regard to both U.S. and Chinese interests affecting the Vietnamese state. In doing so, the author draws upon the theoretical constructs derived from both the neo-realist and the neo-liberal institutionalist paradigms in order to clarify the essence of Vietnam’s international policy strategy in the post-Cold War era. More specifically, the three aspects that will have been of interest to the researcher in the context of this article are as follows: (1) the specific strategy of international balancing as employed by the Vietnamese leadership with respect to both China and the U.S.; (2) the role of the legacy of military-political confrontation with the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China in Vietnam’s international strategy concerning the two powers; and (3) the degree to which the complex interdependence arising out of economic and cultural ties with either China or the U.S. may have swayed Vietnam’s foreign policy in that regard. Based on such considerations, the present article seeks to provide a background for a future in-depth study of the case of Ukraine in terms of the failure of its ‘multi-vectoral’ diplomacy with regard to the EU, Russia, and the U.S. in the early 2010s. Thus, the foundations for a comparative analysis of balancing efforts of middle states caught in-between greater powers in the post-Cold War era may be provided here.

Methodological premises

This research attempts to arrive at a synthesis of two major methodological approaches in the study of international relations, viz. neo-realism (Freyberg-Inan, 2004; Korab-Karpowicz, 2010; Mearsheimer, 2001) and neo-liberal institutionalism (Galbreath, 2008; Keohane, 2012; Jahn, 2013), by emphasizing a coterminous impact of structural disparities in the relevant states’ relations of strategic interdependence, on the one hand, and of cooperative exchanges among the former as being part of the global system of international relations, on the other hand. As for the neo-realist concepts in studying international relations proper, one should refer first and foremost to those of balancing (itself resting upon a specific understanding of a distribution of capabilities observable within a given system of states; Odgaard, 2007), and of
free riding versus bandwagoning, as being analytically useful for the purposes of this study. Whereas balancing implies that “states rely relentlessly both on arming and on imitating the successful military practices of peer competitors and rarely resort to alliances for their security” (Parent & Rosato, 2015: 52), the notion of bandwagoning provides for an alternative logic within which the states feeling insecure would tend to attach themselves to alliances created by major powers, especially the ones that are able to successfully lay claim to international hegemony (Baviera, 2011). Accordingly, analyzing the case of Vietnam in the light of the aforementioned concepts would require exploring the extent to which its international political behavior might have featured the traits of each of the approaches implied above. In that sense, it would be possible to identify the correlation between such ideal types of the states’ behavior in an anarchic international environment and Vietnam’s actual behavior with respect to China and the U.S. after 1989.

The focus of the neo-liberal institutionalist thinking would instead be placed on the concept of complex interdependence having been allegedly born out of the nation-states’ enlightened self-interest to provide for entrepreneurial competitiveness and general welfare of their citizens by developing and maintaining long-term relations of economic cooperation with one another (Sterling-Folker, 2002: 48-51). If one extends the concept in question to incorporate the aspects of cultural cooperation / affinity between the respective states, then it would be fruitful to characterize the possible situation of complex interdependence between Vietnam and the U.S. and/or Vietnam and China as exerting influence upon the Vietnamese state’s readiness to develop cooperative relations with either of the two powers even beyond the requirements of ensuring its own security. If no evidence for such state of affairs may be obtained, then the null hypothesis will prevail, viz. one will have to admit that economic and cultural interdependence would play no tangible role in the context of Vietnam’s relations with the two powers under consideration.

To summarize, the methodological basis for this article will take into account the need to verify the applicability of the concepts and theoretical constructs briefly explored above to the empirical case of Vietnam’s interrelations with both the U.S. and the People’s Republic of China in the post-Cold War political climate, in as much as it may be proven that Vietnam would have followed any of the courses of action hypothesized by the neo-realist scholars and/or displayed any inclination to base its policy on any form of complex interdependence with either of the two greater powers in question. Hence the focus on the present case study will potentially contribute to testing the reliability of more or less abstract concepts in the discipline of International Relations per se.

**Vietnam’s ‘triangular’ foreign policy after 1989: a general review**

The general considerations as to the character of Vietnam’s international political strategy in the contemporary era should necessarily proceed from analyzing the Vietnamese state’s specific measures and policies designed to address the urgent problem of re-configuring its international commitment after the end of the Cold War. As the fall of the Soviet Union and its international bloc would have constrained the room for maneuver available to the Vietnamese Communist Party (hereinafter referred to as the VCP), forcing it to make amends to the previous international political doctrine of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Vu, 2011; Abuza, 1996). The 1992 adoption of the Comprehensive Security Approach could thus be viewed as representing a first definitive statement of the balancing-oriented geo-political and geo-economic position of
Vietnam that has already been mentioned above (Abuza, 1996). The key notions underscored in this VCP-approved document may accordingly be summarized as follows:

(a) The Vietnamese nation-state was to strive to develop mutually beneficial relations with all other nation-states, without prejudice to the fact whether those might have been “former enemies” or not (hereby signaling the readiness to negotiate with both the U.S. and the PRC);

(b) The government of Vietnam would renounce any dependence on the ‘superpowers’ and avoid any affiliation with both existing and future military alliances of any kind; and

(c) The economic development of Vietnam was to be designated as the utmost priority of the state’s international relations, therefore providing for the focus on peaceful cooperation with the parties concerned (see Abuza, 1996: 409, for further details).

As one may see, the points noted afore would amount to a thorough revision of the pre-1989 geopolitical positioning of Vietnam, with a newly non-confrontational and even neutralist policy approach being evidently devised to allow an in-depth rapprochement with both the PRC and the United States. The rationale behind such a step would be two-fold: on the one hand, Vietnam would want to relieve itself out of the international isolation it ended up in following the 1979 invasion of Cambodia / Kampuchea, which would become much more dire after the end of the Soviet support for Vietnam (Abuza, 1996); on the other hand, 1992 saw the first instance of maritime clashes between the Chinese and the Vietnamese naval forces over the territorial claims as to the Spratly archipelago, potentially presaging further tensions between the two states (Wong, 2002: 353-354). In addition, the development of the South Asian economic integration under the auspices of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) would prove to be one of the fundamental stimuli for a subsequent re-alignment of Vietnam’s foreign policy thinking: as noted by Le Mai, the country’s Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1995 (at the time of the intense talks between the ASEAN and Vietnam concerning the latter’s affiliation with the former), the Vietnamese leadership would assume that “we are now in an era where geo-economics is an overwhelming factor that enables us all to move beyond ideological boundaries in order to sustain mutually beneficial cooperation” (Abuza, 1996: 412). Consequently, the new configuration of Vietnam’s foreign policy in the early 1990s would pursue the objective of drawing benefits from the emergent process of globalization and interdependence, rather than opposing it.

On the other hand, the focus on fostering international economic ties, which may be directly attributed to the push for strengthening Vietnam’s economic capabilities in the new international context, was accompanied with the efforts aimed at developing the country’s military and military technological potential, as expressed in the so-called ‘just-enough’ / ‘sufficiency’ doctrine (in Vietnamese, vừa đủ; Elliott, 2012: 268). Accordingly, the VCP would admit to the possibility, and even necessity, of finding new partners in respect of getting access to new military technologies and equipment, with first China and then the U.S. destined to be considered for such cooperation. The problem of U.S. Army personnel missed in action (MIA) during the Second Indochina War had turned out to be one of key bones of contention in the context of restoring U.S.-Vietnam relations in the mid-1990s (Shoji, 2018). With the active participation and engagement of U.S. Senator John McCain, the United States and Vietnam would go on to re-establish formal diplomatic ties in 1995; however, in 1997 the VCP leadership would still lay bare its ongoing distrust of the U.S. by ruling that any future military-security cooperation with Washington should be limited to “three areas: military medicine; cooperation on military science and technology; and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR)” (Shoji, 2018: 4-5).
The fear of the 1989-1991 revolutionary events in the Eastern bloc repeating themselves in Vietnam would have likewise made the VCP leadership rather reticent regarding the rapprochement with the United States: for instance, in 1994, the notion of a “peaceful evolution by hostile forces” was introduced into the official vocabulary to denote a perceived threat of the internal subversion of the socialist regime in Vietnam as supposedly championed by the U.S. and the West in general (Vu, 2011: 109). The primary partner of Vietnam in terms of military cooperation in the 1990s would prove to be the PRC as the two countries had carried out a range of high-profile exchanges at the inter-military cooperation level, in spite of the still unresolved problem of territorial claims in the South China Sea — a unique situation for the contemporary history. A peculiar fact worth mentioning in this context is that each successive President of Vietnam would have his first foreign visit to Beijing from 1992 on (Nguyen, 2016: 38). Thus, in spite of the aforementioned territorial claims-related disagreements between Beijing and Hanoi, the VCP leadership would signal its readiness to demonstrate its ideological rapport with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which could be further explained in the light of the abovementioned premonitions regarding the U.S.’ alleged intent to subvert the Vietnamese government in a 1989-style manner. This may explicate the paradoxical fact of close ties between the two countries’ militaries in the 1990s and the 2000s, in spite of the enduring legacy of the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War and the 1992 Spratly conflict, with the PRC being perceived as a natural partner in opposing the West’s liberal-democratic drive.

Nonetheless, in the 2000s, against the backdrop of the ongoing increase in China’s assertiveness in the South China Sea (as expressed, among other things, in the 2009-2011 series of incidents related to Chinese naval border guards detaining or impounding multiple Vietnamese fishing boats and their crews; see Thayer, 2011: 357). Thus it would come as no surprise that from 2009 on, Vietnam would intensify its military-security cooperation with the USA beyond the limits earlier specified in 1997. In effect, even before that time, the Vietnamese government and military would have gradually acquiesced to more wide-ranging involvement with their U.S. counterparts. As an example, in June 2007, Robert Gates, then-Secretary for Defense, and Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, the head of the Vietnamese government, held talks on the problems of regional security cooperation and potential military-to-military exchanges (Lohman et al., 2012: 7). This would be followed by the December 2007 visit of Timothy Keating, the U.S. Admiral in charge of the Pacific Command, which was focused on developing ties between the U.S. and the Vietnamese naval forces (Manyin, 2008: 20) — a rather foreseeable course of events given the aggravation of the Sino-Vietnamese relations precipitated by the tensions in the South China Sea at that time. The foundations laid down in the course of those two visits would come to fruition in October 2008, with the first U.S.-Vietnam Security Dialogue on Political, Security, and Defense Issues ushering in an era of closer cooperation on the relevant issues between the two parties (Manyin, 2010: 4).

It is worth noting that similar dialogue-oriented arrangements in Sino-Vietnamese relations were earlier put into effect in 2000, when the Sino-Vietnamese Joint Statement for Comprehensive Cooperation in the New Century had provided for the military-to-military consultation mechanism between Hanoi and Beijing (Nguyen, 2016: 169). However, unlike the latter, the 2008 U.S.-Vietnamese security dialogue would be carefully couched in terms of a “civilian-led” security relationship, with the role of the respective military contacts being purposefully downplayed (Manyin, 2010: 4). In that sense, one may surmise that Vietnam would have taken some measures of precaution to avoid drawing the ire of China.
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in a rather sensitive period of the mutual relations. Furthermore, the period of 2005-2009 saw a substantial increase in the number of high-level military-to-military contacts between the Chinese and the Vietnamese militaries: whereas 11 Vietnamese delegations attended to various events and maneuvers in the PRC, 9 Chinese delegations would be sent to Vietnam in the same capacity (Thayer, 2011). Several rhetorical signals of Vietnam’s desire to foster stronger military-to-military relations with China would be routinely given throughout those delegation exchanges. For example, during the 2009 visit of General Le Van Dung, then one of Vietnam’s leading figures of the General Staff, the latter had expressed his hope that the conflicting territorial claims of Vietnam and China to the isles in the South China Sea might be resolved amicably to the effect that the two nations “will keep strengthening our relations… in order to fight the plots of the common enemy” (Nguyen, 2016: 171), the latter being a barely veiled reference to the USA. However, the tone of the Vietnamese military leadership would change drastically in the early 2010s, when it became clear that China could hardly be disposed to offer any concessions to Vietnam in exchange for a joint anti-U.S. stance. Instead, the emphasis on balancing China’s influence in the South China Sea led Vietnam to countenance reaching out to the U.S. in a previously unprecedented way. Thus, in 2011, Vietnamese officers were for the first time admitted for training at the U.S. War College, while the new framework for the Defense Policy Dialogue (DPD) was instituted with the proviso for regular communications at the vice-ministerial level between Vietnam’s Ministry of Defense and the U.S. Department of Defense (Hiebert et al., 2014: 14). In a more concrete sense, the U.S. Congress allocated $1.1 million in foreign military funding (FMF) for the needs of the Vietnamese military in 2011 (Manyin, 2012) as the U.S. Navy vessels were given opportunity to make port calls in the Camranh Bay for the purposes of being maintained and repaired there (with 5 U.S. Navy ships availing themselves of such opportunity in 2011-2012; Shoji, 2018: 8). At the same time, the Chinese navy had been given similar rights in 2001 already (Stern, 2005: 397), which would underscore the lack of readiness on the part of the Vietnamese leadership to renege on its prior agreements with its Chinese partners. Even in the circumstances of the May 2014 clash between the Vietnamese and the Chinese naval ships in the South China Sea, Vietnam’s defense minister PhungQuang Thanh would still pay a visit to Beijing to try to hammer out a compromise solution with his Chinese counterpart (Thayer, 2014). Later in the 2010s, Vietnam would potentially demonstrate its implicit desire to move out of Beijing’s orbit by increasing the intensity of the security ties with the United States. The most salient examples of such behavior would be the March 2018 port call visit by USS Carl Vinson to Da Nang, “the city where 3,500 Marines landed in March 1965 as the war’s first American ground troops” (Maresca, 2018); or the 2015 decision of the Vietnamese government to start buying its military equipment supplies from the U.S. so as to limit Vietnam’s dependence on China in this respect (Boudreau, 2015). Therefore, the current dynamic of the development of the U.S.-Vietnam security relationship would attest to the growing resentment of Hanoi with the lack of reciprocity on the part of Beijing and the increased readiness to view expanding military-to-military ties with Washington as a legitimate form of balancing.

For its part, the international economic cooperation of Vietnam with both China and the United States would show Hanoi’s focus on avoiding being entangled into the respective economic integration structures while drawing benefits from trade and investment, as the case may be. Vietnam’s membership in the ASEAN, as effected in 1994, would serve as a starting point for the country’s increasing openness to the global capitalist forms of international production, investment, and exchange, while China’s similar rapprochement with the ASEAN
in the mid-1990s would give impetus to further intensification of Sino-Vietnamese international economic cooperation in the reform era.

The dynamics of the U.S.-Vietnamese and the Sino-Vietnamese foreign trade growth would show a comparative equilibrium in Vietnam’s openness to businesses registered in the two countries: while the volume of external trade between China and Vietnam had risen $30 million to $20.8 billion in 1991-2009, a similar increase in the U.S.-Vietnam trade was registered as well (from $4.6 million to $15.4 billion; Nguyen, 2016: 177). While in both cases Vietnam would definitely experience substantial trade deficits (Ikebe, 2013), one may argue that in the context of economic asymmetry, the Vietnamese state would try to offset the economic influence of China against that of the USA, and vice versa, thus eschewing any lopsided reliance on either of its major international trade partners. For Vietnam, the 2007 joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) would further imply the gradual turn in favor of closer relations with the United States (Boumelassa & Valin, 2009: 13-42). Against that background, the Vietnamese leadership had committed to participating first in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and then the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), from 2008 on (Hoang & Hoan, 2019). In fact, the 2019 CPTPP summit would be marked by a particular activism of the Vietnamese delegation (Hoang & Hoan, 2019: 5), thereby reflecting the emphasis on fostering ties of complex interdependence with the U.S. and pro-Western states involved in this project as a counter-balance to China’s projects of regional economic integration.

As for the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, Vietnam would so far display a cautious approach by neither rejecting outright China’s efforts aimed at expanding the transport and infrastructure cooperation networks provided for by this project to the territory of Vietnam. Nor being too eager in opening up to Beijing’s offers of extended credit and investment cooperation (Experts, 2019). The problem of perceived vulnerability of Vietnam to a ‘debt trap’ arising out of too close cooperation with China in the context of the OBOR appear to play a preeminent role in that regard. Overall, Vietnam currently appears to try to keep China at arm’s length as far as the question of the OBOR may be concerned, which is unlikely to further contribute to Beijing’s appreciation of Hanoi’s policies in that regard.

**Conclusion**

That said, the case of Vietnam would demonstrate how a middle power that was initially isolated in the international arena after the fall of its previous patron superpower, succeeded in furnishing a relatively stable (though hardly unblemished) triangular relationship with the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China, to the extent that the balancing policies put into effect by the Vietnamese leadership proved successful in maintaining a middle position between the two extremes of aligning with either Washington or Beijing in the context of the regional system of international relations. However, presently, a certain inclination of Vietnam to focus on developing tighter connections with the U.S. proved to emerge, which may in turn lead to soured relations with the PRC. Nonetheless, the factor of ongoing ideological affinity and the apprehension caused by the prospects of the “peaceful evolution” as related above would make it unlikely that Vietnam might ever become a fully-fledged ally of the United States against China, while the evident tension concerning the access to natural resources of the South China Sea would have the same effect with regard to the possibility of Vietnam joining forces with China against the USA. Hence, such an equilibrium of competing
claims and ideologically motivated concerns will likely contribute to maintaining the present state of affairs for the time to come.

