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## EUROPEANIZATION AND THE LOCAL POLITICAL CULTURE AS CHALLENGES FOR PUBLIC POLICY IN THE SLOVAK-UKRAINIAN BORDERLAND

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**Abstract.** *This article focuses on the interaction between local factors and the process of Europeanization as a factor of both residents' political orientations and public policy in the Kosice and Presov border regions of Slovakia and the Zakarpattia region of Ukraine. The study used data collected via the Delphi method along with statistical empirics, contemporary notions of Europeanization, and border and local studies to find answers to the main research questions. Local factors resulting from the historical path of development have a significant influence on residents' political culture and public policy, as demonstrated by nepotism, a general hostility toward elites, and a difference in activism between urban and rural areas. However, there is already evidence that the political culture in the Slovak-Ukrainian borderland and the relevant policy process have been significantly impacted by Europeanization. Both public participation in local and regional development and the influence of non-governmental organizations serve as examples of this trend. Changes in the political culture of borderland residents under the influence of other factors are not, however, the focus of this article, and will be an issue for future research.*

**Keywords:** *public policy, local political culture; Europeanization; borderland; local/regional development.*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *viešoji politika; lokalinė politinė kultūra; europeizavimas; pasienio regionas; regionų vystymas.*

## Introduction

Models of interaction between elites and citizens in border regions, as well as their orientations toward political action, are elements that either support or pose threats to the security of both neighbor states and have an impact on the region's economic prosperity. This is important both for the western regions of Ukraine – which was granted European Union candidate status in June 2022 as an unexpected positive result of Russia's full-scale invasion – and for the eastern regions of the Central European countries, which have been members of the EU for around 20 years. On the Slovak-Ukrainian border (the territory of *Kosice* and *Presov kraj* in Slovakia and *Zakarpattia oblast* in Ukraine), existing integration and differentiating factors between residents of neighboring regions both before and under the contradictory conditions of war and accelerated European integration should be investigated in detail. The Slovak-Ukrainian border can act as a testing ground for the study of the role of political culture among the citizens of neighboring countries as a factor of the security and development of the territory, without taking into account latent political or historical conflicts that can overshadow other orientations of citizens in borderlands in the case of Hungary, Romania or Poland.

In the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war and, at the same time, deepening European integration, it is important to study how cultural matrices affect the involvement of borderland residents in public policy and how these guidelines determine their assessments of the situation in the neighboring state and its citizens. We also assume that local factors are important and will continue to have an impact on citizens' political culture and behavior in Central Europe in the 2020s, while also being shaped by the external influence of Europeanization.

Taking into account the current state of play, the aim of this study is to determine the mutual influence of local factors and the Europeanization process on the political orientations of residents of the Slovak-Ukrainian borderland. Since the concept of political culture became vibrant in political science in the 1970s, it has been perceived as one of the most popular concepts, and, at the same time, one of the most controversial and confusing. Therefore, since theorizing about the content of the concept of political culture is not the subject of our research, we shall use the classical definition of political culture as a particular pattern of orientations to political action (Almond 1956, 396).

The following general *research questions* are examined in this article:

*RQ 1. Do local factors caused by the historical path of development still have an impact on the political orientations of residents in the Slovak and Ukrainian parts of the borderland?*

*RQ 2. Does the Europeanization of the policymaking process have an impact on the political behavior of the residents of neighboring regions?*

Generally, the answers to these questions will help to define in what way residents' political orientations influence the development of the peripheral regions of Slovakia and Ukraine.

## Methodology

*Neo-institutionalism* is the main methodological approach that can be used to study political processes that are developing at the local/regional level because it allows one to account for the influence of both formalized political structures and informal rules of political interaction. This approach defines formal institutions and organizations as those that hold legitimate power within the political system, while informal institutions are defined as agreements between individuals, traditions, and moral codes. Although it is possible to change legal rules quickly, historical development and cultural patterns impede the change of rules developed within informal institutions (North 1990). Citizens' political culture is also regarded as a component of the *local/regional political system*, alongside relevant public authority institutions and political party infrastructure.

Ronald Inglehart's theory of *post-material political culture* was applied to the selection of indicators used for the measurement of the key elements of the political culture in the Slovak and Ukrainian border regions. The first step in analyzing a society is to determine how effectively its citizens can express themselves, how well its democracy is working, how well the economy is doing, and whether or not democratic institutions have ever existed there (Inglehart and Welzel 2003, 64).