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Conflict in Donbass as a Case Study of the
Deconstruction of Ukraine’s Statehood.
Present State and Prospects for Regulating It

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The subject of the article is the analysis of deconstruction of the statehood of Ukraine with special reference to the conflict in Donbas. Activities in the south-eastern part of Ukraine are part of the broader context of the Russian Federation’s strategic activities in the post-Soviet area. Some analysts believe that the Russians consistently implement the strategy of neo-imperial expansionism and their activities in Donbas are the next step to reintegration of the post-Soviet area. An important role is also played by the policy implemented by the president and government of Ukraine.

The author verifies three research hypotheses: (1) that the chief objectives of Russian politics are to destabilize the situation in Ukraine. (2) that Donbass conflict is an example of the use of hybrid war elements such as irregular military operations (guerrilla warfare, sabotage, subversive activities, terrorist acts) and elements of information fight, such as propaganda or disinformation, be it economic or digital. (3) that the non-military methods of propaganda are helping to create a proper propaganda apparatus and the activation of “agitators” who would do “the field work” involving the exposure of the most attractive aspects of “Russianness”.

Keywords: International relations, Russian Federation, Ukraine, political strategy, neo-imperial expansionism, conflict in Donbas

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Introduction

The subject of the analysis in this paper involves the activities of the Russian Federation undertaken in the post-Soviet region. The south-eastern part of Ukraine is presented as a case study, but the specificity of Russia’s actions de facto refers to the entire area of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the USSR). After Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Donbas is yet another “hot spot” in the post-Soviet space enabling Russia to destabilize the situation in the region and to meddle in the internal affairs of other countries (Furier, 2014). As the starting point for the analysis, the author assumed that the actions destabilizing the situation in the region constitute an element of the strategy of the Russian Federation’s neo-imperialist expansionism, which has been consistently implemented for some time now. The field of the strategy implementation is the area invariably considered by the Russians as their exclusive sphere of influence, which results in the intensification of the activities aiming at the deconstruction of political systems of former union republics (Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine).

In this paper, the author verified the following research hypotheses. First one that the chief objectives of Russian politics is destabilizing the situation in Ukraine and incorporating two autonomous political entities controlled by Russia into the Ukrainian political system, which does not necessarily need to result in the creation of a new state commonly known as Novorossia. Weakening Ukraine and its position in the region enough to effectively discourage the western states from undertaking any actions aimed at tightening mutual relations with that state would be considered as a more important goal from the standpoint of Russia’s strategic interests.

Second hypotheses, that the conflict in Donbas shows the signs of a phenomenon known as hybrid warfare, constituting a sort of “a blend” of classically military methods — above all of irregular military operations (guerrilla warfare, sabotage, subversive activities, terrorist acts) and elements of information fight, such as propaganda or disinformation, be it economic or digital (Bachman & Gunneriuson, 2014). The concept of “Malorussia”, sometimes also described as “Novorossia”, became an element of the political propaganda in the mass media, but also a scientific theory of sorts (Nieczypor, 2010).

Third hypotheses, that in the event of a conflict in the east of Ukraine we are faced with a territorial dimension of hybrid warfare. Non-military methods of propaganda employed by Russia refer in particular to the nation state as well as traditional ethic, clan or tribe communities permanently residing in a given territory (Gruszczak, 2016). Therefore, they are an element of informational fight aiming to create a proper propaganda apparatus and the activation of the so-called “agitators” who would do “the field work” involving the exposure of the most attractive aspects of “Russianness”. It seems that in practice it would mean making Novorossia a part of “the Russian world”, to which the president of the Russian Federation — Vladimir Putin — referred to on numerous occasions (Orzechowski, 2017). Therefore, the main goal of these types of actions is extending and maintaining jurisdiction and administrative control over a given area, protecting the borders delineating the limits of such jurisdiction, enforcing systemic rules and legal norms in relation to the population residing in a given area, ensuring public order, managing natural resources and business activity. All those elements share one common characteristic, namely they ought to destabilize the socio-political system in the country in the territory of which this conflict is being played out.
The structure adopted in the paper aims to ensure the transparency and complementarity of the presented argument, while the applied research methods include: systemic, historical, institutional and legal as well as prognostic analyses.

**Some remarks regarding the specific nature of the strategy of the Russian Federation’s neo-imperialist expansionism in the post-Soviet region**

The phenomenon of a political strategy became the subject of scientific study, which in a way forced the expansion of the spectrum of research approaches to the analysed problem. One of them is the analysis of a political strategy as multi-faceted actions carried out by a state on the international arena. The interpretation of the phenomenon of strategy is a long-term task, which becomes a sort of a guideline for the steps taken in foreign policy. It emphasises that a strategy has a national character and similarly as politics, to which it is subordinated, it extensively takes into consideration the neighbourhood, thus the entire spectrum of political, economic and military conditions, which makes it “the grand strategy”. Henry Kissinger also uses the term of “strategy” in its narrower meaning — in the sense of a military potential. Therefore, a strategy encompasses this part of politics in which a military instrument is used to ensure national security (Orzechowski, 2015).

The specificity of the Russian Federation’s political strategies in the post-Soviet region comes down to the fact that, despite the evolution of those strategies, they have maintained certain continuous, permanent, timeless elements. Such elements refer to the historical experiences of a given state and the psychological sphere, in which the perception of Russia as a superpower plays an exceptionally important role. It particularly refers to the region of Eastern Europe, which the Russians believe to remain “an invariable territory of influence and pursuit of major Russian interests”, but it in fact encompasses the entire post-Soviet territory (Orzechowski, 2015).

When analysing the conditions motivating the Russian Federation to take steps based on the strategy of neo-imperialist expansionism, the following conclusions can be drawn: first of all, after the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Russia lost significant influence in the former union territories. In this case, influence is understood as propaganda and pressure exerted by oligarchs and the representatives of the political establishment on individuals, organisations or authorities of the states that used to be part of the Soviet Union. All that puts Russia in a position in which it needs to rebuild its influence in the post-Soviet territory, both for propaganda and for strictly political reasons (Brooke, 2012).

Secondly, it needs to be remembered that in the 1990’s the area of former Soviet influence became the space of West European countries’ economic expansion, and what is even worse, a gradual growth of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization through the accession of Central European countries was a highly painful process of “appropriation” of the Russian sphere of influence. Therefore, every effort needed to be made in order to put a stop to those events and to the presence of NATO forces in the territory of Eastern Europe.

Thirdly, because of the present situation, the influences of Russian oligarchs and entrepreneurs have decreased as well. It was a highly unfavourable situation from the point of the Russian Federation’s strategic interests in the post-Soviet territories. Informal political and business ties were used on many occasions for the purpose of pushing through the economic and political actions favourable to Russia, not only in Ukraine.
Implications of the conflict in Donbas for the statehood in Ukraine

The process of statehood deconstruction may assume various forms. In Ukraine, we deal with the use of elements of informational warfare and hybrid warfare, which would effectively destabilize the political and social situation in that country. The events in Donbas may serve as a contemporary example of an attempt at dismantling state integrity. An effective attempt, since its purpose was in fact the detachment of a part of the territory from the motherland, it needs to be concluded that the intention was successfully achieved. In turn, the issue *de jure* affiliation of the Donetsk and Lugansk Republics remains unresolved, since two entities: a state one and quasi-state one recognize them as their own part or a political territory (Orzechowski, 2016).

Following the annexation of Crimea and the intensification of Donbas conflict as a result of the sanctions imposed on Russia by the western states, a drop in investments occurred even in the sectors such as agriculture, which received assistance from the government, inter alia, through the protection against foreign competition. Therefore, the reinstatement of the full Russian Federation’s voting rights in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) was an exceptionally important achievement (Klein, 2014). On 17 May 2019, the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers took this exact decision, which is the key decision-making authority of that organization. A document of the Council of Ministers constitutes Moscow’s political success, since the reinstatement of its full rights, as a Council of Europe Member will occur without any Russia making any concessions, including the modification of the aggressive politics against Ukraine. Representatives of German authorities assure that Russia’s return to the Council of Europe is not the first step towards lifting the western sanctions imposed on Russia on account of its aggression against Ukraine. That decision enabled the Russian party to fortify its conviction that any concessions regarding the support to separatists in Donbas are unnecessary, which may significantly hinder the conflict resolution.

The above-mentioned reasons became “the driving force” behind the implementation of the neo-imperialist expansionism strategy, while the involvement in the conflict in Donbas and the support provided to the separatist People’s Republics of Donets and Lugansk became an element of the process of reinstating the unity of “the Russian nation” within the scope of a strict integration block (the Eurasian Economic Union), or even a state organization (light USSR) (Krepinevich, 2017). “The Russian world” (Russkij Mir) became not merely a visionary motive surfacing in the propaganda used by the political establishment and the mass media in Russia, but also a scientific theory, according to which the “anti-Russian Ukrainian nationalism, holding a huge mobilisation potential and its own mythology and understanding of the world” must be combated using all means (Orzechowski, 2015). Therefore, the issue regarding human rights of the Russian-speaking population residing outside of the Russian Federation borders is among major factors justifying the actions undertaken by Russia in the Crimea. The Russians eagerly invoke such conceptual categories as national interest, truth and justice in order to legitimize its politics, as well as the use of military force as a justified tool of protecting their countrymen abroad.

An unstable internal situation, evidenced by the Euromaidan and a fairly dichotomous social division — a part of Eastern Ukraine opposing the Revolution of Dignity, i.e. supporters of the so-called anti-Maidan, as well as a part of Western Ukraine supporting the toppling of president Victor Yanukovych — was yet another favourable contribution from the point of view of Russia’s strategic interests. Due to economic problems, corruption affecting not only business but also politics, which in eastern-bloc countries frequently provides opportunities...
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for business development, makes it easier to incite extreme social attitudes, which owing to emotional load, negatively affect the objective assessment of the events.

Recapitulating the considerations undertaken in this part of the article, it needs to be concluded that all of the above-specified elements contribute to a cohesive picture of strategic actions concerning Russian domination in the post-Soviet territory. The main objective is the need for reinstatement of the unity of “the Russian nation”, at times also defined as “a Russian-speaking community”, whereas the instrument for achieving it is an attempt at reintegration of the post-Soviet territory, e.g. in the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union, or through the creation of a state organism, encompassing at least a part of that territory. It is on the basis of the analysed community of “the Russian world” that the priority political project under the name of the Eurasian Economic Union is being implemented (Menkiszak, 2014). Hence, it can be treated as a plan of transformation of the above-mentioned organization into a strict integration bloc, partially mimicking the European Union in its form, however realizing a different development model than the one implemented in the West. However, one fact remains constant, namely that the assuming a strategic control over Ukraine still remains crucial to the success of Russian plans.

After winning the presidential elections in Ukraine, Volodimir Zelensky brought about a significant mobilization of international negotiations regarding Donbas, which arose from the fact that the conclusion of the war was one of the key points of his political platform. During the campaign and after his taking of the office of the president, he promised on a number of occasions that he would be striving towards a speedy resolution of the conflict. At the same time, he was emphasising that Ukraine could not permit the present situation in the east of the country to last for the subsequent years. Public polls conducted in the course of the pending presidential campaign unequivocally demonstrated that the majority of respondents participating in the poll found that the problem requiring the most urgent resolution concerned bringing peace to Donbas (65%), which was deemed as a more significant issue that the improvement of the economic situation (39%) and combating corruption (33%) (Konończuk, 2019).

Over the last three months, Ukrainian diplomacy has significantly activated its contacts with Germany and France, the key states in Kiev’s European policy. The new president’s first foreign visits were to Brussels, Paris and Berlin, which arose from the need to ensure political support for hammering out a compromise with Russia. During that time the Ukraine’s president had four telephone conversations with Chancellor Angela Merkel and three telephone conversations with President Emmanuel Macron. Moreover, several meetings have been held between the representatives of Ukraine and the American administration (inter alia, Zelensky’s meeting with the USA’s Vice-President Michael Pence in Warsaw and with the national security adviser John Bolton in Kiev) (Konończuk, 2019).

The steps taken by Kyiv on the international arena as well as visible softening of the new authorities’ rhetoric towards Russia confirmed that Zelensky is keen to quickly regulate the situation in Donbas. Russian authorities are aware that the president of Ukraine is under pressure of his own promises. Ensuring that the constitution of Ukraine guarantees a special and permanent status to that region within the framework of the Ukrainian state became a crucial issue for Russia. Donbas autonomy would constitute a part of the process of Ukraine’s decentralization. It would be accompanied by the legitimization of the separatists controlled by Moscow through the organization of elections in the region under international supervision. It would actually mean that Moscow would in fact maintain its control over Donbas and thus it
would be able to influence Ukraine’s politics. At the same time, Russia is interested in achieving progress in the conflict resolution, provided that it would occur on its own terms, since it would result in softening of the western sanctions. What is significant from the Russian standpoint, the postulated peace process would not encompass the Crimea, whose status, according to Moscow, is not subject to any negotiations.

An exchange of prisoners of war that occurred on September 7, 2019 doubtlessly provided a breakthrough in mutual relations. After many months of negotiations, prisoners were exchanged between Russia and Ukraine, involving 35 individuals on either side. The prisoners freed by Russia included the most famous political prisoners. One of them is Oleg Sentsov, a Ukrainian director, arrested in 2014 in the Crimea, and then sentenced by a Russian court to the penalty of 20 years of imprisonment for “terrorist activity in the territory of the Crimea” (Strzelecki, 2019). Furthermore, 24 Ukrainian seamen were freed, who had been apprehended after the conflict in the Kerch Strait that had taken place on 25 November 2018, when Ukrainian vessels had been fired upon and detained by Russian warships.

The consent to the prisoners exchange was meant to demonstrate Moscow’s constructive attitude and assure the favour of French and German leaders in the face of negotiations concerning the future of Donbas as well as the debate in the UE regarding the future of the sanctions. However, Moscow’s agreement to the prisoners exchange does not mean that Russia is prepared to offer concessions to Kiev in any key political issues regarding the status of Donbas and Crimea. As already mentioned, Kremlin’s strategy was to force Ukraine to decentralize and to grant autonomy to Donbas within the framework of Ukrainian state, which would translate into a greater number of instruments of Moscow’s influence in all of Ukraine, with a simultaneous acceptance of this formula obtained within the scope of a scheduled meeting, held for the first time in three years, of the so-called Normandy format leaders (France, Germany, Russia, Ukraine), which could consequently lead to softening of western sanctions towards the Russian Federation.

Bringing about the prisoners exchange must be recognized as a doubtless success of President Volodymir Zelensky, who thus demonstrated that he is able to successfully conduct negotiations with Russia. Zelensky expected that in this way he could accelerate an agreement with Moscow on ending hostilities, which, as previously mentioned, would constitute the fulfilment of one of his major pre-election promises. If any real progress were achieved in the peace process, the main risk faced by the new authorities in Ukraine would be the reaction of Ukraine’s society. If any possible concessions to Russia are treated by Zelensky’s electorate, including by the veterans of Donbas conflict, as treason, it could lead to a deep internal crisis.

**Conclusions**

All the actions undertaken by the Russian Federation towards Ukraine within the scope of the implementation of neo-imperialist expansionism strategy can be divided into those occurring at an international level and at the level of the Ukraine’s internal political system. The international scope chiefly entails: disturbing the process of economic and political support of the western countries for the authorities in Kyiv and strengthening conflicts between various political forces, ethnic or social groups against the background of current and historical events in the countries directly neighbouring Ukraine. Furthermore, it seems extremely important that support is provided to various kinds of organizational and political structures aiming at the development of Ukraine’s negative image in the world and at the
increase of international pressure on the state, which will be used by the pro-Russian forces in Ukraine to further destabilize the country. Actions performed at this level may also involve various attacks against the Ukrainian diaspora, inter alia, through the employment of anti-immigration and xenophobic rhetoric.

The actions occurring within the Ukraine’s internal political system include: inciting distrust towards the authorities among a significant proportion of the Ukrainian society through propaganda messages broadcast by the media reporting on the economic and financial problems existing in the political and social spheres as well as on the slow pace or ineffectiveness of reforms, particularly the ones related to anti-corruption activities. Inspiring, escalating and strengthening divisions of religious and faith-related nature seems to be equally significant, particularly the division between the Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church — Kyiv Patriarchate, which may result in deepening Ukraine’s destabilization also in the sphere of values and beliefs.

Thanks to modern technologies, propaganda, and IT infrastructure destabilization and through conventional military attacks, the Russian Federation intentionally and systematically undertakes to destabilize the state on the Dnieper.

The actions of the Russian Federation towards Ukraine are multi-faceted and they result in the effective destruction of the opponent on multiple planes: military, economic, political, informational and identity-related plane. The analysis conducted for the purpose of this paper allows the author to positively verify the research hypotheses formulated in the introduction.

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The Features of German Think Tanks Development and Their Interactions with the Authorities

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The features of the German think tanks development and their interaction with the authorities are analyzed in the article. The typologization of German think tanks, in particular by such criteria as: type of activity (general or specialty), place of operation (open at universities, at foundations and as separate institutions), by scientific orientation (practical, fundamental), by sources of funding (funded by government, land or individuals) is carried out.