*The Delphi Method* was used as the main method for gathering empirical data because it provides the most precise interpretation of public sentiment based on the opinions of experts in the political, economic, and social spheres. This approach enables the development of a predictive model of the phenomenon or process – in this case, at the regional and local scale – in addition to carrying out an up-to-date analysis of citizens' political views (Dixon 2004). The following list summarizes the main features of the Delphi Method: 1) *repeatability* – experts must respond to the inquiry at least twice, allowing them to modify their responses in light of the responses of other experts; 2) *answer confidentiality* – which helps prevent unintentional influence on experts' responses; 3) *controllability* – study coordinators' control over feedback; and 4) *the statistical dimension* – responses must be written in a way that allows for quantitative and statistical analysis (Landeta 2006).

To achieve the goal of this study, a survey of experts using the Delphi Method was conducted in January–March 2022. The research involved eight experts with both research and practical experience in order to ascertain the cultural orientations of the residents of the neighboring Slovakian and Ukrainian regions with the least amount of uncertainty. Four of the experts who participated in the study were from Slovakia, more specifically from the *Kosice* and *Presov* regions, and four were from the Ukrainian region of *Zakarpattia*. It should be taken into account that the research was carried out just before Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine (which began on February 24, 2022), and before Ukraine was granted EU candidate status on June 23 of the same year. Some data gathered earlier or later are also used when there are no mistakes regarding their correlation with experts' opinions.

## The state of art

The concept of *political culture*, introduced into research circulation in the 1960s and then somewhat forgotten, was reborn two decades later for the analysis of democratization that began in Southern Europe and Latin America. Cultural factors began to be considered as belonging to the list of prerequisites for the success of democratization and the consolidation of this regime. According to the classical definition, political culture has three aspects, or more precisely, forms of human orientation towards politics: cognitive, emotional (affective), and evaluative (Almond and Verba 1980).

The possibility of the division of *local (regional) political subcultures* was brought up by proponents of the theory of political culture in the last quarter of the 20th century as part of the study of urban policy in the USA (Stone 1993). Civil society is viewed in communities as something that is not opposed to a “hostile political universe,” but that has the freedom to participate in local government and that affects the cultural orientations of residents.

At the same time, the cultural orientations of citizens are also determined by external factors, chief among which for the inhabitants of the “old continent” is *Europeanization*. This is viewed as the process of developing, institutionalizing, and disseminating formal and informal rules, practices, styles of political behavior, shared ideals and values that were initially developed within the political process in the EU and then added to the national political environment (Radaelli 2000). To conceptualize the phenomenon of Europeanization, we can take the stance that it has multiple dimensions, including the following: 1) the process of EU expansion; 2) the development of European supranational governance structures; 3) the introduction of European processes inside national political systems; 4) the export of political organization forms; and 5) the project of the political unification of Europe (Olsen 2002). Europeanization supports changes in the political cultures of national interest groups in favor of a more proactive strategy for influencing policy processes. However, it has not yet been sufficiently considered how these changes have affected interactions between governments and citizens.

*Border studies* give research a different perspective when it comes to the communities and neighboring regions of two states. After the start of post-communist democratization, these borders were no longer perceived only as political and legal lines that separate sovereign states, but instead as a system of demarcations – including visible natural boundaries and invisible social, cultural, linguistic, and interfaith boundaries – the purpose of which is to mark the division between “us” and “them” (Kolosov and Więckowski 2018). One of the main notions used within border studies is the concept of *borderland*. In short, researchers define such zones as spaces surrounding the borders between states that are lagging behind the state’s centers in terms of economic and technological development (Koch 2019, 73).

We must also point out that over the past 20 years a number of studies on the development of the Slovak-Ukrainian borderland have been published. Particularly, the legal base of cross-border cooperation between the regional and local governments of Slovakia and Ukraine, the impact of European integration on the range of powers, and the areas

where cooperation is most successful or unsuccessful, have been studied (Duleba 2019; Lacny 2021; Lendel 2021). Nevertheless, the “game” between local politics and European public policy along the Slovakian-Ukrainian border, as well as the unspoken political rules in this region, remain unexplored. Due to time restrictions, the findings on the influence of Ukrainians’ migration to Slovakia during the Russian invasion on the attitudes of Eastern Slovaks toward Ukrainians will only be made public from a short-term, at best, perspective. We hope that this article will serve as a starting point for this research.