It is determined that the basis of German think tanks are political foundations — institutions unique in terms of organizational, legal and political form, which have no analogues in the world either in terms of the effectiveness of domestic political work or the scale of their presence abroad. Since their inception, these funds have belonged to one party or another, but they are now independent non-governmental organizations. In Germany, think tanks are effective and proven instruments of foreign and domestic policy. They complement the public policy of the state, and in some cases even implement (or promote) it in areas where the state is powerless. As non-governmental organizations, they may be involved in areas that are not accessible to official government.

It is established that academic think tanks and centers in Germany have a broad list of areas of activity and have an equal (average) impact on the political process. Depending on the transition from the first to the second and third stages, the influence of the contract centers is amplified and reaches its maximum at the stage of implementation of political decisions. Public interest protection centers and party think tanks, by contrast, are most influential in the first stage — the formulation of problems and the agenda for public policy. Thus, with the increase of the autonomy of the analytical communities, the opportunities for influencing the first stage of the political process increase, when, in fact, interests are taken into account on the agenda and alternative solutions of political problems are laid down.

Keywords: public policy, political decision, think tanks, political consultancy, political analysis

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Introduction

There is no doubt that think tanks are a powerful foundation for improving the efficiency and optimality of public decision-makers. Having proven effective in the United States, think tanks have become an integral part of the political system of many countries, especially those seeking to play an important role in the world arena. The political, economic, historical and cultural diversity of European countries also determines the diversity of think tanks, which in each country have both their own characteristics and common features.

Russian researchers O. Balayan and O. Sungurov notes that the development of think tanks on the European continent was determined by the specifics of domestic political development. In view of this, the researchers conditionally distinguish two stages of the development of expert structures in Europe (Balayan & Sungurov, 2016: 54-55):

1. Institutionalization with the support of the state of expert-analytical structures in England, Germany and France in the early twentieth century. This development can be explained that in Europe at that time there were no natural, evolutionary tendencies of development of think tanks, as opposed to the USA. In Western Europe, such structures were initially perceived as a negative and even potentially dangerous element of the political system. Also, the development of think tanks in Western Europe has been influenced by the ideological conflict between liberal and conservative ideological paradigms, and as a consequence, the long-term formation of the conservative tradition. It was autocratic, so it did not involve plural groups in the expert environment. Under such conditions, the formation of independent expert structures at that time was impossible. Analytical life was concentrated, for the most part, in universities.

2. The post-war period. The left ideological paradigm, which also did not involve the strengthening of expert structures dominated in Europe that time.

Another factor is the formation of truly independent think tanks in Europe in the 1970s. There were re-evaluation of the values in the layers of the intellectual elite and searching for new forms of interaction with the state.

Among Western European countries, for the analysis of think tanks, let us pay attention to Germany, because in this country were created unique institutions from an organizational, legal and political point of view, which have no analogues in the world either in terms of the effectiveness of internal political work or the scale of their presence abroad.

Research Methodology

The main methods of the research are systematic, historical, structural-functional, comparative, dichotomization and ideally-typical approach. The systematic method made it possible to consider German think tanks as a part of the country’s political system. The historical method made it possible to analyze the formation and development of think tanks in Germany, as well as to clarify the patterns and conditions of their occurrence. Structural and functional method allowed to reveal the system components of the subject of study, to determine the main characteristics, types and functions of think tanks in Germany. The comparative method made it possible to compare the principles of activity of different types of think tanks in Germany, to establish general signs of influence of these institutions on the
process of public policy formation in this country. Dichotomization methods and an ideally-
typical approach were used to classify German think tanks.

Research results

In Germany, state structures have traditionally dominated in the preparation and discussion
of proposed policy decisions. After World War II, there was a tendency in the country to
develop think tanks from serving the interests of the state apparatus to focusing on broad
public support. For a long time in Germany, expert-analytical consulting was entirely under the
control of individual ministries and agencies. Academic studies were used mainly to legitimize
government decisions in parliament. The public, the media and interest groups have rarely
been involved in such discussions.

In the 1970s, the situation has changed. The number and complexity of the political issues
raised before the government revealed the limitations of such a system. Parliament introduced the
practice of public hearings and actively engaged experts in discussing issues of public importance
for policymaking. Setting the agenda has ceased to be the prerogative of the government and
parliamentary majority leaders. Relations between political experts and analysts with decision-
makers have become closer, and public dialogue has been more thorough.

It should also be noted that German society became more actively involved in the political
life of the country, which also contributed to the development of think tanks. The activities
of the state, relations between the state and society, the process of making important state-
political decisions were in the field of view of more people. Accordingly, the understanding of
public policy and the place of analytical institutions in it has changed.

The radical political and economic changes in the end of 1980s and early of 1990s increased
the demand for expert and analytical activities. There were qualitative changes in the work of
think tanks as they were forced to rebuild their analytical tools to study multipolar foreign
policy, new security conditions, and changes in the post-Cold War world.

The Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic reunification led
to changes in the think tanks. They become interested in the countries of Eastern Europe and
to carry out academic exchanges of information on democratic procedures and institutions.

According to D. Zvyagina, in Germany there are a large number of think tanks such as
“universities without students”, the main activity of which is scientific research. This category
encompasses institutes investigating foreign policy, peace and security, such as the Institute of
International Affairs and Security (The German Institute for International and Security Affairs,
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik — SWP) (The German Institute, 2019) and the German
Council on Foreign Relations (German Council on Foreign Relations, Deutsche Gesellschaftfür
Auswärtige Politik — DGAP) (German Council, 2019).

These think tanks study both international and intra-European issues. Thus, SWP examines
issues of European integration, EU external relations and security policy, and DGAP is
working on analysis of Franco-German relations as well as the political situation in Central and
Eastern Europe. Unlike SWP, whose main mission is to make recommendations to the federal
government, DGAP is an independent and non-partisan organization. The German Institute
for Economic Research in Berlin (DIW) (German Institute, 2019), Institute for Economic
Research at the University of Munich (IFO) (Leibniz Institute, 2019a), Kiel Institute of World
Economics (IfW) (The Leibniz Institute, 2019), Rhine-Westphalia Institute for Economic
The Features of German Think Tanks Development and Their Interactions with the Authorities
by Ihor Petrenko

Research (RWI) (Leibniz Institute, 2019), Halle Institute for Economic Research (IWH) (The Halle, 2019), German Institute of Business in Cologne (IW) (The German Economic, 2019) can also be included in this group of German think tanks. Their academic research is focused mostly on the economic aspects of European integration, as well as the prospects for the development of the EU from the point of view of the German economy (Zvyagina, 2014).

Let us consider the work of the German Institute for International Politics and Security (Science and Policy Foundation, SWP) as a reflection of the activities of “Universities without Students”. It is an independent scientific institution that advises the German Bundestag and the Federal Government, using its own foreign policy and security studies. SWP was founded in 1962 on a private initiative. It is the country’s largest think tank in this field and is an important information center for all foreign observers interested in discussions on German foreign policy.

The Institute carries out research work on many topics, in particular: European integration; common foreign and security policy; global security issues; studies of various countries and their foreign policy: America, countries of the former socialist camp, the Middle East and Africa, Asia — their participation in world affairs; global issues. The Institute’s publications can be found in the monthly Journal “Internationale Politik”, published in German, English, Russian and Chinese.

In the 1990s, some institutes created research unions at universities, like the Center for European Economic Research (ZEW), the Center for Applied Policy Studies (CAP), and the Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI).

A distinctive feature of German think tanks is their proximity to parties. For example, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung), which was founded in 1925, is affiliated with the Social Democratic Party of Germany. The Foundation has offices in more than 100 countries, which shows that its level of influence is remarkable. The main purpose of the fund is to promote the political and social education of people of all walks of life in the spirit of democracy and pluralism. In addition to financial support, the fund organizes annual political seminars and conferences (Heineman et al., 2001: 114). The main directions of its work: 1) study of economic and social policy; 2) research on democracy and civil society; 3) Foreign Policy and Security (Friedrich, 2019).

Another well-known think tank in Germany is The Conrad Adenauer Foundation (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung), which was created in 1955 and affiliated with the center-right Christian Democratic Union. The Foundation has offices and implements various programs in 100 countries. Its purpose is education, the promotion of freedom, peace and justice, the improvement of transatlantic relations and the deepening of cooperation for the development of Europe. The main directions of the Fund’s work: 1) the development of democracy in the modern world; 2) economic problems of the modern world; 3) development of the state and civil society.

Today the Foundation has 67 offices worldwide, with over 200 projects in 120 countries. This think tank is active throughout Germany and has two large training and teaching centers, 21 educational centers. The Fund develops scientific principles and modern methods of analysis that help to properly apply the German leadership and the CDU all political influence (Konrad, 2019).

So, another group of think tanks in Germany is the political foundations or the “Stiftungen”, which MartinThunert calls unique and states that nothing else can be found in other countries except Austria, the Netherlands and, to a lesser extent, France (Thunert, 2000: 191-212). These political foundations include Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Heinrich-Bell-Stiftung, Rosa Luxemburg-Stiftung. These funds are actively involved in
foreign affairs. For example, promoting democracy in Africa and Latin America has been one of their main focuses. These organizations can only be called think tanks because they spend no more than 20% of their time on research. Fully funded by the state budget and closely linked to political parties represented in the Bundestag, they still retain some autonomy (Thunert, 2006: 185-221).

The international work of political foundations is carried out in two main directions: 1) implementation of short-term and long-term projects and local state programs — such work is coordinated by a regional office or a separate fund and usually involves organizational activities, establishing contacts and cooperation with partners, conducting various educational activities (conferences, round tables, meetings, seminars, trainings); 2) political analytics and research, publishing.

In general, think tanks in Germany can be typologized by several criteria.

First, by type of activity — general or special purpose. General think tanks (e.g. Institute for International Affairs and Security (SWP), German International Relations Council (DGAP), Center for Applied Political Studies in Munich (CAP) (The Center, 2019), The Bertelsmann Foundation (The Bertelsmann Foundation, 2019) conducts policy-oriented research at the intersection of such areas as relevant politics, business, science and the media. Their focus is on transatlantic relations, European integration, international security policy, energy policy, global economy and more.

Special-purpose think tanks focus on the study of a specific area of international relations or cooperation. Their two main areas of research are: 1) Peace and Security Problems — The Peace Research Institute in Frankfurt (PRIF) (The Peace, 2019), Institute for Peace and Security Studies (ISFH) (The Institute, 2019), Bonn International Center for Transformation (Bonn, 2019); 2) economic research — the Kiel Institute for World Economy (IFW), the Rhine-Westphalia Institute for Economic Research (RWI) and more.

By the place of functioning, the think tanks are open: 1) at universities; 2) at funds; 3) as separate institutions.

Based on scientific orientation, the analytical centers are directed: 1) on practice; 2) on basic research. Most of them seek to combine these areas and combine international and interdisciplinary analysis with specific proposals to improve existing practices.

By the sources of funds, the analytical centers are divided into: 1) federal funds; 2) funded by the state (the federal government); 3) which are financially supported by individuals (donations) (Zvyagina, 2014).

According to researchers from the Humanitarian Technology Agency, German think tanks are in a difficult situation, they are overwhelmed by the complex and large-scale tasks that modern Germany is solving. Researchers notice changes in the activities of German think tanks. They have several major trends: 1) the process of integration of Europe and its impact on the social and political life of Germany; 2) deduction of large funds for democratization of Eastern European states; 3) maintaining the integrity of the EU and overcoming permanent crises in it (Modern think tanks: an analytical report of the Center for Humanitarian Technologies, 1998).

German think tanks work closely with the media. The centers offer a wide range of products of their scientific activity: they publish books, analytical notes and participate in joint research, conduct seminars, conferences, meetings. Presentation of the centers in the media and public life helps them in attracting sponsors and partners. When it comes to the target audience of German think tanks, it should be noted that, although politicians are the main recipients of their recommendations and research findings, they have successfully extended their influence.
to other spheres of society. German think tanks also attract the attention of diplomatic missions in other countries (Zvyagina, 2014).

According to Martin Thunert, there are quite powerful academic institutes and university think tanks, traditions of state funding of analytical research and development in Germany. Charity and philanthropy are not well developed, informal contacts in the triangle “academics — analysts — political elites” prevail over formal ones, while the “revolving door system” is a little popular. There are also problems of lack of political, strategic, applied, rather than academic research, and the need to be audit-oriented, to work on the boundaries of political and political & cultural, political & political; there is a tendency for science to hide the position and specific recommendations (Thunert, 2004: 71–88).

Martin Thunert also gives an assessment of the political impact of the German think tanks by their types and main functions. Academic think tanks mediate the formulation of problems and agendas for public policy, the choice of political action strategies, and the implementation of policy decisions. Contract think tanks have insufficient influence on the formulation of problems and agendas for public policy, the choice of political action strategies, and the powerful — on the implementation of political decisions. The effective involvement of public interest centers in shaping public policy issues and agendas is low in the choice of policy strategies. They almost have no effect on the implementation of political decisions. Party think tanks have a significant influence on the formulation of problems and the agenda for public policy, the average — on the choice of political action strategies and the implementation of political decisions (Thunert, 2004: 85).

Thus, academic think tanks in German have a broad list of activities and have an equal (average) impact on the political process. Depending on the transition from the first to the second and third stages, the influence of the contract centers is amplified and reaches its maximum at the stage of implementation of political decisions. Public interest protection centers and party think tanks, by contrast, are most influential in the first stage — the formulation of problems and the agenda for public policy. Thus, with the increase of the autonomy of the analytical communities, the opportunities for influencing the first stage of the political process increase, when, in fact, interests are taken into account on the agenda and alternative solutions of political problems are laid down.

**Conclusions**

The basis of German think tanks are political foundations, which are unique institutions from an organizational, legal and political point of view, that have no analogues in the world either in terms of the effectiveness of domestic political work or the scale of their presence abroad. These funds have, since their inception, belonged to one party or another, but now they are independent NGOs. According to the decision of the Constitutional Court, they have the right to receive funds from the federal budget, and sometimes, in the case of long-term projects, they can be funded by the German Foreign Ministry or the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development.

Think tanks in Germany are effective and verified factors of foreign and domestic policy. They complement the public policy of the state, sometimes even implementing (or promoting) it in areas where the state is powerless. Think tanks have such opportunities because of their unique place in the German political system. As non-governmental organizations, they may be involved in areas that are not accessible to official authorities.
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The Value Dichotomy Curse of Ukraine’s Modernization: to Break, or not to Be

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The article explores the reasons for failure of modernization of contemporary Ukrainian society hitherto. The conclusion about their deep value nature is grounded. Hence, it is proposed to look for ways of successful modernization based on pivotal cultural and historical traditions that have a consolidating, consensus character for all regions of multicultural Ukraine and for the Ukrainian civil nation as a whole.

Keywords: modernization, values, dichotomy, European integration

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Introduction

Ukraine’s really successful modernization and European integration presuppose the presence of values, rules and institutions inherent in competitive market economy and structural liberal democracy. Meanwhile, the ruling elite of Ukraine, like of most post-Soviet countries, is characterized by the absence of any stable, uninterrupted for generations spiritual doctrine, traditional values (in fact, in the twentieth century those countries passed twice through a sudden collapse of the old system of established values and norms), anomie (in particular, a weak effectiveness of externally professed legal, religious and moral norms as a means of normative regulation of behaviour), opportunism
in making strategic decisions, etc. Meanwhile, the political system instability\(^1\) practically for all the period of independence has not allowed formulating and realizing the national strategy for social and economic development.

Statistical and econometric estimates lately made by the Institute for Economics and Forecasting of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine show the formation of a clear trend since 2014 towards the socio-economic divergence of Ukraine and the EU — in fact, perhaps the most important indicator of Ukraine’s system modernization failing. It is statistically substantiated that “for the post-Euromaidan period of 2014-2018 such mechanisms of European integration as the implementation of the Association Agreement with the EU, the introduction of a “no-visa” and deep free trade zone, formally pro-European socio-economic reforms in recent years, etc., do not provide the expected macroeconomic, institutional, integration and convergence effect for Ukraine” (Burlay, 2019: 78). That requires urgent developing and implementing the national policy aimed at overcoming the above divergence trend and promoting the opposite trend towards the Ukraine — EU institutional and socio-economic convergence.

Despite numerous works by Ukrainian and foreign scholars on the problems of modernization and European integration of Ukraine, the former still lack a synergistic approach to understanding and interpreting the basic dichotomies that had and have a decisive influence on the above processes. That, in turn, leads to a false logic of “zero-sum game”, separating geopolitical and political-regime factors from historical and cultural values, the absolutization of certain mental paradigms, and so on, that on the eve of the Euromaidan events and the armed conflict in the east of Ukraine was pointed out, for example, by Ukrainian political scientist Sergiy Tolstov (Tolstov, 2013: 42-43).

The foregoing makes appeal to the deep historical, socio-cultural and, ultimately, value causal origins for nearly thirty years of Ukraine’s modernization impasse to try to understand why numerous attempts to radically overcome the Ukraine haunting value dichotomy failed. In addition, finally, after determining the key problems and contradictions of the indicated dichotomy, we shall try to outline the ways of the “stitching” and genuine modernization of Ukraine as a state and society.