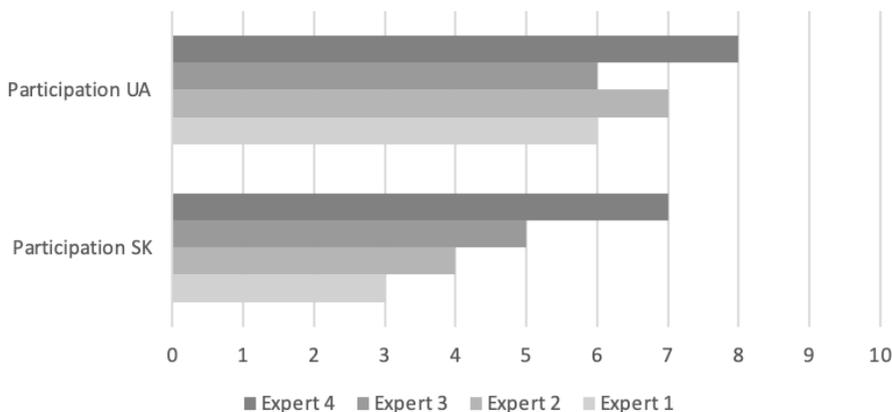
## Empirical findings

The historical legacy of development, which perfectly aligns with the content of the path-dependency concept, is one of the factors that contribute to the peculiarities of the political culture of the residents of the Slovak-Ukrainian borderland. In general, the historical trajectories of the border regions of Slovakia and Ukraine share some characteristics, such as Austria-Hungary’s neglect of local residents’ interests, “Magyarization” and the suppression of national consciousness, and the devaluation of regional culture. Since the turn of the 20th century, the region has seen a rise in national pride and the beginning of the fight for independence from the Habsburg monarchy. In light of this, it makes sense to draw the conclusion that the historical development of national self-awareness, which has been undergoing change under various state and political regimes over the past century and today, has influenced how Slovaks and Ukrainians view politics, particularly in their local communities.

In addition, we adhere to the hypothesis that local, historically determined factors that have influenced the political orientations of citizens on the Slovak-Ukrainian border since the turn of the 21st century have begun to combine with the influence of Europeanization. Initially, this happened in Eastern Slovakia, which began to converge with European practices before official accession to the EU in 2004; during the last few years, it has been happening in Ukrainian Zakarpattia.

Inglehart’s theory of post-material culture can be used to determine the elements that appeared in the traditional political norms under the influence of modern external factors – i.e., the trends of Europeanization. According to this approach, citizens’ political orientations and behaviors must meet certain criteria (Inglehart and Welzel 2003, 64). The collective active political position of citizens, which includes the following, is one of the best signs of the prevailing modern political culture: 1) *involvement in territorial development and discussion of particular issues with elite representatives*; 2) *election participation*; and 3) *contacting the local/regional representatives, submitting petitions, requests, etc.*

Figure 1 depicts the opinions of Slovak and Ukrainian experts who participated in the Delphi survey regarding the participation of borderland residents in the formulation of spatial development policy, which corresponds to Inglehart’s first criterion. The concept of Europeanization involves the implementation of policies vital for the EU in the national environments of member states and candidates. One of them is the policy of cohesion and regional development.



**Figure 1.** UA and SK citizens' participation in regional development processes

Source: (Rishko 2023, 269)

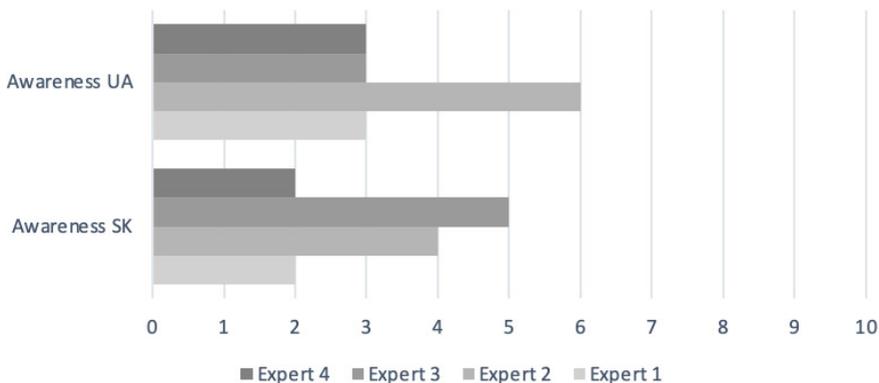
The main barriers to citizens' involvement in the creation of regional development strategies in the Kosice and Presov kraj, according to Slovak experts, were indicated as follows: 1) *insufficient expertise in long-term planning*; 2) *lack of enthusiasm on the part of municipalities to inform the public and involve citizens in regional development planning*; and 3) *inadequate human resources*. Experts involved from the Slovak side generally agree that the main problem is the regional authorities' refusal to consult with the expert community about the necessity of particular policies.