Main Text

The dichotomy of values, civilizational and cultural aspirations is inherent in Eurasia both by definition (in fact, its very name implies the duality of the continent’s two different wings) and historically, especially since the Mongol invasion. Moreover, such a dichotomy of classical Europe (that is Europe of the historical space of the Carolingian Empire) and classical Asia, as a zone of active civilization influence of the “Celestial Empire” (“Great China”), is a universal property of the whole post-Soviet space at the macro-regional, national, regional, subregional and local levels. We have shown that this dichotomy has a fractal nature, i.e., in practically every society, at each of its structural levels, there is a potential of both the East and the West. The question is in their dynamic proportions (Piliaiev, 2015).

\(^1\) For instance, before the Prime Minister’s cadence of Vladimir Groysman (April 2016 – August 2019), the Prime Minister’s average term in independent Ukraine was about 1 year (Amelin, 2016), and most political parties (such as President V. Zelensky’s Servant of the People, “The Opposition Platform – For Life”, “Holos [Voice]”), which won the parliamentary elections on July 21, 2019, did not even exist during the previous electoral cycle (2014-2015).
In our opinion, fruitful for understanding the nature and root causes of both the strategic crisis over Ukraine and the Ukraine’s modernization failing would be to use, along with the fractality category, the concepts of limitroph and frontier states.

It should be noted that the term “limitrophic states” was actively used in European geopolitics of the interwar period. A Soviet perestroika, then Russian late philosopher of history and political scientist Vadim Tsymbursky, born in Lviv, modernized this definition by linking it to the concept of the “inter-civilization belt”, where there are geopolitically unstable border zones, “territories-straits” between “civilizational platforms” with broken traditions of continuity, the disordered management systems and forms of self-identification of the population. This previously known term was re-activated in the vocabulary of modern political science — now in relation to new states that declared their sovereignty during the collapse of the USSR (Tsymbursky, 1993; Tsymbursky, 1997). In fact, the concept of the “frontier civilization” proposed by Ukrainian political philosopher Sergiy Datsyuk is very close to the above-mentioned “inter-civilization belt” concept (Datsyuk, 2016).

In Ukrainian political science, the term “limitroph” with regard to Ukraine was introduced by a prominent Ukrainian political philosopher Mykola Mikhalchenko, who defines it as a peculiar, frontier situation of Ukraine beneficial both to Western countries and Russia because it allows them to avoid direct military contact at the border (Mikhalchenko, 2000; Mikhalchenko, 2001).

The present Eastern Europe limitrophs (Ukraine, Moldova, with significant reservations Belarus) are characterized by conflicting ethno-political and cultural-civilizational identities. For Ukraine and Moldova, this is manifested in sharp fluctuations in the course of domestic (including cultural- humanitarian) and foreign policy: from somewhat pro-Eurasian, which relies on post-Soviet mentality, to radically pro-European and pro-Western (in fact, far enough from Western standards of rule of law, separation of powers, tolerance, rationalism, etc.).

Meanwhile, Volodymyr Gorbulin, Oleksandr Vlasyuk, and Serhiy Kononenko define Ukraine’s historical mission in the system of geopolitical coordinates in the role of “outpost and shield of the Euro-Atlantic world on the Eastern European and Eurasian-Continental territories” (Gorbulin et al., 2015: 21). At the same time, the above authors, in the context of radical restructuring the Eastern European space in connection with the Euromaidan and the Ukrainian-Russian armed conflict, strategize the formation of a new historical and cultural “layer” of the Euro-Atlantic community “within the former Kyievan Rus” which would delimitate the Euro-Atlantic world and continental Eurasia, “protecting the eastern borders of the former world” (Gorbulin et al., 2015: 24). Sergiy Datsyuk (Datsyuk, 2016), while arguing with the aforementioned authors, directly determines that Ukraine belongs to the “civilization of the Frontier”. He stresses, “the frontier civilization strategy is fundamentally different from the countries of the united Europe or Russia as a country of north-east Eurasian continental integration”. Thus, Datsyuk insists on the urgent need, in the context of overcoming the challenges of Russian aggression and the prolonged socio-economic crisis, for the construction of a “fundamental theory of frontline strategy in Ukraine”. However, according to Datsyuk, the Ukrainian ruling elite, because of their total corruption and social irresponsibility, has not yet realized this need (Datsyuk, 2016).

The East-West fractal dichotomy as it were sets the nature of conflicts in the limitrophic, frontier space of post-Soviet Eastern Europe.

The East–West geo-axiological fractal dichotomy, which correlates with the value opposition of “power–freedom”, in the Cold War era in Europe in the most pronounced
institutional form passed along the German-German border. According to Der Tagesspiegel, “The Germans were integrated into military alliances — both in the West and in the East. It was a kind of guarantee that they (the Germans — I. P.) would never again wake up with ambitions to unleash aggressive wars and enslave their neighbors” (Marschall & Grabitz, 2017). After the collapse of the USSR and the Eastern Bloc (Warsaw Pact) headed by it, the geopolitically and institutionally demarcated border of dominant influence in the East–West dichotomy gradually shifted further to the east, still formalizing itself in the form of a line of contact of the conflicting parties according to the 2014-2015 Minsk Agreements. Meanwhile, the dichotomous “black and white” juxtaposition of “Russia — the West” has been growing rapidly, especially since spring 2014, in both the Ukrainian, the Russian and the Western discourse.

During periods of military and geopolitical confrontation, cultural-value dichotomy is most pronounced and acute. Therefore, in the context of the post-Euromaidan confrontation between Putin’s Russia and the neoliberal West, the trend towards polarization of views on the cultural-value basis has intensified. For example, Alexander Sytin, a Russian historian and political scientist from the liberal camp, directly argues that Russophobia should come to replace anti-Sovietism as an integral system of historical and political views, considering the only way for Russia to reconcile with the West “through “historical unconsciousness”, destructing traditional ties of generations…”, “the maximum individualization, depatriarchalization and secularization of life and consciousness” of the people (Sytin, 2017). He is echoed by Polish political analyst Alfred Kshitsky, living in Berlin: “Russia is, regardless of the personal composition of the elite that rules it, is the enemy of the civilized Western world, it was in essence also during the time of the Moscow kingdom, the Russian empire and the USSR” (Kshitsky, 2017).

The armed conflict in the Donbas, as testified by its development for 2014-2019, in contrast to the frozen conflicts in the South Caucasus and Transnistria or post-communist wars in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, has not so much ethnic, but ideological and, more deeply, value-civilized character that manifests itself in the absence of cross-cut ethnic divisions in the political loyalty of civilians in the conflict zone, as well as in the largely economically motivated geography of flows of refugees and displaced persons from the Donbas.

Results of the national survey of Ukraine’s population conducted in 2016 by the Institute of Sociology at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine clearly testified: “European orientations are not determined by ethnic identity and native language” (Reznik & Reznik, 2017: 137). Similar conclusions were drawn from his own experience by the Deputy Head of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (2014-2018), Swiss citizen Alexander Hug. In an interview to Foreign Affairs magazine a week before his resignation, describing the situation in the conflict zone in the Donbas, he pointed out: “I have seen other conflicts where you have an undercurrent group dynamic, ethnic, religious. You do not have this here. You do not need to think about reconciliation from village to village. It’s pure political decisions that are required” (Mackinnon, 2018). The empirical study of the ideological motivations of separatists in eastern Ukraine conducted by Ukrainian philosopher and researcher of post-Soviet ideologies Mikhail Minakov, Director of the Ukrainian research program at the Kennan Institute (USA), has also confirmed the primarily ideological and value nature of the conflict (Minakov, 2018: 280-281).

Phase spaces of nonlinear systems contain many images of all possible motions, only one of which is realized at a given time and with given internal and external parameters. All other possible states are virtual until the change of conditions leads to their realization. However,
just these states, being hidden in reality and virtual until a certain time, most often determine the direction and features of the system’s development (Afanas’yeva et al., 2013).

For example, in the early 1980s, Kyiv, like Donetsk, was a fairly typical Soviet city where the vast majority of the population lived in the Soviet ideological, mental, cultural, and every day “matrix”. In the first stages of Gorbachev’s perestroika, Kyiv (until about mid-1988) looked like a “preserve” of the Soviet-Communist nomenclature against the backdrop of the dynamic changes in the ideological and cultural climate of Moscow and Leningrad of the time. However, the national-democratic awakening, which encompassed initially the circles of nationally-minded intellectuals and students, and then the broad masses of the Ukrainian capital, catalyzed socio-cultural and axiological factors of consciousness related to the deep values and traditions of Rus-Ukraine, which resided in the Central-European space of Lithuania, Poland, Rzeczpospolita (the Commonwealth), especially the Lithuanian Statute and Magdeburg Law traditions. These values and traditions had been in a dormant latent state for decades, but had rapidly transformed from virtual factors of consciousness into a real powerful factor of socio-political processes and had profoundly influenced the reformatting of the Kyiv masses’ mentality. In Donetsk, however, these factors were very weak and did not significantly affect the reformatting of the mentality of the local population, and information policy in the Donbas during the whole period of independence up to the events of spring 2014 did not contribute in any way to the axiological restructuring of the regional mentality but, on the contrary, only reinforced pro-Russian orientations and nostalgia for the Soviet era.

In Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine in 2014-2019 Pavlo Klimkin’s view, the main problem for Russia at present is not Ukraine’s future membership in the EU or NATO (since many people in Moscow just don’t believe that), but the possibility of “a united, democratic and European Ukraine as a country with post-Soviet legacy that is established and sustained as a state with values completely opposite to Russian ones” (Leng, 2015).

The main divide between Western values and the political culture of Russians lies precisely in relation to individual freedom. As a famous Russian political scientist Alexander Tsipko emphasizes in this context: “the problem is not in Putin, but in the Russian political culture and our political system. It was not Putin who created it, it simply corresponds to our tradition: power in Russia has always been unlimited” (Neef, 2016).

On the contrary, the political system of Ukraine is characterized by a high degree of competitiveness with a simultaneous weakness of political institutions (in particular, political parties), and a generally low level of political and legal culture at all levels of the state, politics and society. If in the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus, and the post-Soviet states of Central Asia (except Kyrgyzstan) a representative of authority invariably wins the presidential election, in Ukraine after 1991 four times (in 1994, 2004, 2010 and 2019) a representative of opposition won the presidency (in May 2014 Petro Poroshenko won the presidential election after the victory of Euromaidan which took place at the end of February 2014). However, the very competitiveness of electoral democracy in Ukraine is associated not so much with the struggle of political ideologies, but primarily with the struggle of various clan-oligarchic groups for power, which in such circumstances leads to a whole series of negative consequences for the stability of state and political institutions, the consistency of domestic and foreign policy, economic modernization and international competitiveness of the national economy.

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2 The only exception is the victory of Alexander Lukashenko in the first presidential elections after the declaration of independence of Belarus held in the summer of 1994.
The Russian annexation of Crimea, the armed conflict in the Donbas and, accordingly, the systemic crisis of Ukrainian-Russian relations have only actualized the problem of civic value consensus within Ukraine. Recently, this problem has been clearly emphasized by President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky: “Ukrainian society needs to agree on each other, and this is very important, because today there are completely different visions of the issue of the return of the Donbas and Crimea inside Ukraine” (Zelensky, 2019).

Ukraine is capable of overcoming the periphery, limitrophic, “gray zone of Europe” syndrome on the path of a thorough reformatting of the ideology of national-state construction, in particular recognition of the historical and cultural heritage, European values and traditions of the Kyivan, Galicia-Volyn and Lithuanian Rus, in particular the Rus region of the Kingdom of Poland and Rzeczpospolita, along with the Ukrainian Hetmanate of the XVII-XVIII centuries, the Ukrainian People’s Republic (the UPR) and Pavlo Skoropadsy’s Ukrainian State (Hetmanate) of 1918 are the historical and cultural pivot around which the formation of the Ukrainian political nation might successfully take place.

All-Ukrainian dialogue and consensus also involve the involvement of such well-forgotten, but inspiring, unions and civic consensus on the facts of national history, such as the conclusion in August 1920 of a military-political agreement between the UNR under the leadership of the Supreme Commander of the Ukrainian Army, President of the Ukrainian People’s Republic Symon Petliura and General Peter Wrangel’s Crimean government, with the participation of Chief of State of the Second Polish Republic Józef Piłsudski and under the aegis of the Entente, on the recognition of the powers of the future democratically elected All-Ukrainian Constituent Assembly and the operational inclusion (realized in September-November 1920) of General Boris Perminkin’s 3rd Russian “White” Army, based in Poland, to the operational grouping of the UPR’s Army for joint offensive against the Bolsheviks in Right-Bank Ukraine (Salsky, 1933: 317).

The systemic crisis that has lasted in Ukraine almost since Gorbachev’s perestroika, deeply affecting all spheres of life of the state and society, makes us look more critically at the problem of the “aggregating” or “voice-centered” model of democracy, based primarily on formal institutional and procedural mechanisms of popular expression of will. Not to mention the very serious problem of manipulating the will and the electorate’s votes, effective control of voting and counting of votes, the issue of the place and role of public discussions, taking into account the views of ordinary voters and minorities, and developing pluralistic dialogue, compromise and consensus formulas (platforms) of public policy (Kymlicka, 2002: 287-293).

The drama-existential challenges that Ukraine faced since 2014 exposed an extremely simplified, imitative (sometimes reminiscent of a cargo cult) understanding of democracy as a voice-centered system of formal procedures, as a result of which — it doesn’t matter by what means (through manipulation, coercion, indoctrination, propaganda, deceit, etc.) — the necessary numerical superiority is ensured both in elections of state authorities and local self-government, and when legislative bodies adopt laws and other important, sometimes fateful, decisions. Meanwhile, prominent Western theorists of democracy at the turn of the 20th-21st centuries came to the realization of the need to transform voice-centered democracy into the dialogue-centric one.

As Jürgen Habermas emphasized, “institutions guaranteed by constitutional law only have value to the extent that the population makes them value” (Habermas, 1995: 226). A prominent

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3 In 2016, Ukraine’s GDP (PPP), according to the IMF, amounted to 63.4% of the 1990 level (see: International Monetary Fund, 2017).
Canadian philosopher, Will Kymlicka, considers as the primary condition for the health and stability of democracy that how citizens “consider potentially competing forms of national, regional, ethnic or religious identity”, “their ability to be tolerant and work with those who are different from them” (Kymlicka, 2010: 362).

As Ukrainian philosopher Petro Kralyuk from the Ostroh Academy stresses, over the years of independence, despite pro-European declarations and decorations, the Ukrainian authorities essentially did not have and do not have a program to consolidate the population of their state, “they don’t have an understanding of what role in this consolidation should have been played by the Ukrainian national factor, and what role national minorities would have to play” (Kralyuk, 2016). And, as Sergey Datsyuk points out, because of the “poor quality of the ruling class”, which was evident after the victory of Euromaidan, “the current identity gap in Ukraine leads to a fundamental impossibility to take a strategic position, since every piece of identity is seeking not an internal unity but external subordination” (Datsyuk, 2016).

Voice-centric democracy is clearly not enough in determining the legal status of languages, religions, or cultural rights of persons belonging to minorities. Here, a consensus is needed between the country’s main ethnic, ethno-religious and ethno-cultural communities, which can be reached, as, for example, a well-known Ukrainian political scientist Valentin Yakushik suggests, through “development and implementation of democratic mechanisms of public (nation-wide, regional and local) discussions (“public hearings”) on the key issues of cultural, socio-economic and political development” (Yakushik, 2018: 83).

Conclusions

By its basic social parameters, Ukraine is developing as a pluralistic, European-oriented society; the vast majority of its population identifies its origin from the Kyivan, Galicia-Volyn and Lithuanian Rus – European states with strong traditions of self-government, respect for the rights and dignity of the individual, private property, multicultural and multi-faith living environment. The Hordean tradition of government has never been organic for Ukraine. In this regard, the Rus-Ukraine of Zaporizhzhya Sich, the Hetmanate, the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, the Cyril-Methodius Brotherhood has traditionally acted as a libertarian alternative to the Eurasian-Horde, authoritarian-despotic form of state multinational unification around Muscovy. In the post-Soviet era, these fundamental differences became apparent again.

In our opinion, the fractal dichotomy of social, political and moral values as well as of geopolitical orientations in Ukraine — Russia relations is likely to increase. The task of the authorities and civil society in Ukraine is to prevent further exacerbation of this dichotomy in Ukraine, to unite society and the Ukrainian political nation around European values.

Meanwhile, history convincingly manifests that a nationwide civic consensus in Ukraine is possible, and just that is capable of ensuring the true modernization of Ukraine as a state, society, national economy as well as the realization of the European Choice and integration into the family of civilized countries and peoples. The platform of national and civic accord envisages the recognition of the European Rus-Ukraine tradition being common to all regions of Ukraine, inherent in its historical and cultural values, and finally, a powerful layer of common axiologically Europe-oriented history. Indicators of value identity should be constantly monitored by authorities, scientists and the public.