Despite some negatives in the evaluation of citizen participation in regional governance, experts also emphasized the benefits brought about by Slovakia's early-2000s public administration reform. The decentralization of EU member states means the competence of municipalities/regions to begin cooperating with foreign partners on this territorial scale and is crucial for both European integration and vital democracy. A fundamental change has been made in how citizens evaluate regional development. Particularly, the elected authorities must keep the public informed daily about the progress in implementing the regional development strategy and potential solutions to problems. However, besides certain opportunities, experts do not give the level of citizen involvement in the political life of the Kosice and Presov regions high marks.

The evaluation of the responses of Ukrainian experts focused on the level of citizen participation in developing regional policies is slightly higher. According to them, decentralization, which began in Ukraine in 2015, has a favorable impact on this process. It is critical to stress that although the EU strongly supported this reform, it did not make it one of Ukraine's integration requirements.

Regardless of the average participation indicators, both Slovakian and Ukrainian experts agreed that correlation by region would vary in the core and periphery because people in cities are more engaged in discussing local issues than those in rural areas. It is

significant to note that all experts gave low ratings to the degree of citizen awareness of carrying out regional projects and fundraising (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** UA and SK citizens' awareness concerning regional projects

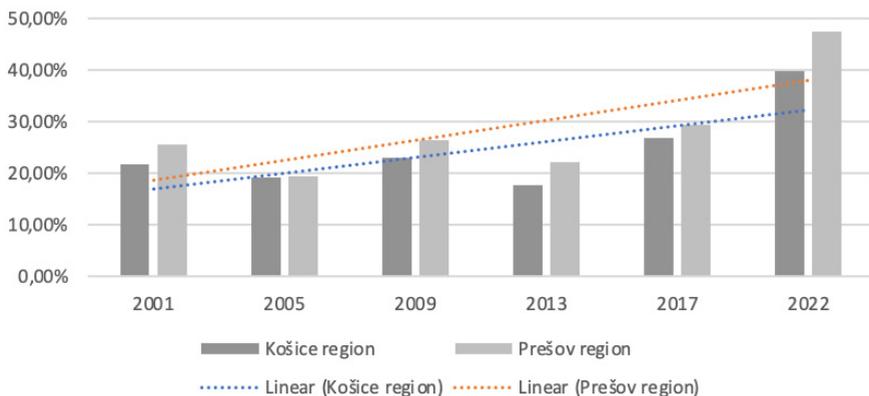
Source: (Rishko 2023, 270)

Despite the citizens of the Presov and Kosice regions' relatively low level of involvement in cross-border cooperation, which is caused by the political elites' lack of interest in informing them, Slovak experts claim that public awareness of regional development during the pre-election campaigns was relatively high due to communication between voters and candidates. Elites and the public in the Slovak-Ukrainian borderland continue to have low levels of awareness regarding the possibility of using EU funds as a tool for spatial development. The main obstacles to pursuing these opportunities, according to all experts, are a lack of knowledge, expertise, and administrative constraints. Regional elites are generally less aware of opportunities for cross-border cooperation than local elites, according to Slovak experts. The difference in citizens' awareness of fundraising for projects between residents of villages and cities was mentioned by Ukrainian experts.

Experts also evaluated the level of both electoral activity and trust that Slovakian and Ukrainian borderland residents had in local/regional elites. In October 2022, Slovakia held its first-ever combined regional/local elections, choosing council representatives, mayors, and leaders of districts and regions. This change contributed to a higher turnout (Figure 3), and experts contend that this is a result of the elites' improved performance during the pandemic, which raised public interest in local politics.