Taking into account the aforementioned historical and value paradigm in the Ukrainian authorities and diplomacy’s practical actions would contribute to both the settlement of the
armed conflict and the resumption of peaceful life in the Donbas, as well as to the prevention of conflict threats in other regions of Ukraine. It is the consolidation of the Ukrainian civic nation around the European traditions and values of the Kyivan, Galicia-Volyn, Lithuanian Rus, the Commonwealth and the Hetmanate that, in our opinion, might unite, on the basis of passionate national idea, all regions and segments of the population, major political forces, representatives of civil society, and believers of all traditional denominations of Ukraine.

We consider the true implementation of the European Choice of Ukraine on a path that combines Freedom and, accordingly, European liberal values with the pivotal cultural tradition of European Rus-Ukraine, which permeates, as an axis, the whole array of our national history. Only in this way, a sustainable democratic development and socio-economic recovery of Ukraine can be ensured.

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Imitating Democracy and Populism as an Attribute of Modern World Countries

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Spreading of imitation democracy and populism as the attributes of modern world countries are analyzed in the article. It is established that a totalitarian-democratic society, as a rule, is characterized by illusory economic prosperity, multicultural diversity of customs and traditions, free access to information and dissemination, many freedoms and conveniences. All this illusion is actively supported by the government and the media, which in such societies are directly controlled by the state or belonging to groups loyal to power and serve as a tool for balancing and counteracting antagonistic movements. It is revealed that the totalitarian-democratic regime seeks to integrate any opposition and absorb possible alternatives to the development of the state. That is, on the one hand, the establishment of imitative democracy proclaims the state democratic, formally enshrining all the principles of a democratic society, and on the other; insulates civil society from participation in the formation and exercise of public authority. In addition, totalitarian democracy does not seek to resolve social contradictions, but obscures them with a screen with false symbols and values.

It has been found that since the activities of antagonistic movements in totalitarian democracies are not a threat to their existence, critically-minded activists are generally not persecuted or even encouraged. The government seeks to create the conditions under which any criticism becomes trivial and routine and, accordingly, imperceptible to most of society.

The proposals on the necessary actions for overcoming the “challenge” of populism and minimizing the risks of spreading the regime of imitative democracy in the world are highlighted, in particular: mobilization of civil society in support of democratic institutions; strengthening the rationalization and institutionalization of the political process; political isolation of populists through the formation of large centrist coalitions in parliaments; more active involvement of citizens in the democratic process of decision-making: formulating an attractive program agenda; attracting new people to centrist parties.

Keywords: political regime, liberal democracy, imitative democracy, populism, anti-liberal political movements

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Introduction

Researchers on the problems of theory and practice of democracy in today’s world emphasize the imitative nature of democracy in transitional states. However, a similar situation is also typical of countries with longer traditions of democratic rule. Some researchers even conclude that imitative democracy is now becoming the most widespread form of political regime in the world.

Today, western democracies are faced with the two types of difficulties: 1) strengthening the role of authoritarian forces in Russia, Iran, Turkey, which stop the movement to democracy and oppose themselves to the liberal West, professing the concept of autonomous modernization (in fact it is a global competition between authoritarianism and democracy); 2) an anti-liberal movement within European countries and the United States (the Trump presidency, Brexit, intensifying right-wing populist and right-wing extremist movements), which weakens the solidarity of Western countries in the face of challenges and threats from authoritarian states.

The greatest threat to democracy is populism, which has become at the heart of the anti-democratic movement. Today, populist parties are present in the parliaments of eight European Union countries, three — in Hungary, Poland and Italy — are parties in power. In addition, this trend is upward. The classic Liberal Democratic parties do not have time to adapt to the new communication and organizational challenges, and thus lose to the populists.

Partly spreading of populism in the EU is facilitated by the media, which, instead of meaningful facts and meanings, very often relay emotions, post-truths and even fakes to society.

Theoretical Background

There are usually no pure forms of political regime. Authoritarian and totalitarian governments may be characterized by certain democratic attributes, and conversely, democracy may use certain non-democratic practices.

The classic approach to a clear demarcation of democratic and totalitarian political regimes today requires a revision, as new forms and methods of governing society emerge as the information society develops. Undoubtedly, stable elements of classical totalitarianism are inherent in some modern states of the world, such as North Korea. But political regimes of a latently totalitarian character, dubbed totalitarian (imitative, governed, manipulative, decorated, front) democracy, are becoming more widespread. Concepts of quasi-democracy and pseudodemocracy are also used to refer to this type of political power organization.

J.L. Talmon was the first who formulate the concept of totalitarian democracy in 1952 (Talmon, 1961). This issue has also been learning by U. Engdahl(Engdahl, 2010), D. Furman, who, however, uses the term “imitation democracy”(Furman, 2007), V. Pribylovsky, who uses the term “managed democracy”(Pribylovsky, 2005), and others.

A. Kalinina defines totalitarian democracy as (Kalinina, 2014: 283) a form of political regime in which democratic legislation is formally enforced and all electoral rules and procedures are observed, while civil society participation in government and the influence of society on power are in fact is minimum or absent. That is, the main distinguishing feature of imitative democracy is the removal of civil society from real governance and the absence (or minimum level) of its influence on the state public policy. At the same time, the combination of totalitarian democracy with elements of representative democracy is real (Talmon, 1993: 191-214; Kalinina, 2014: 284).
The main characteristics of imitative democracy are:

1. Electoral formalism, the formal nature of the principle of universal suffrage, formal and factual qualifications for active and passive suffrage.
2. Elitism and caste, lack of “social lifting” in the society that really reflects the ability of the political system to update and embrace progressive ideas.
3. Absence of real political and economic competition, political competitiveness.
4. Concentration and manipulation of important public resources in the hands of a limited number of individuals for exceptional benefits.
5. Low representation of different social groups in public authorities and low reflection of their interests in public decisions of these bodies.
6. The poor legitimacy of power in the people’s eyes.
7. Practical sensibility of citizen participation in political processes other than elections.
8. Use of extra-legal instruments.
9. Lack of clear political identity in political parties.
10. Total corruption of the bureaucracy.
11. Removal of the political party from the people, inefficiency of the state mechanism and general dysfunctionality of the state.

**Research results**

In general, the imitation democracy regime is widespread in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, in particular: much of Asia, almost all of Africa, and in the past — Latin America, most of the Arab states, are imitation, governed, or totalitarian democracies. Modern examples of totalitarian democracies include the Russian Federation with “adapted democracy” by Vladimir Putin, Belarus “with the free choice of Aleksandr Lukashenko”, and Kazakhstan with the regime of Nursultan Nazarbayev. Ukraine also has signs of imitative democracy.

What is the main reason for the establishment of a totalitarian democracy in the post-Soviet states? According to D. Furman, the starting point for the establishment of democracy in these countries was the proclamation of such principles as democracy, building a market economy, ensuring human and citizen rights, the movement to Europe and progress. However, in all these states there was virtually no psychological and cultural ground to accomplish the tasks. And most importantly, no one was involved in the creation of such soil. Moreover, in most states that were part of the USSR, there was not the least democratic experience necessary to exist in modern conditions (except for the Baltic countries), and some countries did not have the experience of an independent state. That is, a number of problems have fallen on these states — the simultaneous transition to both a new social order and a new political order, the creation and construction of a new, first nation-state of its own (Furman, 2007).

The reasons and prerequisites for the emergence of a state of imitative democracy include:

a) the awareness by the ruling circles of the renewed state the need for active external attributive demonstration to new foreign partners of the commitment adopted in the systems of the last benchmarks in order to prevent the application of sanctions and political isolation;

b) the distorted consciousness of person and society in general, which were formed primarily under the influence of historical cultural and spiritual heritage.
Means of combating imitative democracy and ways of overcoming its negative impact on the state of democracy are:

a) expanding the boundaries of human consciousness, critical thinking;
b) dissemination of true and deep knowledge of the essence of the political and legal phenomena of the present;
c) consistent disclosure of defects in functioning social systems.

The key to democracy as a political good of social life is the development of spirituality and consciousness of citizens, which allow to provide the necessary intellectual potential to fulfill its requirements (Zhuk, 2015: 26).

The Ukrainian researcher A. Kalinina calls access to comprehensive and alternative information, critical analysis of everything and everything as the key to overcoming totalitarian tendencies at the personal level (Kalinina, 2014: 286). Nevertheless, the majority of Ukrainian society, according to various sociological data, having all potential opportunities to access an infinite mass of information obtains information from television. Moreover, most of the TV channels belong to the oligarchs, the smaller ones belong to the state, and public broadcasting is a very small part. As a rule, Ukrainians have unlimited trust in their favorite TV channel, not at all checking the information provided by other sources. This creates a fertile ground for neo-totalitarian tendencies in individual and collective consciousness and contributes to the establishment of imitative democracy (Kalinina, 2014: 286).

Thus, a large number of newly-formed states and, in general, post-Soviet society, were not at all levels prepared for real democratic change. They came to power from the Soviet Union, who, for the most part, in declaring democratic principles, sought to gain more power and influence rather than build a democratic state and civil society.

The result of the formation and functioning of modern totalitarian democracies is information overload, populism, social infantilism and indifference, legal nihilism and absenteeism.

Problems with democracy in the world are leading to increased populism. Right-wing populists have already won seats in the parliaments of France, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, and Italy. The same political forces continue to strengthen positions in Hungary and Poland, where laws have been passed restricting the activities of non-governmental organizations. The rise of populism can also be observed in Ukraine, in which democratic transit is still far from a stable and irreversible state.

Because of the popularization of the idea of democracy by populist politicians and dictators of different styles, many citizens from different countries have a dangerous apathy for the principles of a free democratic society. And those who advocate liberal democracy are subject to various attacks and harassment. Moreover, certain politicians (for example, Orbán in Hungary) even choose the main leitmotif of their election campaign to fight against philanthropists, liberals and civic activists who advocate for the ideas of pluralism, the rule of law, strong civil society structures, and important civil society structures areas such as politics, economics and culture.

At the beginning of the 21st century, a new pan-European tendency is emerging — the emergence of populist “third forces” seeking to occupy a niche in political life and sufficiently fighting for power and influence with traditional liberal-democratic political forces.

Thus, populism is one of the greatest threats to democracy both in the world and in Ukraine. The vast majority of populist movements in the world are anti-elitist in nature and imply an organic polarizing ideology that opposes the majority minority and leads to criticism of
representative institutions and a vivid leader capable of turning popular discontent and protest into a power mobilization strategy. In the post-socialist space of Eastern Europe, populism may also be perceived as an eclectic fuzzy ideology that contains predominantly “right” ideological elements but is also capable of compiling them with “left” rhetoric depending on the socio-economic and political context of the individual country. From populism, which is perceived as ideology, in turn follows a certain form of political strategy. The ambiguity and plasticity of the ideological core of the populist movements of Eastern Europe enables them to combine populist rhetoric with many classical ideologies such as nationalism (Martinelli, 2016: 15).

The researchers distinguish two main types of populism: 1) protest (social) and 2) identity (nationalist). Protest populism is a critique of the elites, combined with the glorification of a people who are understood as “ordinary people”, “ordinary citizens.” This kind of populism means “hyper-democracy”, a call for direct democracy and a denial of ordinary democratic procedures. Identity populism, like protest populism, is directed against the elites, against a democratic state as an institution, but the focus is on protest against “foreign”, “foreigners.” The elites are condemned primarily because they are not national, but detached from the people, cosmopolitan. Also there are right and left populism. The fundamental difference between them is the image of the enemy. The enemy of right-wing populism is the “emigrant”, “alien”, and “other.” The enemy of left populism is the “world of capital”, “oligarchy”, and “banks.” However, both of them agree on one thing: officials have moved away from the people and do not represent the interests of society.

In today’s Europe, political parties that harness the potential of populist identity have the greatest political success. Not all citizens are able to appreciate the fundamental values of liberal democracy — freedom of personality, pluralism of lifestyle and belief, mutual tolerance and willingness to compromise, respect for the democratic order. As soon as the crisis occurs, many citizens are happy to give their fate and freedom to the right populists. Today, the main cause of the electoral success of right-wing populists is the migration crisis and the flourishing of racial and ethnic xenophobia in these societies. European populists rely on the politicization of ethnicity and cultural racism.

Analyzing the situation with liberal democracy in Eastern Europe, it cannot be mention the eminent political scientist Samuel Huntington, who, while exploring the waves of democratization, referred to the backward waves (a fallback to authoritarianism) — the replacement of democratic systems with historically new forms of authoritarian rule. He wrote about the possibility of a third feedback wave because of two conditions. First, the demonstration of the continued viability of undemocratic rules by the new authoritarian powerful countries. Secondly, the decline of the United States as a world of democracy, a manifestation in this country of political stagnation, inefficiency of the economy and social chaos. It is likely that the time of the third rollback has begun. China and Russia are demonstrating the viability of their undemocratic regimes, and the US is losing its leadership and demonstrating revisionist policies on the important foundations of liberal democracy, foreign policy adventurism and extreme domestic polarization.

The situation in Eastern Europe has become an echo of this state of affairs, which is of great concern. The pioneers in the fight against liberal democracy in this region were Hungary and Poland, which saw a convincing electoral perspective in conservative populism, demonization of liberals and their global values, attacks on minorities, the search for historical justice, the fight against foreign powers, eroding the democratic system of checks and balances. The Czech Republic and Romania are likely to follow this path. Politicians in all these countries, as a rule,
do not oppose a democratic political regime, and do not campaign openly for authoritarian rule; they build their policies on the basis of rigid criticism of liberal methods and principles of social organization. Their main weapon is populism as a political ideology, which seems to be defending the interests of the common people as opposed to the interests of the various elites, in our case it is a matter of the so-called the “Western capitalists.” In fact, it is about forming an anti-liberal democracy as an alternative to liberalism, which can become a long-term political trend in Eastern Europe.

The question is, why in Eastern Europe such a fierce struggle against liberalism and the values of an open society? According to the head of the Center for Liberal Strategies (Sofia) Ivan Krastev, the answer to this question is to be found in the specific nature of the revolutions of 1989, when states liberated from Soviet oppression expressed the idea of normality — to lead a normal life already available to Western Europeans (Krastev, 2018). This process was accompanied by mass emigration of the most educated and liberal citizens from these countries to their western neighbors, which led to serious demographic problems and crisis of identity in Eastern Europe. The massive departure of the “liberals” changed the structure of the electoral field of these countries, liberalism lost its internal resistance and human driving force. The image of liberalism in Eastern Europe has become the EU and the US, and the weakening of their influence has been the impetus for a populist-nationalist anti-liberal revolution, the effects of which we are all now acutely aware.

At the same time, those who left have increased their social status, because they immediately got a normal life, and those who remained in their unreformed homeland began to feel like the losers who are trapped behind by the advancement of social life. That is, the East Europeans were given the inferiority complex, which became a fertile ground for populism.

East European populism is growing. The right-wing Polish populist party has won a parliamentary majority and now retains leadership in polls, and the right-wing populist Fidesz Party has won two consecutive parliamentary elections in Hungary. The success of populism in this region cannot be explained by economic problems alone. Indeed, Orban came to power in 2010 after the Hungarian economy slumped by 6.6% in the crisis year of 2009, but the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland have fallen out of this logic. The Czech Republic has the lowest unemployment rate in Europe, but this did not prevent its citizens from voting in the parliamentary elections for populist parties. Poland from 2007 to 2017 showed the fastest economic growth in Europe, but the PIS populists has won on the elections. The roots of populism and the anti-liberal movement in Eastern Europe lie in the face of demographic change and problems that weaken exemplary ones from the perspective of the liberal-democratic values of the United States and the “old Europe.”

Common to all these populist movements is the desire to change the rules of the game and move away from liberal-democratic governance. Therefore, after coming to power in Hungary, the Fidesz Party used its constitutional majority and actually changed the electoral system to its advantage. It is also worth noting the increase in corruption in this country with the rise of populists to power. The Polish government also sought to change the rules of the game, the object of its attack was the system of checks and balances, which they tried to dismantle through changes in the constitutional court. Unlike the Hungarian government, the corruption situation in Poland is much better. They are less focused on controlling the economy and focus on moral issues, seeking to re-educate their citizens and change their assessment of history.

Despite differences in certain approaches, one can note the emergence of an anti-liberal consensus, the tools of which are nationalism and xenophobia. Of great concern is the support
for this movement by young people, for whom totalitarianism is so remote and unfamiliar that they are willing to abandon liberal-democratic values in favor of an authoritarian government that seems to be experiencing for them, rather than for the elitist world groups that “plays” with all liberal groups, puppets, cashing in on ordinary people. The majority’s rights are at the heart of this consensus. They seek to enhance cultural and political polarization, to form the image of the enemy on the basis of the conspiracy theory of a bunch of rich people who want to make a living at the expense of most citizens in different countries of the world. This approach is based on the allegations of Fidesz representatives that Brussels, with the help of billionaire George Soros, was secretly planning to flood the country with migrants.

Both Fidesz and PiS represent themselves as the true voice of a nation that fights against internal and external enemies. Moreover, they actively introduce the concept of the right citizen — a true Pole or Hungarian. They view all others as untrue people who interfere with the will of the people. To them, all dissenters are the wiles of “conspirators” who seek to continue the exploitation of their state.

A unifying moment for Eastern European populists is the attitude towards the European Union, which, on the one hand, is used as one of the images of evil and, on the other, does not neglect to use its financial resources. Economic growth, both in Poland and Hungary, is largely due to EU funds. The East Europeans’ annoyance with Brussels can be explained by their desire for self-affirmation and their efforts to overcome a certain set of inferiority. The countries of Eastern Europe aspire to become full members of the European club, and not just objects of instruction from the developed West. While they have viewed Brussels as a benevolent friend since the beginning of the European integration process, today they are perceived by EU commissioners as largely interfering with internal sovereignty. In general, foreign power is a historical trauma for most Eastern European countries.

The trigger of the rise of populism in Eastern Europe was the migration crisis of 2015-2016. The citizens of these countries fear migrants and refugees. According to sociological surveys, more than 50% of Poles and almost 70% of Hungarians believe that their country’s borders should be completely closed to refugees. The reason for this attitude towards migrants is that the region of Eastern Europe consists mainly of small aging, ethnically homogeneous societies. Cultural and ethnic diversity, which is the norm for Western European countries, is perceived as an existential threat in Eastern Europe. On this basis, the formation of the anti-liberal movement is taking place in this region. Thus, the sources of Eastern European populism are both the emigration of liberally minded citizens to Western Europe and the fear of global immigration from the Middle East.

Geopolitical instability in the region has also become a major factor in the anti-liberal revolution in Eastern Europe. While the EU and the US played a major role in consolidating liberal Eastern European democracies, these countries felt completely safe. However, revisions to US allies, the debt crisis, refugees and Brexit in the EU, as well as the revisionist policies of the Russian Federation, have forced these countries to re-evaluate their geopolitical challenges and threats. At the same time, the Russian factor (a combination of authoritarianism with anti-liberal ideology) for some, such as Hungary, became an example for imitation, and for others, such as Poland, it became an additional incentive to vote for anti-liberal forces, which would seem to be the only ones able to really defend the country, because the liberal “Old” Europe has failed to respond adequately to Putin’s violations of the world order.

Thus, anti-liberal populism is on the rise across the European continent, but it is particularly acute in Eastern Europe. Eastern European populism has deep historical roots and is likely
to be a long-term factor in the situation in the region. The main reasons for this are: 1) the emigration of liberal-minded citizens from the region to advanced democracies in search of a normal life; 2) reducing the role of the United States as a liberal-democratic outpost; 3) the migration crisis in the EU. In fact, anti-liberal democracy is a new kind of authoritarianism, the main danger of which is that it was born in democracy itself, and its main tenet is that the power of the majority need not to be restricted, because it comes from the people and is realized for them, and all the liberal restriction is an attempt of external influence and control. The destruction of the liberal system of checks and balances is still the main result of an anti-liberal democracy in Eastern Europe. Anti-liberal democracy does not bypass Ukraine, though its manifestations in our country have certain specific characteristics.

In Eastern Europe, populism is predominantly based on collectivist and ethno-nationalist (ethnically exclusive) traditions against the background of recent history. Thus, it has a relatively modern historical origin and is rather in the “right” version. The coming of the right-wing populists to power in Hungary in 2010 and Poland in 2015, and their electoral successes in other countries of Eastern Europe during the 2000s, cannot be regarded as an unexpected sensation. In fact, the neo-populist wave in the post-socialist states was the result of a total fatigue from democracy. Among the common genetic reasons behind the great success of populists in the post-socialist space of Eastern Europe are:

a) the blurring of value orientations in transitional societies, a marked disappointment in the socio-economic results of democratization by maintaining a qualitative development gap in comparison with Western European countries;

b) intransigence of party-political confrontation, high polarization of political forces in the ideological spectrum on the “right-left” scale;

c) the absence of a systematic policy course on the formation of a collective civic identity in the destruction of a system of rational social discourse and constructive dialogue as a result of the fierce confrontation between the “right” and “left” in the political field of post-socialist states;

d) instability of socio-stratification structure and regime of property relations in transitive societies, oligarchization of political and economic elite;

e) the managerial inability of moderate reformist political forces to respond adaptively to emerging challenges and to hold the electorate’s political preferences in a crisis;

f) imperfection of the institutional design of state power and the system of checks and balances set out in the Constitution of most Eastern European countries;

g) European regional crises (the debt crisis in the Eurozone and the migration crisis in the EU) have greatly contributed to the growth of support for radical right-wing populists in Eastern Europe.

It should be noted that all populist movements in post-socialist countries are characterized by a certain set of general features:

First, populism in Eastern Europe does not boil down to political extremism, which seeks to completely dismantle liberal democracies, populists aiming at modifying existing representative democracy into a plebiscite one.

Second, populist movements in the post-socialist space are ideologically differentiated into “rigid” (“Jobbik” in Hungary, “Attack” in Bulgaria, “Camp of Greater Poland” and others) and “moderate” (“Fidesz” in Hungary, “PiS” in Poland, GERB in Bulgaria and others), although the real boundary between them is plastic and flexible.
Third, populist ideological platforms that mobilize voters in Eastern Europe are increasingly based on identity politics. As mainstream centrist parties increasingly lose their attractiveness, appeal to nationalism and identity politics becomes more and more attractive to the public.

Fourth, populism in Eastern European countries is not a specific phenomenon of “post-accession” to the EU, despite the claim that the rise of populism is driven by high expectations of EU membership and fatigue from long-term austerity measures, since populist (mainly) right parties began to form in post-socialist countries from the late 1990s.

Fifth, the populist wave in Eastern Europe is not a temporary departure from a certain vision of “normality.” In the political process, long-term changes are taking place in the post-socialist space that contribute to the spread of populism: politics are becoming more personalized and focused on social networks and the media. Populist parties and movements that pay particular attention to the communication system and the personalities of their leaders are much better suited to the new environment than mainstream parties, which account for their growing electoral victories.

It is important to emphasize that the main real goal of the vast majority of populist movements is the permanent retention of power in order to maximize their political and economic preferences and to convert the acquired power positions into resource capabilities, which requires a leveling of the existing system of democratic control. Based on the examination of the two cases of Hungary and Poland, in which the populist parties Fidesz and PiS succeeded in winning the elections, it is possible to trace the stages of deconstruction of democratic political institutions by the populists who came to power:

1. Restricting media freedom in order to gain control over the public agenda. In Hungary, this was reflected in the creation of a National Communication Office, which controls the state media, and in the forced depoliticisation (threats of sanctions and advertising taxes) of the private media; in Poland — through the nationalization of public service broadcasters and their editorial policy as a result of legislative amendments.

2. Reformating the system of separation of powers to remove existing institutional constraints in the political field. In both states, this was primarily due to a change in the procedure for the formation of the Constitutional Court in order to subordinate the judiciary to the executive.

3. Amendments to the electoral legislation that ensure guaranteed success in the next electoral cycles. It is noteworthy that such anti-democratic measures are carried out by populists in Poland under the slogan “the will of the people is more important than the constitution or laws”, despite the fact that the term “people” acquires a very restrictive definition: it is no longer the only nation but only the electorate and supporters of the ruling party (Sztompka, 2016: 89). After all, the result of the populist policy of politics is the formation of illiberal democracy, which in Hungary, according to B. Magyar, took the form of a post-communist mafia state, which arose from the decay of a one-party dictatorship of a privatized parasitic state, an economic political entity power (Magyar, 2016: 6).

However, it should be noted that the same factors that give far-right populists the opportunity to achieve major electoral success today might soon turn against them, since the “third way” and “simple solutions” to the complex problems facing the European countries they offer are wholly illusory. They are not capable of practically satisfying electoral “demand”, but almost
inevitably their activity is capable of generating new problems and conflicts. Right-wing populism is undoubtedly dangerous for democracy, especially in Eastern Europe, as it appeals to the uncontrolled mobilization of the masses, not in the name of creation but in the name of destruction. Using utopias and mass illusions, populism emphasizes the existing distinction between a speculative democratic ideal and an imperfect democracy. Populists put the agenda on the agenda with really pressing issues, but they answered incorrectly.

Populism can destroy democracy as it seeks to centralize power, weaken checks and balances, strengthen executive power, neglect political opposition, and transform the election into a plebiscite that serves the interests of the leader. The core of populism is the people, not the citizen. Populist politics is far from pluralism, dissent, minority views.

The neo-populist wave is a serious threat both to national democracies in post-socialist states and to the functioning of the EU, whose external control is a major deterrent to pushing populist Eastern European regimes into consolidated authoritarianism.

Conclusions

The 21st century is a time for the flowering of totalitarian democracy. It can be used both in the positive sense — the transition from an overtly totalitarian or authoritarian regime to a liberal-democratic one, and contains the characteristic features of a direct representative democracy, and in a negative one — it is conditioned by the transition from a liberal democracy to an imitative one, or by increasing controllability in the already existing pseudo chemistry.

Thus, forms of totalitarianism adapt to the conditions of the present and acquire new improved and modified features. Therefore, it is critically important to be able to recognize the various aspects of any form of totalitarian rule and to devise effective ways of preventing the imitation of democratic regimes.

The two biggest problems of liberal democracy are, first, the strengthening and establishment of authoritarian regimes that promise prosperity, progress, stability and prosperity without democratic values. Moreover, they are trying to show democracy as a brake on the development and achievement of the community, and they are throwing all their forces at the fight against it, mobilizing the masses, convincing them that the whole problem lies in democracy, not in inefficient governance, corruption, clientelism, etc. Although their real purpose is to secure the continued restoration of power, the monopolization of resources, and the ability, at their own discretion, to redistribute public wealth for its own benefit. Secondly, the challenge for liberal democracy is the wave of legal populism, nationalist and xenophobic movements in free and partially free countries, which covers country after country.

Liberal democracy is being deconstructed by populist political forces in many countries. Developed democracies of the world are no exception. The wave of anti-liberal movements is gaining momentum in the United States, Germany, France and Italy. These movements are most threatening in Eastern European countries — Hungary and Poland. Populists in these countries, by appealing to conspiracy theory, seek to blame all the troubles of liberals, who seem to be wringer the citizens, forcing difficult reforms that ultimately do not bring people a normal life and social wellbeing. At the same time, the nature of citizens’ relations with the traditional press is changing qualitatively: the mainstream media is increasingly losing out to social media, which, along with conflicting discourse, political cynicism, fakes and soft propaganda, is becoming a populist information weapon.

What to do to protect democracy?
First, clear and correct concepts must be employed, in particular to distinguish a referendum from a plebiscite that has nothing to do with democratic voting or direct democracy. Democratic elected governments must engage in a real and serious dialogue with citizens in the inter-election period, otherwise the gap between the people and their representatives will widen geometrically, making full use of populists. Direct democracy and, especially, the instrument of popular legislative initiative can overcome this gap.

Secondly, direct democracy must be developed first and foremost with a digital focus, including both tools for organizing mass political actions and new opportunities for financing political projects, for example through crowdfunding. Democratic governments should go to their citizens and ask about their needs.

Third, the creation of online platforms that, on the one hand, act as an educational space for political democracy and demonstrate best practices of democratic government, on the other hand, serve as a platform for unifying Liberal Democrats, promoting values of an open society and consolidating efforts in the fight with populists. We need to create new spaces for discussion, the so-called Massive Online Deliberation Platforms, which will allow people to communicate with each other in a different way than what is currently happening on social networks. These new spaces should be in pre-moderation mode, there should be clear rules, and increasingly sophisticated systems built on artificial intelligence technology should identify and cut off the so-called “trolls”, paid disseminators who seek to turn any civilized debate into bazaar. Such “discussion platforms”, by the way, open to high-quality media, too, should operate on the basis of special algorithms, only they will be focused not on enhancing emotions and not on relaying hatred, but on supporting rational arguments.

In order to protect the values of democracy and effectively confront today’s information and political challenges, we also need to:

a) mobilize civil society to support democratic values and institutions through the creation of mass-based online debate platforms with appropriate moderation and discussion rules;

b) restore confidence in electoral democracy, by improving electoral legislation in the electoral system and increasing accountability for bribery;

c) strengthen the rationalization and institutionalization of the political process;

d) improving the quality of media work, including the implementation of a more responsible information policy;

e) civic education for young people, for the sake of inculcating values of an open society, forming critical thinking and generating a request for ideological parties with institutional fuses that would hold its representatives within the values within their ideological vector;

f) involving citizens in political decision-making; build inclusive political institutions and the economy in parallel;

g) to conduct factcheck of populist statements based on facts and reality;

h) return to national dialogue and constitutionalism;

i) to carry out political isolation of populists by forming large centrist coalitions in parliament; involve “new faces” in centrist parties.
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The Soft Power of the State as a Dialectic of Contemporary Dependencies in the International Arena

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Dialectic is a concept that means the ability to argue leading to confirmation or questioning the thesis. Derived from ancient time, various currents of understanding the concept of dialectics in the modern world are subject to redefinition and constitute the basis for the functioning of the sphere of interactions in the international arena. Today’s discourse on the relationship between various entities boils down to the claim that hard power began to give way to soft power. The implementation of dialectic assumptions in the functional space of the soft power of the state makes it possible to conclude that, today, entities on the international stage, pursuing their particular interests, do not always use a narrative that is consistent with reality. Therefore, an important aspect of mutual interaction is making an objective analysis of phenomena and events that form the basis for establishing various types of relationships on the world stage.

Keywords: dialectics, state pragmatism, soft power, mutual relations, international relations, raison d’état, challenges of the modern world

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Introduction

The Peace of Westphalia, concluded in 1648, ending the Thirty Years’ War, has made a mark on history as an event not only heralding a new order in Europe, but also as a phenomenon about the emergence of a formally non-existing international system. The factor that makes it possible to claim that at that time a new matter of relations between particular entities on the international arena began to shape is the process of formalization of these relations, which until now were based on the connections of heterogeneous feudal actors. The Westphalian agreement initiated the tendency to consolidate sovereignty, which was based on the monopolization of means of violence and sole control over foreign policy instruments. In the mid-seventeenth century to have these prerogatives testified about the subjectivity on the world arena (Gałganek, 2008: 24). International relations have since gained theoretical orientation and coherence, says Benno Teschke. This became possible through the process of diffusion and convergence of trends characteristic of various paradigms and disciplines (Teschke, 2003: 2-4).

The theoretical assumptions of the science of international relations in the late wave period boil down primarily to the issue of ensuring the security of the state, increasing its power and position in the international arena. The factor that implements these principles is the foreign policy pursued by individual countries. In addition, the theoretical and practical premises of external policy have not fundamentally changed since the 17th century, since the goal of each entity is still to ensure security and achieve the best position in relation to others. However, the means, tools and methods of their implementation have changed. This is primarily due to the dynamics of the international environment, which is constantly changing under the influence of continuous technological and information development (Zięba, 2005: 48-55).

In the post-westphalian world, the change in international conditions has contributed to the redefinition of the principles and methods regulating the functioning of this sphere. The emergence of new entities, and therefore new formal and institutional challenges, is today one of the directions in which the space of international influence is developing. The implication of this state of affairs is the desire of states to expand the scope of their means, tools and methods to effectively implement foreign policy.

Pragmatism of international conduct in the modern world boils down to a tendency when hard power begins to give way to soft power. In this context, the main problem boils down to the statement that the world, in fear of total destruction, taking into account every aspect of the functioning of the state, seeks to implement the assumptions of its foreign policy by using means directed at dialogue, persuasion and agreement (Podobas, 2013: 105-106). Certainly these are not the only means used by states, because hard power is still present in the rhetoric of the modern world, taking on the face of various types of military conflicts. Despite the perspective of wars waged in various corners of the globe, the contemporary tendency to interact internationally boils down to negotiation processes and mutual dialogue. The asymmetry of conflicts in today’s world is an important aspect that should be taken into account by the governments of all countries and institutions with legitimacy of international subjectivity (Szczurek, 2014: 13-14).

The multi-faceted and multi-subjectivity of phenomena in today’s world provides the basis for treating hard power as an insufficient tool for implementing policy, because in an environment of mutual dependencies and interactions, subjects of international relations basically base their actions on methods and tools having a dialectical character (Svyrydenko & Yatsenko, 2018). Therefore, the purpose of this work is to indicate vectors
of development of contemporary international relations through the implementation of soft power dialectics in the system of mutual interactions as an effective tool for foreign policy implementation of individual entities. Illustrating in these context tendencies often based on overbearing, particular actions of states constituting the essence of constructive dialogue on the world stage.

**Soft power as a tool for implementing state policy on the international stage**

In the conditions of systemic, ideological and axiological changes that took place in the early 1990s, the concept of soft power appeared. Its creator was the American researcher in the field of international relations, Joseph S. Nye, who in his work *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* formulated the concept of soft power, in short, consisting of the ability to persuade entities operating on the world stage to follow our desires and assumptions (Nye, 1991: 14-17). This assumption boils down to the postulate that soft power is the ability of the state to attract others by changing their preferences in such a way that they act in the interest of the state, which thanks to its “attractiveness” draws attention in the system of interactions on the global arena (Fijałkowski & Polus, 2014: 255-257).