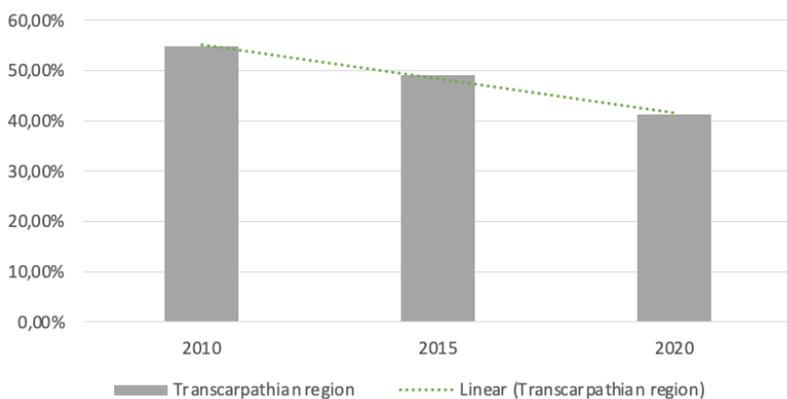
It is crucial to take note of another trend that first became apparent during this campaign. The majority of the deputies who were elected to regional councils have declared themselves independent. This is a result of disagreements among the major political parties represented in the parliament, which resulted in the dissolution of the coalition and the calling of early elections in September 2023. Independents make up 22 of the 57

deputies in the Kosice region and 27 of 65 in Presov region. In both cases, candidates for governors who had already been elected in 2017 were re-elected. The trend of electing independent candidates suggests a high level of trust in local authorities. The experts in this study assigned a trust score of 7–8 to regional (local) elites, on a scale of 1 to 10.



**Figure 3.** *Voter turnout in SK on regional elections (Kosice, Presov self-governing regions)*  
Source: SME Vol'by (2022)

To begin an analysis of election activity in the Ukrainian borderland, we must examine the results of voter participation in local (regional) elections in the Zakarpattia region from 2010 to 2020 (the last election campaign; Figure 4) in order to compare the level of electoral activism and trust in politicians in the borderland.



**Figure 4.** *Voter turnout in UA local (regional) elections (Zakarpattia region)*  
Source: Ukrinform (2020)

When we examine the graph of participation in elections in Zakarpattia, we can observe a trend of waning public interest in the political life of the area. During the local (regional) elections in 2020, this pattern was noticeable not only in this area but also across the whole of Ukraine. Political scientist Oleh Saakian noted: “Epidemic threats have become the main factor in the decrease in voter turnout. An additional factor was the apathy as a result of the activities of the political elite, but it was the pandemic that kept a significant portion of voters from going to the polls” (Saakian 2020).

Contrary to Slovakian respondents, none of the Ukrainian experts had any positive opinions about locals’ trust in political elites. The main arguments used by Ukrainian citizens of Zakarpattia to justify their disregard have been systematized into the list of local cultural factors below: 1) *nepotism among the elite and overt corruption are important issues*; 2) *management structures’ incompetence and negligence*; and 3) *residents’ disappointment stemming from unfulfilled election-related promises*.

Despite widespread dissatisfaction with governance, in 2022 residents of the Zakarpattia region, according to experts, attempted to ignore or minimize this negative stand to preserve tolerance and cohesion because of the challenges caused by Russia’s invasion. On the other hand, particularly during this time of war, local politicians are trying to attract voters’ attention by interacting with the media more and giving back to the community. Because of their close ties to Hungarian-speaking minorities and their support for the organization of humanitarian initiatives in the Zakarpattia region, experts claim that the presence of Hungarian parties in the area also increases voter loyalty.

According to Ukrainian experts, the large number of internally displaced persons (IDP) in the Zakarpattia region will contribute to a change in the political elite, particularly with regard to the group that gave most aid to the new residents during the war. There will be a sizable number of IDPs who remain in the area; in this case, there will undoubtedly be changes in political culture and behavior. According to experts that were surveyed, there has also been an increase in interest in local/regional politics as a result of the active implementation of decentralization in Ukraine. According to our forecasts, two new trends – the departure of a large number of citizens from other regions and the growth of interest in politics – will significantly affect the local political culture.

As was already mentioned, in addition to local factors, the behavior of individuals in politics is always influenced by external events: nationwide radical changes or the adaptation of the political system to a supranational one. This is exactly the kind of influence observed on the bordering regions of Slovakia and Ukraine in the context of the acceleration of European integration.

The decision to accept Ukraine as an EU candidate in June 2022 was a significant step in the rise of pro-European political elites. According to a sociological survey conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, the western and central regions of Ukraine have the strongest support for joining the EU (European Integration Portal 2022).