The “attractiveness” of the state is nothing more than the ability to attract various entities to the sphere of their influence. The level of political mobilization, evaluation of the level of development of democracy, etc. directly influences on the “attractiveness” level (Iskhakova, 2018; Możgin, 2018). Having these abilities testifies first of all to the power of a given country. The concept of power in this work is implemented in the context of the concept of soft power. The classic approach to this phenomenon refers to the real military (material) strength of the state and is included in the current paradigm of the realistic, characteristic of the sphere of hard power. Despite such inclinations, it is worth noting that the issue of power refers primarily to the multi-faceted nature of the issue and is interpreted in accordance with the assumptions of the policy pursued by a particular country. Hence, we can talk about the semantic dualism of the concept of power, because on the one hand we can treat it in terms of military (material) strength, and on the other as an axiological and cultural (immaterial) tool. The barrier to the introduction of a clear definition of the concept of power is its complexity and multifaceted. There are several aspects of understanding this concept, among which it is worth mentioning the power understood as the ability to resolve conflicts, power as the ability to exercise control over the setting of rules applicable to entities of mutual interaction and power as a predisposition to formulate and export cultural and ideological postulates addressed to a wider audience (Fijałkowski & Polus, 2014: 260-261).

The first understanding of the concept of power is part of the context of realistic theory of international relations. The materialistic nature of this approach often treats power as a country’s military capabilities that are objectively measurable (e.g. army size, status of a nuclear state, number of weapon units) (Dybczyński, 2005: 647-649). In this context, one should not ignore the country’s natural resources, which in relation to other entities testify to its “attractiveness” and testify to its functional abilities — this is, among others predisposition to have the right amount of energy raw materials along with processing infrastructure that ensures energetic independence, and thus creates the assets of a given entity, as well as having the right mineral resources used in creating high-tech machines controlling production and processing processes (Pysar et al., 2018).
The second and third shot comes down to the context of soft power. Despite constructive discrepancies, which clarify the differences in these approaches, it should be remembered that the border between different understandings of the concept of power is fluid and it often happens that there is a fusion of some concepts that are characteristic of different theoretical approaches. Therefore, when talking about the power of the state or another entity on the international arena (do not forget the fact of the existence and influence of multinational corporations, whose resources often exceed the capabilities of certain countries), one should remember about semantic dualism that boils down to a distinction between hard power and soft power. However, the legitimacy of the use of these tools by individual countries as part of their policy implementation boils down to the common goal of pragmatism in achieving the tasks outlined.

Despite the statements regarding hard power, this work boils down to formulating the main directions of the influence of soft power on the process of mutual interactions on the international arena. The means of expressing the soft power of the state are primarily culture, which influences the attractiveness of the state through the interest of other entities in cultural heritage, tradition and religion; political values that are manifested by sketching and observing the appropriate axiological framework, which in the modern world most often boils down to having a democratic system based on respect for human rights and dignity (but not all the countries that we can now enlist as powers that combine the aspects of hard and soft power, follow democratic and law-abiding rules; it is a utopian system that Western countries are trying to implement in the modern world); and foreign policy in the broad sense, the exemplification of which is diplomatic opportunity to negotiate internationally.

In the context of this article, it should be assumed that the sphere in which the interactions of entities on the world stage occurs is of a dialectical nature. This is primarily due to the very definition of dialectic, because in the classic approach this concept means on the one hand a way of intellectual cognition that transcends formal logical relationships and is directed at revealing the dynamic nature of your subject, on the other — the art of argumentation that leads to confirmation or question the thesis (Adler, 2001: 21-24). The dialectical nature of contemporary relations between countries fits into the eristic stream of reasoning for this concept, when we deal with dialectics as the art of applying in the discussion the rules leading to the superiority of their arguments, which are not necessarily always a coherent and logical whole (Arthur, 1998: 450-452). Within this trend, two approaches have emerged that treated dialectics on the one hand in a rhetorical way, describing it as pursuing a goal by showing truthfulness, and on the other, pragmatic, meaning achieving the goal even using false arguments. Therefore, by implementing the concept of dialectics in the context of contemporary interactions on the international arena, we have an excellent picture of the mechanisms and principles regulating this sphere of subjective activity. The thing concerns above all such phenomena as unsustainable technological and economic development, socio-cultural stratification and the information boom, one of the determinants of which is the increasingly frequent use of the so-called fake news. These factors belong to the constructive elements in which the soft power of each country finds its reflection. The economic, political and cultural predispositions of individual entities on the international stage testify to his ability to participate in international processes.
Mutual interaction of entities on the international arena

From the perspective of several years, it can be said that the change in the balance of power in the international arena, which took place at the end of the twentieth century, was just a moment of redefinition of the basic mechanisms guiding global politics. Bipolar world, in which the United States and the Soviet Union played a dominant role today has been replaced by a multi-vector and multi-faceted world. Nowadays, the complexity of the balance of power in the global arena consists in the formation of many centers of regional interaction. On the one hand, they are regional powers such as China, Russia, Iran, Brazil, India and South Africa, and on the other, they are international corporations, which often cover the whole world — they include entities such as Google, Amazon or Apple. Francis Fukuyama in his book *The End of History and The Last Man* announced his famous thesis that the collapse of the bipolar balance of power heralded the end of rivalry between powers and permanent development, the center of which would be the United States (Fukuyama, 2006: 17-21).

The perspective of a unipolar world could not survive too long, because the American state was not able to stand the influence of other entities that were directed at dismantling the existing norms and principles. Fareed Zakaria, an American journalist and researcher in the field of international relations, announced the thesis that the beginning of the 21st century is the end of the hegemony of the United States. At the same time, he pointed to the importance of the non-Western world, because many factors, both economic, cultural and social, pointed to the increase in the “attractiveness” of countries such as China, India, Iran and Brazil (Zakaria, 2009: 81-85). Not only Fareed Zakaria pointed to a departure from world unipolarity and the formation of a multipolar world, because another American researcher Robert Kagan referred in his works to the tendency of formation of regional powers in different parts of the world (Kagan, 2009: 37-41).

In this context, one fundamental question comes to mind, namely, what does it mean to be a regional power? The answer comes down to finding the “attractiveness” of a given entity, taking into account its predispositions, which include hard power and soft power. Despite this, keeping the direction of the considerations of this work, only the sphere of soft power of entities operating on the global arena will be taken into account. Joseph Nye pointed to the permanent dynamics of the sphere of international influences, arguing that the essence of the international system is to strive for balance consisting in building a counterweight to dominant powers (Nye, 2002: 2-4). Therefore, we return once again to the concept of the “attractiveness” of the subject, which affects the ability to create various types of relationships between him and another subject in order to realize the particular interests that make up the raison d’état of each of them. Soft power dialectics are manifested here in the formal and informal predispositions of the subject. Formality in this context consists in the institutional integration of various entities, when specific issues are agreed at the level of government negotiations – among others security, energy supplies, or trade agreements. Even family policy of the national states can be a matter negotiation in the face of globalization challenges (Tulowecki & Svirydenko, 2018: 92-94). In turn, the informal scope of relationships is based on the cultural “attractiveness” manifested in exporting patterns and values by a potentially stronger and more attractive state to other entities, which results in the assimilation and unification of codes that the society adopting these patterns and values begins to use (e.g. phenomenon of “mcdonaldization” of society) (Ritzer, 2004: 31-33).
Joseph Nye’s soft power concept has become a source of inspiration for other researchers in the sphere of international relations. In this context, a slightly different approach to this issue was presented by the Russian diplomat and analyst Konstantin Kosachev. According to his claim, soft power is not only the ability to present the sphere of its axiological advantages, but also to respect the values of others. In addition, this concept is equated with the subject’s ability to coexist with others without the necessity of assimilation and to create conditions and rules affecting the development and survival of the cultural sphere of entities with whom we establish relationships (Kosachev, 2012). According to Konstantin Kosachev, who was primarily involved in analyzing Russia’s position in the international arena, the authorities in the Kremlin have not developed their own, unique only to the Russian state, soft power tools that would shape in this respect a model that is equivalent to the Chinese or American model of using soft power mechanisms to other players on the world stage. Both Chinese and American models are directed at exporting values and economic prerogatives that allow other entities to provide their own economic, energy and military security. There are many examples that exemplify this state of affairs, because China through its economic expansionism builds a strong base in the form of alliances with European, African and South American countries, based on services in the sphere of economy and the latest technologies (Huang, 2008: 23-25). In turn, the United States using a similar model is trying to gain support on the European continent and in Asia. This is mainly due to the strategic geopolitical plans of the American government, which cannot be reconciled with the fact that the United States is not a hegemon in the international arena today (Zakaria, 2009: 47-50).

There is no doubt that in the modern world, both China and the United States have shaped structured systems of influence on countries of their interest. The “attractiveness” of these countries on the international stage is beyond doubt. Interesting in this context is the position of Russia, which after the collapse of the Soviet Union was able to rebuild its power and may become not a global, but at least a regional power. Referring again to the achievements of Konstantin Kosachev, it is worth noting that the Russian state’s narrative of soft power is based on three pillars: cooperation, security and sovereignty (Pacak, 2012: 196). The narrative used by this Russian researcher boils down to the claim that Russia allowed the former Soviet Union countries to form their own states without any resistance. In addition, Konstantin Kosachev claims that the rooting of Soviet culture, religion and identity is so strong in the Länder (federal states) that they form an independent political and social creation that could not exist without modern Russia (Kosaczew, 2012).

Analyzing this message of one of the leading Russian diplomats and experts in international relations, we are again returning to the theoretical sphere of dialectics, which indicates that any narrative that brings a given subject closer to achieving the intended goal is justified. Given the actual state of affairs, because it is about the war in eastern Ukraine and the unsanctioned annexation of the Crimean peninsula in which the Russian state is involved, the only conclusion is that, guided by the “Machiavellian” principle that “every goal justifies the means,” Russia today seeks to rebuild its spheres of influence by using not always fair means and mechanisms. Russian soft power is focused on “close abroad” and is implemented through the use of the now outdated methods of Marxist dialectics, which through its pragmatism does not take into account the conditions and principles in the modern world.

The United States, China, the Russian Federation and many other regional powers are today trying to use their own strengths proving their strength and power. Despite this, contemporary actors of the world political scene are focused on cooperation and strive for
The interaction of various entities on the international arena nowadays boils down to a pattern that consists in the pragmatic nature of these relationships. Today it is important to achieve the goal and it often happens that entities use their “attractiveness” manifested in the form of political (democratic system), economic (having developed economies based on modern information technologies), energy (ability to export energy resources) and cultural (linguistic and religious proximity).

The dialectical nature of the sphere of interaction on the world stage further emphasizes the legitimacy of the statement that in the modern world soft power takes on greater significance than hard power. The pragmatic current of understanding dialectics defines it as a tool for winning disputes even with faulty and false arguments (Ziomek, 2000: 23-24). Derived from sophists, this trend played an important role in the further development of dialectics as a tool for achieving intended goals. Arthur Schopenhauer in his *Eristic* referred to a narrative arising from the concept of Niccolò Machiavelli’s power, which defined dialectics as an art of discussing aimed at maintaining appearances (Siemek, 1982: 13-16). The notion of dialectic in the Marxist-Leninist approach emerged in the same trend, which played an important role in shaping the soft power of contemporary states, especially the Russian Federation. Vladimir Lenin in his reflections on dialectics pointed out, on the one hand, that everything is an intrinsically diverse whole, on the other, stressed that the relations of each thing are not only many times diverse, but also general and universal, because the fact that everything is associated with everyone (Lenin, 1956: 194-195).

Today, analyzing the narrative of many countries, directed outside, aimed at influencing other entities, one can see the difference between the actual state and the one that is presented during various types of negotiations, meetings and contacts that occur internationally. This article was intended to signal the emerging and increasingly used tendency to use soft power tools in the implementation of the policy of various entities on the world stage. Sidney Hook in his considerations argued that a factor that is objectively present in things and processes is a contradiction. The contradiction, which is the basis of all laws of dialectics, which perfectly captures the essence of contemporary interactions in the world. Since the days of Aristotle, it is generally accepted in the theory of logic that statements, judgments or sentences are contradictory, not objects or events (Hook, 1958: 185-186).

Therefore, in this context, an important is the objective analysis of the narrative guided by the players of global games in the sphere of public discourse. Soft power, which demonstrates the ability of these entities to draw other, less “attractive” entities into their influence, is today an indispensable tool in implementing the strategic policies of various entities. That is why it is extremely important to pay attention to processes directed at the interaction of entities on the world stage, because each of them is based on a particular interest, constituting the raison d’état, which will not always have positive effects on the global community. The negative consequences of such interactions may be various kinds of wars, conflicts and social tensions, leading to international instability.
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The Dialectics of Humanism and Pragmatism as a Basis for the Formation of Higher Education Strategy Development

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This article is an attempt to analyze the key contradictions between humanistic and pragmatic orientations in the modern space of higher education. The authors use a philosophical approach in understanding the value of knowledge as a powerful tool for social and economic development. It has been proved that politicians and teachers play almost the same role in overcoming the global poverty and violence. Instead of theorizing about humanistic ideals, they should direct the ideas of humanism in a practical way - through the training of students and the creation of a favorable climate for the life of citizens. The ideas of democracy and human respect must also go beyond the audience and be implemented in the practical dimensions of society. Science in universities must be subordinated to humanistic values, just as philosophy was subordinated to Theology in the Middle ages. While most universities are trying to mobilize efforts to increase economic performance, it is necessary to work on the development of intellectual capital in society. In addition, it is important for policy makers to understand the difference between the training of a competitive specialist and the education of a harmonious personality in the context of the formation of a higher education strategy. These processes must occur synchronously and not contradict each other. That is why the study of philosophy or cultural studies is no less important than the study of mathematics and physics. In addition, the language of the world is defined not only as a certain lexical set that a person

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can possess, but also rather as a set of inherent knowledge and values that a person constantly implements in relationships with other people.

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Introduction

One of the main dilemmas of a philosophical nature in the formation of a strategy for the development of higher education at the present stage is the dialectic of humanistic and pragmatic orientations. To find the optimal balance in the dichotomy of these principles, one should try to answer the age-old question formulated by one of the founders of philosophical thought — the Greek thinker Aristotle. The content of this question is as follows: is knowledge of absolute value, or is it valuable only in the context of achieving a person’s practical goals, pursuing a specific activity in a real dimension? Many philosophers have tried to answer this question on the basis of their own ideological and value principles, based on the “spirit of the era”, as well as on other objective factors.

A sufficiently detailed and rationally reasoned answer to the above question was found in the works of the German philosopher, statesman Wilhelm von Humboldt, who was forever rooted in the history of his nation’s higher education as a progressive reformer, as well as the founder of the University of Berlin. According to Humboldt, the university is a tool for bringing people together who profess the values of intellectual freedom and peace while supporting a unified research lifestyle. There can be no doubt that the activities of the first European universities, which appeared in the Middle Ages, were based on such philosophical principles. It is known that the first universities in the classical sense were the educational centers of Bologna, Oxford and Cambridge.

Over time, the socio-cultural role of the University has undergone certain changes, but in any case, this hasn’t negated its main goal — to generate qualitatively new knowledge for social progress and improvement of human living conditions. It is obvious that the functioning of universities in the today’s dimensions is devoid of the idealism that was inherent in the earlier stages of society. Modern higher education institutions are deprived of the right to free-thinking, going beyond the existing paradigm of thinking, since their funding is provided by the profile ministry, i.e. the direct executive body in the state. In this case, one can recall the famous British expression, “He who pays the piper calls the tune”. In the context of a permanent economic crisis in the world, it remains for universities to mobilize the available resources to preserve their integrity, forgetting about their eternal mission of spiritual enrichment of society by popularizing humanistic values.

The irrelevant value of the humanitarian knowledge of Antiquity and Modern times in the modern era is being replaced by the relative value attached to pragmatic epistemology. This is particularly evident in the current administrative reforms in the European educational space, where the emphasis of idealistic freedom in higher education and science is shifting towards instrumental “freedom for”. As the modern Greek researcher Andreas Casamias notes, “the EU Discourse on education and training is imbued with an instrumentalistic ethos that views knowledge and culture as a means to achieve economic goals” (Kazamias, 2010: 32). Just on such specific pragmatic grounds, that consider the Humanities as a cognitive and productive
tool, the modern ideal of the European educational policy, called ambitiously the “knowledge society”, is based (Kazamias, 2010: 32).

As it was pointed out by one of the authors of this article in the previous research, modern society is a complex system of implicit and explicit links, which are conditioned by two major transhistorical factors – the authority of social tradition and the objective necessity of a particular era. Against the backdrop of the collision of these diachronic forces, there is a change in the surrounding reality, which has long dragged the conservative and progressive elites into the conflict. The present time is not exceptional, and even more so, the conflict of values of the past and the present has grown on a global scale, embodying almost all spheres of humanity. This applies to the confrontation of globalists and anti-globalists, advocates of centrisms of the national economy and economic cosmopolitans, traditionalists and postmodernists, religious fundamentalists and spiritual liberals, fans of modern art and apologists of art classics, etc. (Terepyshchyi, 2016: 85-86). Education also does not remain outside the outlined conflict, which only increases the relevance of the analysis of this problem.