In addition to the data from sociological surveys, experts involved in the Delphi study also emphasize the Euro-optimism of residents of the Zakarpattia region. However, both Slovak and Ukrainian participants were confident in the need for citizens to be informed

about the socioeconomic development of the border territories of Ukraine after it joins the EU. It is necessary to communicate with residents to convince them that EU programs, as well as political and management Europeanization practices, will contribute to the wellbeing of the population. These opinions are currently connected to the EU member states' increased support for Ukraine in the war with Russia

Also important to note is that the Slovakian experts suggested that there are also Eurosceptic sentiments present in the area. These opinions are reflections of issues with public media and education that are brought on by anti-European organizations. The main prerequisite is citizens' dissatisfaction with their socioeconomic situation, which leads to protests against the government as a whole. Despite having been members of the EU for almost two decades, Slovaks still need to be made more aware of it, which is another important consideration. Slovakian Euroscepticism is also linked to an optimistic view of the "good old days," or the communist era. This tendency is linked to increasing populist sentiments on the negative influence of the war on the economy of Slovakia.

Local (regional) civil society organizations continue to play a significant role in how postmodern political culture functions, especially under the challenge of Euroscepticism. According to all experts, residents of self-governing regions such as Presov and Kosice are interested in joining NGOs to impact regional/local development. These types of organizations also support the development of the Kosice and Presov regions in a variety of fields, including the environment, education, sports, and culture.

According to Ukrainian experts, citizens of the Zakarpattia region are becoming more interested in starting NGOs or interacting with existing organizations and volunteer initiatives which, in contrast to the political elite, inspires more trust on both a local and cross-border level. We have to mention that Zakarpattia, as a border region of Ukraine, has already seen the emergence of a vast network of NGOs whose activities are very vital in the conditions of the war. They are heavily involved in regional/local politics, cross-border cooperation, and the social sphere. These organizations' primary spheres of activity are as follows: 1) *volunteer groups* (IDP aid, material and technical support for the military); 2) *protection of the environment*; 3) *preventing unauthorized construction*; 4) *support of decentralization*; 5) *education of different groups of citizens*; 6) *activities in the cultural field*; 7) *participation in cross-border and international projects*; 8) *research projects*, etc.

There is every reason to claim that the Ukrainian part of the borderland has developed the same civic structures as the residents of Eastern Slovakia. In the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, there is also a thriving volunteer and charitable sector whose assistance has greatly benefited IDPs. For instance, the Carpathian Foundation, an international organization that has a representative office in Uzhhorod, has assisted a few charitable initiatives to aid IDPs since the start of the war (Shokina, 2022).

According to experts from Slovakia, NGOs also assisted the government in addressing crises brought on by the large influx of migrants from Ukraine. The government's ability to address all of the demands made by society during this time period was hampered by the crisis in parliament that resulted in the breakdown of the government coali-

tion at the beginning of September 2022. However, Slovakia is in 11th place in the ranking of support for Ukraine by nation (Bomprezzi et al., n.d.).

Despite the fact that we study political culture, focusing on the concept of post-materiality, the *well-being of citizens, influenced by economic development*, is a factor that still influences their political behavior in this region of Europe. When discussing the socio-economic analysis of the borderland, it is important to note that Kosice and Presov kraj are regions where GDP level is among the lowest in the EU. The per-capita GDP of the Kosice region represents 85.1% of the national GDP, and in the Presov region this figure is only 61.4% of the national GDP (data as of 2021). Due to poor infrastructure and a low level of service, there are very few jobs in the area, especially in small towns and villages. However, Kosice is currently evolving as a logistical, industrial, and educational hub. Another significant regional investment mechanism is the machine-building industry, which is also starting to develop. According to experts, this industry will create around 3,000 direct and 10,000 indirect jobs.

Labor migration from Ukraine is an essential tool for the development of the Slovak borderland, as the high rate of emigration of Slovaks from the eastern regions to the west gradually reduces the workforce. This causes Ukrainians to impact demand and boost competition in the labor market, according to the statements of the experts that participated in the survey. Experts anticipate a further rise in migration from Ukraine to Slovakia due to the removal of the border as a barrier to labor migration, based on the economic growth of the Kosice region and new employment opportunities.

According to Ukrainian experts, the poor economic development of the border region, the high unemployment rate, the low wages (particularly in rural areas), and the proximity to EU states were the primary causes of the increase in migration from the Zakarpattia region to the EU prior to February 24, 2022, which caused a depopulation trend. After the beginning of Russia's invasion, however, more than half a million IDP from other parts of Ukraine migrated to Zakarpattia, thereby altering its socioeconomic and cultural patterns. However, the consequences of this demographic shift will be the focus of a future research article, as well as other factors influencing the local political culture.

## Conclusions

This study carried out an analysis of expert opinions and relevant statistical data, and the conclusions of other researchers allows us to react to the identified research questions.

1. *Do local factors caused by the historical path of development still have an impact on the political orientations of residents in the Slovak and Ukrainian portions of the borderland?*

As it transpires, the influence of local factors has both positive and negative consequences for post-material political culture. Historical traditions of coexistence in multi-ethnic states, such as Austria-Hungary and the Czechoslovak Republic, led to a high level of tolerance towards representatives of other socio-demographic groups, not the ideol-

ogy of their political activity. On the other hand, nepotism, and, as a result, a negative assessment of the elites by citizens; a lack of professionals who can deal with spatial development, particularly in rural, remote areas, and a trend towards Euroscepticism are obstacles to active citizen participation – in particular in rural, remote areas.

2. *Does the Europeanization of the policymaking process have an impact on the political behavior of the residents of the neighboring region?*

Despite strong signs of conservative culture on the Slovak-Ukrainian border, which does not promote participation in local and regional politics, staying in or approaching the accession to the EU significantly affects their political orientations. First of all, even to a limited extent, political elites, more local than regional, communicate with residents every day to develop strategies, programs, or development projects. Even if this is a tribute to the necessary rules of creating politics and is given by Europeanization, it is permissible that it will become an organic norm after a certain time. Thus, the very trend that politicians communicate more with residents before elections proves that these issues, which were not important for politicians before joining (or during rapprochement with) the EU, are now a necessary part of election campaigns at the level of communities and regions. The lingering significant mistrust of politicians, which can be traced on both sides of the border, is accompanied by the growth of citizen activity in the form of NGOs, thanks to which they can influence decisions without elites. The format of so-called civil policy is a trend that corresponds to the rest of the EU, so it can be considered a Europeanizing influence.

To conclude, we can predict that the border regions of Slovakia and Ukraine will experience deep cooperation on different levels due to Euro-optimistic views, and increased participation of citizens in regional development due to Ukraine's EU-aligned perspective. It is also important to consider the predictions of experts regarding changes in political elites in Zakarpattia, which will be brought about by shifts in the priorities of the population as a result of the country's ongoing war and the influx of IDPs.

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## EUROPEIZAVIMAS IR LOKALINĖ POLITINĖ KULTŪRA KAIP VIEŠOSIOS POLITIKOS IŠŠŪKIAI SLOVAKIJOS IR UKRAINOS PASIENYJE

**Anotacija.** Straipsnyje daugiausia dėmesio skiriama vietinių veiksmų ir europėjimo procesui kaip gyventojų politinės orientacijos ir viešosios politikos veiksniams, jų sąveikai Slovakijos pasienio Košicės ir Prešovo regionuose, taip pat Ukrainos Užkarpatės regione. Tyrime naudoti statistiniai duomenys, taip pat Delphi metodu surinkti duomenys. Siekiant atrasti atsakymus į pagrindinius tyrimo klausimus pasitelktos šiuolaikinės europėizavimo sampratos, pasienio regionuose atliktų lokalių tyrimų rezultatai. Vietiniai veiksniai, susiję su istorinio vystymosi ypatumais, stipriai veikia gyventojų politinę kultūrą ir viešąją politiką ir tą rodo nepotizmas, bendras priešiškus elitiui, pilietinio aktyvumo skirtumai tarp miesto ir kaimo. Tačiau jau esama įrodymų, kad politinę kultūrą Slovakijos ir Ukrainos pasienio regionuose ir atitinkamą politikos procesą reikšmingai paveikė europėizavimo procesai. Viena vertus, šios tendencijos pavyzdžiais laikytini: visuomenės dalyvavimas vietos ir regionų plėtroje, nevyriausybinių organizacijų aktyvumas ir plėtra, ir t. t. Kita vertus, pasienio gyventojų politinės kultūros pokyčiai, veikiami kitų veiksmų, nėra šio straipsnio dėmesio centre ir bus kito mokslinio tyrimo tema.

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