As rightly noted by the Ukrainian philosopher Sergei Proleiev, “education as a social institution contains a threatening ambivalence. On the one hand, it offers the human person access to the cultural achievements of mankind and opens up opportunities for productive development of the individual, building a creative and successful life scenario. On the other hand, the educational process decomposes and destroys the original personality, produces people for a given social system, re-forms them into typical social characters for a given society. The social system tends to its reproduction simply through the educational system. Thus, it seeks to preserve the stable dispositions of social relations, a set of social roles and a hierarchy of values” (Proleiev, 2007:18). Such a statement gives reason for deep reflection not only to scientists and philosophers, but also to politicians who must realize the severity of this problem and its ambiguous impact on the development of modern society.

When going to University to work or study, everyone should be honest with himself, answering the question-what is the ultimate goal of my activity? It would be naive to think that a large percentage of today’s students will choose to neglect the acquisition of professional skills for the sake of something that will in no way bring them closer to success in the later stages of life. According to Lex Borghans and Frank Cörvers, for example, in the Netherlands, more and more young people prefer higher professional institutions where they teach practical skills without combining science with the educational process. Since 1985, the number of students in Dutch society has ceased to increase, but the growth of the number of people studying in higher professional institutions has significantly intensified. This process is a kind of litmus test, clearly demonstrates the obsolescence of the classical University in the socio-economic context, which pushed European officials to the American course of reforms. After all, this was almost the only way to rehabilitate the pragmatic component of the existence of education, its return to the real economic world (Borhans & Cörvers, 2010: 19-20).

The essence of the European University is the indissoluble unity of different pragmatic purposes, which makes it “obsolete” in the modern strictly functional system. As Karl Jaspers rightly pointed out in his work “The Idea of a University”, “a University is a professional school, a world of learning, a research institution. Between these three possibilities there is an “either-or” and the question is raised: what is actually wanted from the University, after all, it cannot decide everything, it should define one goal for itself. In this latter sense, it is in demand the elimination of the University, and instead of it the formation of special professional schools, educational schools (in the form of special faculties that should serve only education) and
research institutions. However, in the idea of the University, these goals form an indissoluble unity. One goal cannot be separated from the others without destroying the spiritual essence of the University and at the same time destroying itself” (Jaspers, 2006: 66).

There can be no doubt that this trend is not unique to the European socio-cultural space. In particular, in August 2015, by the decision of the Japanese government, the Departments of Humanities were eliminated in most national universities. Politicians explain this decision by the fact that these units are “unnecessary” for the development of the country (Grove, 2015). The Japanese education system has long adopted the American pattern of education for economic development. The partial elimination of humanitarianism from the structure of the educational system is, in fact, a radical way to accelerate the process of pragmatization of education, its compliance with the international model. Indeed, humanitarian education and science respond to external transformations too slowly, it is a kind of “ballast” of the innovation movement. On the other hand, it is difficult to overestimate the role of the disciplines of the humanitarian cycle in the processes of solving acute social conflicts within a society that suffers from a lack of understanding at the ideological and value level. It is one thing to teach a student how to solve a particular problem in a math class, it is quite another to cultivate a humanistic — oriented personality in this person. Both the first and the second require high pedagogical skills, an individual approach to each applicant for education and a sincere desire of the teacher to make the world a better place by training each student. Many scientists have focused already in their works on the fact that higher education as a tool for peace-building is significantly underestimated (Milton & Barakat, 2016; Novelli & Smith, 2011; Pacheco & Johnson, 2014; Svyrydenko, 2019). The content of these scientific publications is the theoretical and methodological basis for this article. In the following paragraphs, it is proposed to elaborate on the philosophical analysis of certain works, entering into a kind of academic discussion with its authors.

**Theoretical and methodological framework of the research**

The main methods used in the process of preparing the manuscript of this article — scientific reflection, deduction and abstraction, gave the authors the opportunity to carry out a thorough analysis of the original sources listed below and get their own non-standard, original conclusions. First of all, it should be stared with the understanding of the key ideas of Sansom Milton and Sultan Barakat, which are of great importance in the context of writing this work, because it pursues the identical task — to eliminate gaps in the understanding of the impact of higher education on society in conflict.

The authors suggest several directions where the universities should move in full consolidation— stabilization and securitization, reconstruction, state-creation and peacebuilding. Together, they form a single system that focuses on strengthening state structures, restoring people’s trust in government, and respect for members of society to each other. Based on the study of individual cases of various military conflicts from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Sierra Leone, scientists emphasized aptly that the intelligentsia, scientific and pedagogical staff of universities had been often subjected to harassment and outright bullying, which significantly “tied their hands” in the dissemination of humanistic values (Milton & Barakat, 2016). When the question is about a crisis at the level of academic freedom and intellectual capital, it becomes obvious that the material and technical base in universities is even more neglected.
It is impossible to ignore the fact that sometimes higher education causes even more harm to post-conflict rehabilitation of society, when instead of calling people to reconciliation, it reflects all negative phenomena that are inherent in a certain society as a whole – interracial or interreligious hostility, segregation, conflict of political ideologies, and so on. As a confirmation I would like to quote: “However, higher education can in some contexts have negative socialisation effects that work counter to reconciliation and conflict transformation. For instance, during and after conflict universities in Bosnia and Lebanon became split along confessional lines. In these cases, higher education institutions reflect the social context of conflict and function as perpetuators of conflictual identities rather than as arenas of social transformation. In another case, in response to post-war violence in Iraq — which escalated in 2005 and peaked in 2007 — many faculty members were killed, threatened, and harassed often for their ascribed identity. As a result, university staff left their posts and displacement of academics occurred along ethno-sectarian divides. Individual universities came to be associated with sectarian and political divides. For example, Al-Mustansiriya was perceived as a Shiite institution while Al-Nahrain was seen as a Sunni institution. Once “mixed” universities such as Basra and Mosul came to be relatively homogeneous. While this de facto separation positively influenced the short-term security of campuses, the “ethnic enclave” model has been less beneficial in contributing to long-term peacebuilding goals of overcoming conflict through promoting inter-communal understanding and social cohesion” (Milton & Barakat, 2016: 414). Therefore, sometimes higher education is also able to throw its negativeness into the center of the conflict, contributing nothing to mutual understanding between people, but rather the opposite. Therefore, in our opinion, timely consensus-building within universities and their collective decision-making in the context of the development of higher education as a tool for transforming the dominant triggers of conflict and peace-building is crucial thing in this case.

A thorough understanding of the scientific article by Ivan Pacheco and Turner Johnson is useful for our work, because it is a comparative analysis of two seemingly non-identical conflict situations in Colombia and Kenya, and on the basis of this, specific proposals are made to determine the architecture of the world-wide processes for the participation of educational stakeholders. The authors propose to consider peace building not only as a situational perspective in the development of the educational industry, but also as a permanent vector of stabilization of society: “Peacebuilding, as a role of higher education, must be more than just a reaction to conflict, it must be infused into the purpose of higher education in fragile states. Providing opportunities to universities to play a role in peacebuilding an funding university activities in conflict abatement may contribute to a new discourse and sustainable responses to violence” (Pacheco & Johnson, 2014: 6). Except it, they compared various initiatives of higher education institutions and ranged them on the indexes of the productivity.

It is worth adding that the performance of universities and other institutions of higher education in the context of peace-building does not depend on the signing of inter-state agreements at the political and diplomatic level. Scientific and pedagogical staff of higher educational institutions can always promote a dialogue method of communication in society, conduct various trainings and master classes to disseminate modern methods of overcoming conflicts, develop critical thinking, reduce the unemployment rate by means of higher education, promote the demobilization of combatants, and provide psychological assistance in refugee camps, even if this is not provided at the legislative level. After all, it is well known that in emergency situations, the worst thing is to delay and wait for the command “from
above”. By the way, in previous studies, the authors of this article have already developed a certain method of non-violent interaction in the academic environment, which can be found in the open access at the specified link (Terepyshchyi & Khomenko, 2019).

Continuing the presentation of this work, it should be noted that the content of the prepared document with the participation of Mario Novelli and Alan Smith interests us in that it offers an original vision for the creation of educational programs and implementation of various educational initiatives that would strengthen the activities of the UN in laying a solid and reliable Foundation for further peace-building. Novelli and Smith make it clear that the education sector cannot continue to remain on the periphery of society in emergency conditions: “Crucially, education is not a marginal player in peacebuilding, but a core component of building sustainable peace. Peacebuilding is essentially about supporting the transformative process any post-conflict society needs to go through and these change processes unfold over generations. In the short to medium term, external peacebuilding support is aimed at assisting the society to develop the resilience needed to prevent a lapse into violent conflict, and in the medium to longer term the emphasis shifts to developing the resilience needed for self-sustainable peace” (Novelli & Smith, 2011: 37).

Moreover, we support the idea that education in the educational sphere should begin at the value level. Unbiased educational experts and scientists should jointly analyze what values are translated within the national educational system and on what philosophical principles one or another educational model is based. In our opinion, it is important that it is dominated by centripetal rather than centrifugal tendencies. This will be the first really significant step towards a harmonious society in which violence can only be encountered on the pages of individual textbooks or manuals.

The authors of the last but no less important work, which will be discussed now, are Denys Svyrydenko, Chengzhang Zou and Weizhen Gao. Their article is devoted to the consideration of higher education as a tool for peace-building and decolonization on the example of the situation in Ukraine. The authors scientifically prove that the design of a progressive educational policy in the field of peace-building requires a critical study of international experience, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in particular. However, blind borrowing of foreign practices is absolutely destructive phenomenon that can lead to the formation of a false trajectory in the development of society. No less important one is the proposal of scientists to create separate training modules in universities within the existing disciplines: “It is advisable to develop a model program for peacebuilding for students of all specialties. Taking into account international experience (schools of peace, education camps for peace, etc.), there is a need for the introduction of a special training course on the foundations of peacebuilding in universities. Also, it is necessary to offer separate educational modules in the curriculum of disciplines: “Politics”, “Law”, “History of Ukraine”, “Philosophy”, “Philosophy of education”, “Educational policy”, etc. These modules for existing programs on various humanitarian disciplines will increase the reach of potential participants in the peacebuilding process. The proposed changes in the content of education will comprehensively cover the problems of internally displaced persons, mediation, non-violent interaction, education of tolerance, opposition to propaganda, development of critical thinking, etc.” (Svyrydenko, et al., 2019: 53). It is not surprising that the vast majority of the disciplines proposed here are the part of a unite complex called humanitarianism.
Discussion

Taking into account the previous opinions and views of scientists, we should return to the main dilemma in this work — the correlation of humanistic and pragmatic orientations in the context of choosing a successful trajectory of higher education development. As it has been emphasized in the previous part of this work, it is impossible to neglect the humanistic component of higher education in any case, because now we are talking about the future of civilization by educating new generations of the progressive-minded young people. It is obvious that the University should be focused on the needs of society, namely its economic and socio-cultural dimensions. However, we cannot allow the University to be downplayed as a “factory of professions” or, even worse, as a “factory of diplomas”.

In this context, it is advisable to pay attention to the reflections of the British scientist Michael Gibbons, who believes that the changes taking place in the academic space of Europe are natural and are consequences of a key factor in the university crisis— massification of the studies. “Massification is due to the fact that the university departments have been the main places of scientific development. But more and more often in our era, researches are also being carried out in other places, in particular, such as different enterprises”. This, in turn, leads to natural changes that deprive the University of the privileged status of a scientific monopoly and put the latter in a situation of typical capitalist competition (Gibbons, 1994: 76).

We like the position of some postmodernist theorists in education, according to whom the University must meet the social situation that surrounds it in order to realize both humanistic and pragmatic goals. It can no longer be the standard of the detached “unselfishness” that is promoted in Humboldt’s ideas and must accept the necessary social role and laws of the market. This view, in particular, is supported by the British researcher Peter Scott, who also notes that the university should expand its functions to an institution engaged in life-long learning and even leisure (Scott, 1997). Because of this, at any cost, universities should maintain the teaching of Humanities, which are focused not so much on practical skills as on the development of personal worldview. After all, their goal is not to train, say, philosophers, cultural scientists, but rather to spread humanistic values in society to a wide range.

Moreover, we are convinced that students of higher educational institutions should study both fundamental and applied Sciences. This will help in expanding the horizons of their thinking, which will focus on constructive actions and activities, operating by the language of peace, not by the language of war. The language of the peace means not only a certain vocabulary that a person can possess, but rather a set of inherent knowledge and values that it represents in relations with other people, carriers of non-identical life principles. It is important to emphasize that knowledge of the language of the peace in the dimensions of modernity requires a high level of intelligence and intellectuality, which is manifested in respect for other people regardless of their skin color, ethnic origin, religious or political position. After all, history has known many cases when extremely intelligent and educated people, having received power, lost their minds, a persistent sense of the earth under their feet, condemning individual Nations and States to genocide, collective suicide, and so on.

Today, many educators proclaim child-centrism and human-centrism, but these slogans are only manifested in the fact that teachers put the success of their work in dependence on the success of students, but they do not set themselves the goal to cultivate the desire for self-sufficiency. The education of this trait would not only help in combating the many problems and doubts of pupils and students (inferiority complex), but it would also help in establishing the
true subject-subject relations in the pedagogical communication between teacher and student, professor and student, it will form an important platform for the development of a responsible and democratic society of a new type in which politicians will fulfill the will of the citizens exclusively, forgetting about personal interests, but remembering the interests of the state. To some extent, this statement may be perceived as too idealistic, but it is an important point of support in political decision-making.

A teacher, like a politician, must not only speak eloquently about humanistic values in front of an audience of his listeners, but also reproduce them in their own actions in relation to members of society. Betty Reardon, Director of the higher education program at the center for peace and peaceful education at Columbia University’s teachers College, points out that teachers and politicians must share a common goal: to maintain peace on a local and global scale, to respect the rights of each individual, and to allow him to find his place in society. In one of her most fundamental work, the American researcher argues that achieving peace requires the elimination of such negative phenomena as sexism, racism, nationalism, poverty, elite education, militarism, etc. (Reardon, 1988). On this basis, the effectiveness of the national strategy for the development of higher education as a tool for peace-building should be evaluated, taking into account the presence or absence of these phenomena in the educational sector. Because if nationalism takes place in the educational sector, it cannot be eradicated from the society itself.

The same applies to refugees, who should get a chance to integrate into a certain social community through the educational space. In particular, Jacqueline Mosselson, rightly points out that “education creates a space in which a refugee can retreat from the labels of “exotic” or “alien”, one becomes a “student”, at the same time experience silences their refugee status. Refugees often talk about how others viewed them as different, which caused a sense of unease and anxiety that was directed at them by teachers during the first few months after resettlement. Over time, as they studied longer and became more integrated into the University space, they no longer described the wary attitude of classmates and teachers; once seen, they were perceived already as students, not as refugees” (Mosselson, 2011: 16). The ability of education to assimilate cultures, to create conditions for the emergence of tolerance and dialogue is one of the significant auxiliary functions in the modern post-globalization world.

If the classical University of the Old World was based on the justification of the ideology of the national state, in modern transnational conditions, educational institutions are already based on General planetary social myths. The following rhetoric is evident in the text of the Yerevan communique (May 2015): “We will support the efforts of higher education institutions to develop intercultural understanding, critical thinking, political and religious tolerance, gender equality, democratic and civic values to strengthen European and global citizenship and lay the Foundation for inclusive societies” (YerevanCommunique, 2015). Such a definition of the key directions of higher education development shows that in the modern world it is impossible to focus only on humanistic or pragmatic values, because this will inevitably lead to an imbalance, the growth of crisis phenomena in society.

One of these phenomena, which I would like to dwell on separately, is increasing poverty, caused, among other things, by disproportionate access to the resources of the world around us. While the citizens of some countries of the European continent have a high level of material well-being, intellectual development and remain optimistic about the future of their children, in other societies there is actual genocide and outright discrimination of the population. It is not surprising that permanent poverty leads to an increase in violence within individual
countries, since weapon in this case is a symbol of mistrust of the local population in relation to the authorities and hatred of the oligarchic clans that used to parasitize on the consumption of the economic goods. If one looks at the past from the perspective of the present, it can be seen that in war, as a rule, the socially disadvantaged segments of the population are killed, while the political elite only enriches its fortune. It is obvious that without a change in this trend, there is no point in even hoping for a peaceful resolution of existing conflicts.

We firmly believe that the main value of education in modern society is to overcome the spiritual and material poverty of mankind. We assume that it is impossible to implement this intention within a single state, which means that politicians and educational diplomats should unite with each other and provide concrete proposals at the international level to solve this problem. Higher education should also be involved in this process, as a tool for the development of critical thinking, collective spirit and solidarity of the entire world community.

Conclusions

Thus, in forming the strategy for the development of higher education, it is necessary to avoid extremes regarding the correlation of humanistic and pragmatic orientations, despite the harsh realities of the modern world. Universities must be ready to prepare simultaneously new generations of young people for the unstable economic situation, instilling deep humanistic ideals, as well as provide them with the opportunity to acquire practical skills that will become possible in the subsequent stages of life. The scientific component in universities should generate new knowledge focused on solving current social problems, accustoming education applicants to comprehensive, critical thinking. If earlier in higher educational institutions it was possible to observe a kind of confrontation between “physicists” and “lyricists”, today this makes no sense. Scientists should unite in order to develop a common “road map” in the direction of overcoming poverty, various forms of human discrimination, conflict-prone society. Therefore, every scientific research must become not only practically deterministic, but also humanistically oriented.

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